



Winter 2010

## Work among Katrina victims rewarding

By Larry Springer

Representatives from 28 churches, many of them members of the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America, spent Jan. 9-16 in Lakeshore, Miss. for the purpose of ministering to Lakeshore Baptist Church and its community.

Grace Baptist Church of Carlisle, Pa., again sponsored the project. Unity of purpose has always been a hallmark of these projects, and this year that was most evident.

The churches that participated were: Albany Baptist Church, N.Y.; Ballston Lake Baptist Church, N.Y.; Bible Chapel of Delhi Hills, Ohio; Church of the Savior, Myersville, Md.; Community Baptist, Fargo, N.D.; Community Bible Church, Bradenton, Fla.; Covenant Life, Gaithersburg, Md.; Faith Reformed Baptist Church, Media, Pa.; First Baptist Church, Clinton, La.; First Presbyterian Church, Henderson, N.C.; Grace Baptist Church, Carlisle, Pa.; Grace Bible Church, Catawissa, Pa.; Grace Baptist Church, Chambersburg, Pa.; Grace Baptist Church, Taylors, S.C.; Grace Covenant Church, Gilbert, Ariz.; Grace Fellowship Church, Bremen, Ind.; Grace Fellowship Church, Hazleton, Pa.; Grace Reformed Church, Oakland, Md.; Greentown Bible Fellowship, Pa.; Harvest Bible Chapel, New Lenox, Ill.; Living Word Fellowship, Wellsboro, Pa.; Lycoming Centre Presbyterian, Pa.; Milford Bible Church, Pa.; Neelsville Presbyterian Church, Md.; Pioneer Presbyterian, Ligonier, Pa.; Pioneer Valley

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*Alyssa Rarick of Bremen, Ind., does some cleaning at the Lakeshore church building during the week of ministry by representatives from 28 churches in Lakeshore.*

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# ARBCA Update

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

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Providence Baptist Church, Suffolk, VA

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Reformed Baptist Church, Lafayette, NJ

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Reformed Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, VA

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Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, Jackson, GA

Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, La Mirada, CA

Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, Mercer Island, WA

# Commentary: What is Revival, why does it come?

*Editor's note: This is the second of three parts on Revival, written by David Vaughn, an RBMS missionary to France.*

In our previous article, we saw God's description of The Need of Revival as given in His word to the prophet Micah (7:1-6). Now we will turn our attention to what our Lord says through His prophet about (1) The Reason for Revival, (2) The Character of Revival and (3) The Seeking of Revival in Times of Spiritual Decline.

## The Reason for Revival

As we saw in the mirror of Micah's description last time, we are in great need of spiritual revival. The conditions of the sick and weakened Church of Micah's time are present with us in the West today. It is not a matter of theoretical concern for us to ask, "Where does revival come from? What is its source? For what reason is it given by God? Where can we look and what should we be pleading in order to seek revival today?"

For the answer to these crucial questions we must skip to the end of Micah 7 but we will come back to the unexamined parts of the chapter when we inquire into the character of revival and the manner of seeking it. Before we go to verses 18-20 where the reason for revival is revealed, let us set the stage by remembering the position of God's people in Micah's time and noticing how much it is our position today in great parts of Europe and America. If we run our eyes over verses 7 to 9 of this chapter in Micah, we notice that Zion, from her position of weakness and spiritual decline begins to say,

*"Rejoice not over me, my enemy; when I fall I shall rise..." (v. 8)*

In these verses we discover the Church's surprising response in a time of decline.

As we continue to scan the chapter we observe that in verses 10 to 17 the amazing character of God-given revival is shown to us in phrases such as these:

*"A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended.*

*"In that day they will come to you, from*

*Assyria...and from Egypt to the River, from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain.*

*"I will show them marvelous things. The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall lay their hands on their mouths; they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God, and they shall be in fear of you."*

Here is a restoration that's more than a restoration! It is a revival! With all this in mind we go to verses 18 to 20, where God explains to us why, in His providence, it happens over and over in history that a backslidden, declining Church is restored and revived so that in the end God's triumph is seen once again.

Remember that when we arrive at verses 18 to 20 God has already shown the bleak situation of His church, her surprising expectation of revival and the amazing power and effect of that predicted work of God. In verses 18 to 20 the prophet stops to wonder at the reason for this and to announce it to us that we might understand. What is that reason for the Church's restoration and triumphant revival? Let God's prophet speak it to us:

*"Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love." (v. 18)*

We notice that the context is God's paternal anger against the church but the wonderful news to Micah's day and ours is that He does not retain that anger forever "because he delights in steadfast love."

There is a reason for restoration and revival and it is found in the heart of God and in the glory of his graciousness. The divine mercy and love will not allow sin, wrath or disfavor to have the last word toward his beloved people:

*"He will again have compassion on us."*

This is stated categorically by the prophet though the restoration has not yet come!

It is not of the world's sins but of God people's sins that Micah speaks using the word "our:"

*"He will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea..." (v. 19)*

We must carefully notice that this way of God's working is a matter of sworn promise:

*"...You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham as you have sworn to our fathers from days of old." (v. 20)*

Undoubtedly, Micah is referring to promises of God such as that in Deuteronomy chapter 30 where, as part the Mosaic Covenant, He foretold as part of His sworn promise that the people would fall away from Him but that He would not leave His people in such a weak and miserable state indefinitely:

*"...then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you...And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers." (Deut 30: 3-5)*

And so, in the very law covenant of God, this momentous fact has been revealed to us, His people: "I am a restoring God, I will not retain my anger forever, I will correct and in correcting I will restore and revive My people for I delight in steadfast love. And when the revival comes it will not simply bring you back to a previous point of well-being. It will make you more prosperous than your fathers!"

We sing Samuel Davies' great hymn "Great God of Wonders," based on Micah 7:18-19: "Who is a pardoning God like Thee and who has grace so rich and free?..." Perhaps as we sing it we are often thinking of God's wonderful grace in converting sinners. But that is not the particular manifestation of divine grace that Micah is thinking of when he penned these words. The thing that makes him exclaim, "Who is a pardoning God like you?" is rather God's merciful commitment to forgiving, restoring and reviving His people when they backslide!

Forgiving, restoring grace to a backslidden Church! This is one of the surpris-

See **Revival**, page 14

## Institute for Reformed Baptist Studies

# Symbolics provide context for confessions

By Douglas VanderMeulen

It is difficult to speak too highly of Dr. Jim Renihan's course on Baptist Symbolics.

The quality of this course excels in presenting a proper context for both London Baptist Confessions. Dr. Renihan is conversant with the 17th century English primary sources that aid in giving the political, social and ecclesiastical context of the English reformation and specifically of Particular Baptists.

Dr. Renihan's class fulfills something of what the Confessions' framers expressed when they wrote:

*"One thing that greatly prevailed with us to undertake this work, was...the profit that might from thence arise, unto those that have any account of our labors, in their instruction, and establishment in the great truths of the Gospel; in the clear understanding, and steady belief of which, our comfortable walking with God, and fruitfulness before him..."*

Class materials demonstrate just how well-read and theologically-informed our 17th-century forefathers were and their deep commitment to covenantal theology. Inescapably, the reader of the Second London Baptist Confession is brought to God's redemptive purposes in the Pactum Salutis (Covenant of Redemption), Historia Salutis (historical events of redemption), and Ordo Salutis (the actual application of God's acts in the life of the individual believer).

Though these terms are not explicit in the text, the confession is replete with a commitment to their concepts. The writers wanted to identify themselves with the covenantal theology of the Westminster Divines and the Congregationalist through both the words and structure of our Confession. They wrote:

*"...we designed to explain our sense, and belief of; and finding no defect, in this regard, in that fixed on by the assembly [i.e. the Westminster Assembly], and after them by those of the Congregational way [i.e. the Savoy Synod]... and...choose not only to express their mind in words concurrent with*

**A sound understanding of our Confession is a wonderful guard against such errors and an effective tool in training up a future generation of faithful believers who will be prepared to fight the good fight of faith.**

*the former in sense, concerning all those articles wherein they were agreed, but also for the most part without any variation of the terms we did in like manner conclude it best to follow their example in making use of the very same words with them both, in these articles (which are very many) wherein our faith and doctrine is the same with theirs, and this we did..."*

Our Confession was written by well-informed thinkers who understood covenant theology and redemptive history. In writing the London Baptist Confessions, the authors were stating the intention to stand in solidarity with the Magisterial Reformers, the English Presbyterians and the Congregationalists.

Most of the errors our 17th Century Baptist forefathers had to fight against remain to this very day. We share in their battle against Preparationism, Arminianism, Socinianism, Pelagianism, and all heresies that undermine the gospel.

A sound understanding of our Confession is a wonderful guard against such errors and an effective tool in training up a future generation of faithful believers who will be prepared to fight the good fight of faith.

Calvin warned of the danger of corrupting religion by a privatized or personalized understanding of Christianity. He wrote, "Now we must also hold that all who corrupt pure religion - and this is sure to happen when each is given to his own opinion - separate themselves from the one and only God."

Today, with growing ease, many define their Christian faith according to private experiences and personal preferences. Sadly,

many claiming to be Reformed hold to very little of what makes Reformation theology distinct.

Some subscribing to a Reformed creed have a praxis that is more consistent with Arminianism or Preparationism.

Others have a low view of the church and her offices. The problem is rarely an outright denial of covenant theology. More often than not, it is simply the neglect of principles that slowly erodes our foundation.

The Reformed confessions express a recovery of the gospel in doctrine and piety that changed the face of the world. The divinely powerful gospel recovered in the Reformation led to an evangelistic and missionary thrust that transformed entire societies.

Our own Reformed Baptist tradition produced men like William Carey, the "father" of modern missions. Think of the regions of the world that have had the benefit of the clearest Reformed witness and you find the highest development of society, education, health care, and civil rights. Reformed confessional Christianity offers the most consistent expression of the gospel of Christ, a gospel that God has also used to transform the nations.

What a treasure we have in the Second London Baptist Confession and the other Reformed Baptist documents.

What a blessing it has been to discover the rich truths contained in it with the aid of Dr. Renihan's class on Baptist Symbolics.

*Douglas VanderMeulen, pastor of Community Baptist Church in Fargo, N.D., took the Baptist Symbolics course taught by Dr. Jim Renihan at IRBS last January.*



# RBMS missions around the world

I want to express my deepest and sincere thanks to each one of you for the love that you've shown to the Lord and His work in this world, especially in Chile.

I know that the motivation in your hearts is produced by the sovereign work of the Spirit of God and that He has directed you to care for us, supporting us in prayer and with finances, for all of this and much more, thanks and I hope that in all this God may receive the glory.

It's my prayer that God may prosper you in every sense in this year 2010 and that we could together continue to serve the One who gave everything for us at the cross of Calvary and Who in the present continues to intercede faithfully, according to His will, for us.

A beautiful passage of Scripture found in Psalm 36:7 comes to mind, which says: "How precious, oh Lord, is your mercy! That's why your children are protected under the shadow of your wings."

Without a doubt this text expresses my feeling for all the things lived this year, a year loaded with issues, some of them very sad, but also happy ones and in the final balance, it is without a doubt a joy to count on a God so good in His doing and sovereign in his direction, Who has allowed us to continue firm in His infinite grace.

A brotherly hug to each of you.

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*The congregation in Santiago, Chile*

A glance over the year 2009 allows us to celebrate with rejoicing the faithfulness of our Lord through some difficult times.

In the last months, the Lord has sent us contacts with whom we began biblical studies. Besides presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ, these studies are always opportunities to get to know the persons, to develop relations and to demonstrate an interest for them. It is also the occasion to answer more personal questions.

We are delighted at the strengthening of some of our members. We are not many, but the persons present are faithful to the Lord, regular in the participation in the wor-

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**CANADA**



ship services and they seize the opportunities presented to them to share the gospel in their circle of family and friends.

As regards Aylmer's cell, December

was difficult. Both couples who were present left. Few persons want to experience the

See **Durands**, page 8



# RBMS missions around the world

Let me begin this brief update by again thanking each of you for your prayers for us as we begin the new year of ministry in the United States.

We have received so many encouraging e-mails and "old fashioned" cards and letters assuring us of your love and support for our family and the work we have been assigned in the providence of God.

Gail and I are so thankful to be part of what the Lord is doing here in Asheville as we seek to be "workers together with Him," as he "seeks out worshipers who will worship him in Spirit and Truth."

Since we last wrote we have concluded another return visit to Argentina in November.

We participated in the fourth "Palabra Fiel Pastors Conference," working now with the William Carey Seminary of Cordoba and our good brother Sam Masters.

The conference theme was "Walking Faithful: The Message of the Pastoral Epistles."

Omar Ramos of Chile brought messages covering the theme of the place of the Word of God in the Pastorals. (This was after he had just finished six messages on biblical counseling the week prior.)

Sam brought two messages on the instructions to believers concerning holy conduct in the Pastorals. And I brought two messages on biblical masculine leadership in the Pastorals. It was a lively conference of discussions and good interaction.

Though the conference did not get wide publicity, we still had large crowds of 65-80 in each service. The messages will be of great value to the Seminary as they begin a full schedule of class offerings in their new academic year, beginning in March.

The closing of the conference ended a flurry of preaching for me, in both English and Spanish, which included preach-

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Don, Gail and Ian

## HOME MISSIONS



ing 10 times in nine days and traveling about 12,000 miles before I returned home for a holiday break with family.

Please remember the small church in Carlos Paz, "Mision de la Gracia."

They are experiencing a very difficult time on many levels, both spiritual and material.

The necessities of the people in Argentina are not well known by most in the North, but economically the people are generally little better than they were after the huge financial crisis of 2001-02.

Pastor Jorge Molina has lost half his salary due to physical disability and Claudio is carrying a very heavy responsibility trying to maintain his home and the outreach labors of the church.

These faithful men need our continued prayers that Christ would give them grace as they seek to lead others to joyfully accept the losses that come with providence and the uncertainty of life under the curse.

The Lord brought us an especially wonderful blessing this year as a family in that Claudio (our son-in-law) was granted a 10-year visa to the USA, so that he, Amy and their new baby, Jillian were able to be with us for the holidays.

For the very first time, our three older children and grandchildren were able to enjoy a holiday together in one place with us.

This has not happened to us since we left for Argentina in 2001.

It was a great kindness and we re-

joiced in it. "The Lord is good to those who wait for him..." Lam. 3:25.

Further, as a result of his time with us and visiting the brothers at GBC Taylors, Claudio returned home much encouraged and refreshed in the Lord and in the ministry God has given to him.

He was able to greatly encourage the brothers in Argentina when they returned with the warm embrace of brethren in the North.

As for the Crosspoint Church of Asheville, you can check out our progress and events on our Web page at [www.crosspointasheville.org](http://www.crosspointasheville.org).

We are seeing new families added to us and, if the Lord permits, we are planning to constitute the church in May of this year.

We are now six families and just like many of you, we are praying that God would add to our number according to his will for us.

I have just completed the exposition of Nehemiah and will begin a new series on Galatians in February entitled "The Gospel: No Additives." The greatest need we have now is for another building.

The site we have used for the past year is no longer functional for us and we must be out by April.

Please pray with us that the Lord would lead us to the place he has for us to worship each week.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the ARBCA General Assembly to be held at our sending church in Taylors this April.

# RBMS missions around the world



## Jamaica in Crisis

The global economic meltdown has impacted every aspect of our economic life.

Some of the multi-national corporations have locked their gates and have returned home. The government is eagerly trying to find solutions.

In all of this the church in general is forging ahead in two major fields: the spreading of the Gospel, and helping to care for the less fortunate.

It is not always as easy as they would want it to be but they do have challenges.

The church is being challenged by the Muslim community and other heresies promoted by external agencies. Yes, we are still grateful that no one has blocked the church's path in saying what she wants to say.

## Grace and Faith

The two churches which are in the city, half an hour away from each other, have been experiencing much unity and a desire to know more of God's Word.

At Grace, we have been studying the person of Christ for some time now and

It is already six years since the church at Bremen agreed to support our church planting work at Payerne and Neuchatel. How time flies !

As I write my last news for the Update (the financial support from you finished at the end of December 2009) my heart overflows with thankfulness to God who has supplied our needs through you and who has allowed us to get to know you and develop real fellowship links throughout these years.

Your material and spiritual support, as well as you brotherly love, has been extremely precious to us. We have really felt supported in prayer and we hope that you will continue to pray for us.

We will continue to send pray requests for the "Prayer Focus" although our names will no longer be featured in the ARBCA Update.

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## JAMAICA



every Wednesday there is the desire to continue. We give thanks to God for that.

The numbers remain steady and in addition we have regular visitors. Deacon Boysie Williams and myself are working together to maintain and keep our existing members.

One week ago, Oneil went through Eph. 4:21-32 and Eph. 5:1-11 and pointed out as kingdom people how the church should walk and behave. These devotions were well accepted. Oneil has taken a good turn so it may be in a few more years he matures.

At Faith, despite the physical challenges, the doors are still open and we are

still enjoying under the Spirit's guidance a blessed worship hour. Prayer meetings which were suspended are back again for we are experiencing some peace in the community.

We are still seeing people from the community but the children have withdrawn themselves. Generally speaking, for both churches and for Jamaica, we are praying for a successful year.

We also say thanks to all of you who have been praying for us as a family and also those who have been giving your finances to us. We promise under God to be faithful to His Word and to the churches who are behind us.

## The Favres

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## SWITZERLAND



To bring to a conclusion this period of support, we would like to especially thank the following local churches who have been generously involved with us in the Lord's work : Bremen, Carlisle, Fayetteville, La Mirada, Placerville and Rockford.

During the past six years, the Lord has allowed the churches at Payerne and

Neuchatel to grow significantly and become self-financing. Your support, however, has been extremely precious during this delicate transition.

We trust that our contact with you will continue throughout the coming years and we would like to assure you that we will continue to pray for you and remember you.



# RBMS missions around the world

Greetings from your sister churches in Quebec, Canada. I cannot tell you how much we cherish the blessing of our fellowship with all of you.

We are most thankful to our Covenant God for His faithfulness. In the last few months we have witnessed a significant growth in some of our churches, namely Montreal and Quebec City.

We keep learning every day to trust in our sovereign God for His work to advance. As you know, we had to stop broadcasting our radio station at the end of December as we lost our frequency. It was difficult to face, after all the work, energy and money we had put into this project and, useless to say, we were a little discouraged and tempted to flee.

Indeed, as soon as the news about our frequency reached us, we presented a request to the CRTC for another frequency (by the way, there is only one left on the FM band in our area). We prayed, asking God to allow us to keep proclaiming His Word on air. In the meantime we have been very encouraged by people, saved and unsaved, telling us how much they missed our programs. At last, a contact of ours at the CRTC told us that our request for a new frequency has been accepted and should be published in the coming days. How thankful we are to our God who granted us this other opportunity. So, as you read these lines, we will very likely be back on air.

In the last three months of last year, I also had the opportunity of visiting all our

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churches and was greatly encouraged by God's work in each one of them. Our pastors keep showing the same enthusiasm for the Lord's service. They continue building up the faith of those who have been entrusted to their care and proclaiming the Word of Life to the lost.

Our church in Quebec City has started a new youth group and we thank God for our dear brother Paul Lassonde who, with the help of his wife Jeannette, is in charge of this ministry.

Last November, we were blessed with the ordination of an elder and three deacons in our St-Jérôme Church. Moreover, our Church in Rouyn-Noranda is considering ordaining another elder to assist Pastor Jean Lépine.

Our ministerial meetings continue to be well-attended, as none of our ministers are absent. We are progressing with our training center. New developments are about to take place; in particular, we will be offering a three-year training program.

Beginning in February, we expect to have the joy of having Caroline Vaughn with us. She is going to spend three months in our midst. We pray that this period will be a time of blessing for her as she will certainly be a blessing to us.

We ask your prayers for our coming Quebec association general assembly, which is scheduled for April 6-7. This year our guest speaker will be Pastor Olivier Favre from Switzerland who will give three messages on "The Different Aspects of the Often-Forgotten Doctrine of Adoption."

Lastly, we would appreciate your prayers, for we are planning to publish seven booklets on different subjects of the Christian life. We are grateful to The Banner of Truth as they have allowed us to use their name in French for our publishing ministry: La bannière de la vérité.

Thank you again for your fellowship and your precious prayers. You also are constantly in ours.

## Durands

From page 5

setting up of a church.

We ask to the Lord that he sends some columns and people with conviction. We pray also that the Lord saves a large number in this city. We are always grateful to the Lord for the sacrificial efforts put in by André, the person in charge of the cell, and his wife Carole. André said to me recently that he had other contacts. Thank you for

keeping this couple in your prayer.

In Montreal, my son Georges-Émile led his first biblical study on Wednesday on Jan. 6. We were all edified and encouraged. Georges-Émile studies in theology in a reformed seminary.

We have established a project to get in touch with persons who want to immigrate to Canada and to settle down in Montreal, to help them settle down and to establish contact with them. At the beginning of 2010, we welcomed a Brazilian sister and were able to help her. In April, two other

Brazilian families are going to immigrate in Montreal. May the Lord bless this project.

In January, I began a series on the Ten Commandments. I am delighted at the welcome and enthusiasm which this subject has aroused.

In the next months, we want to organize a Sunday school for children 6 to 11 years old. We plan to have seven by the spring, among whom will be four of the preschool age.

We give thanks to the Lord for the opportunity which He gives us to serve Him.

# RBMS missions around the world



## Baptismal Service

In early February we baptized a 51-year-old man who recently came to faith in Christ and of whom I spoke to you in my last letter. Several who were present said that they felt that it was the most moving baptismal service they had seen.

The new believer, a man at the height of his professional career in a highly placed executive position with an international company, gave an outstanding testimony which was both very humble and bold. He spoke of his years of rebellion against God and then resisting the gospel as he heard it for years. He spoke of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and of his sufficient atonement on the Cross as his only hope for salvation. And he spoke of his repentance and determination to live a new life for God and with Christ.

He publicly thanked his Christian wife for the patient, loving and discreet way in which she had kept a testimony for the Christian life alive in the family despite him.

His four non-Christian children were present, three of them being university students. He asked the church to pray that they would all be brought to see and embrace the truth of the gospel. But he said it in such a sweet and touching way in front of them!

The oldest child, a boy, had never set foot in our church, though the three girls have been often to services, especially in the last two years. I was surprised when the boy, who has been hostile to any contact with the gospel, came up to me immediately after the service and said, "Thank you for my new dad."

Though the thanks belonged to the Savior, I understood this response as a very positive one. In fact, throughout the sermon I had been intrigued to notice how intently this young man was listening to God's Word preached.

It seems that the evident change in his father's life has been used by God to begin to soften his heart. Pray that God would open that heart to embrace Christ and his gospel call to repentance and faith.

Today the baptized man's wife told me

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that as they took the oldest girl to the train station to go back to Paris where she studies, she told them that she was enthralled with the experience of the church service and with her father's testimony of conversion. She also had been very hostile toward the gospel when her parents first began to attend our church.

This had radically changed over the last several months. Now she has begun to develop a friendship for the first time with one of the Christian girls in the church who is about her age. This Christian girl will be going up to stay with her in Paris in the next couple of weeks. Pray for their time together.

## Winter Camp for Students

Several weeks ago we held our annual winter camp for university students and young adults. About 50 young people attended. We are thankful for the Lord's faithful and rich blessing upon this time. And it is good news that we will be forced to look for more room next year as all the places in the center we rented were taken this year.

Four Reformed Baptist pastors preached on subjects such as "Union with Christ," "Revival after Spiritual Decline," "Trusting God in Trials," "Calvin's Teaching on the Christian Life," "The Life of Felix Neff – Apostle of the Alps," and "The Last Judgment."

We are encouraged by the serious commitment of the young people (both guys and girls) coming through these camps at this time. There are a number of the young men who manifest real spiritual leadership, and

some of them are reflecting on the possibility of a call to the ministry.

## Preaching in Aix-en-Provence

You may remember that I am in the process of transitioning out of the work here in Grenoble to make room for a French pastor. Please continue to pray that God would raise up a man! We are moving forward as a church in different aspects related to this transition. We have examined our church life with its strong and weak points and discussed where we need to grow and act in the next 18 months to prepare for this transition.

One aspect of the transition is my moving on progressively to new fields of service. I have begun to preach in the city of Aix-en-Provence in the south of France, about three hours from Grenoble by car. There is a group of 10 Reformed Baptist Christians meeting there who are looking for a church planter.

I will be preaching there about every five weeks from this point on. This will enable the group in "Aix" and myself to get to know one another and to come to conclusions about the possibility of my being called to ministry among them. At the same time it will help the church in Grenoble by forcing them to do without me regularly.

My first visits to this group in Aix have been extremely encouraging. Though the group is small, they are very committed and are involved in evangelistic outreach to Muslims and other encouraging efforts. We covet your prayers for the needs of both the church in Grenoble and the group in Aix.

# Church Planting: See the multitudes as Jesus did

By Gordon Taylor

Have you ever sat in a mall and watched people? What do you think when you see the crowds passing by? How should Reformed Baptists view the multitudes of people around them?

Jesus is the One who taught His disciples how to view the multitudes and in teaching His disciples, He teaches us.

I believe that, if we are to have an increasing burden to plant churches, we need to see the multitudes as Jesus saw them. The population of our country is becoming more diverse so that the multitudes include peoples from many nations and many different religions.

All of these people groups need to be reached with the gospel here in our own homeland. I want to show you from this passage the four ways that Jesus viewed the multitudes with the goal that you will likewise begin to see people as Jesus saw them. To see how Jesus viewed the multitudes I want to use four key words suggested in Matt. 9:35-38.

**1) Study the multitudes.** The text states that Jesus “saw” the multitudes. This was not a mere glance. This was a thoughtful gaze.

Jesus studied these people. He contemplated them in a light of their response to His ministry. In a biography of William Chalmers Burns, I read that after he was converted he was walking down a street in Glasgow and his mother, who had come in from Kilsyth, saw him but he seemed to completely ignore her.

She turned back to find him, but he was hidden in a small doorway. She asked him why he had not spoken, “O mother,” he said, “I was so overcome with the thought of multitudes perishing that I did not see you and had to come in here to pray.”

This is the proper way to view the multitudes: gaze on them. Look at them and consider their true plight. We need to ask some questions: Do they know the gospel? Are they saved or lost? Is the truth available to them? Are they subject to all kinds of false teachers?

Now consider the second word that will show us how we should view the multitudes.

**2) Understand the true need of the multitudes (36,37).** Jesus saw these people as spiritual victims (36). They were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd. There is no more sorry sight than to see sheep without a shepherd.

Sheep need loving, constant and careful care. They were WEARY, that is, they were troubled, harassed, alarmed, and fearful. Have you ever seen sheep in a pen being barked at and run at by a dog? They are scared. You can see it in their eyes.

These people were SCATTERED – that is, they were dejected, hopeless, and discouraged. Picture a weaned lamb that wanders away from the flock. The flock goes to another location. The poor lamb looks around and begins to run in the direction he thinks the flock has gone only to find as he reaches the brow of the hill the flock is not there. He is lost! Lost! Lost!

There he stands. Darkness is falling. It is a place where there are coyotes. He stands alone on the hill and drops his head, lies down without hope. That is what Jesus saw.

He saw multitudes whose shepherds fleeced them rather than nurture them just like false shepherds abuse the multitudes in America today. We must see the multitudes as Jesus saw them.

**3) Have Compassion on the multitudes (36).** The word Matthew chooses here means “inward parts, intestines, entrails” – emotions affect internal organs. The Bible often uses this word to indicate the deepest possible emotions of the human soul.

This was the word that Jesus used to describe the feeling or emotion of the Samaritan who found the man robbed and beaten by the road side (Luke 10:30). Jesus experienced the deepest possible affection and concern for the people that He saw! How do we view the people we see? With judgment? With disdain? Do

we wonder why they don’t know better? A heart steeled against the needs of the masses is not the heart of Jesus.

If we begin to have this kind of compassion what can we do? It is this question that leads me to my fourth word.

**4) Pray for the multitudes (37, 38)..** The sight of perishing humanity could lead to dejection by thoughtful disciples. The masses are duped. See them walking up and down our streets and driving up and down our highways. What are we to do once we begin to see them as Jesus saw them? Jesus tells us what to do!

First, know there is a harvest. The harvest refers to the whole multitude that Jesus saw. The harvest refers to the large crowds that need to hear the gospel! Jesus wants all these people to hear the Good News! **THERE IS A MISSION TO BE ACCOMPLISHED! THAT MISSION IS TO SEE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THE MULTITUDES!**

Second, know there are few laborers. There is a labor shortage. Who are the laborers? They are gospel ministers who are called and commissioned to preach the gospel. True that all are to witness to Christ, yet there are some who are specially called to labor by public preaching.

Third, we must pray. Pray because the Lord of the Harvest must send out laborers. Literally the text says pray “that He may CAST OUT laborers.” He will do it. It is not merely someone who wants to go but someone who is cast out! Someone who is thrust out!

I urge you to study, to understand, have compassion on the multitudes and then pray for laborers. The Home Missions Committee of ARBCA is placing an emphasis on prayer this year for reaching the multitudes at home with the gospel. I encourage every church and every church member to enthusiastically engage in prayer for our needy nation.

*Gordon Taylor is coordinator for the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America.*

## Lakeshore

From page 1

Baptist, Chicopee, Mass.; Spring Meadow PCA, Las Vegas, Nev.; and Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church, S.C.

At the 4-1/2 year point, the recovery from Hurricane Katrina has continued to evolve.

On the surface, if you drive around Hancock County you will see definite progress. Most of the impressive ruins from the devastation have been removed, and you see businesses trying to make a go of it.

Sadly, with the state of the economy, many have failed. There are still many families struggling to secure permanent housing or trying to complete their homes. Although the hurricane certainly created many hardships, in reality there is not always a direct link. The source of the problems under which people suffer is often more complex.

Poverty has all kinds of faces. We can attempt to analyze it, theorize about its origins and even develop programs to improve it, but we cannot eradicate it. When Jesus said, "The poor will always be with you" he stated the great summary of poverty and the church's connection to it. The poor are "with" us, and according to the scripture, we should go and be with them. Going forth and seeking out those who are struggling with life is much of what we seek to do in Lakeshore. This is the calling of this small church on the Gulf Coast, and we try to minister mercy in their name with God's help.

Some of the folks in Hancock County are still in the midst of building a home in piecemeal fashion. Others still haven't begun. We helped one family who had finally gotten to the point where they needed plumbing installed. They had gotten all of the money they could secure through loans and had expended it all on rebuilding. Without more funds and the skills of a plumber, they could not move forward.

Thankfully, using project benevolent funds, we were able to provide both of those needs. The remaining projects lined up for us by Pastor Elbourne (or as many in the community call him, Brother Don) were



*Ed McEnaney and Phil Mania from Greentown, Pa., cheerfully take care of sanitation and trash runs, something they did throughout the week.*

funded by the owners, and we provided the skills.

The bulk of our labor was turned toward construction and maintenance on the church property. We worked simultaneously on the bunkhouse and Mercy House. The bunkhouse is nearly finished; in fact we were able to use it for berthing. The Mercy House is an impressive building that will be used as a distribution center with a classroom for community education. This educational concept is born out of the conviction that the church can be an agent to improve life skills and develop business acumen in a Christian context.

Pastor Don was exceedingly thankful to see so much progress in one week. Of course we had our usual run of repairs and maintenance on the facilities and vehicles as we battled sub-20 degree temperatures. As always, the Lord provided all the skills we needed to tackle every situation.

Although bending nails is the meat of what we do during the week, an equally important component of the project is the mission we assign our evangelism/visitation team. Pastor George McDearmon led this team with great energy and focus. They were able to reach out to many of the citizens that have had contact with

Lakeshore Baptist, the number of which is growing quite large.

General George, as one of his team members likes to call him, would gather his troops in the morning and prep them with exhortations to bring the gospel to sinners. With the power of all-prayer, they would march forth into the highways and byways seeking to bring the good news. Some adopted the tactic of stopping and asking for directions to the home of a contact, then witnessing and inviting these friendly strangers to the Friday evening meal and preaching service.

The Lord blessed these forays into the community with many opportunities to communicate the Gospel. Some of these visits were to believers, an opportunity to be an encourager. As in the past, the words "Lakeshore Baptist Church" opened up many doors of southern hospitality. One of our team members, Ruth Landrum, having grown up on the mission field in Peru, is bilingual. We were aware of this important skill, but had no idea if or how it would be used. Our God was preparing the way! Ruth, with her friendly manner and complete ease in Spanish was able to

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# Lakeshore

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connect with Hispanic families, share the gospel, and invite them to the Friday event.

The Friday evening community meal and evangelistic preaching service is the zenith toward which we point during the week. The petitions have been lifted to heaven, and the seed has been sown in the community. We wait upon the Holy Spirit to move. The Lord blessed us with a rain-free week until late Friday afternoon, when it began to sprinkle.

Our wonderful kitchen crew had prepared a superb feast, complete with colorful centerpieces packed with useful household supplies.

These and other items were to be given as gifts to our guests. Would they come in the rain? Would they come and stay for the service? How would we handle the disappointment if our work bore little fruit? These were some of the questions that assaulted my mind.

A half hour before the meal the folks started to arrive. To our great joy, a long steady line was forming into the dining hall. It was an amazing site to see the diversity of our guests.

There were the elderly and handicapped. There were those who had mental problems. Some wore the evident effects of a hard life. Families with children were in attendance. A blend of races was represented. I was surprised to see a few young men show up – not the usual hangout on a Friday night. I spoke with one of them named Ryan. He had lost everything twice – once with Katrina, then again in prison. His family had moved out of state, and he was cut off because his parole didn't permit him to cross state lines. He readily confessed that he was a great sinner and was clearly troubled in his soul.

Next came two entire Hispanic households. They were warmly greeted in Spanish by Ruth, who had evidently won their affection.

Overall, it was quite a festive occasion amongst relative strangers. The count was 65 guests for the meal and nearly the same for the service. Mitch Axsom, an elder from First Baptist Church in Clinton, La., was our



*The congregation at Lakeshore, outside their temporary sanctuary.*



*Ruth Landrum, from Media, Pa., with Miss Redford, a member of LBC. Ruth's Spanish-speaking skills proved valuable during the week of ministry in Lakeshore.*

preacher for the evening. Seeing that we had about 15 Spanish-speaking friends in attendance, he decided that we would make the service bilingual. The message of the cross was simple and powerful, suited to the audience. Although the use of an interpreter created some difficulties, it ensured that all in attendance understood that Jesus Christ bore the sin of those who looked to Jesus, as did the thief who hung beside Him.

This year I was struck by how this project has grown over the past three years to include an edifying ministry not just for the people of Lakeshore, but also for those



*Chris Brucks from Community Baptist Church of Fargo, N.D., paints a house in the community.*

who come to help. Some among us noticed that this year, more than ever, our time in Lakeshore had the elements of a conference. This "conference" has the practical focus on hearing the word, immediately followed by the doing. That application of God's word hopefully returns home with us. Here are some of the ways this is manifested:

We had 11 sermons with very practical applications. Don Elbourne's sermons were particularly helpful in wrestling with the topic of mercy ministry.

There is constant prayer and interpersonal discussion on a range of topics. Especially on how to implement what we learn upon return to our home

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## Lakeshore

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churches.

The project continues to expand a sense of community between churches throughout the United States. We now know of skill sets that expand into a broad range of talents. Will God use those skills in the future in ways we can only imagine?

The fellowship is sweet. The emphasis on instruction, work, and defined purpose binds the hearts of believers in profound ways.

This is an excellent venue for young adults. As we look to the next generation to take the mantle of ministry, this week can be instrumental in forming a young person's thinking. During the week, our youth leader, Bobby Bonser, introduced them to the book "Don't Waste Your Life" by John Piper. How appropriate a topic for young minds developing ways to use their talents for the glory of God!

It has been immensely encouraging to be a part of the Lakeshore Baptist Church story. We have grown very attached to Don Elbourne and his flock. They have been a sterling example of a church with a heart of compassion for its neighbors. How often do I hear from team members that they received far more than they gave?

Pastor Aaron Hoak posted on our blog comments that are representative of the experience we enjoyed. In summary, this is an excerpt:

"I went to Lakeshore because I knew people not only needed their houses rebuilt; they needed the good news of God saving sinners through the work of His Son, Jesus. After all, Jesus Himself ministered both to the physical and spiritual needs of people. When the crowds learned where He had gone, "They followed him and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing" (Luke 9:11)

"LBC, it seems to me, is doing a fine job of meeting people's needs and speaking to them of the Kingdom of God – true mercy ministry.

"What happened in Lakeshore was that I was reminded of how much I need the gospel. I learned how far short I come



*Kate Stuber, left, and twin brothers Caleb and Matt Hood, from Pioneer Presbyterian Church, work on the roof of a shed across the street from Lakeshore Baptist Church.*

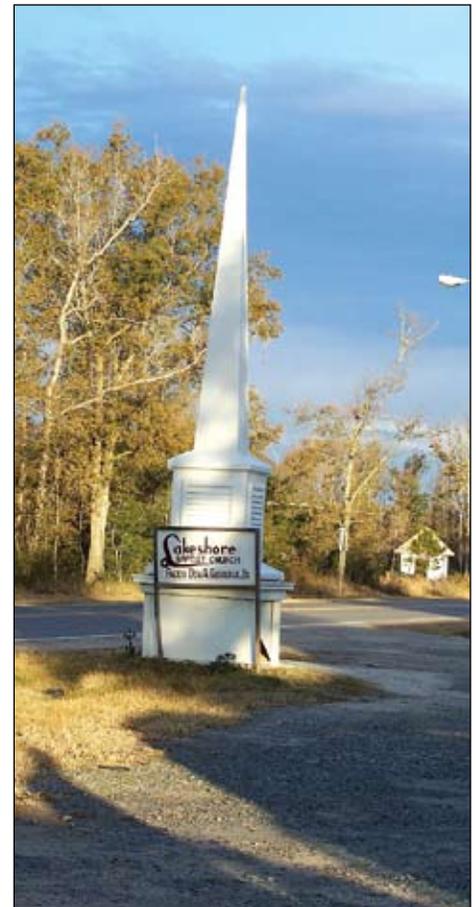
in loving sinners. I learned how pathetic my complaints are. I learned how little I show real love to people in need. I learned how much growing I have to do. I learned how weak I am. I learned again how totally dependent upon God I am.

"I learned that I can deal with a little physical discomfort. I learned that His strength is made perfect in my weakness. I learned that I have a lot more to learn about mercy ministry. (Thoughts on how to translate what LBC is doing to our churches would be most welcome.) I learned more about the joy of telling others of the hope that lies within me. I learned more about fellowship and communion of believers of like mind. I learned more of how the body of Christ operates. I learned that God moves in mysterious ways ... and I am still learning.

"I went to Lakeshore to be a blessing to others, and hopefully I was. But what I know happened is that I was blessed. I'm thankful to each one who played a part in the experience of a lifetime – from my family and church at home who prayed for me, to those who were there with me. I pray now that I remember what I've learned, and I pray that God will continue to build not just houses in Lakeshore, but his Kingdom."

Amen, brother!

*Larry Springer is a deacon at Grace Baptist Church, Carlisle, Pa.*



*The steeple from Lakeshore's former church building, destroyed during Hurricane Katrina, still sits next to where the church driveway intersects the highway.*

# Revival

From page 3

ing ways of God with His people! And it is this revelation that brings Micah to see the glory of God's grace in a new and greater way and to praise Him in verses 18 to 20.

God's sworn promise to restore and revive a backsliding people is one of the greatest manifestations of His grace. What more could our souls long for in 2010 in the Church of the Western World than to know that our immutable God has shown himself to be a restoring and reviving God who will not retain anger forever, but who will show faithfulness and steadfast love to His people in reviving the downcast Church in spiritual decline? (1)

Such is His sworn promise of old.

## The Character of Revival

God revealed to Micah what it would look like when God restored His backslidden Church. He promised to give her times of great triumph over sin and over the world.

Let's now go back and examine more carefully verses 10 to 17. The first thing we notice in verse 10 is that there will be a total reversal in the balance of power between the Church and her enemies:

*"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."*

When God brings revival, it involves this great change. Those who mocked the Church's faith and claimed that nothing could justify her belief in God are now ashamed of what they so confidently affirmed in the past! God's people looks upon

<sup>1</sup> This does not contradict the reality of God's justice in dealing with local congregations by, for example, taking away a lampstand. In the Old Testament God could cut off from Israel certain disobedient individuals or families despite the fact that He had sworn to restore His people when they fell away. God's promise assures us that it is not in line with God's character or covenants with His people that His people, as a whole, should decline, fall away and end her days under sin's reign and misery. It will be evident both in this life and the next that God and His grace reign and triumph, not sin. This reality has especially come into its own and into most visible display through and since the victory of Christ and the inauguration of the New Covenant. (Rom.5 :17 ; 2 Cor.2 :14 ; Rom.8 :31-37)

their once vigorous enemies from a position of triumph and superior strength.

God also promises us that when He revives a fallen Church he will bring her unprecedented growth:

*"A day for the building of your walls! In that day the boundary shall be far extended. In that day they will come to you, from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt to the River, from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain."* (v. 11-12)

What a description of revival: A day for the building of walls and the extending of boundaries!

Micah, who lived through the disappearance of the northern kingdom by Assyrian invasion and the almost-disappearance of the southern kingdom in 701 by Assyrian invasion, tells his contemporaries that:

*"In that day they will come to you, from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt to the River, from sea to sea and from mountain to mountain."* (v. 12)

From Israel's worst enemy there are those who flock to join her and serve her God! As these people are pictured by the prophet as fleeing to Zion, there comes this description of life outside of Zion:

*"But the earth will be desolate because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their deeds."* (v. 13)

In other words, the only place where there will be security and safety will be in Zion. This is the reality that becomes so clear when God comes down and visits men in revival power.

Next, God informs His people that he will give recovery of what has been lost. Two of the first places that Israel gained in Canaan during the Conquest were the fertile lands of Bashan and Gilead (Josh. 13:19-31). They were also two of first places Israel lost as judgment began to fall on the people in anticipation of the Exile. Now the prophet tells the people that will have the right to ask for this recovery:

*"Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance who dwell alone in a forest, in the midst of a garden, let them graze in Bashan and Gilead."*

The visible care of the Divine Shepherd in restoring and reviving His people means that their experience of His rich gifts will be enjoyed again in full.

Though our inheritance is not a physical Canaan, we also cry out, "Restore to

us, O God, those wonderful parts of your inheritance where we grazed in the past!!" Certainly, the revivals familiar to us since Reformation times have given back to the Church rich truths and blessings lost during times of decline.

The last effect of true revival seems to be the sobering effect on the unconverted who look on as spectators of God's work in the Church.

*"The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall lay their hands on their mouths; their ears shall be deaf; they shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth; they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God, and they shall be in fear of you."* (16-17)

There seems to be a distinction between the fearful nations mentioned here and the individuals from nations such as Assyria and Egypt who come from afar and enter Zion (v. 11-12). Perhaps we have here a description of the fact that revival creates a general fear of God even among those who do not come and join God's people by saving faith.

The effect of revival, even on the unconverted, is incredibly powerful. They tremble and come out of their strongholds, lay their hands on their mouths, and are in fear of God.

We are reminded of countless accounts of revivals in past history all the way down to the days after Pentecost when alongside the mass conversions there was a great effect on those who did not join the church: "... great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things... and they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women."

Much closer to us, Jonathan Edwards described Northampton during revival days in this way: "The town seemed to be full of the presence of God... "A loose, careless person, could scarcely be found in the whole neighborhood; and if there was any one, it would be spoken of as a strange thing."

Here is the Spirit-inspired portrait of what it looks like when the Almighty rises

## Revival

From page 14

to defend His Church from her enemies and to restore and revive her from her spiritual darkness. What a glorious change from the time when Zion was sitting in darkness (v. 8) under the chastisement of God (v. 9), enduring the taunts of an ungodly society who held sway and boasted of its power and the church's impotence (v. 10)!

The prophet opens our eyes to what God can do. We would otherwise have thought such things impossible! But here is what our Lord swore that He would do for His people of the old covenant because of His unfailing love for her. Should we expect His ways to be less wonderful toward the Church of the New Covenant with its better promises? Has the Almighty changed? Has His mercy waned or His power diminished?

Has Church history not abundantly confirmed every word about God's ways in Micah 7 as the almighty Restorer and Reviver of His people?

Is there a single word in Micah 7 that we could call exaggerated as we hold in our hands our New Testaments or even peruse the journals of the men of the revivals of recent times?

Even taken in the most literal way, the miracles of Micah 7 have been seen and testified to in places where some of our feet have trod:

A witness of the Revival in the Isle of Lewis in 1949-53 wrote: "I have known men out in the fields, so overcome by this sense of God that they were found prostrate on the ground..."

David Brainerd testified thus of his experience among the American Indians: "The power of God seemed to descend upon the assembly like a mighty rushing wind and with an astonishing energy bore down all before it. I stood amazed at the influence that seized the audience almost universally, and could compare it to nothing more aptly than the irresistible force of a might torrent."

Gardiner Spring spoke in 1832 of his experience of revival in the previous part of that century: "From the moment I entered university in 1800 until 1825 there was a series of uninterrupted heavenly visitations spread throughout different parts of the

land. During this period of 25 years there was not one sole month when you could not point to some village, city or theological school and say, 'Look what God has done!'"

And Edward Griffin was able to say in 1799: "I could stand at the door of my house in New Hartford... and count 50 or 60 contiguous congregations spread out in one field of divine wonders..."

I mentioned these two last statements recently in a Bible study in the south of France.

Present at that study was a North African man converted from Islam four years ago. He makes frequent trips back to his home country to witness among his people.

After hearing the statements of Gardiner Spring and Edward Griffin and the teaching of Micah 7 he spoke up and said, "What you are describing in exactly what we are seeing in my country among Muslims at this moment."

Another man present at that study is a Reformed missionary who has worked in Muslim evangelism for years. He echoed what I have heard from others: "We have seen more conversions among Muslims in the last four to five years than all that have occurred from Mohammed's time until four or five years ago." The God of Micah 7 has not changed!

But let us close with a word about our part of the world.

We are thankful for the great and wonderful work of doctrinal reformation that God has given in the last few decades in many countries of the world. The Church in many places in Europe and America has been greatly blessed by it. We have seen the hand of God in this in our day. And I cannot but wonder if this may not be the preparation of God for revival.

But one thing is sure. It is not revival in this sense of the outpouring of the Spirit that gives extraordinary strength and fruitfulness to the Church. It is not revival in the sense of Micah 7. To realize this we need only to ask what has happened in the non-Christian society in America or Great Britain, for example, during the same period of time as the modern resurgence of the Calvinistic doctrine?

What has happened is not what Micah 7 describes: the reversal of the radi-

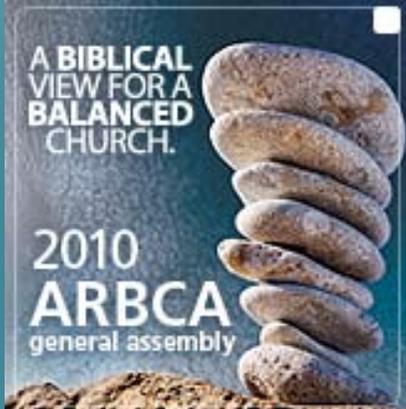
cal balance of power between the Church and its enemies, unprecedented growth in the Church as people flow even from the Church's worst enemies of the past, recovery of what has been lost, an overwhelmingly sobering effect upon the society at large when puts its hand on its mouth and fears God, light and victory and joy and power in the Church in an extraordinary way.

These things we have not seen! So, though we are immensely grateful to God for His mercy in restoring many parts of the Church to sound belief and the sound piety that flows from it, there is still something we must seek with all our hearts, brethren!

In the last article we will turn to what in some ways may be the most important and certainly the most practically urgent part of teaching given to us in Micah 7: How the Church in decline is to seek revival. For this instruction, we will turn next time to verses 8 and 9.

*David Vaughn is a Reformed Baptist Mission Services-sponsored missionary in France. He will be one of the keynote speakers at the ARBCA General Assembly, advertised below.*

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