

RNet Monthly

A monthly publication of the Reformed Baptist Network
January 2022

Praying for each other more specifically,
encouraging one another
with what the LORD is doing,
"Rejoicing with those who rejoice,
weeping with those who weep."

FROM THE COORDINATOR "MAN-FISHING"

*"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."
(Luke 5:8)*

This narrative teaches that we are instruments of God. The catch was miraculous, yet the fishermen, the boat, and the fishing tackle were required.

It's the same in personal evangelism, gospel proclamation, and global missions. "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). No doubt when God works without instruments He is glorified, but He also selects the plans and the instruments who will magnify Him on the earth.

Human effort alone is totally worthless. "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing" (Luke 5:5). Why? They were skilled, experienced fishermen who understood their work. They were not lazy; they had toiled all night. Was the sea fished out? Certainly not, as soon as the Master came the fish swam into the net in schools.

Why? It's because there is no power apart from the presence of Jesus. Without Him we can do nothing, but with Him we can do all things (Philippians 4:13). Christ's presence guarantees success. Jesus sat in Peter's boat and His will, by divine influence, drew fish into the net.

When Jesus is lifted up in His church and on the mission field, His presence is the church's power. "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to Myself" (John 12:32).

Go out this morning and in faith fish for souls. Let us work until night and we will not labor in vain. He who tells us to let down the net will fill it with fish, with a great multitude, that no one will be able to count (Revelation 7:9). 🌐

— adapted from C. H. Spurgeon, Morning and Evening

— Mark Chanski, RNet Coordinator

MISSION THOUGHTS

THE END GAME

“It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.’” (Isaiah 2:2, 3 ESV).

Churches, saints, pastors, and missionaries can never be satisfied until they see all the nations flowing into the church. I suggest this is the end game.

The promise of the nations flowing into the house of the LORD is in the latter days. If I read my Bible correctly we live in the last days as Hebrews 1:1, 2 (ESV) teaches us. “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”

I admit that I am no expert in prophesy, in fact I knew more about prophecy in high school (though erroneous in my thinking) than I do now. But I do believe the Bible. I see many promises and the one in Isaiah is one that encourages us to expect great gospel progress. We may, perhaps, have to wait until the eternal kingdom to see this ultimately fulfilled. However, should we not at least expect a foretaste of the “end game” in the days in which we live? I do expect to see great progress and so at least a hint of final gospel victory. Will you join me in prayer for 2022 that our missionaries, pastors, and churches will see greater fruit than we have ever seen in the past? 🌐

— Gordon Taylor, RNet Support



CHURCH UPDATES

Covenant Baptist Church, Toronto, Ontario CA

Chris Powell, Pastor

I Peter 3:12: “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.”

Let me begin by affirming the utter truth of this Scripture. The last year has been the hardest year of ministry for many of us, but, as we have personally seen and can testify from this year, our Lord also truly hears and answers prayer.

2021 was a tough year for us as a church and family. Some of our sadness included the departure of two deacons from our leadership team. Subsequently, we faced multiple tragic deaths of unbelievers and believers including my sister Rachel (52) who passed away of appendiceal cancer leaving behind her husband and two children. The pandemic hit hard in Toronto and we were considered the most locked down city in North America. Even to this day we are still under a mandatory mask mandate and capacity limits. Capacity caps ranged as low as 10 to our current limit of 60.

We also experienced significant struggles as renters of our building. Due to a false complaint, we faced a public health investigation of our church. The most recent crisis was when our landlord decided to independently impose a vaccination mandate on all who entered their building. This very nearly meant the end of our 10 year tenure there, but, through prayer, we negotiated a compromise which had us buying a filtration system and moving our morning meeting to 9 AM. These conditions were set to expire the end of this year but we learned recently we have another reprieve until March 2022. Please continue to pray for our freedom to meet and for revival in our country. This week the Canadian government passed a bill banning conversion therapy that has serious implications for religious freedom and churches.

We've also had encouragement and many answered prayers. Praise God that all of our crises were answered positively in response to prayer! We enjoyed a visit from Pastor Jon Ryttersgaard and family over the summer as he provided a short sabbatical for me to help us. On Reformation Day we celebrated the conversion and baptism of three new additions to our church. Two of them were young girls who were raised in the

— Continued on next page

CHURCH UPDATES

Covenant Baptist Church, Toronto, continued...

church including my own daughter Hannah. A third was a young man who began attending our youth group more than 10 years ago. Please pray for more conversions. Provisionally, despite our limits, we have some inquiring unbelievers attending our services. We also have a group of men whom I am regularly discipling towards ministry including our deacon Kristoffer Rodas who has continued preaching a once monthly series in the book of Philippians. May the Lord continue to use us to build His church. ☺

Redeeming Grace Church Cody, WY

Donald Thomas, Pastor

Greetings From Wyoming,

About a year and a half ago God graciously planted Redeeming Grace Church here in Cody, Wyoming. I accepted the call by Trinity Bible Church to be the church-planting pastor. Our initial vision was that when we became constituted and self-supporting we would prayerfully begin the search for that man who would serve as co-elder and take up the future preaching ministry of RGC. We give praise for God's grace in blessing our labors as we have just begun the process of searching for that man. We are asking you to help us in our search. Please pray that our Lord will provide a co-elder who is a gifted expositor of His word. Please forward all inquiries to donaldthomas1689@gmail.com.

We give praise that God recently guided us safely through difficult, class VI rapids of adversity. We are currently enjoying the calm waters of joyful unity within the church body. We also give thanks to God for saving one of our men from the grips of Roman Catholicism. He will be baptized, and he and his wife will be joining the church on Christmas Sunday!

I pray that this update serves as an encouragement to you and your church. I pray for bountiful Gospel blessing on your kingdom labors.

Finally, I am thankful that I am not laboring alone, but in your warm fellowship through RBNNet. ☺

*Gospel blessings,
Don Thomas*

CHURCH UPDATES

Bible Baptist Church, Galway, NY

Michael Churchill, Elder

Bringing our RBNNet brothers and sisters greetings from the Bible Baptist Church of Galway, New York.

2021 has been a year of major change for our little flock here in upstate New York, beginning with the retirement of pastor Wayne Brandow. Wayne came to Galway in 1977, and faithfully served here for almost 44 years. In May of this year we celebrated his retirement, and he and his wife Martha now reside in Franklin, North Carolina. I have no doubt that they will both quickly find a way to minister to their new community for the Glory of our Lord!!

We are still basking in the blessing and joy that our annual General Assembly gave those of us in attendance. Seeing your faces, and working together to fulfill the great commission is so rewarding!

Throughout this year we have found ourselves needing to adapt to some early COVID restrictions – including having outdoor services this spring – but the Lord has been faithful in allowing our doors to remain open, and for our church to continue to be a beacon of truth in a very dark area. As the church's only Elder, I have been earnestly seeking the Lord's will in our search for a new pastor. I am grateful for my Pulpit Search Committee, who have greatly assisted in our search for a new under-shepherd. In God's providence He has also provided our church with 3 godly pastors and elders from surrounding reformed churches who have been giving me excellent counsel, and who give of their time to assist me in the weekly preaching of the Word.

In October we extended a call to serve as our Senior Pastor to an individual, but last week he withdrew his name from consideration due to personal issues. Our flock is undeterred, though, and we are confident that the man of the Lord's choosing to serve as our pastor has yet to be identified, and we continue to persevere in our search. In fact, rather than be discouraged, we have had 4 individuals who have expressed an interest in becoming members of our church. The Lord indeed is good!

I would ask for your prayers in our search for a new Pastor, for continued unity and growth in faith of our congregation, and for wisdom and endurance for me as I oversee the body here. ☺

*In His Service,
Michael Churchill, Elder*

CHURCH UPDATES

Grace Reformed Baptist Church, Mebane, NC

Stu Johnston, Pastor

Dear brothers & sisters,

It's hard to believe that almost two years have passed since Pastor Gary Hendrix retired, and more than a year since he went home to be with the Lord. During this extended time of transition, we have known some strains, but the Lord has been very good to us. Like many of you, we've seen a large number of new people come among us during this extended COVID season. Our most recent new members' class had 15 people in it. We have enjoyed having a number of RBNNet pastors minister here during 2021: Mark Redfern; Mark Chanski; Matt Foreman; Jarvis Singleton, and Tiago Oliveira. We are grateful for the opportunity to nurture our ties to these men and their congregations.

We are also thankful that we could add two new missionary commitments this fiscal year, partnering with RBC Riverside in SE Asia and with Heritage Church Owensboro in N. Africa. We appreciate the zeal for missions in the Network.

We are encouraged by what the Lord is doing among a good number of our young people. We are also encouraged by our women's ministries, especially in bible studies, prayer, and missions support.

Recently, I've begun an exposition of The Gospel of John. We sincerely hope that we will have the joy of seeing more people coming to faith in Christ.

Please pray for wisdom in leadership for me and my fellow elders, Michael Lopes and Stephen Byrd. Please pray that the Lord would deepen our congregation's humility, love, and concern for souls. Please pray that the Lord would bring us a godly man whose preaching and leadership gifts, personality, experience, and character would be what the Great Pastor knows us to need both in the shorter term and in the longer term. We now have a large number of dear older saints, 60 and above. Please pray that the Lord would give us grace to finish well, full of sap until the end.

Thank you for your fellowship in love and prayer. ☺

*In our Savior,
Stu Johnston (for the elders)*

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