

RBN Net Monthly

A monthly publication of the Reformed Baptist Network
April 2024

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."

BEING A MISSIONARY IS HARD

After Jonathan Edwards' high profile ministry in Northampton, MA, he was forced out of his pulpit by a congregation that had grown weary of his preaching. He left there to become a missionary to Native Americans. Here's a digestion of Wes Carpenter's summary:

After Edwards had spent more than half his life in the place where his name may always be associated, he left Northampton. Officially, his Stockbridge mission began Aug 8, 1751, although his new congregation never had more than 18 families. However, evangelizing to Native Americans that spoke a completely different language was quite different from the ministry at Northampton.

The Stockbridge mission consisted of a few hundred Mohawk Indians. Upon Edwards' arrival, the original missionary, Sergeant, suddenly died. He died young, but his missionary service was not in vain. Almost 125 Indians had been baptized and a small school had been established. Edwards would continue to reap the harvest that was sown prior to his coming.

Iain Murray: "Edwards' surviving sermon notes revealed he worked hard to adapt and simplify sermons for the Indians, dropping illustrations which he had used at Northampton, and substituting others which were more familiar to their culture."

Edwards' finances were at rock bottom. He found himself preparing sermons on the covers of letters and scraps of paper. Preaching sermons to the church included both English and Indian audiences. However, this was done at separate times since an interpreter was needed for addressing the Indians. "Edwards didn't shrink from preaching terror to the Indians or from explaining in narrative terms some hard points of Calvinism, such as original sin and reasons for God's wrath and judgment." The Stockbridge Indian congregation had much respect for Edwards, but there were no reports of remarkable conversions.

Edwards remained in Stockbridge until 1758—approximately seven years. The Lord Jesus, our Lamb, is worthy! 🙏

— Mark Chanski, RBN Net Coordinator

MISSION THOUGHTS

ENDURING TRIALS

“Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3 ESV). Timothy had a good deal of hardship he had to endure. He had to oppose false doctrine, “As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:3 ESV). Teachers in the church had departed from a Christ centered gospel ministry and were side tracked into false teaching thus leading the church astray. This was no small trial for Timothy to refute such men and bring the church back to the truth. But Timothy must rise to the duty and be faithful. (See also 1 Timothy 6:3, 6.) And he must refute these men with gentleness, “And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness” (2 Timothy 2:24, 25a ESV).

Also Timothy had health issues so Paul advised him to “No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments” (1 Timothy 5:23).

Nothing has changed since Paul’s day. Missionaries have to stand against false teachers and teaching. Many have health issues—yet persevere with courage.

Do you wonder, as I do, why all these troubles come to God’s honored servants? The answer has to be in the word “share” (ESV) or “endure” (NKJV). Suffering is the way our Lord Jesus accomplished the greatest good for the world. We worship a suffering Savior. We glory in the cross. His servants who faithfully proclaim the gospel while suffering follow in the footsteps of our Lord, while facing trials within and without.

I encourage you to check the RBN Net website page on missions and see all the RBN Net endorsed missionaries, national pastors, chaplains, and support missionaries. As I surveyed the names I know that there are at least a dozen facing trials of some sort. I encourage you to use the RBN Net Prayer Guide and pray for them. 🙏

— Gordon Taylor, RBN Net Support

CHURCH UPDATES

Rivertown Grace Fellowship,
Conway, SC

Kevin Lambert,
Victor Crawford, Kent Griggs, Elders

Greetings in the Name of our Lord to our sister churches. We always remember you in our prayers and thank you for lifting up Rivertown Grace Fellowship to our Great God.

Our God has blessed Rivertown in many ways. We introduced 2 new members on March 10, as the first new members since constituting. We are grateful Scott and Becky Peavy have entrusted their spiritual growth to RGF. We anticipate another family of 4 to join very soon. We have other families and individuals who continue to consistently attend.

God has also graciously allowed RGF to refurbish our worship area with new chairs and vinyl flooring replacing old pews and carpeting. This gives us more flexibility for fellowship space and conferences. The building we are renting has been a blessing both for space and finances.

Back in October we were blessed to have Pastor Robert Selph lead our first conference entitled “The Doctrines of Grace.” His focus was Unconditional Election. Those in attendance were edified and encouraged by his teaching. Bob and his wife, Cathi, were with us 3 days as he preached our Lord’s Day message.

There are several things that remain the focus of prayer. RGF is still praying for God to provide the means to bring in a financially supported teaching elder. Until then, the elders continue to share the preaching. Please pray with us for God’s guidance in this. RGF also is praying God will provide someone to play piano for our services. Our desire is to learn more of the great hymns of the faith.

Evangelism and outreach are on our hearts. Our desire is to see God work to bring revival to Conway/Aynor through the preaching of His Word. We are seeking God for direction on ways to reach our community for Christ.

Our God is gracious, and we are grateful. 🙏



CHURCH UPDATES

Cornerstone Bible Church,
Ridgecrest, CA

Lyn Whitcomb, Pastor

Cornerstone Bible Church is located in Ridgecrest, CA, a high desert community of about 30,000 people, located 150 miles north of Los Angeles along the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. The largest employer in the area is the Naval Air Warfare Center, China Lake, where a good number of our church members work. One of the challenges of living and ministering in Ridgecrest is its geographical isolation: it's about 1.5 hours from the nearest population center in the Lancaster-Palmdale area.

In May of this year, our church will be celebrating its 20th anniversary as a constituted church. The church was planted in 2003-2004 through the cooperative efforts of my home church, The Reformed Baptist Church of Riverside, CA; Free Grace Baptist Church of Lancaster, CA; Immanuel Baptist Church of Sacramento, CA; Grace Community Church of Minden, NV; and other participating churches. I have been the primary preaching pastor here since June, 2004. I served the first 11 years in Ridgecrest in the full-time ministry, but the last nine years I've worked full-time as an engineer at the China Lake Navy base to help the church be able to afford its own building. The Lord provided us with a wonderful facility in 2016 which the congregation has significantly improved and paid off earlier this year. Our Lord provides!

I'm thankful for my fellow elder, Kevin Gillette, and our four faithful deacons. We are prayerfully considering Paul Kuttig to be recognized as our third elder and asking the Lord for two additional deacons. Please also pray for me as I continue medical care for prostate cancer.

2022-2023 was a challenging time for us in that several key families joined the exodus of people leaving California. The Lord has demonstrated His faithfulness to us in bringing more people into our fellowship so that our membership and attendance are higher than ever! What a lesson for me that the Lord arranges the members in the body, just as He pleases!

We're looking forward to hosting a Creation Seminar during March 22-24 with Professor Andy McIntosh. We have had other encouraging outreach opportunities including the Desert Empire Fair in October and the Petroglyph Festival in November. Please pray for wisdom and perseverance to reach out to our community with the gospel and for conversions in our midst. Thank you for your prayers and your fellowship in the gospel! 🙏

CHURCH UPDATES

Jersey Reformed Baptist Church
Pataskala, OH

Paul Huston, Pastor

The Lord continues to be gracious to the saints of JRBC. It is to His glory that Christ is magnified through the use of those whose lives reside in Christ alone. During our weekly communion we are reminded that our new life, eternal life, and forgiveness of sins rests solely upon the sacrifice that Christ made on our behalf at calvary. To this end, Chaplin Seth Curtis expositis communion messages following the 1689 paragraphs on the Lord's Supper.

This last year has seen several small but significant changes and challenges that have worked to the good and the growth of our church. The changing of the previous name of our church, Faith Bible Church, to Jersey Reformed Baptist Church has been a positive step in identifying who we are both locally and on our website. We continue to work on having a clear, usable website because we have found, as many of those reading this also have probably found, that a significant amount of those who visit our church have read most of the website and either listened to or watched about 2 sermons.

Our Friday evening bible study continues to be a highlight of the week. Recently, we finished an 8-week study entitled "Gospel Components". This study identified the key components of the gospel from scripture. At the end of the study, all participants gave a gospel presentation based upon the gospel component theme. It was so encouraging to see and hear the gospel being spoken in clear, scripturally accurate sentences.

Recently, we have been sad to have a few of our number move away due to job changes or marriage. But the Lord has brought in others, some of whom face significant distance or other challenges but still come when they can.

Our prayer needs would include prayer for those who are faced with very difficult health and home situations. Even more please pray that our gospel witness would be faithful and a light of hope for those whom the Lord has chosen. May God Bless. 🙏

CHURCH UPDATES

Christ Bible Church,
Kingsport, TN

Damon Joseph, Pastor

Hello Brethren,
I bring you greetings from East Tennessee and particularly the brothers and sisters here at Christ Bible Church of Kingsport, TN.

We praise God for His gracious activity and patience with us over the past year. He continues to ceaselessly labor in immeasurable ways among our people on the individual, family, and congregational level. With that said, we need God's help in so many areas and humbly ask for prayer for our congregation in different respects.

Please pray for us as we present new By-Laws to our congregation this month. Please pray as we seek to raise up and present new Elders/Deacons after the current By-Law process is completed. Please pray for the leadership as we seek to organize the church in various ways to cultivate a healthy Body. Please pray as we continue to seek to cultivate more faithful worship, discipleship, and evangelism. Please pray as we seek to support more evangelistic and church-planting efforts throughout the nations. Please pray for us as we continue to seek a new long-term location to carry out God's will and plan for our church.

Again, God has been so gracious to us! We praise Him as He continues not only to merely sustain, but cause His people to abound! May He continue to receive the reward of HIs suffering here in East Tennessee and use Christ Bible Church as a means to accomplish this end to His glory! 🙏

*In Christ Alone,
Pastor Damon Joseph*

