

RBNet Monthly

A monthly publication of the Reformed Baptist Network
September/October 2023

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."

ANOTHER DIMENSION

An old TV commercial presents a bored office-worker tossing his pencil up into the air. It gets stuck in the ceiling tile. He stands on his desktop to retrieve the pencil and finds the ceiling tile can be pushed up. He pokes his head thru the ceiling hole to discover above him an unknown world—a crowd of people, a marching band, a circus, elephants, a raging river with whitewater rafting. He lets down the tile, and there's just office silence.

The commercial is make-believe. But the Bible occasionally pushes up tiles, exposing the existence of another dimension, an unseen world.

Daniel caught a peak of it, as while praying an angel appeared saying, "Don't be afraid, Daniel,.... I've come in response to your words. But the Prince of Persia was withstanding me for 21 days; then Michael (the archangel), one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia" (Daniel 10:12-13). What's this? A world of angels, hostile powers, teeming activity, but unseen by our eyes?

Elisha also caught a peak of it when surrounded by Aramaeans in the city of Dothan, and his young attendant was afraid. "He answered, 'Don't fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' Then Elisha prayed, 'O Lord, open his eyes that he may see.' And the Lord opened the servants eyes, and he saw the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (2 Kings 6:16-17).

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places" (Eph 6:12).

Let's not be naive. There's an unseen spiritual war going on over the destiny of our never-dying-souls. Like Daniel and Elisha, let's use the weapon of "all prayer" (Eph 6:12), to call on Him who is unseen that He might protect and save us from foes unseen. 🙏

— Mark Chanski, RBNet Coordinator

MISSION THOUGHTS

THE MAIN THING

What did Paul do when he entered a city? What did Peter do on the Day of Pentecost? What did Stephen do when arrested? What did Philip do when he went to a city in Samaria? What was Jesus always doing? You know the answer: teaching and preaching the Word of God!

Preaching is the main task of a missionary. I found this illustrated once again in an article in the August & September, 2023 *Banner of Truth* magazine written by

...it is therefore time for the church to shake off her drowsiness, increase her prayer and plead for weak preachers who want to see Christ's kingdom advanced.

Rebecca VanDoodewaard entitled, "Jim Elliot and the Struggle of Preaching". Do missionaries struggle in preaching? Yes. How did Elliot struggle? Understand that Jim Elliot was a very gifted communicator who because of his giftedness was in great demand as a preacher before he went to the mission field where he was martyred with four others. Although greatly used and greatly gifted as a preacher he struggled in preaching like many preachers do today.

At 24 years of age he wrote in his diary (5 December 1951), "Terribly depressed after preaching last night. Felt as though I had no liberty, no power . . . How sadly and how slowly I am learning that loud preaching and long preaching are no substitutes for inspired preaching. Oh, its awful! To see a room full of people, waiting to hear a word from the Lord and have no words . . ."

Elliot wrote this after two years of preaching with the blessing of multiple conversions. Yet, he faced real depression and discouragement. Every preacher/missionary knows why. It is because he sees a lost world, the greatness of God, and sometimes, sad to say, a church that lacks zeal and fervency in prayer.

Since the main thing is preaching, and since preachers are the target of attack by the evil one, and since sometimes churches are weak in prayer, it is therefore time for the church to shake off her drowsiness, increase her prayer and plead for weak preachers who want to see Christ's kingdom advanced. 🙏

— Gordon Taylor, RBNet Support

CHURCH UPDATES

Grace Church,
Lolo, MT

Tony Sutton, Pastor

Grace Church is a church plant that was launched in January 2019. We are located in Lolo Montana just south of Missoula in the Bitterroot Valley. We are in a small town of a few thousand, and people from throughout the Bitterroot Valley attend our church coming from as far as 45 minutes away. Since we constituted in 2019, God has blessed our congregation with slow incremental growth from seven original members to 30 members today. Each week we have approximately 55–70 people attending including children. We have 2 elders, Tony Sutton and Larry Springer, and 3 deacons. Indeed God has been good to us.

Montana has proved to be a difficult place for planting primarily because of financial needs for a building. We have had to bounce around from venue to venue, including meeting on Sunday nights only for over a year. We are currently meeting in a community center which allows us to meet for \$200 per year! This is God's great mercy. We have been saving towards facilities, but up to this point they are truly out of reach. Average rental space for us to meet is around \$3500, and there are few buildings we could buy, and nothing under 1.5 million. The community center also has its challenges, though it is a blessing. We meet from 9:00–10:30 and must set up the center for Bingo and be gone before 11:00. With this being said we would ask your prayers specifically in the area of facilities. Please pray the Lord would open up the door for us to have a facility full time and provide the ability to pay for it.

We are so thankful to be a part of this network and the kindness we have experienced from you all. We look forward to what the Lord will do in the coming days and years! 🙏

The vision of Reformed Baptist Network
is to glorify God through fellowship
and cooperation
in fulfilling the Great Commission
to the ends of the earth.

CHURCH UPDATES

Grace Family Baptist Church,
Houston, TX

Aaron Wright, Pastor

The Lord continues to bless Grace Family Baptist Church in Houston, Texas.

Currently, one elder is preaching through the book of Luke, and the other is finishing up the book of James. During Sunday school, we teach biblical theology except for the last Sunday of the month, when we teach a portion of the confession. We just finished up a large group study over the summer and walked through the new FaultLines curriculum from Voddie Baucham, and we will begin a study in the fall on evangelism in our men's and women's studies. We will also start small groups back up in September.

We were blessed to have six baptisms and 12 new members join the church in July. One of those baptized is the first child born into the church to be baptized within the church. We were planted in 2006. Praise God for His continued provision. Currently, we have three candidates that are going through the membership process.

We look forward to having our annual Semper Reformanda conference in the fall. Pascal Denault, Sam Renihan, and Jim Renihan be teaching the seventh chapter of the Confession.

Additionally, we are participating in street evangelism every third Friday. And recently, our children had a summer day camp and studied creation.

We are blessed with the opportunity to assist three churches in Costa Rica and one in Venezuela. We had the chance to visit the Costa Rican churches and participate in a conference last year, and we intend to visit again in February to support their evangelistic efforts. Reformed theology is currently growing within Costa Rica.

Pray for our mission endeavors in Latin America and also for our upcoming conference. We often have many who are new to reformed theology attending the conference. Additionally, pray for our evangelism inside and outside our church building, especially unconverted young people who hear the word each Lord's Day. Lastly, pray for the unity and sanctification of our church. 🙏

CHURCH UPDATES

Covenant Reformed Baptist Church,
Angier, NC

Doug Short, Pastor

Covenant Reformed Baptist Church is located in Angier, North Carolina a town about 45 minutes south of our state's capital city Raleigh. Angier itself has a population of about 6,500 people but it is one of a number of small towns that are being engulfed by the rapidly growing Raleigh suburbs. The area is surrounded by farms which employ migrant workers and, as a result, a little over 30% of Angier's population is Hispanic.

CRBC was formally known as Trinity Baptist Church. Trinity experienced a steep decline in membership in 2019 leaving only 9 adult members on the rolls by March of 2020. In the fall of 2020 new elders were installed and, desiring a new start, the church changed its name to CRBC. 2021, then, began a season of growth that has continued to this day. We are now averaging between 120 and 130 on Sunday mornings and will soon be celebrating our 10th baptism as CRBC.

Prayer Requests:

Spanish Language. During our services, we offer Spanish translation and we have a number of Hispanics (some who speak no English) as members. While we also offer Spanish language Sunday School and small group meetings, we have come to realize that we will not reach the broader Spanish-speaking population unless we offer a full Spanish-language service. We are praying for wisdom regarding this as we do not want to create two churches but to retain one unified body even while offering differing language options.

Officers. We are in the process of examining a third elder and we are in need of deacons as we have recently lost two leaving us with only one. Please pray for our discernment and for the Lord to raise up men of godly character to fill these roles.

Missions. We pursued membership with RBNet in part because we have a heart for missions and we are looking for opportunities for our families to get personally involved in doing kingdom work. 🙏

CHURCH UPDATES

Harvest Reformed Baptist Church,
Halsey, OR

Jeff Black, Pastor

Greetings from Harvest Reformed Baptist Church in Halsey, OR. We are truly thankful to be a part of a vibrant network of like-minded brethren who share in the glorious proclamation of our Lord's mercy and grace in Christ Jesus!

Over the years, we've experienced the ups-and-downs of rural ministry in a town of roughly 250 families—many of them grass seed farmers or paper mill workers. Our church dwells in the midst of two Mennonite churches, one Methodist church, and one Assemblies of God church. We're the only church in a 20-mile radius that preaches the gospel of God's grace alone in salvation. All others preach a works-based salvation in an area well-known for its history of "rugged individualism."

Over the past five years, we've fluctuated in attendance between 12–25 folk on a regular basis. In Sunday School, we're going through Spurgeon's Catechism. In morning worship, we're in the Gospel of John—working through our Lord's last discourse to His disciples before His arrest in the garden. After fellowship meal, we conclude our day with an early afternoon Bible study. The past several Sundays, we've been watching the CBTS 2023 Conference on "How Then Should We Worship?"

A few months ago, we went through a name change to break free from the stigma of Grace Bible Community Church (known in town for its various heartaches and splits over 30 years). We're treating this as a "new" planting of the Lord and looking for ways to reach out to the community with the gospel of grace and light. Pray with us that we might continue to experience growth: in grace and unity in the body, and in our outreach efforts to the surrounding region. Soli Deo gloria!

We look forward to sweet fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ at the upcoming GA. Thank you so much for all your prayers! 🙏