



Spring 2017



General Assembly photos provided by Robin Eckhardt

Delegates at the 2017 ARBCA General Assembly gather at Epworth By the Sea conference center for the traditional group photo.

Delegates vote to proceed with seminary effort

By Steve Marquedant

The 2017 General Assembly, held April 25-27 at St. Simon's Island on the south Georgia coast, marked the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America.

The Association has grown numerically over the past 20 years, but more importantly, ARBCA churches have grown to hold a better theological and practical understanding of the implications of being Confessional.

Our association holds a full-subscription position to the 1689 LBCF and has since its beginning.

ARBCA was started with four main

points of emphasis: 1. Foreign Missions 2. Church Planting 3. Ministerial Education 4. Publications.

History was made at that very first General Assembly as the messengers voted to start a training institute, known as IRBS, which would work in cooperation with Westminster Seminary California to train men for the gospel ministry. IRBS started the very next year on the Escondido campus.

History was made once again at this G.A. as the messengers voted by a margin of 64-4 to approve IRBS to begin operations as a full stand-alone Reformed Baptist seminary as soon as the fall of 2018.

The initial location will be in the facilities of Heritage Baptist Church of Mansfield, Texas. This is a very bold enterprise for a small association, but so was the original vote for IRBS in 1997.

We have seen how the Lord has blessed IRBS by training a new generation of ministers, many of whom currently serve in our churches. It is our prayer the new fully Confessional seminary will do even more to advance the cause of Reformed Baptists in the USA and around the world.

The theme of the G.A. was "The Work of Christ in His Resurrection, Ascension

See **G.A.**, page 12

Inside: Commentary:
'Still Not Dead'. PAGE 3

Walking where others have gone.
PAGE 4

Church planting reports.
PAGES 12-15

ARBCA Update

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ASSOCIATION OF REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA

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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Pastor Earl Blackburn, Chairman

Pastor Jeff Massey, Vice Chairman

Pastor Jason Walter, Secretary

Pastor Rob Cosby, Treasurer

ARBCA Coordinator: Steve Martin

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Berean Baptist Church, Powder Springs, GA

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Cornerstone Fellowship, Newburgh, IN

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Grace Reformed Baptist Church, Brunswick, ME

Heritage Baptist Church, Worcester, MA

Heritage Baptist Church, Mansfield, TX

Heritage Baptist Church, Shreveport, LA

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Hope Reformed Baptist Church, Tinley Park, IL

Mariposa Reformed Baptist Church, Mariposa, CA

Port Cities Reformed Baptist Church, Lewiston, ID

Providence Baptist Church, Ball, LA

Providence Reformed Baptist Church, Remlap, AL

Providence Baptist Church, Walkersville, MD

Providence R.B.C., University Place, WA

Redeemer Baptist Church, Macon, GA

Redeemer Ref. Bapt. Church, San Bernardino, CA

Redeeming Grace Baptist Church, Hudgins, VA

Reformed Baptist Church of Kansas City, KS

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Santa Teresa Baptist Church, Santa Teresa, NM

Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Ontario, CA

Sycamore Baptist Church, East Moline, IL

Trinity Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, LA

Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, Jackson, GA

Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, La Mirada, CA

Trinity Reformed Baptist Church, Kirkland, WA

Tucson Reformed Baptist Church, Tucson, AZ

Waco Family Baptist Church, Waco, TX

West Suffolk Baptist Church, Suffolk, VA

Commentary: 'Still Not Dead' – Carey's deathless sermon

By Jerry Slate

At 10 a.m. on Wednesday morning, May 30, 1792, the 30-year-old bi-vocational pastor of the Harvey Lane Baptist Church in Leicester, England, stood before a company of his peers and began to preach. Messengers from the 24 member churches of the Northamptonshire Baptist Association had assembled in the Friars Lane Chapel in Nottingham for three days of fellowship and to transact associational business.

The pastor's text was Isaiah 54:2-3, which says:

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." (KJV)

As the young man began to expound the passage he exhorted his fellow pastors to broaden their vision; to not be content with reaching Great Britain for Christ, but to set their gaze upon the entire world! The minister's name was William Carey and the message he proclaimed has become known as "the deathless sermon," for no one who heard him preach that day would ever forget it. Carey's friend, John Ryland, Jr., would later say:

"It was as if the sluices of his soul were thrown fully open and the flood that had been accumulating for years rushed forth in full volume and irresistible power...If all the people had lifted up their voices and wept...I should not have wondered at the effect, it would have only seemed proportionate to the cause; so clearly did he prove the criminality of our [apathy] in the cause of God."

And over a year after hearing the sermon Andrew Fuller wrote to a friend, "I feel the use of his sermon to this day. Let us pray much, hope much, expect much, labor much; an eternal weight of glory awaits us!"

On the day after Carey preached, the Association held a business meeting, but it appeared as if nothing tangible was going to be done in response to Carey's challenge from the day before. Carey seized Andrew Fuller by the arm and cried out in great distress, "Is there nothing again going to be done, sir?" In response the messengers, perhaps awkwardly, passed a resolution:

"Resolved, that a plan be prepared against the next ministers' meeting at Kettering, for forming a Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the Heathens."

The men completed their business, the final benediction was given, and everyone went home.

If you and I had been present at these meetings, we might have concluded that nothing would come of this resolution.

Certainly, Carey's zeal for world missions was commendable. But most of these men were relatively unknown pastors of churches located in rural areas that most people would have never heard of. Their congregations consisted of many impoverished and illiterate people. How could such obscure men, with such limited resources, ever hope to engage in such a major undertaking?

Yet the men pressed on in faith, and the following October The Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the

Heathen was formed, and in January of 1794 the Society appointed their first two missionaries: John Thomas, and the preacher of the deathless sermon, William Carey. The rest, as they say, is history.

But what encouraged Carey and his friends, limited as they were, to pursue such a lofty goal? The answer lies in Carey's message preached on that May morning; for while no written version of that sermon has survived, two key phrases of application have: "Expect great things. Attempt great things," and history has supplied the implicit words "from God" and "for God."

This May marks 225 years since Carey preached that anointed sermon, and though the full contents of his message have been lost to history, it has not lost none of its power; it still reverberates down through the centuries.

I was struck by the fact that Carey's deathless sermon was mentioned twice at this year's General Assembly: when Dr. Jim Renihan stood on Tuesday afternoon, April 25, to introduce the IRBS stand-alone seminary project, he began his remarks by referencing the deathless sermon and quoting its famous motto "Expect great things. Attempt great things." And when Pastor Earl Blackburn closed out the GA on Thursday evening, April 27, he again mentioned Carey and gave the final benediction from Isaiah 54:2-3, the very text Carey preached from.

My dear brothers, most of us pastor small, seemingly inconsequential churches.

We are part of a relatively small association of churches. Our resources and manpower are limited, we are a tiny minority swimming upstream against the mighty torrents of compromise, lawlessness, and apostasy that characterize so much of modern American evangelicalism. Our circumstances make the temptation to grow weary in well doing all too real. How can such weak, small, insignificant people be used of God to see His kingdom advance upon the earth in our own generation?

Well, the answer should be all too obvious. We are indeed small, but we serve a very big God. And it is not just that He is "bigger" than us in proportion to how much bigger we are than the ants. No, the space between the creature and the Creator is infinite, it is limitless. Our Triune God is all powerful and absolutely sovereign, and therefore He is in no way limited by our smallness, our lack of resources cannot hinder Him from fulfilling His purposes.

And bless the Lord that His work among the nations is not confined to our meager prayer lives, for none of us even know how to pray as we ought (Rom. 8:26). Indeed, He "...is able to do exceedingly abundantly all that we ask or think!" (Eph. 3:20).

In recent years, we have endured several painful controversies that have fractured us and made us even smaller as an association. But wouldn't it be just like God to use such small, insignificant people to bring great glory to Himself?

It was once so in Gideon's day. Gideon had amassed a large number of troops to deliver Israel from the Midianites. But he received a divine directive: "The people who are with you are too

See **Commentary**, page 18

IRBS: Address to General Assembly, April 25, 2017

By Dr. Jim Renihan

In 1979, Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia observed its 50th anniversary.

In anticipation of this event, as a special commemorative project, the seminary trustees and administration sought to plant a new reformed seminary on the West Coast of the USA.

Initial plans and efforts were difficult, and the project was delayed. Four sites were identified, reduced to two, and finally north San Diego county was chosen. Two men, Robert Strimple and Robert den Dulk, were sent from Philadelphia to prepare. They began fund-raising, recruiting students, identifying faculty, building a library and all the other tasks associated with starting from scratch.

They leased commercial property in San Marcos, and classes began there in the Fall Semester of 1980.

The task was difficult. The new school had no fame or reputation, and the two Bobs (as they were called) feared that they would be overshadowed by the renown of the mother school back east, since that's where the eminent professors had been. In "Westminster Seminary California: A New Old School" (published for WSC's 30th anniversary), we read "Westminster California started with ... reasonably well known and proven professors ... yet none of them were a match for the reputation of a Murray, Van Til or E.J. Young.... Philadelphia was the place where [they] had taught ... California could not make such claims. The new faculty would need to carve out its own identity." (p. 60).

When classes began, the model followed was simple. Three full-time faculty, Dr. Strimple, Allen Mahwinney and John Frame, took up residence, supported by several part-time professors (most of whom lacked doctoral degrees). These offered the first year curriculum. In the second year they were joined by Robert Godfrey, and the full time faculty grew as the years passed and stability was achieved.

Looking back on that beginning, Dr. Strimple says that he was "naïve" (43) about many things, but he was also "confident in the Lord."



Jim Renihan, center, signs the IRBS Seminary Project Charter as ARBCA Administrative Council Chair Earl Blackburn, left, watches.

"I believed that God had called us to this and He would provide." (43) Dr. Strimple was correct. The first graduating class had one student, the second had seven and the third had 22 graduates. The 2016 graduating class was the 35th, and the total number of graduates in those 35 years has been 1,100! From very humble beginnings much good has been accomplished.

Why do I begin with this story? For two primary reasons.

First, we are following the WSC model very closely. Their method of beginning is largely the same as ours — the difference being that we have the benefit of advice and counsel from those who have gone before us, and they have helped us to identify some of the potential difficulties ahead. We hope to hire two administrators around July 1 of this year, and they will begin the preparation work so that we can commence holding classes in the fall (or perhaps summer Greek) of 2018.

We will identify core faculty members, and along with qualified part-time professors, begin to offer the first year of a MDiv program. For the next two years we will

add classes, with the goal to have the first graduating class in May 2021.

The second reason for this story is to present you with a real-world portrait of the possibilities before us. I began my seminary studies in 1980, the same year that WSC began. I could have been a student in that opening class.

But in the intervening years, WSC has sent out 1,100 graduates to serve in churches. What would our cause look like if in 35 years we sent out 1,100 graduates?

That's not an optimistic number. It's a real-life number.

There is no padding or exaggeration in it. It has happened in my lifetime. And there is every reason to believe that it can happen for us. Many of us will not be around to see that total, but that doesn't matter.

The important thing is that it is realistic and attainable, with the blessing of God. The growth of the OPC has been due in many cases to the influence of the two Westminster Seminaries; the growth of our Association

See **IRBS**, page 18

RBMS missions around the world



“But the Word of God is not chained.” (2 Tim 2:9). We bow down before our God as we are witnessing His powerful Word doing His powerful work.

This is still our testimony as we are in the second year of our church plant in Montreal (Église réformée baptiste de la Trinité).

We are first of all encouraged by our weekly attendance that averages 35 peoples every Sunday morning. Among these, we have five young people who started to attend three months ago and who are giving us much joy as we see their love for the Word and their desire to live for our Lord. One of them shows a great interest in theology and his leadership qualities obvious; I would not be surprised to see him contemplating the pastoral ministry.

There is also a lady, converted a few months ago and who has asked for baptism.

We still have a meal altogether the first Sunday of every month, followed by our survey of church history. This is very well-attended. Everybody stays for it. Every other Tuesday, one of our men is having a prayer meeting at his home. It is a time of prayer and they also meditate on the Psalms.

On March 24, our women held their first ladies' meeting, coordinated by two of them. They are planning to hold the meeting every month. I also began to teach the Heidelberg Catechism every other Saturday, especially for the benefit of our newcomers.

It serves as an introduction to our faith and the Heidelberg Catechism is a good way to have discussions. A couple had been invited to our last lesson and they are continuing to attend the church. I ask your prayers for them.

The big event remains the coming of Guillaume Bourin. We came in touch with Guillaume through Pastor Pascal Denault, as they collaborate on blogs. Guillaume came at Christmas time and we had him preach in our church.

He has spent some time at Heritage Reformed Baptist Church in Mansfield,

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Texas, during his studies at Southwestern Baptist Seminary and Pastor Larry Vincent thinks highly of him. We made a proposal to Guillaume to come for a four-month internship, from mid-June to mid-October. At the end, we will make a decision together concerning the possibility of him staying as the pastor of our church plant in Montreal. Your prayers would be appreciated.

Our Montreal church plant is gathering in Centre St-Pierre. We greatly enjoy this gathering place; not only is it well-located, but our room is clean, full of light and we have all the services we can need, such as equipment for Powerpoint, screen, tables, etc.

We have renewed our lease for another year, as there are many rooms in the building, which gives us room to grow.

After a season of peace and growth, our church in Quebec City has passed through difficult time as one family moved away and another left to join another church. We also, sadly, had to put a man under discipline for immorality. It has been a shock for the assembly, as this man had a good testimony.

We also have another man who resigned as we were counseling him on his bad and negative attitude. We were even on the verge of considering disciplining him as well.

Despite these sad situations, we have a lot to rejoice about. We hired Max, a young man, father of four children (his wife is expecting their fifth) to help out in our church. He will be like an intern and will assist the elders in their task.

We also ask your prayer for Mario and Ginette, who will move from Rivière-du-loup at the end of June because they want to join our church in Quebec City. We ask your prayer as we are looking for a job for him.

Our radio station is still running and we keep adding new teaching programs as we find people to do them. At the moment, I am preparing a new series for my morning program on the book of Daniel. I have received a very positive response to my series on Genesis.

Our CERB (Centre d'études réformées baptistes) is still in operation and last fall, thanks to the good work of Pastor Pascal Denault, we had the joy and the privilege to have Dr. James Dolezal come to teach a course on theology proper.

We are still collaborating with Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary for our distant education. At this moment at least two of our people take courses there and three more are planning to do the same.

One the major changes that took place this year in our association had been Pastor Marcel Longchamps moving. He had been ministering in Rouyn-Noranda for the last five years but in the fall he moved to take the pastoral responsibility of Église réformée baptiste de Nantes, formerly Église Éveil à la grâce de Lac Mégantic. It means that Pastor Jean Lépine is back in the field, all by himself, in Rouyn-Noranda.

May our God keep us faithful in His service as we strive to spread the good news of His kingdom in this most secular province of Quebec!



RBMS missions around the world

As I write this update, the family and I are finishing up our last few months in Las Vegas and preparing for our summer move.

Earlier this spring, we received notification that we will be moving to Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., in mid-June. The move will bring with it not only new and greener scenery, but new opportunities for leadership and ministry.

In our new assignment, I will be moving into the position of Deputy Wing Chaplain, and given responsibility over the Protestant ministry on base as well as supervisory responsibility over at least two other chaplains.

We are thankful to the Lord for counting us worthy to continue in ministry, and prayerfully looking forward to this next chapter. While our current assignment is coming to a close, the work of the ministry here continues. The new year as brought with it a seeming increase in pastoral counseling, especially marriage and family counseling.

I have been working with several couples through very difficult situations and am thankful that thus far all of them have committed to the hard work of reconciliation and recovery. Too often couples choose divorce over reconciliation, and I have been encouraged to see more people coming forward wanting to counseling, advice, and reconciliation.

I have seen several couples begin to attend church together for the first time in their marriages. Several husbands have sought out counsel and advice to be better husbands, fathers and leaders in their homes. Likewise, several wives, following Peter's teaching in 1 Peter 3:1 have led their husbands to the Lord.

In addition to marriage and family counseling, this past year I have been focusing on mentoring and discipline with several men.

One of my Lt. Colonel commanders approached me and asked to be mentored several months back. He was appointed as an elder at his local church and is also

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attending Phoenix Seminary on-line. His ministry in the church and his theological studies have given opportunity for many fruitful discussions, and it is a blessing to watch as the Lord uses this dear brother in Christ for the expansion of His kingdom.

I am also working with another man who is attending an SBC seminary and interning at the local church my family and I attend. Over the next few months he and I will be focusing on preaching and systematic theology as we meet weekly.

Finally, I have been leading a men's study through Wayne Grudem's "Bible Doctrine." That group is made up of government contractors, civilians, and Active Duty.

The Lord has used these discipleship and mentoring opportunities to remained me of Paul's exhortation to Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:2: "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

One of the ways our Lord has invited us to join him in building his kingdom is through discipline, training, and raising up Christian leaders, who themselves will teach others. My Lt. Colonel friend, in addition to working with me, hosts a Bible study in his home, a men's breakfast once a month, and is actively disciplining another one of our officers. What an encouragement to see 2 Tim. 2:2 in action!

Over the past year I was able to, with the help of a volunteer, run two financial stewardship classes using the Financial

Peace University Curriculum. The focus of the courses was to enable airmen and their families to be better stewards of the financial resources the Lord entrusts to us.

Like much of American society, debt is a major factor for many military members. In fact, two things you are guaranteed to find outside every Air Force base are car lots and pay-day loans.

The convenience of these often leads to our airmen getting themselves into bad financial situations and accumulating large amounts of consumer debt.

To the praise of God's grace, we were able to use the FPU curriculum to see an average debt reduction of 25 percent per student over just 12 weeks. Several were able to get out of debt completely, and two students now want to teach financial stewardship in future classes.

In addition to the financial aspect, the classes allowed me to build several relationships that the Lord has used to bolster people's faith. Several started attending church, sought counseling for parenting and marriage situations, and mended broken relationships in their extended families.

An important lesson the Lord reminded me of in this is that, in ministry, we can use tools like financial peace, marriage classes, and the like to reach a demographic who might not normally come to church or chapel. Said simply, we can use "good advice" classes as avenues to sharing the Good News. Along those lines, over the past several months I have used an impromptu coffee

See Stoleys, page 7

RBMS missions around the world



March 28-31 was the seventh annual Reformed Convention, held this year in Bogotá, and sponsored by the Latin America Reformed Seminary of Medellín in close relation to the Iglesia Bautista La Gracia of the same city.

We received edifying and encouraging preaching by men such as Sugel Michelén of the Dominican Republic, Sam Waldron and Joel Beeke. The convention was formatted especially in remembrance of and gratitude for the Reformation 500 years ago. We heard reports of impressive growth of the Reformed faith not only in Colombia but also in Venezuela, Bolivia, and other countries. We were also reminded of the need to consolidate and increase this progress by constant and Spirit-filled efforts to preach the whole counsel of God and to walk in gratitude, obedience, and unity.

Other efforts in Bogotá and other cities continue to train pastors and to build the church. Since November the church in La Alborada in Bogotá is without a pastor. This has spurred us to more diligence in seeking to encourage the men of the congregation to prepare themselves in every way for the ministry of the Word. Our prayer is that from the congregation itself God would call some to the pastorate.

Meanwhile, pastors from other churches in the city as well as the deacons and others of the church are doing the preaching and teaching. Especially Marco Antonio Orjuela, pastor of the San José de Bavaria church in Bogotá, is providing pastoral counsel and support. We thank God for the gifts He has already given us!

Both the online radio station (www.radiogracyayamor.com) and our web page (www.iglesiacristianagracyayamor.org), administered by one of our deacons, Danilo Rairón, are useful instruments for getting out the good news of the Gospel.

The Christian school continues its important labors. Enrollment (230) is down some this year, requiring adjustments financially. Helberth Conde, our chaplain, who is also pastor of a Reformed Baptist

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church, works with our director Gustavo Hernández in every area of Christian education.

In the state (department) of Santander, north of Bogotá, pastors Agustín Ballesteros, Roberto Rodríguez, and Alirio Sierra, watch over the churches (still small and in some respects struggling) in Curití, in San Gil, and in Bucaramanga (two church plants), the capital city of 1,200,000 population.

I quote from our first-quarter report on the political situation in Colombia:

“The peace talks between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) are now history. An agreement was signed in December, and the process of implementation of the agreement has now begun. The agreement has become part of the Colombian constitution.

“Amnesty is being granted to practically all of the some 7000 guerrilla combatants, and crimes against humanity committed by some of these seemingly will be cared for with symbolic punishment. The philosophy

and goals of the agreement are decidedly leftist socially, politically and economically. But peace is not yet complete. There are two more guerrilla groups that continue operations, and there are a number of organized criminal bands that defy attempts to suppress them.

“What is our response? It is the same as has been our responsibility until now. We must confess that until now we have not done all the Lord has required of us, and now we must assume our duty and privilege with greater energy and faithfulness than ever. That means preaching the Gospel, praying, and presenting the fruit of the Gospel both individually and corporately, declaring all the counsel of God concerning all things related to life and godliness, that is, to everything. We’re not saying anything new; we’re simply reminding ourselves as to why we’re here, and why the Lord has shown us mercy.”

Thank you for your continued prayers and for your constant efforts to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Stoleys

From page 6

bar as a means to meet and reach out to new folks. One of my squadrons regularly does very late night missions. At the request of their director of operations, a brother in the Lord, I have been joining them for their permission briefs, usually between 2030 and 0000 at night, to make hand-crafted

coffee.

By doing this, I have established several new relationships with folks I would not otherwise interact with. As they squadron members become comfortable with me, a few have come to be for individual counseling, prayer, and advice. In late March I was able to reconnect with several families we knew and served with at our previous assignment at Edwards AFB

See **Stoleys**, page 8



RBMS missions around the world

As we look back over the past year we give thanks to the Lord for the evidence of his blessing upon us. While it has not been without its pastoral challenges, it has largely been a year marked by peace and harmony among a congregation that has remained numerically stable.

Our congregation has a large proportion of children and we have been encouraged by evidence of the Spirit's stirring in the hearts of some of them; a couple have been asking serious questions about the way of salvation, and others have been giving serious thought to the subject of baptism. We would be grateful for your prayers for the children.

Our regular ministry continues a weekly cycle of Sunday and midweek meetings, and a monthly service in a home for the elderly. In the coming weeks we anticipate that there will be an additional bi-monthly meeting in a nursing home that specializes in the care of people with dementia. Please pray for Dafydd and co-Elder Ian Fuller as they lead the church through these blessed routines.

Our wider ministry includes the provision of weekly sermons for a local Christian radio station and Dafydd's participation on its board of trustees, involvement in the organization of an annual Youth Camp for the Fellowship of Reformed Baptist Churches in New Zealand (usually held in April), hosting

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an annual School of Theology in July (Dr. Fred Malone will be teaching this year on the Pastoral Ministry, DV) and Dafydd's share of teaching at an annual Theological Studies Camp in Pune, India (usually each May, but this year it will be running at the same time as the ARBCA GA).

Please pray for the Lord's continued provision for and blessing upon these opportunities to serve the wider church.

Our greatest struggle is reaching out into the community with the gospel. Some of our members are particularly active in personal evangelism, and as a church we try to take advantage of the opportunities afforded during the Christmas and Easter seasons in particular. However, over the years we have made many different attempts to reach out to the 'unchurched' with the gospel and have repeatedly found our efforts falling on deaf ears and disinterested hearts. Please pray with us for wisdom, courage and perseverance in this

vital endeavor.

We have been encouraged of late by the presence of a number of young people (aged in their late teens and 20s) who have begun attending our evening service: most attend other churches in the morning, but for various reasons have found their way to us in the evening and seem to value the faithfulness of the preaching and the warmth of the fellowship.

Please pray that we will continue to be a blessing and encouragement to them in their growth in knowledge and faith.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers, and for the cards, gifts and notes of encouragement that our family have received from time to time. We are deeply grateful to Christ Reformed Baptist Church in Vista and the churches of ARBCA who have supported us through another year, and we pray that the Lord will reward you richly in every needful way as you have been such a great blessing to us.

Stoleys

From page 7

in California.

While at Edwards we befriended one of my commanders, his wife, their parents who lived with them, and their (now) 11 children.

The Colonel and his wife were key volunteers in the chapel community, working weekly in our junior and senior high ministry, hosting a small group in their

home, and leading several outreach efforts.

Just a couple weeks ago the Lord permitted in his sovereignty for Auline, the Colonel's wife, to fall ill. Just a few short days after becoming ill, our Lord called Auline home. Having a strong faith and trust in Jesus Christ, as Auline was dying, she still encouraged others, ministered to them, and asked them to gather around her in prayer and praise, specifically asking them to sing her favorite hymns and choruses.

It was at Auline's funeral, which was

held at an afternoon Lord's Day service, that we reconnected with our Edwards friends. What struck me at her funeral was watching Mike, her husband, not only boldly sharing the hope of Christ, but singing "It Is Well With My Soul" mere days after losing Auline.

What a powerful reminder of the hope and peace given to us by the Lord even in the midst of sorrow and tragedy. Auline will be missed, but Mike is confident that

See **Stoleys**, page 9

RBMS missions around the world



Greetings from Perth, Australia!

We continue to thank the Lord for his faithfulness and kindness towards our family and our congregation. It has been almost one year since we arrived in Perth and although we've been very busy the Lord has sustained our strength.

It is a real blessing to be able to see Christ build his church through weak and sinful individuals, so as to receive all the glory. More and more we are finding in him and in his promises everything needful for life and godliness.

Our congregation continues to hold steady, with about 45-55 people in attendance on a Lord's Day morning for worship and our study of the confession. In the afternoon service we average 35-40 people. Although we see visitors almost every Sunday we have not had any new families commit to coming on a regular basis.

However, those who have committed to coming continue to show growth and an appreciation for God's word. We trust that in time the Lord will add the lost to our number. Christ's Sermon on the Mount forms the basis of our morning sermon series while in the afternoon we have been slowly moving through Paul's letter to the Colossians.

One new blessing with regard to our schedule on the Lord's Day is the addition of 30 minutes to our hall rental time. The woman who rented after us and played "heavenly music" for others to stretch and meditate to has packed up and left. So, now we are able to push back our service time a bit to better accommodate the setup time needed for our worship.

Also, we'll be able to consistently have the full time needed for our study through the confession since part of that time gets sacrificed if the preacher goes too long in the morning service.

Pastor Andrew Harrison, who ministers at Southern Districts Reformed Baptist Church in Sydney, visited us in April.

On June 24 we are planning to hold

The Beardmores

<abbeardy@yahoo.com>

Allen, Katie, Ethan, Abigail, Logan, Thomas

185 Bagot Road

Subiaco, WA 6008

AUSTRALIA



our second day of fasting and prayer. We hope to make this practice a regular staple of congregational life since the work that needs done in our city is far greater than our ability to accomplish the task.

Our times of prayer on Wednesday nights have been well attended and blessed by God. This week we'll finish Martyn Lloyd-Jones' book on "Spiritual Depression." As the weeks have gone by, our discussions of Christian experience have gotten better and better.

By the time you read this, we plan to be reading through Walt Chantry's book "David Man of Prayer Man of War." This will allow us to continue discussing experiential Christianity while at the same time slowly becoming more familiar with a large section of the Old Testament.

Please remember our congregation in prayer. We have two women who will shortly be giving birth and we are thankful the Lord has blessed them in this way. Some of our men continue to be without work and the economy remains sluggish. Many of our young people have not yet professed faith in Christ and we would love to see the Lord save them.

Our family has been doing well, but homeschooling and constant ministry pressures required us to take a short break.

Thank you for your continued support in prayer and in finance. We are in great need of spiritual strength to continue battling "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual

forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Our great hope is Christ and his promise that his sheep will hear his voice. It is a privilege to have been sent out to plant a church in Perth. We seek "to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ."

Stoleys

From page 8

the Lord will use this for his glory, and is specifically praying for the salvation of Auline's brother and niece, both of whom lived with Mike and Auline.

Again, as we close out our four-year assignment in Las Vegas, we are reminded that there is much work to be done. I hope to finish well here, to hand off the work here to the chaplain coming in behind me, a conservative Baptist chaplain and brother in the Lord, and to prayerfully await what the Lord has for us in our next assignment.

Personally, I am looking forward to more preaching and teaching, Lord willing, and rejoining an on-base community as we expect to move into base housing.

As always, the prayers and support of our ARBCA family mean so much to Janet and me. Thank you for joining us in this ministry, thank you for the many kind letters and card, and thank you for your prayers.



RBMS missions around the world

Last year I had the opportunity to attend the General Assembly in Rockford, Ill. Just two weeks back from a deployment in Afghanistan, I drove from Florida to Illinois and back, providing a wonderful opportunity to spend time each way with my grandfather, Army Armstrong.

A World War II veteran, my hero and father figure, he died less than a month later. I drove back up to Illinois with Sharon, and conducted the memorial service.

There's no telling how many funerals and memorial services I've conducted over the past couple of decades, but this was the most difficult by far. Not a week has passed this last year without tears, yet it is not the expression of a sorrow that lacks hope (1 Thess. 4:13).

A little over a year ago I arrived in Afghanistan. It was the week after Thanksgiving, which meant missing a wedding anniversary, Christmas, the New Year, Sharon's birthday, and valuable time with my growing sons.

I told the family on several occasions, "Well, at least we'll be together this time next year." Instead, I found myself alone in Turkey, the week after Thanksgiving, which so far has meant missing a wedding anniversary, Christmas, the New Year, Sharon's birthday, and valuable time with my growing sons.

While we'll be able to spend a few weeks together this summer, this has been a bitter providence. Nonetheless, the Lord is teaching me again about the vastness of His wisdom and the wideness of His mercy in every instance of His providence, regardless of how pleasant or bitter it seems at the time.

He is also teaching me that He is the true Rock of our family, causing me to let go of things to which I didn't realize I was grasping so tightly.

In God's kind providence, the elders and members of Grace Covenant Church of Gilbert, Ariz. have granted membership so that I may continue to serve as a military chaplain under the auspices of ARBCA. I

From an RBMS Chaplain

Due to the circumstances under which this brother is serving, he has requested that we not specify who he or his family members are at this time in this medium.

appreciate their willingness to let me join their ranks, as well as the tremendous support they have provided to my family and me.

The gratitude our family feels for this care, especially during this extended period of separation, is deep. Initially I was displeased to learn of a year-long remote assignment, especially to a location which was on the very bottom of my "wish list."

Nonetheless, by God's sanctifying grace, I am seeing reasons for the Lord ordaining this assignment. The parish here is small, and biblical knowledge is generally constrained.

Though there are only about 30 attendees, beliefs range from Charismatic doctrine to Reformed theology, and from Inclusivism to the necessity of confessing Christ Jesus for salvation.

Attendees at Bible study and worship include a dear Roman Catholic lady and a precious Muslim gentleman, both who have expressed a strong desire to know more about the teachings of Holy Scripture. Several of those who attend regularly have spoken about the growth they are experiencing as a result of the faithful proclamation of God's Word, grateful that it is Christ-centered and not merely pabulum.

It seems that God has planted this chaplain in the middle of this parish for His glory, and that causes me to rejoice. Thank you for your prayers on behalf of these individuals and for this parish. This year I will meet the promotion board for major.

The Lord has been kind in granting strategic assignments and godly supervisors, and solid records which will be presented to the board. Promotion, and thereby continued

military service and ministry, rests ultimately with divine providence.

I have confidence that God has called me to this service, and that He will continue to pave the way for it. Further, with recent assignments related to the previous unit, I see His kindness in calling me away from Florida and bringing me to Turkey.

Had I stayed, as was planned previously by leadership, it is likely that great difficulty would have attended the way and proven detrimental on personal and professional levels.

Ah, the wisdom of God displayed even when we chafe, initially, at His providence. I rejoice in His kindness, His goodness, His wisdom, and His daily work in our lives. The Lord's kind providence has also been displayed in placing a colleague in this region that was also a co-laborer at Ft. Hood.

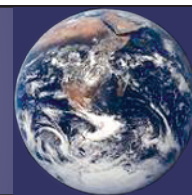
Our education and experience will be combined this summer as we travel throughout the country and minister to military members in a way that, Lord willing, will be used to strengthen faith and families. The tour will last nearly a month.

When that tour is complete, I will be responsible preparing the chaplain ministry in Ankara for transition. Not only that, but I will know by that point what the next stop is for our family, and shortly thereafter whether or not selection to the rank of major has been given.

Personally, I'm hoping to be assigned to Luke AFB in the Phoenix area. We'll see, though, what the Lord has in mind. Another matter for rejoicing for my wife and me is God's work in the lives of our children.

See Chaplain, page 11

RBMS missions around the world



We trust that this report finds us all encouraged and challenged as we look back over what the Lord has been doing over the past year. No matter what our church state may be we have much to give praise to God for, as well as much to continue to pray about.

Here in Clonmel, we have been very exercise in trying to procure a permanent home for the church... Two years ago we were very excited about the prospect of buying a site and anticipating the building of our own place where the church could meet and work together. We had the architect's plans and all seem to be ready to go.

Well, that is not how it turned out. The owner of the site, having agreed a price for the land after we had got planning permission, added an extra cost out of the blue. This was not what had been agreed and as elders we did not have the confidence that more such conversations would not be taking place further down the road with the owner - so, regretfully we withdrew our offer.

As you can imagine, this was hugely disappointing. We had invested much time, money and prayer. We teach that God is sovereign, so we hold to it. We have since seen a number of other of buildings but nothing that ticks all the boxes.

The Brennans

<matthewmbrennan@eircom.net>

Matthew, Barbara, Simon and Timothy
Ballingarrane North
Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

IRELAND



Apart from that big disappointment, the work of the Gospel has continued to be encouraging. The radio ministry, youth clubs, home Bible studies, summer camps and Holiday Bible Club have happened again during this year. We had a special joy recently of seeing two of our young people be joined in marriage. And in recent weeks we have baptized three teenage girls.

The regular attendance at church is encouraging. We have had visitors on Lord's Day morning for some time now and this is unusual but very welcome! We have tried various evangelistic efforts with little "success," but the seed in being sown

As a country the economy has begun to pick up with projected growth for the next number of years at 3 percent per annum. As a society we seem intent on legalizing abortion, with the UN recently accusing Ireland of being "cruel and inhuman"

because we do not have ready access to abortion.

A case was taken to the UN and the woman received €30,000 compensation for not being allowed to have an abortion in Ireland. There may be many such claims to follow!

Some of our members have been actively involved in the pro-life campaign. What all this teaches me is that the Gospel is still the real and ultimate need for Ireland. Jesus asked that we "pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the harvest field." Please do so for the country's sake.

As I survey the church scene, I am more convinced of a confessional church and for the links that join us all together I am very grateful to the Lord. We thank those churches in ARBCA that support us here in Ireland and trust we may know growth in all its dimensions.

Chaplain

From page 10

All seem to be following the Lord faithfully. There have been struggles along the way, yet all three seem to be maturing into young adults concerned with honoring and serving Him.

My wife's health continues to be a matter of prayer. She sees mercies in all of it, and her gratitude for God's provision continues to grow. My wife and I are very grateful for your prayers and support.

In this country, filled with political turmoil and structured by a religious ideology opposed to the beauty of the gospel, the

Lord is not only using His word among His people, but also using an insignificant parish for His glory among people who don't (yet) know Him. Please pray that God might open doors for the gospel, and that truth may be

proclaimed tactfully yet in a straightforward fashion.

There are certainly challenges, yet I know that God's word always goes out and fulfills His divine intent (Isa. 55:11).

Hear G.A. speakers here!

Sermons from year's ARBCA
General Assembly keynote speakers
and others are available for download
at www.arbca.com/sermons.



Church Planting: New pastor arrives in Valley City

By Douglas VanderMeulen

Community Baptist Church in Fargo, N.D., is excited to announce the Lord's provision of a man we think will be perfect for planting a church in Valley City, N.D. We have spent over a year considering several excellent men, and the Lord has provided Mark Hogan as someone gifted and prepared to help us in Valley City.

Mark graduated from Westminster Seminary California and is presently a member of Christ Reformed Baptist Church in Vista, Calif. He and his wife, Christine, have an infant son, Judah. Mark and Christine grew up in Reformed churches — Mark in the United Reformed Church, and Christine in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

They met at Providence Christian College in Pasadena, Calif. After college

graduation and marriage, Mark began his studies at WSC while Christine took advantage of the seminary's provision for wives to audit classes.

In God's providence, with the impending birth of son Judah, Mark and Christine became persuaded of the biblical view of believer's or credo-baptism. With encouragement from some of his fellow IRBS students at WSC, and subsequent reading of Nehemiah Coxie and other Reformed Baptist titles, Mark and Christine became fully persuaded of the Reformed Baptist understanding of the covenant of grace.

Today, Mark and Christine hold to the Second London Baptist Confession in full subscription.

Over the past few months, the leaders

of Community Baptist Church interviewed Mark and invited the Hogans to come to Fargo to meet our congregation.

During the first weekend of March, Mark preached and taught on the Lord's Day and investigated life in Valley City.

With their love of our Lord, their grasp of Reformed Theology, and their engaging personalities, they very quickly won the hearts and minds of the Community Baptist Church (and Valley Baptist) family.

We hope that you will take the time to prayerfully consider helping us to establish what will be only the second Reformed Baptist Church in the state of North Dakota.

— Douglas VanderMeulen is preaching elder in Community Baptist Church of Fargo, N.D.

GA

From page 1

and Session." "Session" is an older English word for "sitting."

Evening messages focused our hearts and minds on each of these three aspects of Christ's exaltation with great profit. Pastor Stephen Garrick of Emmanuel RBC in Georgetown, Texas, preached on the Resurrection of Christ. He took his text from Romans 6 in keeping with the theme of the work of Christ. He focused on what was accomplished for believers by His resurrection and what it practically means for our lives.

Pastor Steve Marquedant of Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Ontario, Calif., preached the next night on the Ascension. He dealt with the Scriptural accounts of the ascension itself along with the doctrinal and practical implications of the ascension, while quoting from some of the ancient creeds and older catechisms.

The G.A. was concluded with a stirring message from Pastor Fred Malone of First Baptist Church of Clinton, La., which summarized the entire topic well, and focused our attention on the fact of Christ's Session, which means, He is King of Kings



Pastor Brandon Smith, left, of host church Trinity Reformed Baptist Church of Jackson, Ga. leads singing.

and Lord of Lords, seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Each day began the right way, with thoughts of Christ as three men gave an exposition of the Suffering Servant passage in Isaiah.

Pastor Jeff Massey of Redeemer RBC in San Bernardino, Calif. gave the first

devotion from Isa. 52:13-53:3. He preached the passage in three points: 1. Behold My Servant; 2. Behold His Service; and 3. Behold the Certainty of His Success.

Pastor Mark Raines of Grace RBC in East Haven, Conn., preached from

See GA, page 13

Church Planting: Work progressing in Longview

By David Randall

Grace to you from northeast Texas. My wife, Terry, and I are very encouraged by the participation of so many churches in our financial and prayer support. It is comforting to know that many are "holding the ropes" on our behalf.

Meetings: We moved to Longview Texas from Georgia on July 30, 2016 and began our first Bible study and prayer meeting in a member family's home on Aug. 4, with 10 souls in attendance. The next month we relocated to our home.

In October, we picked up three more in attendance and began our first worship service in the evenings, preaching through the book of Jonah. During this time, the Randall and McCubbin families continued attending our sending church, Heritage Baptist Church of Shreveport, LA, where we have membership.

On Christmas Day 2016, we began our first morning worship service in our home and discontinued our evening service due to my bi-vocational time constraints. (I work as a full-time casework estimator. Since I

have minimal time off from work, I was not able to attend the General Assembly this year. I hope to be able to take a day off without pay once a quarter to attend the meetings of the Texas Area Association of Reformed Baptist Churches.)

On March 5, 2017, we relocated our morning worship and Sunday School classes to The Holiday Inn North in Longview. Brother Ryan McCubbin is leading the adults through The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith and I am teaching the youth various subjects including the Men and Women of the Old Testament. With this move, we have seen a steady flow of visitors with some returning for another visit. I am presently preaching through the Gospel of John and just completed chapter one.

On the first Sunday of the month we have a fellowship meal in lieu of Sunday School.

Outreach: With the arrival of spring, we have begun to hand out flyers and strike up gospel conversations in our community. Receptivity has been polite, with some

mild interest. The Longview News Journal back in the fall did a free two-page write-up with photos regarding our work. We have recently seen some fruit from this article.

This month we began listing in their church directory section. More than that, we started a new heading/category of church. We are the first and only church at present listed as "Reformed Baptist." May the Lord be pleased to add more to the list.

Gratitude: Words cannot adequately express my appreciation and thanksgiving for all the help our association has been to us. We could not make what little progress we have made without the Lord of Providence employing you as means in supporting us and in interceding for us and in counseling us in this work. Even the children of your Sunday School classes have encouraged us with handwritten Christmas cards.

"For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints" of Covenant Reformed Baptist Church Plant of Longview Texas.

GA

From page 12

Isa. 53:4-9 under the headings of: 1. Acknowledgement of Guilt; 2. Awareness of the Exchange; and 3. The Acquiesce of the Sufferer.

The final devotional was given by Pastor Craig Anderson of Elm Street Baptist Church in Sweet Home, Ore. His passage was Isa. 53:10-12, with the points of: 1. The Servant's Destiny; 2. The Servant's Accomplishment; and 3. The Servant's Rewards.

During the G.A., Pastor Fred Pugh of Grace Covenant Church of Cleveland, Ohio, taught three messages on Associationalism. These were designed to remind us of why our churches are in formal association with one another and also to help us deal with difficulties that arise, according to our Confession.

All nine messages were very helpful,



Delegates gather for a meeting at the conference center.

and all are available for download at the ARBCA website, www.arbca.com under "sermons."

Association business was transacted

during the three days, including extended times devoted to discussing the proposed

See **G.A.**, page 14

Church Planting: Lookout Mountain group enjoys unity

By Nathan White

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

We are grateful for the support and prayers of our sister churches, and we count it as a great privilege to hold communion with churches of like-minded faith.

We have now reached seven months of ministry here in Lookout Mountain, Tenn., and we are encouraged at how the Lord has blessed this church plant so far.

As of April 1 we have 42 people who make up our 'core group,' nine of whom have joined themselves to our congregation in formal church membership, with seven others currently in the membership process. The Lord has granted our group a great deal of unity in the faith, and their love for the Lord and for one another is evident to all.

Since we began Sunday worship services in August, I have been preaching through the gospel of John, which we will continue in through the rest of this year, at least. Our morning worship services are well-attended, and the people have been receptive to the preaching of the word.

In our adult Sunday School, I recently

completed a series on the church and church membership, and now I'm teaching a series on the Reformed doctrine of worship, which will take us through the end of summer. Pray that the Lord would soften hearts and use this series for the greater edification of His people. Many of our core group folks do not come from a confessionally Reformed background, and so there are elements of the Reformed doctrine of worship that will be new to them.

We also continue to hold mid-week Bible studies, specifically aimed at (though not limited to) students at nearby Covenant College. These are very well-attended, and the Lord has used our study of His word here for the greater spiritual maturity of these young men and women.

Summer is approaching quickly, and this means that many of our college students and faculty members will either be moving back home for the summer or will be taking extended vacations.

Among the 42 in our core group, possibly as many as 17 will be gone the entire summer. Please pray that the Lord would bring in more visitors, and more

stable families and older saints.

Financially speaking, the Lord has sustained our work here, though funds have been tight. We thank God for all the churches who have sacrificed and supported us thus far.

This church plant would not have been possible without the gifts and support of the wider body of Christ. We still have about \$15,000 to raise from outside support to meet our 2017 budget.

But at present, the giving of our core group has exceeded projections and all our needs have thus far been met.

Please pray that the Lord will continue to provide, and provide in a way that would enable us to finally do some sort of advertising our outreach in this community.

Please that we would remain faithful to the work for Christ's kingdom, and that the Lord would continue bless our efforts with peace, unity, and love for one another.

We praise the Lord for all of our sister churches, and we will uphold you in prayer, asking that God would richly bless you in your labors for Him.

G.A.

From page 13

seminary with the Seminary Project Team.

There were reports from the various committees and our part-time coordinator, Steve Martin, along with the dean of IRBS, Dr. James Renihan.

Brandon Smith was voted to a third term on the Administrative Council. Rob Cosby, Bob Curley, and Jeff Massey were all voted to second terms on the AC. Three new members were added: Jack Daniels, Steve Marquedant and Jason Walter.

Two new churches were added to ARBCA membership at this G.A.

Grace Family Baptist Church in Conroe, Texas (north of Houston) was voted into the membership. Their pastor is David Shiflet. This church has been a member of the Texas Association (TAARBC) since 2011.



Administrative Council members are, from left, Jack Daniels, Michael Kelly, Brandon Smith (kneeling), Al Huber, Steve Marquedant, Earl Blackburn, Rob Cosby, David Dykstra, Jeff Massey, Jason Walter (kneeling) and Steve Martin.

After a church split in 2015, the church emerged stronger and with even more clarity concerning their confessional

identity. Their prayer letter was in the May 2, 2017 ARBCA email update.

See **G.A.**, page 16

Church Planting: In San Tan, 'blessing upon blessing'

**By Frank Urquidez
and Robert Holmes**

Greetings from San Tan Reformed Baptist Church. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since we began Sunday morning services at STRBC last Sept. 4, we are simply struck with awe and wonder at what the Lord has done in our midst. We have been showered with blessing upon blessing for which we give God all the glory.

Although we are not yet a constituted church, we praise God that he has added to our leadership in a formal way.

Our sending church voted to accept Rob Holmes as part of our Elder board. Rob has graciously committed to coming alongside me in the planting of STRBC. On April 30 we held a special Ordination service at Grace Covenant Church, in Gilbert, Ariz., for our brother. I am so humbled and privileged to have had the opportunity to preach at our brother's ordination service.

We praise our Great God for the visitors that have come into our midst. Since we began having Sunday morning services, we have seen 50+ visitors come into our doors to worship. This is not including the members from GCC, who have joined us from time to time to be an encouragement to us.

Of those who have visited us, several of them have remained with us and two of those families are currently going through church membership.

On Jan. 29 of this year we had 63 souls in attendance. Since that day we have been averaging close to 50 each Lord's Day. Due to illnesses, everyone has not been in attendance at the same time but when everyone is there we are close to 60 in number. It is a blessing to see our ushers adding additional seats to accommodate those who are coming.

We just recently added another family from GCC who lives in the local area. They have decided to come and join us in the work. They were shocked when they visited for the first time and saw how many people were there for Sunday Worship.

We praise God that we now have 16



The San Tan Reformed Baptist Church congregation meets.

families who attend faithfully every Lord's Day. Of those 16 families, nine are members and soon two more families will be added to membership. We also have about four other families who are not as consistent but have shown much interest in the work.

Lord willing, sometime in June we will have a special service at GCC to welcome our two new families into formal membership as well as baptize two of our young adults.

Several of our children are asking their parents serious questions about what it means to be a Christian. Please pray that God would grant wisdom and discernment to our parents as they seek to direct their children to Christ. I am so thankful that my youngest child Elizabeth has recently come to know the Lord. She is our sixth child. My wife and I praise the Lord that all of our children now have professed Christ and are walking in fellowship with Him.

Since we only have two services (9:30 a.m. worship and 4 p.m. prayer), I have been preaching through the book of I Corinthians. Once a month Elder Rob Holmes preaches through the book of Philippians.

God has given us great liberty in our preaching and God's people seem to be growing in Grace. Please continue to pray for both Rob and I as we still are full-time employees with many time constraints and

need much grace in leading God's people, as well in our preparation for Sunday worship.

We continue to see unity among the brethren. Recently, a mature gentleman came to visit. He expressed how blessed he was by the love that the people showed him. He has enjoyed being among God's people so much that he is now attending our other ministries.

What a blessing to report that God's people are showing the love of Christ not only to one another but also to visitors who come in our midst. Truly they are following the example of our Lord by being a servant and ministering in love to others.

Although we have reported much of God's blessing, we have also recently experienced great sorrow. We had to follow Matt. 18 and place one of our members on church discipline. We are currently counseling that person each Thursday and pray that soon the Lord will grant restoration. Please pray for that individual, as well as the elders, that God would give us wisdom in dealing with this issue and that the member would be receptive to counsel and would show true repentance and be restored.

Pray that God would keep His church from discouragement and disunity during

See **San Tan**, page 16

G.A.

From page 14

The second church voted into the association is Providence RBC of Remlap, Ala., being the first Alabama church to join ARBCA. Their pastor is no stranger to ARBCA, as Kurt Smith was called to pastor this church in 2016. Pastor Smith attended his first G.A. in 1999, and his former church in Georgia (SGBC – now dissolved) had joined in 2009.

Chaplain Joshua Stoley gave a report of his work and also showed slides sent in by Chaplain James Galyon, who is currently overseas.

National Pastor Matthew Brennan from Clonmel, Ireland, gave a sobering report of the sad state of true Christianity in Ireland.

Encouraging news came from Cuba as the missions arm of ARBCA, RBMS, added two national pastors, Daniel and Jatniel Perez. They are father and son, and pastor two different congregations in Cuba. Both are leaders in a Cuban association of Reformed Baptists. Pastor Don Lindblad of TRBC-Kirkland, Wash. has worked in Cuba for many years, and this is some of



Mealtime brings delegates and guests from around the nation and the world together for food and fellowship.

the fruit from those labors.

A special project was approved by delegates for Pastor Lindblad to make two trips in the coming year to Cuba, with two

different men accompanying him.

Community Baptist Church of Fargo

See G.A., page 17

San Tan

From page 15

this most difficult of times. We have been encouraged by our members during this time that, while we are yet a small work, they have been blest to know that we take very seriously the Lord's work and Word.

Despite all the growth we have seen, the harvest is still plentiful. San Tan Valley and Queen Creek continue to see a tremendous amount of new homes being built. There are several new subdivisions that are building hundreds of new homes, which means hundreds of souls.

Pray for us as we seek to go into these communities and minister to them. We have a great opportunity but we must be active and consistent about getting out into the highways and byways and invite them. There are many "churches" trying to take advantage of this growth by moving into

the area.

Many of these churches offer a watered-down gospel and advertise kid-friendly activities. Pray that those who are serious about the things of God would see the error in these tactics and attend other places where the gospel of Christ crucified is preached and God's glory is given preeminence.

We desire to be both light and salt in the communities where we live and serve.

I join with Paul in his letter to the Philippians in expressing thanks to all our ARBCA churches for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Thank you for supporting us, not only financially, but most of all in prayer. We serve a great and awesome God and we have seen His gracious hand at work.

We continue to seek His face and that He would continue to show us His glory.

Please continue to pray:

■ For wisdom and protection of the

leadership;

■ For continual unity of the body;

■ That preaching would go forth with unction from on high;

■ That visitors would continue to come and not just come, but remain;

■ That sinners would be saved;

■ That saints would be built up in the faith;

■ That the family going through church discipline would be restored;

■ That the Tuesday night Bible Study on "Holiness" would be owned of Him;

■ That Tuesday night fellowship meals would be used to bring unity and love for one another; and

■ That families who have been attending for six months would desire to join us as members.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support as we seek to further His Kingdom here in San Tan Valley, Ariz.

Oh, what a mighty God we serve!

G.A.

From page 16

has been actively searching for a man to plant a church in a facility one hour west of them that they own in Valley City, N.D. They believe they found that man in Mark Hogan, a recent graduate of WSC.

The Home Missions Committee urged each ARBCA church to consider supporting one or more of the church plants: Valley Baptist Church in Valley City, N.D., Christ Reformed Baptist Church in Lookout Mountain, Tenn. and church planter Nathan White; Covenant Reformed Baptist Church in Longview, Texas and church planter David Randall, and San Tan RBC, San Tan Valley, AZ, church planters Frank Urquidez and Rob Holmes. Mark Hogan, Nathan White, and Rob Holmes were all in attendance at the G.A.

This was the first time in the history of ARBCA, the G.A. took place at a conference center, the beautiful facility of Epworth by the Sea on St. Simons Island. The island is easily reached by a bridge connecting to Brunswick, Georgia.

St. Simons Island is rich with history.

About 15 minutes up the road from the conference center was the historic meeting house of Christ Church, Frederica. The building was erected in 1820. But the earlier history of the island was of interest to many of the messengers and a destination for some during free time.

From 1736-1766, the first religious services on the island were conducted by John Wesley, George Whitefield and other clergy members of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. These services were generally held at the fort in Frederica or under the large oak trees that populate the island.

If you have the two-volume biography of George Whitefield by Arnold Dallimore, you can piece together snippets of the history by looking in the Index under "Frederica."

The messengers were housed and well-fed at this very fine facility. There was the advantage of almost everyone staying together on the island and not having to commute any distance to the meetings.

Next year, the G.A. will meet in Fargo, N.D. from May 8-10. The airport has easy



Epworth By The Sea provided generous accomodations for the General Assembly, including Strickland Auditorium above. Below, an ancient live oak tree stands on the conference grounds.



access, there are many hotels, and some housing will be available for messengers on a first-come, first-served basis.

We know CBC of Fargo will work hard and be excellent hosts. Please plan to attend the 2018 G.A.

IRBS

From page 4

may likewise be aided.

IRBS began holding classes in 1998, and our first graduates, Aaron Hoak and Stefan Lindblad commenced in 2001. After this year's graduation, we have had 34 graduates. That's good, but paltry compared to the fact that WSC had 30 graduates after its third ceremony!

We need to look carefully towards the future and make preparations for it. And these must begin now.

I recently returned from speaking at two conferences in Singapore.

One was a leader's conference with men from all over Asia — Japan, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, China and New Zealand and several churches in Singapore. As I spoke with these men, I heard some of them speak of three organizations that are having a powerful impact in that part of the world: Heart Cry missionary society, 9 Marks, and the Master's Seminary.

Each of these groups has much to admire in their zeal for the spread of the gospel, and they are all making significant progress in their work. We should be thankful for them.

At the same time, none of them represent what we believe are the fullest Biblical convictions. But we should observe and learn lessons from them. They are enterprising and outward-looking. They are not content with their current status, but seek to expand their Kingdom efforts whenever possible.

Some things succeed, others fail, but the remarkable growth they are seeing is a result of effort. Perhaps we need to be reminded of William Carey's story, which is recounted in part on page 3. It took lots of effort to convince his brothers to begin the work of foreign missions. There were many obstacles, financial, logistical, even political.

But when they acted, the world was changed. "Expect great things; attempt great things." Carey's two points from his May 30, 1792 sermon should be in our own minds. Will we take seriously the promises of God?

The task before us is monumental. I am keenly aware of this. There are many obstacles. But faith does not allow obstacles to intrude in its obedience.

We need to remember two things: One, we have a mandate from Scripture to train

men and II Tim 2:1-7 is very clear. We must prepare the next generation of ministers. Anything less is disobedience to Scripture.

Secondly, We are following a biblical method, establishing a modern "School of the Prophets" similar to what we see in the Old Testament and in the life of Paul, who was trained at the best seminary in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3).

Based on these two facts, we should proceed in faith, trusting the Lord to supply our needs. It is always right to ask Him to bless what He has appointed, and we ought to do it with boldness and expectancy.

One of my friends, a former vice president at a major seminary, told me an interesting story.

In many of the early days of the seminary, finances were tight and difficult. He remembers the months when there was no certainty that funds for salary would be available, and testifies that some of the best experiences he remembers were the fervent prayers of the staff, when they gathered together asking the Lord to provide for their needs.

And He always did. As we enter this project, will we take seriously the words of Jesus when he taught us to pray "give us this day our daily bread?" That must be our prayer — mine and yours — as we enter this task.

Hudson Taylor's maxim "God's work, done in God's way, will never lack God's supply" is true. We can trust that our Lord will provide for our needs — personnel, facilities, financial support.

Commentary

From page 3

many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved Me.'" (Judg. 7:2).

Perhaps God has pruned us so that we will bear greater fruit (John 15:2); maybe He is about to do something so wonderful and amazing that our very smallness will magnify the fact that He and He alone has done it, and so He alone will receive all the glory and praise for it when it is accomplished.

So, my footsore and weary brethren,

On Aug. 31, 1993, Albert Mohler addressed the Convocation at Southern Seminary with his famous sermon, "Don't just do something: Stand there."

It was an articulate defense and reminder of the confessional principles of Southern Seminary, and a call to the faculty and administration to act with integrity when they that day signed the Abstract of Principles.

His words were necessary and marked a significant change in the theological ethos of that famous school.

I would like to suggest something similar, but opposite, to you. Two years ago, we took an important, God-honoring stand. We defended our Confession of Faith and asserted our commitment to the classical Christian doctrine of God.

We planted our feet and stood upon the truth of Scripture.

I thank God for that day; it was a watershed in the life of our Association. But we cannot keep reminding ourselves of the fact that we took that stand as if that is the sum of our life together. We must build upon that commitment, preparing the next generation of men to do the same. And so, the word for us should be "Don't just stand there: Do something."

I suggest that what we do is take steps now to ensure growth in the future. I urge all of our churches to support this important effort to train men for the future.

May the Lord give us 1,100 graduates to serve in churches, to plant, and to spread the gospel overseas.

we need to remember Paul's admonition: "...let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (Gal. 6:9).

Of necessity, we have had to pause in recent years and examine ourselves inwardly. It is now time to press onward, fixing the gaze of our souls outward and upward.

And let us take William Carey's timeless exhortation to heart: "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."

— Jerry Slate serves as one of the pastors of Berean Baptist Church in Hiram, GA and as chairman of RBMS.