

MINISTRY &

REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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LEADERSHIP



The Mexican Pipeline



RTS-Charlotte alumni feed a network of church planters south of the border.



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WHO WE ARE

Reformed Theological Seminary exists to serve the church by preparing its leaders through a globally accessible program of theological education based on the authority of the inerrant Word of God and committed to the Reformed faith. This program promotes biblical fidelity, confessional integrity and academic excellence, and seeks to prepare students marked by "A mind for truth. A heart for God."

As such, Ministry & Leadership exists to show how God is working through the ministries of its graduates, faculty members and students.

A common misconception in the church today is that to be Reformed theologically does not promote a robust missiology. Scripture, history and contemporary trends show us otherwise, though.

First, let's look at the connection between Scripture and missions, which features a foundation in Abraham himself. Recall that Abraham was called to leave his community and go to a land that God would show him, and ever since there has been a migration of nations — people from one culture melding with those from other cultures. Dr. Michael McKelvey, one of the newest additions to the RTS faculty, addresses this issue in his exposition of Genesis 12:1-3 (see page 4). The missional call is not isolated to the Old Testament, obviously. Consider the Apostles and their far-flung missionary journeys, faithfully recorded in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. The Reformers picked up their missions mantle, preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth, as documented by Dr. Elias Medeiros, a professor of missions, in his article starting on page 6.

Today, though, the missional call has taken on an exciting new dimension. While there is still a need for missionaries to go to cross-cultural fields, it has become increasingly apparent that we don't just have to "go" to missions. With technology, travel advances and other God-given inno-

ventions, we no longer live in a world where we live in isolated, homogeneous communities. Today, in every country, every city and even in our small towns, we have an extraordinarily growing cultural diversity. Cities like Houston (see pages 16-19) especially reflect this cultural shift, and RTS seeks to establish a presence in these places in order to help exert a faithful gospel influence.

We live in a multicultural world, and its effects are inescapable. However, this reality is nothing to be feared, but instead should be embraced. In particular, multicultural diversity gives us a glimpse of what eternity will look like — people from every tribe, tongue and nation glorifying and worshipping the one true God.

So as with Abraham, in the Great Commission and in Acts, we are called to take the gospel to every nation. RTS helps the church fulfill that call not only in preparing missionaries to "go," but also in preparing leaders who are native to other nations, like in Mexico (see pages 10-13) and at RTS-Houston, where we find people of other ethnic backgrounds right here in our own backyard.

Our Reformed heritage, then, has a rich missions tradition. Reformed Christians should, above any, lead in fanning the flames of a missionary passion for the lost in every nation. **M**

Lyn Perez, Editor in Chief

Paul Schwarz, Managing Editor

Bill Henderson Design, Graphic Design

Stephanie Hartley, Dawn Kilgore, Editorial Assistants

Ministry & Leadership promotes RTS through articles designed to edify its readers through solid biblical instruction, and through reports that focus primarily on the national and global impact of RTS students, faculty and alumni. Our goal is that readers will become partners with RTS through prayer, financial giving, educational experience and student referral, as well as providing placement opportunities.

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TRAVEL

Dr. James Anderson spoke at Southern Evangelical Seminary's Socratic Club, April 26, Matthews, N.C., on "Paradox in Christian Theology."

Dr. Richard Belcher will speak at Christ Church, Columbia, S.C., May 11 and 13, on "What is the Mission of the Church?"

Dr. Donald Fortson will speak at Matthews Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Matthews, N.C., on "The American Presbyterian Experience" on Wednesday nights, 7 p.m., June 25–July 30.

Dr. William Fullilove will speak at The Fellows Initiative Directors Training Retreat, June 6-8, on "A Theology of Faith and Work."

Dr. Robert Leslie Holmes will be a plenary speaker at the National Conference on Preaching, May 13-16, Duluth, Ga. He is now the most frequently invited teacher in the conference's 30-year history. He will also be the commencement speaker at Erskine Theological Seminary's graduation on May 24 and will be awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.

Dr. Bruce Lowe will speak at Students Leaders Retreat, Myrtle Beach, S.C., June 16-22, on "How to Understand the Stories of the Bible."

Dr. Andy Peterson will lead seminars on "Christian Counseling and Family Life in Galatians" at The Fields Church, Carlsbad, Calif., May 16-18.



Dr. Don Sweeting will speak at the Evangelical Free Church's Leadership Spiritual Renewal Retreat, June 24-27, in

Colorado Springs, Colo., and at Fellowship Denver Church on July 6.

Dr. Derek Thomas will speak at the Banner of Truth Conference, Elizabethtown, Pa., May 27-29; be the evening service preacher for the PCA General Assembly, Houston, June 18; and speak at the Cedar Falls Bible Conference, Cedar Falls, Iowa, July 28-31.

Dr. Guy Waters serves on the PCA General Assembly's Study Committee on Insider Movements and will present the committee's report in Houston in June.

TRAVEL (INTERNATIONAL)

Dr. Richard Belcher will teach at the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne, Australia, Aug. 2-6, on "Preaching Old Testament Narrative from the Book of Judges."

Dr. John Currid will teach a class on the Pentateuch at the Fellowship of the Reformed Churches in Israel, Tel Aviv, Aug. 6-17.

Dr. Don Sweeting will speak at the 2014 Lausanne Consultation on Global Theological Education, Sao Paulo, Brazil, June 1-6.

Dr. Guy Waters will teach Romans at China Reformed Theological Seminary, Taipei, Taiwan, in May, giving two public lectures and an alumni seminar, as well as the commencement sermon ("What Now?," using Matt. 28:18-20) for the graduation ceremonies on May 31.

PUBLICATIONS

Dr. James Anderson reviewed Alan Spence's "A Guide for the Perplexed" for *Journal of Reformed Theology* (8:1) and wrote "Calvinism and the First Sin" for *Calvinism and the Problem of Evil* (Wipf & Stock, fall).

Dr. John Frame's *Apologetics to the Glory of God* will celebrate its 20th anniversary this summer with a new release edited by Joseph Torres.

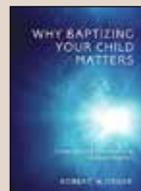


Dr. Charles Hill wrote two chapters for the book *How God Became Jesus: The Real Origins of Belief in Jesus' Divine Nature*

(Zondervan, March). His chapters are titled "An Exclusive Religion: Orthodoxy and Heresy, Inclusion and Exclusion" and "Paradox Pushers and Persecutors?" The book is a response to Bart Ehrman's book *How Jesus Became God*.

Dr. Robert Leslie Holmes will contribute six articles to the new *Lexham Bible Dictionary* (2015).

Rev. Kenneth McMullen wrote "Church Government in a Confessional Church" for *The ARP Magazine* (March/April).



Dr. Bob Orner, guest lecturer in practical theology and dean of students at RTS-Orlando, has written *Why Baptizing Your Child Matters* (March).

Dr. Guy Waters reviewed N.T. Wright's "Paul and the Faithfulness of God" for *Themelios* (April) and Brian S. Rosner's "Paul and the Law" for *Reformation 21* (December 2013), and wrote "The Fulfillment of the Law" for *Tabletalk* (May)

ALUMNI PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Bassam Chedid (M.Div. '98, D.Miss. '97), adjunct professor of missions at RTS-Jackson, has published the *Arabic Study Bible*.

Dr. Justin Holcomb (MATS '97, MACT '97), canon for vocations at the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida, adjunct professor of theology at RTS-Orlando and guest faculty at RTS-Washington D.C., has written the books *Know the Heretics* (April) and *Know the Creeds and Councils* (April).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. William Fullilove will formally receive a Ph.D. in Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures from The Catholic University of America on May 17.

Dr. Ligon Duncan will be inaugurated as chancellor and CEO of RTS on Thursday, Oct. 2, at First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Miss., at 7:30 p.m.



Dr. Charlie Wingard was appointed to the RTS-Jackson faculty as assistant professor of practical theology

beginning Jan. 1. He has a B.A. in political science from the University of the South, Seawee, Tenn.; an M.Div. from Vanderbilt Divinity School; and a D.Min from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

CAMPUS EVENTS

Houston
"Reformed Ramblings" on June 19 will feature a tour of the campus, including the Lanier Theological Library and chapel. The tour will include lunch in the Lanier Grand Ballroom.

Orlando
Kelly Kapic (M.Div. '98), professor of theological studies at Covenant College, will speak at the inaugural President's Forum of the new school year.

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Abraham's Call: A Blessing for the World

Have you ever received a gift that was not meant only for you? I can remember years ago when my son wanted to get his mother a new cast-iron skillet for Christmas. Being the thoughtful father and husband I am, I was very willing to buy the skillet for him to give her. My son knew it would be useful for his mother in her cooking endeavors. However, I was very much in favor of this gift as well, because I knew I would benefit from all the good cooking! Of course, my wife loved the skillet because it was from her baby boy, but she also gave me a look that indicated she knew the gift would also benefit me!

When we come to the call of Abram in Genesis 12:1-3, we see God freely give His grace to Abram as a gift. It is a marvelous event in which God lavishes His amazing grace upon one man from Ur of the Chaldeans. God calls Abram out of this world to be His own. This is a wonderful gift and, indeed, a tremendous calling. However, God's gift to and calling of Abram was not meant only for him. As we look closely at this text, we see there is a missional dimension intended by God for the benefit of many others. To put it another way, God determines to use Abram's call as the means by which He will reach the world with His blessing.

The Text

Genesis 12:1-3 is one of the central texts of the Bible. It establishes the purpose of God in calling Abram out of the world to be his follower. Consider how the Lord confers immense blessings upon him:

“Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your

name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”

Abram is commanded to leave his homeland and kindred and go to a land he had never seen. The Lord did not even tell him to which land he would go, but simply “to the land that I will show you.”

After this charge, blessings come in a flood of God's

God is a gracious God,
committed to seek and to
save that which was lost by
the fall of mankind.

grace. God promises He will make Abram into a great nation, that He will bless him, and that He will make his name great. In verse 3, the Lord pledges His care for Abram by blessing all those who bless this man and his descendants, and cursing all those who would dishonor him. The last statement of verse 3 deserves special attention: “In you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” Here is the promise that *through Abram's line* there will be blessings that come to all mankind. This is an amazing promise whereby God pledges to extend grace to all the nations through this man, Abram.

However, another portion of this passage indicates that Abram's call is missional. Verse 2 reads, “I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.”





ent from the surrounding nations because their God was the unique creator and sustainer of all things. They were to bear witness in both word and deed that the Lord is the one true God. By living righteously in a fallen world, their lives would demonstrate that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and so all need His mercy.

Our God is a God on a mission! It has always been God's intent to bring His blessings, His gospel, to the nations through his Old Testament people. God is a gracious God, committed to seek and to save that which was lost by the fall of mankind. Through this covenant with Abram, God reveals that His purpose is to reach the whole world. God gave the charge to Israel to be his witnesses to the nations. Consider the missionary words of Psalm 67:1-3: "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us . . . that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!"

The Church Today

The New Testament clearly reveals that the promise of God to Abram is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He is the only one through whom all the families of the earth are truly blessed. Christ has now given His commission for the church to make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:18-20), which means that God's missional purpose, revealed so long ago, is not yet complete, but ongoing. The New Testament church is called to be a blessing to the nations by proclaiming the good news of Jesus' victory for all who would believe, taking the good news of the forgiveness of sins to a world in desperate need of mercy. When we understand that God's mission has always been to show His grace to every tribe, tongue and nation, then we will desire to join in that mission.

By God's grace, we have come to know that we possess something that changes everything in our lives. We have received God's greatest gift—His blessed Son. Christ is God's gift to us, and He is a gift intended for others as well, even to those who dwell in remotest parts of the earth. There is no greater gift than the love of God in Jesus Christ, and this is a gift intended to be shared. **M**

Dr. McKelvey is an RTS alumnus who is a recently appointed assistant professor of Old Testament at RTS-Jackson.

The last phrase of the Hebrew text could very well be translated in the imperative. Instead of saying God will bless Abram and make his name great "so that" he will be a blessing, the original language may be obligatory. In other words, God tells Abram, "be a blessing." (Some scholars argue that it should be read, "you shall be a blessing," but I would personally opt for reading the verb in the imperative, "be a blessing.")

But what does all this mean? It means that from the initial call of Abram and his descendants, God's purpose was for this people to be a blessing to the nations! To put it more clearly, God is telling Abram and Israel that he is blessing them so they will in turn be a blessing to the Gentiles. They are missionaries! How so? They are set apart by God in a sinful world as a witness to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were to be differ-

MISSION

The Calvinist Reformers were committed

REFORMED CHRISTIANS

have a rich heritage of evangelistic fervor and missionary history dating back at least as far as the life and ministry of John Calvin himself. A careful reading of 16th-century resources would convince anyone of Calvin's commitment and passion for the spreading of the gospel in the world. Calvin never limited his ministry to the city of Geneva, Switzerland, and while there he carried out extensive correspondence with other ministers and leaders everywhere. Therefore, no one can write or speak about Calvin and Geneva as just a localized phenomenon.

John Knox described Calvin's Geneva as "the most perfect school of Christ which has been seen on earth since the days of the apostles." Calvin's influence was felt not just in Switzerland, but in England, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy and even South America.

Time and space do not allow me to present the full extent of my research on this subject, which I presented during a workshop (titled "Missions and the Reformation: Did Anyone Give a Rip?") at the Cross conference in Louisville, Ky., in December (more information about that conference can be found on page 15). For our purposes, we will focus on missionary activity in Europe and South America, specifically my native Brazil, as the roots of my own Reformed faith can be traced back to the influence of Calvin himself.

GENEVA AND EUROPE

The sending of preachers throughout Europe began in 1555. According to historian Mack P. Holt, it is known that "in the less than twenty-five years between Calvin's arrival in Geneva and the outbreak of the civil wars in France, more than a million French men and women had been converted to Protestantism." Alister Mc-

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by Elias Medeiros



MINDED

to propagating the gospel to all nations.

THE
WORK
OF THE
REFORMERS
WAS AN
INCOMPARABLE
EXAMPLE
OF
MISSIONARY
WORK
DURING
THE
16TH CENTURY.



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Grath says that “at the opening of the momentous year 1562, the number of [elders and deacons] in France had risen to 1,785.” The reports presented by researchers are astounding: “A study of eighty-eight agents sent out on 105 missions during the period 1555-63” highlights the “early successes of Calvinism” and confirms “the impression that the movement held a special appeal to the urban middle class.” In a 1560 letter, Calvin reports the following:

Meanwhile, the truth of the gospel is breaking forth. In Normandy our brethren are preaching in public, because no private house is capable of containing an audience of three and four thousand persons. There is greater liberty in Poitou, Saintonge, and the whole of Gascony. Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiny possess many intrepid disciples of Christ.

The Reformers’ “missionary” work throughout continental and non-continental Europe during the 16th century, especially Calvin’s, is well documented. According to the *The Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva at the Time of Calvin*, Jean Vernou and Jean Lauvergeat were the first two pastors commissioned “to go and preach the Word [to the brethren who were scattered in several valleys of Piedmont] in response to the request of three brethren who were sent from there for this purpose.” They were sent in order to establish the believers and to evangelize unbelievers. This was just the beginning of an increasing recruiting, training and sending of workers throughout Europe, especially to France and neighboring countries. And most of them were sent as “underground” ministers to France, Italy and elsewhere.

Philip E. Hughes, the editor and the translator of the *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs*, reaches this conclusion:

When everything is heard, said and written, Joel Beeke is right when he concludes that:

A negative view of Calvin’s evangelism is a result of (1) A failure to study Calvin’s writings prior to drawing their conclusions, (2) A failure to understand Calvin’s view of evangelism within his own historical context, and (3) Preconceived doctrinal notions about Calvin and his theology to their study. Some critics naively assert that Calvin’s doctrine of election virtually negates evangelism.

FRENCH CALVINISTS IN SOUTH AMERICA

The Reformers’ attempts to establish the Reformed faith in South America —French/Genevan Calvinists in south Brazil in 1556 and Dutch Calvinists in northeast Brazil between 1630 and 1654 — are another attestation of the Reformers’ readiness and promptness to reach out to the nations when God opened the doors. Unfortunately, many mission historians have simply dismissed these historical facts as being invalid “missionary endeavor” or as being irrelevant in terms of “missionary” evidence of the Reformers’ commitment to world evangelization.

To give just one example, let us allow Jean de Léry to speak in this regard. He was a good friend of Calvin and an eyewitness of the missionary journey of 16 Calvinists to South America in 1557.

The French Huguenots made their first effort to bring the Reformation to Brazil in 1556. Under the protection of the French invaders, 16 of them embarked to Brazil with the direct and intentional support of Calvin and Admiral Gaspar de Coligny. They went there to help the establishment of a French colony in Rio de Janeiro, but Léry’s report makes it clear that it was more than that. In the preface to Francis Coligny (the admiral’s son), Léry makes sure that his purpose would be well understood:

Since my purpose is to perpetuate the remembrance of a journey expressly

made to America in order to establish the true worship of God, among the French who retired to that place and among the [Indians] who lived in that region; I judged as my obligation to make known the name of the one who was the cause and the motivation of this expedition.

And,

[M]y intention and my purpose shall be just to report what I have practiced, seen, heard, and observed, whether in the ocean, going to [Brazil] and returning to [France], or among the American [Indians] among whom I lived for about a year.

Léry presupposes the planting of a Reformed church in Brazil that would include the natives to whom they pur-

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE BIBLICAL MANDATE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL NATIONS RESTS ON A FOUNDATION LAID BY CALVIN AND THE REFORMERS THEMSELVES.

posed to win for Christ through the preaching of the gospel to them. The Genevan team went to Brazil to preach the gospel and to support a “Reformed” ruler. Léry did not believe that the Roman Catholics brought the gospel to Brazil, but that the team from Geneva was “the first to propagate [it].”

THE TWO LEADERS: CALVIN AND COLIGNY

Calvin and Coligny were the minds and hearts behind such expedition. Coligny was acquainted with Calvin’s life, work and vision. He corresponded with Calvin, read his works, and knew and was influenced by the passion of the Geneva Reformer. A French Huguenot leader, Coligny was the one who, together with Calvin, encouraged and supported the formation of a Huguenot team to go down to Brazil in 1556 with the two Genevan pastors authorized by the church in Geneva to preach the gospel in the “French Antarctic,” as they called it.

Gaspar of Coligny, according to Léry, “carried out his enterprise through those whom he sent to America, besides making a part of that land subject to the French crown, also gave ample proof of his zeal to have the Gospel declared [preached] not only throughout this kingdom, but throughout the entire world.” Reformers such as Coligny were not just interested in seeing those nations under the crown of France, but under the crown of the Lord Jesus, while the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ would spread through all the world, according to God’s timing and will.

The work of the Reformers in Europe and South America was an incomparable example of missionary work during the 16th century. Concerning their commitment to the propagation of the gospel to all nations, the Reformers of the 16th and 17th centuries were biblically, theologically and practically committed to and involved with the preaching of the gospel through the ministers of the Word to all men everywhere. The fulfillment of the biblical mandate to preach the gospel to all nations rests on a foundation laid by Calvin and the Reformers themselves. **M**

Dr. Medeiros, Harriet Barbour professor of missions at RTS-Jackson, has been an ordained minister of the gospel for nearly 40 years. In Brazil he worked in pioneer church planting in the Amazon region and in other rural and urban settings, as well as taught at several theological institutions. Contact him at emedeiros@rts.edu to receive the full-length version of his research on the missionary zeal of Calvin and the Reformers.

CONTINUING THE LEGACY

Andrew Jumper Center

As pastor of Central Presbyterian Church in St. Louis from 1970 to 1991, Andrew Jumper usually introduced his sermons by saying, “We believe the Bible to be the only infallible rule for faith and practice. The only way to know God’s will and God’s way is to go to God’s Word.” Dr. Jumper’s devotion to the Word is memorialized through the institute that bears his name: the Andrew Jumper Center (Centro Presbiteriano de Pós-Graduação Andrew Jumper in Portuguese).

In the late 1970s, leaders of the seminaries of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil began to see the need to provide theological training for aspiring pastors and church leaders while allowing them to stay in Brazil and thus overcome the barriers of relocating to the United States. Two Brazilian professors contacted RTS looking for help in establishing a seminary-level institution in their country. Dr. Gerard Van Groningen, then coordinator of the department of Old Testament at RTS, responded by offering institutional support to the project.

The movement gained impetus in the fall of 1979, when Elias dos Santos Medeiros (who is now an RTS-Jackson professor and who wrote the attached article) enrolled in seminary. Shortly after, Dr. Van Groningen enlisted the help of Dr. Simon Kistemaker, then RTS professor of New Testament and now professor emeritus, who volunteered to participate in the project. Eventually, in 1991, the program was adopted as a “missionary project” by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and named for Dr. Jumper, who contributed greatly to raising institutional and financial support within the EPC.

Affiliated with Mackenzie Presbyterian University (Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie) in São Paulo, the Jumper Center includes Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees among its offerings, as well as a distance learning component. **M**

For more information about the Jumper Center in Portuguese, visit cpaj.mackenzie.br.

The Mexican Pipeline



RTS-Charlotte alumni feed a network of church planters south of the border.



By Paul Schwarz



Anyone who has planted a church will tell you that it's hard work. Some of them might also be able to tell you it's dangerous. For a four-year period roughly covering 2008 to 2012, that was true of Andres Garza and his fellow team of church planters with Mission to the World in Monterrey, Mexico. Andres, an RTS-Char-

lotte graduate who leads the MTW Church Planting Center in northern Mexico, had steered his team through a season of drug gang-fueled violence that prompted many people to leave the city, with those who stayed living in fear of venturing out at night lest they get shot.

"Before that, Monterrey used to be the most peaceful large city in Mexico," says Andres, who calls himself a "guinea pig" in that he was part of an experiment by MTW in handing the reins of team leadership over to a national instead of an American. Today, though peace has largely returned to Monterrey, the church planting network Andres leads has been refined — in fact, as is often the case in the midst of

persecution, it has become more fruitful.

Andres and his team have taken on the audacious goal of planting at least two churches in each of the 27 largest cities in northern Mexico. From an American perspective, 54 churches may not seem like very many, but the church climate in Mexico is much different than it is stateside. Centuries of religious tradition have clouded Mexicans' minds and hearts to the true gospel, and the MTW church planting team faces other obstacles as well.

God is faithful to save His own, though, and Andres' life testifies to this truth. In his last year of college in Monterrey, the woman who later became his wife invited him to an evangelistic campaign at her Presbyterian church. "I only showed up because I was attracted to her," Andres admits. Eventually attracted to the gospel as well, Andres came to faith in Christ and, through the influence of MTW missionaries, responded to a call to ministry.

"Most people in Mexico think missions is about going to the jungle and living in a tent and evangelizing the Indians," explains Andres, who as an architect and city planner, was hired by MTW to help with demographic studies to aid the then-fledgling church planting movement in northern Mexico. "City planning is a passion for me, but when they started relating city planning to the church and with mis-

As a Mission to the World missionary, Michael Lee (bottom, right) serves Mexican nationals in church planting leadership, including Andres Garza (previous page, left), MTW team leader in northern Mexico.

sion, I started thinking about ministry in a different way.”

Eventually Andres tapped into an already-existing pipeline between RTS-Charlotte and MTW in northern Mexico. In 2002, one of his current partners in church planting ministry, Jorge Aleman, had already completed his first year of seminary there, as had Michael Lee, an American who serves as an MTW missionary with the Monterrey movement.

Michael’s especially circuitous route to the mission field passed through, among other things, a haze of marijuana smoke and meeting his wife through a mutual friend who dealt cocaine. “I was high as often as I could be, except at work,” is how Michael describes his life before he came to faith in Christ. That work — a series of successful jobs in the hospital field (first in food services and then in administration — eventually gave way to a calling to ministry, which he and his wife wrestled with for several years. At age 39 Michael began attending RTS-Charlotte, where he pursued a ministry internship with Bethel Presbyterian Church across the border in Clover, S.C.

That’s when Michael learned that Bethel (as

“Most people in Mexico think missions is about going to the jungle and living in a tent and evangelizing the Indians.”

Andres Garza



had Filbert Presbyterian Church, about 30 miles from Clover) had established a partnership with MTW’s work in northern Mexico. One of the beneficiaries of that partnership was Michael’s RTS classmate Jorge Aleman. Jorge had been an associate pastor at a church in Monterrey that one of the MTW missionaries there began attending. Jorge was invited to attend an assessment center that MTW had set up to evaluate potential church planters.

“[That missionary] came when God was speaking to me about the mission of church planting and how I can be involved with that,” he recalls. With the support of the Bethel and Filbert congregations, Jorge began attending RTS-Charlotte.

The three alumni, along with a fourth graduate, Jose Luis Cardona (who finished his RTS-Charlotte degree last year), serve together in the MTW Church Planting Center in Monterrey. (Jaime Jimenez, who graduated from RTS-Jackson four years ago, is a church planter in the network.) While Andres leads the MTW team, Jorge serves as the coordinator of training for church planters, Jose Luis helps with the training as well, and Michael helps the Mexicans coordinate the theological training received by the church planters.

“Theological training is hugely different in Mexico than it is in the U.S.,” Michael explains. “When we see seminary here, we see the buildings. In Mexico, seminary is a small conference room with a table and five chairs, and I bet that’s probably what seminary looks like in most of the rest of the world.”

Seminary not only looks different in Mexico, but it also must adapt to cultural realities. MTW has started a seminary in northern Mexico, but after a few years, it wasn’t accomplishing its intended purpose, primarily because aspiring Mexican pastors (and Mexican churches for that matter) don’t have the disposable income to uproot for years at a time as is customary in American seminary.

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Andres (left) worked as an architect and city planner in Monterrey before receiving a calling to vocational ministry.

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“Our vision in northern Mexico is 54 churches in the 27 largest cities,” Michael emphasizes, “and [to provide theological training for enough pastors] at the normal rate would take 100 years. So Jorge and I realized that our current model wasn’t working.

That’s when Andres, Jorge and Michael retreated to a cabin in the northern Mexican mountains and brainstormed a new plan. Ultimately they drew from the Incubator model developed by Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City and adapted it to a Mexican context. In essence, the new model incorporates intensive church planter training, mentoring and coaching over two years in 16 modules, with four classes, four modules per class, and one-week classes from Monday through Friday.

As the adjustment of their training model illustrates, learning from mistakes is a recurring theme with these church planting leaders. “When we started this church planting movement, we made a lot of mistakes,” Andres admits, explaining that he originally went to RTS intent on fixing mistakes and improving the work. “We still make mistakes, but not the same ones.”

The Lord has been gracious to work powerfully through

these men in spite of their mistakes, as the MTW network has succeeded in planting approximately one new church each year in northern Mexico. Jorge tells about one of these church planting projects in Durango, a city of about 800,000 people in northern Mexico that had no Presbyterian church for a long time. A year and a half ago, MTW sent a church planter and his family along with an MTW missionary

“When you’re planting a church from scratch, it’s really difficult, especially in Mexico,” says Jorge, who explains that the Durango church has grown to the point where it has launched worship services and has a core group of members. That church has opened a biblical counseling service in the community that has served to draw people into the congregation.

Michael relates a story about Mary, an industrial engineer in Monterrey who was invited to Iglesia Cristiana del Sur by Cecilia, a childhood friend. Within a year, Mary came to faith in Christ and invited her mother to a Bible study Michael attended. When the Bible study leader outlined differences between religious tradition and biblical Christianity, Michael thought the woman would never come back.

“Mary said, though, that ‘This was the greatest thing that ever happened to her; she had been dying to hear the Word of God,’” Michael testifies, continuing that the mother keeps



coming back to the study, participating and asking questions. “All of our churches have stories like that.”

Jorge acknowledges that such stories show the Holy Spirit working supernaturally on the hearts of Mexicans, just as He continues to work on his own heart concerning the MTW church planting movement itself. “The vision that God has given us is something that’s impossible for us to do,” he confesses. “We want to reach the 27 largest cities in northern Mexico and plant two churches in each city. When I see that vision, my [initial] feeling is always, ‘No, we’re not going to do it,’ and I feel discouraged.

“But on the other hand, when I see what the Lord has been doing through us in these years and how the church planting movement has grown, I always give thanks to Him and say, ‘You are doing this.’ In that sense I get encouraged again.”

Church planting in northern Mexico may not be as physically dangerous as it was a few short years ago, but as the RTS-Charlotte alumni church planters trust the Lord to do what only He can do, it’s no less adventurous — or fruitful. **M**

For more information about the MTW church planting network in northern Mexico, e-mail Andres at andres@cpimonterrey.com.



Michael (above) attended RTS-Charlotte with Andres (top and left, in black shirt), though Andres was not the first Mexican national leader with MTW to attend the seminary — Jorge Aleman preceded him.



RTS is positioned to provide theological leadership in a changing culture.

A New Reformed Movement

SINCE RTS WAS FOUNDED IN 1966, it has ridden the crest of a remarkable resurgence of Reformed and evangelical Christianity over the last 50 years. But we are now at the peak and on the downside of a worldview megashift like nothing that has ever occurred in Western culture. This will have a hard impact on theological education and the church — we will be sailing against cultural headwinds for the rest of our lives.

The closest historical parallel to what we face today dates back to 1662, when 2,000 ministers in the Church of England were ejected from their churches because they refused to sign the Oath of Conformity. This marked the end of the Puritan movement in England, which dated back 100 years to the reign of Henry VIII and which worked to bring more spiritual independence in the church, more independence from state control, and more evangelical and Reformed theology and religion.

As you may well know, out of the Puritan movement came the Westminster Assembly, which created the Westminster Confession, to which we all subscribe at RTS. Though the Puritans' goal was to see a Reformed church established throughout Great Britain, they completely failed — the Westminster Confession was never accepted by the Church of England. The Church of Scotland was the only church in England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland that adopted it.

The reason for this brief history lesson is that the moment we are in right now appears very similar to that moment. The Puritans had worked for reform in the church for a century and had utterly failed and finally were kicked out of the church, which meant they could not go to university. The Puritan movement was an intellectual movement, so when it was cut off from the university, it lost its ability to influence the culture. We are entering into a similar period, where Bible-believing, evangelical Christians will be culturally marginalized, precisely because of what we believe.

But here's the good news: Though the Puritans completely lost in their goals for reform, they created what we call today the Era of Nonconformity, which led to what we now call evangelicalism. "Low church" Anglicans, Presbyterians, independents and Baptists all essentially shared Reformed theology — they may have squabbled on baptism and church government, but their view of the Christian life and of the doctrines of grace were all the same. Those people became the bedrock of the formation of what we now call the United States of America. They created a force they never intended to create, but yet far more powerful than what they tried to create.

You see, God does things we don't expect. Today, because the Puritans lost every goal they had, South Korea is predominantly a Presbyterian country, there are 9 million East Africans who subscribe to the Westminster Confession, and the entire country of Malawi is psalm-singing Presbyterians. The Puritans could not have imagined the impact the Westminster Confession was going to have on people they didn't even know existed.

Today, in the wake of the evangelical and Reformed church's own cultural marginalization, RTS is positioned to be at the center of the network and fabric of the evangelicalism that will be created out of that marginalization. Young people know that when they walk into an evangelical church, they're making a choice in a way that you and I did not have to make 40 years ago. They know that if they choose to be part of evangelical Christianity, then they go against their culture.

RTS stands at the center of providing the theological ballast for this movement because we remain committed to what this institution has always been committed to. We have been absolutely certain of who we are theologically. We're Reformed, evangelical and confessional, and we're not apologetic about that. At the same time, though, we're happy — we're not mad at anybody. We have taken

BY DR. LIGON DUNCAN

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an attitude of appreciative but critical engagement with other evangelical traditions. We genuinely want to serve the whole Christian community, but we know who we are — being firm in our theology but wanting to serve the whole Christian community.

As the late, noted pastor John Reed Miller, whom I succeeded at First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, would say to me regularly, “Ligon, Reformed Christianity is the intellectual muscle system of evangelical Christianity. Evangelical Christianity depends on Reformed theology to keep it centered.” I think one of the reasons there has been a resurgence of Reformed theology in evangelicalism is because during the “battle for the Bible” in the 1970s, the go-to leaders for evangelicalism were Reformed voices like Carl F.H. Henry, Francis Schaeffer, R.C. Sproul, James Montgomery Boice and J.I. Packer. The younger generation began to say, “Reformed theology can’t be that bad, because those are the Bible guys!”

When Mark Dever, Albert Mohler, C.J. Mahaney and I started Together for the Gospel in 2006, we had no idea what we were going to encounter. As we planned the first national conference, Mark and I said, “Oh, there’ll be 247 people there,” while Al said no, it’ll be huge. He was right, because at our first meeting, we had about 3,000 people, and we had to cut off registration two months beforehand. This was not a Presbyterian crowd — they were charismatic, Baptist, independent evangelical and so forth, but they were there because of the Bible and Reformed soteriology.

Thus, the legacy of the “Bible guys” was to mainstream the doctrines of grace into the bloodstream of 21st-century evangelicalism. That’s what created what author Collin Hansen popularly dubbed the “Young, Restless and Reformed” movement. RTS is in a position to be the theological anchoring point for this whole movement. We want to feed into healthy Reformed and Presbyterian denominations that already exist and foster them, and feed into healthy local churches.

Also in this “Young, Restless and Reformed” movement, the next generation of the church is encountering the love and grace of God, with a high view of God, of grace and of sovereignty in the Reformed tradition. Notably, it is attracting people coming from non-Reformed traditions. It is precisely the combination of grace and truth that is serving



as a magnet to these young folks. When I talk to them, I find that many are fatherless. In a fatherless generation, many young people desperately seek spiritual fathers. If we do that, teaching the truth that the Lord has granted us and loving them well, who knows what the Holy Spirit will do in the days to come?

So as you see, I’m excited to be on this journey. The students RTS sends out are living in a culture that is toxic for Christian orthodoxy, eating away at their souls every day. When they begin to waver, they need to know there is a place where people are

not wavering, where they can find strength to go on. **M**

This article is based on a chapel message Dr. Duncan delivered at RTS-Orlando. To view the complete message, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ltyw_pXG1CE.

Partners in the Gospel

ONE WAY IN WHICH RTS WORKS TO SERVE the whole Christian community is through partnerships with like-minded ministries. This spirit of gospel partnership has particularly been demonstrated through the involvement of RTS leaders in two recent conferences.

From December 27-30, 2013, students from around the world gathered in Louisville, Ky., for Cross, a student missions conference that sought to recapture the relationship between biblical orthodoxy and missionary zeal. RTS-Jackson professor Dr. Elias Medeiros gave a breakout session titled “Missions and the Reformation: Did Anyone Give a Rip?” (see pages 6-9 for his article on this subject), and RTS chancellor and CEO Dr. Ligon Duncan gave one on “Complementarianism in Missions.”

Dr. Duncan returned to Louisville from April 8-10 for the biennial pastors conference put on by Together for the Gospel, a movement he helps lead (see main article). Not only was he a plenary speaker, but he also spoke at workshops, and RTS-Atlanta professor Dr. Derek Thomas represented the seminary on the “Preaching Sanctification” panel. **M**

For more information about the two conferences, see cross-con.com and t4g.org, respectively.

Solving a Bigger

A high school math teacher continues his RTS education.

Markus Berger loves geometry. That doesn't exactly qualify him as a nerd — after all, he once worked as a personal trainer, has been into powerlifting and played college football for three years. But it does mark the high school math teacher as a bit different. “It's very intuitive and logical at the same time,” Markus explains about his favorite math subject.

As for his favorite classroom subject, that has taken on a new angle in the past two years as he works toward a Master of Biblical Studies degree at RTS-Houston. Markus continues to work full time as a math teacher as he pursues a path that he hopes, God willing, leads him to become a seminary professor — perhaps even at RTS.

The Cleveland, Ohio, native found out about RTS-Houston through being a ruling elder at Christ Evangelical Presbyterian Church, which hosts the seminary campus. When the first class was offered in 2011, “I was oblivious to it,” Markus admits, but he quickly jumped on board immediately afterward, and is currently about halfway to his degree.

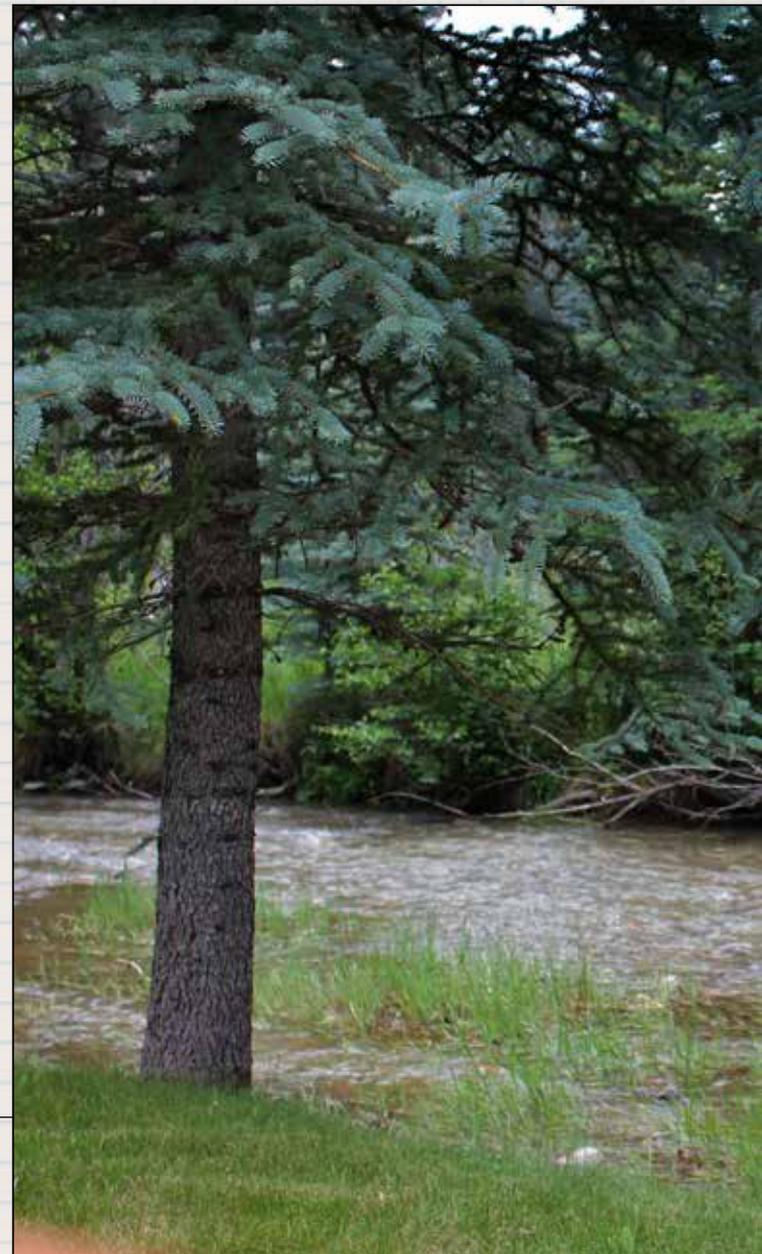
Markus' calling to seminary contains internal and external elements. For one thing, the students in the Sunday school classes he has taught at Christ EPC prompted his thinking. “I got great encouragement from [them] that I should consider going to seminary,” he observes. Their observations complemented the finding of some professional testing he'd done that indicated he might enjoy being a professor.

Initially Markus thought that meant he should consider going back to school to become a math professor, but with the encouragement of others and with the establishment of RTS-Houston, his thinking changed. “I'm even more excited about [theology now],” say Markus, reflecting on the influence of the RTS classroom experience. “I'm pretty new to the Reformed faith. I was being taught [Reformed theology] in my 20s but didn't have a name for it. When I came to Christ EPC and especially to RTS, I realized what I'd been taught in years past. I want to be able to give that back.”

Through his seminary education, Markus wants “to be able to affect students who have a desire and passion to be in the pulpit,” he explains. His passion for missions — his

wife, Anjali, is originally from India, and he is the missions elder at Christ EPC — also weighs heavily on his sense of calling. “I would like to travel to other countries and help provide seminary training they don't have,” he says, adding, “My desire is to come back and teach at RTS.”

In the meantime, the Lord continues to work through Markus as a public school math teacher, in which he is in his eighth year, even though “it's a very tough environment,” he acknowledges, noting the limits on the spiritual content he can convey in the classroom. “When I teach [math], I speak



BY PAUL SCHWARZ

Equation

in terms of principles being knowable because God made them that way — the patterns and the symmetry. I'm telling these kids, who have been inundated with evolution and things being by chance, that there's purpose and specificity behind the principles. I also pray that I'm open to looking for the needs of the kids and addressing them."

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Markus and his wife, Anjali (below with their daughter, Esther) met in Ohio, Markus' home state (Anjali is originally from Mumbai, India).



RTS-Houston: Cool, Diverse and Growing

If attending seminary can qualify as “cool,” then RTS-Houston is the place to do it. After all, according to a 2012 article in *Forbes* magazine, “Move over Austin, L.A. and the Big Apple. Forget Dallas and San Antonio. Houston is now the “coolest” big city in America . . . , beating out D.C., Los Angeles, Dallas and Seattle in the top five.” The magazine used data points such as entertainment options and restaurants to make its designation.

On a deeper level, though, RTS-Houston is strategically located due to its placement in a growing epicenter of ethnic diversity. According to a new report published by Rice University, Houston has surpassed Los Angeles and New York City as the most ethnically diverse metropolitan area in the United States. The city is an especially well-established center for Spanish speakers, with nearly half of Houston’s residents being of Latino origin.

As the social and multicultural reputation of the nation’s fourth most populous city continues to grow, so does the RTS-Houston campus itself. Since 2010 the campus has been hosted by Christ Evangelical Presbyterian Church, which has accommodated the seminary through an addition project that has provided an 800-square-foot library, a 200-seat chapel, four state-of-the-art classrooms and four offices.

“RTS-Houston is uniquely positioned to provide the spiritual preparation needed in today’s world,” concludes Tim McKeown, the campus’ executive director. As the city founded in 1836 continues to step forward into the 21st century, so does the seminary campus planted there.

For more information about RTS-Houston, visit rts.edu/Houston.

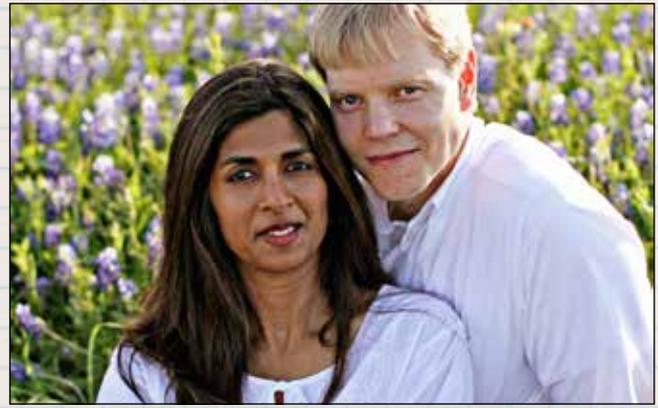
Markus gravitates toward the classroom setting (right); he hopes to eventually become a seminary professor.

Continued from Page 17

Markus then talks about opportunities to minister to students who have come to him and opened up their lives. “I had one particular discussion about sin and how it leads to poor decisions and is an affront to God, and about the need for salvation,” he says. In another conversation, a student told him he was an atheist, and Markus took the time to challenge his presuppositions.

Another recent evangelistic opportunity came at bedtime with his 5-year-old daughter, Esther. Reviewing John 1:12, a memory verse at her Christian school, with her father led to this question: “Daddy, what does it mean to be a child of God?” Markus then had the unenviable task of simplifying theological truth to a level understood by a small child, thus helping lead her one step closer to faith in Christ. “Ministry and missions happens first at home, with my wife and daughter,” he notes.

Whether he’s teaching the gospel to a 5-year-old, theorems and postulates to high schoolers, or Sunday school to adults, one thing is clear: Markus’ life is taking on a divinely crafted shape. **M**



Houston, We Have a PCA General Assembly

In the Presbyterian Church in America, June means one thing: General Assembly. This year’s annual official denominational gathering will take place in Houston from the 17th through the 20th.

With the proximity of RTS-Houston to the General Assembly, the seminary will be well represented beyond the regular display in the exhibit hall. An RTS friends and alumni luncheon will take place on site on June 19. Also, on June 17, as part of the Women in the Church program, RTS-Houston will host a luncheon and has arranged a tour of the Lanier Theological Library in northwest Houston, which includes, among other features, original fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls and a stone chapel that replicates a sixth-century Byzantine church.

The RTS presence at the General Assembly will not be limited to the Houston campus. Dr. Derek Thomas, an RTS-Atlanta professor who is also minister of preaching and teaching at First Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Greenville, S.C., is scheduled to preach at one of the worship services during the event. Other RTS professors and alumni



will participate in other program elements that had yet to be announced at publication time. **M**

For more information about the PCA General Assembly, visit www.pcaac.org/general-assembly.

Striking New Oil

A petroleum engineer from Venezuela describes his journey to faith and to seminary.

One of the most unusual paths to an RTS education belongs to Arnaldo Espinel, who spent the first 30-plus years of his life in his native Venezuela. Arnaldo is a member of Christ Presbyterian Church in Katy, Texas, where RTS-Houston adjunct professor Dr. Duncan Rankin is an associate pastor and RTS-Jackson alumnus Fred Greco is senior pastor.

I first came to the U.S. from Venezuela in 1996 to receive a master's degree in petroleum engineering from Texas A&M University. I went back to Venezuela to work for the national oil company there, but in 1998, the country began to change toward communism. Everyone who was against the regime was fired, and finding another job was impossible because we were blacklisted.

So I called my mentor at Texas A&M, who encouraged me to come back here and find a job in the petroleum industry, which I did. I continue to work here because I am literally an exile from Venezuela. I see now that God wanted me here, because after I came here I began to study faith. For a long time I was looking to verify my faith — I wanted to be sure I was in the right place. I grew up in religious tradition, but I didn't practice the faith when I was an adult.

One day, I started reading books and studying the Bible. When I did, I started to see there was something beyond where I was, and I needed to understand it. I actually started teaching other people how to read the Bible, and even started some religious doctrine courses. This is when I began to understand that I couldn't be saved by my works. I felt guilty all the time, and it seemed to me that being a Christian should be something different than what I'd believed.

In this search, God took me in different ways to various Reformed resources, and I understood for the first time what I needed. Now I'm looking to please God instead of trying to be worthy of heaven. Christ has saved me, for which I'm grateful, and my character and my priorities have definitely changed, including my attitude toward work. Before, ev-

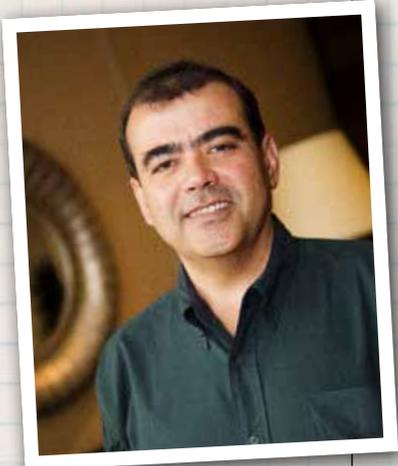
erything depended on my work and on me — I needed to work hard for my wife and kids, to do something for God so I can please Him, so that then I could be saved. Now I understand that justification comes from Jesus and not from my works.

When I began to follow the Reformed faith, I wasn't even going to a Reformed church. I was nurtured through the Reformed resources I mentioned earlier. So, using the Internet, I started my own research to determine which church was the right one. When I was saved for the first time, I found many theological trends, and I thought, Who's right? I opened the window to see the whole Christian world, and they all taught different things, and felt lost in the jungle.

As part of the process, I started researching different seminaries. I like to study — in Venezuela I studied business administration for five years and got my degree through night school while working as an engineer. I compared seminaries and institutions, and it seemed like RTS-Houston was the right one. Along with that I concluded that I needed to find a Reformed church. That's how I found Christ Presbyterian. I'm a candidate to be a deacon, I've begun teaching some Sunday school classes, and Pastor Rankin encouraged me to apply for pastoral candidacy in the presbytery.

In coming to RTS and Christ PCA, I was guided by the Holy Spirit, for sure. I've been working as an engineer and taking one course per semester, and now I'll be taking two courses per semester so I can finish in 2016. I feel like God is calling me to preaching and teaching — preparing to be a pastor and teacher is my No. 1 goal.

Everything works perfectly in God's plan. If I had remained in Venezuela, if I had not been fired, I would not have the faith I have now, and I wouldn't have found such a good place to study. Now that I'm in my second year at RTS-Houston, the most important thing is to be able to eventually dedicate myself to the ministry of the gospel. **M**



From the Outside In

Dr. Voddie Baucham is a husband, father, pastor, author, conference speaker and church planter. The pastor of preaching at Grace Family Baptist Church in Spring, Texas, can now add visiting lecturer at RTS-Houston to his assortment of hats.

An emerging leader in the Reformed evangelical movement, Voddie did not hear the gospel until he was in college. As a result of his understanding of what it means to be a skeptic, he has developed a reputation for defying convention and for speaking to “outsiders” in ways few Bible teachers can.

M&L managing editor Paul Schwarz caught up with Voddie one afternoon to hear him address his perspectives on various subjects, especially multiculturalism.

Q How did someone from your cultural background come to the Reformed faith?

I didn't grow up in church at all, raised by a single, teenage mother in south central Los Angeles. Some football teammates of mine at Rice University in Houston took me under their wing and disciplined me. They even gave me my first preaching opportunities, noticing gifts in me early on.

Eventually I went to seminary and didn't have any Reformed training there — in fact, it was very antagonistic toward any Reformed understanding. As I began to serve churches, I realized I had been trained as a social Arminian in a man-centered mindset, and it never set well with me.

So I began to research Reformed writers — Calvin, Edwards, Spurgeon and the like — and it resonated with me. Slowly but surely I began to self-identify with Reformed doctrine. It was like a breath of fresh air. I also had begun to back away from some inconsistent practices, and now I had an epistemological foundation upon which to build.

Q You are especially well known for your perspective on Christian education. How are young people different today from other generations?

Not just decades but centuries ago, young people had been catechized as the norm. They had a home, education and church life surrounding them and developing them in a consistent, confessional framework. Today, though, the alarming majority of children, whether churchled or not, are not catechized in a Christian education.

Then, in churches, they're in fiercely pragmatic settings that fight for their attention by catering to their desires, which have been shaped by the anti-Christian culture at large. It's a perfect storm, and the result is rootless children.

Christian Smith, in his book *Soul Searching*, characterizes the worldview of even churchled young people as moralistic therapeutic deism. It's fascinating research, but it's also common sense. If kids aren't experiencing regular family worship and are not being catechized, if they're not receiving Christian education, and if pragmatism rules the day in their non-confessional, fiercely pragmatic churches, what else could we possibly expect?

Q How does the church adapt to the multicultural, multiethnic world we now live in?

In his book *The Gagging of God*, D.A. Carson talks about pluralism in three different ways. First, there's empirical pluralism. Here in Houston, there are about 74 foreign consulates, and according to some estimations, it is the most ethnically diverse city in the country. So empirically speaking, diversity is a simple fact.

But then you go from empirical pluralism to cherished pluralism, which adds value, saying that something more diverse is inherently better than something less diverse. That's where you start running into problems. Now we start measuring success merely by how much diversity we have in our midst. That's wrong-headed. The next step is philosophical pluralism — the idea that there are no absolutes at all.

We're at a place of cherished pluralism in much of modern American Christianity, and it's dangerous. For example, you see one church with two different ethnicities, and another with four different ethnicities, and you think the church with the four different ethnicities has to be doing the better job of being the church, right? It may be, though, that that's the neighborhood they're in, and they're no more welcoming or loving to people different than them. Or those four different ethnicities are broken up in four different pockets and are not sharing community like they ought.

So I'm very cautious about the push for diversity. I desire that all people would hear the gospel and be saved, that God would bring to His church all those whom He would call. The minute I start playing the diversity game, I'm in danger of stepping over certain lost people in favor of other lost people because I need to ramp up my ethnic diversity quota. And that's usually problematic.



Q How is it problematic?

In a number of ways — first, because we change our priorities. Instead of being set on faithfulness, now we've added another category. Faithfully preaching the gospel and seeing God bring whoever He brings is no longer enough. Now we have too many white people being saved, or too many black people being saved. Now I'm a failure because as the gospel is being preached and as God is drawing people, they don't look like what we think we ought to look like. It's not a biblical category of measuring success.

If there's a problem with our not being welcoming or with being prejudiced toward people, then that's sin, and we need to deal with that. But our goal is faithfulness in the gospel.

Q It has been said that 11 a.m. to noon on Sundays is the most segregated hour in our country. How valid is that statement, and how much of a concern is it?

Is it a valid statement? Probably. Is it a reason for alarm? No, because people tend to go to church with people who are like them, and that's always been the case.

I don't think we're seeing today what we saw in the '40s and '50s, where churches were segregated because people were being refused entrance. That's simply not the case. So is

the statement true? Sure, it could be. But is it better in those other hours of the week when people are together because they're forced together? Inherently in that statement, we're saying that the church is wrong and awful because we're not seeing the demographic breakdown that other institutions are seeing during the week.

In our schools, for example, you see different ethnicities together, but these same people are not going to church together. But they're going to school together because the law forces them to. That's what I mean by cherished pluralism. Now we're thinking we're inferior to an institution that is forcing diversity on people, and that is simply not the case. If there's sinful separation, that's a problem, but the fact that people tend to congregate with people who are like them in a variety of ways is not necessarily a problem.

Q With that in mind, what is your church's philosophy of ministry?

Our vision is to be a kingdom-building, Christ-exalting, multigenerational community of faith. We want to be about multigenerational discipleship. So we have a huge emphasis on family discipleship, on the responsibility of this genera-

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tion to communicate truth to the next generation, primarily in the context of the home.

As we talked about earlier, what's the major problem with this next generation — why is it so rootless? It's because they're growing up in homes where they're not being enveloped with gospel-centeredness or saturated with catechesis. We want to change that, to see young people given a Christian education. We see churches that are fiercely pragmatic, and we want to change that too. We want to see a generation encased on all sides with the truth, and we want to see this communicated both inside and outside the home, as the gospel is proclaimed by individuals infected with these truths.

Q What counsel would you give a young person today who is considering a call to ministry?

I have a definition I work from: When you have God-given gifts, talents, abilities and desires in the life of an individual who meets biblical qualifications, and those things come in contact with a divine opportunity, then you have a call. You need all three of those.

The first is, do you have the goods — gifts, talents, abilities and desires? The second thing is, do you meet the qualifications? God lines those up clearly and for a reason. Then, does the church agree with you? That's what I mean by divine opportunity.

So often, especially in this individualistic generation, you have those who give themselves a calling — “I have a strong feeling; therefore I'm called.” Like I tell young people all the time, until the church says you're called, you're not called. People find that offensive because there's this fierce sense of “You can't tell me what God's called me to do!” I stop them right there and say, “You have a huge problem, because now you sound like that man who says, ‘That woman's going to be my wife! I don't care if she likes me or not!’” It just doesn't work.

You have a generation that doesn't love the church, and therefore their idea of calling, ministry and service doesn't even include the church, let alone submit to the church. That's why I try to get them thinking that yes, you need gifts, talents, abilities and desires, and you need that internal sense of call, but there are qualifications to meet, and you can't feel your way around those. If you don't meet the

qualifications, you're out of there. And then the bride has to agree, to confirm, to say, “This is what we see.”

Q You have a staff member of your church and a daughter who attend RTS-Houston. What blessings have you seen from this?

It's encouraging to me to see both of them at a place that's right in line with who they are, with their Reformed leanings. To see them in a setting like that has been a blessing to me. So to be asked to be a part of that is a tremendous honor. I love the church and having a hand in helping individuals who desire to serve the church. I want to give counsel, give knowledge, share my experience and do whatever I can to strengthen them and perhaps lighten their load.



Q What else do you want to impart to students?

My strengths are connected in large part to the way I came to faith. My interest in cultural apologetics, preaching and teaching apologetically — all these are rooted and grounded in the fact that I came to faith from the outside in, remembering what it's like to be a skeptic, to have questions, to feel like I was OK and didn't need Jesus. In light of that, I think I bring a unique perspective, a unique voice. Also, I believe that the perspective I bring from pastoral ministry and the opportunities I've had beyond that will add another dimension. I'm excited about it. **M**

For more information about Voddie, visit www.gracefamilybaptist.net/voddie-baucham-ministries.

Continued from Page 3

ALUMNI EVENTS

Breakfast for alumni and friends, ARP Synod, June 11, 7 a.m., Bonclarken Christian Conference Center, Flat Rock, N.C.

Lunch for alumni and friends, PCA General Assembly, June 19, noon, Lanier Grand Ballroom J, Hilton of the Americas, Houston.

Breakfast, EPC General Assembly, June 20, Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tenn. (reserve a spot online during registration at epc.org).

COMMENCEMENTS

Atlanta



May 17, 10 a.m., in the chapel. Speaker: Dr. L. Roy Taylor, stated clerk of the PCA, adjunct professor of practical theology at RTS-Jackson.

Charlotte



May 24, 11 a.m., Christ Covenant Church, Matthews, N.C. Speaker: Dr. John Yates II, rector of The Falls Church Anglican, Falls Church, Va.

Orlando



May 23, 7:30 p.m., St. Andrews Chapel, Sanford, Fla. Speaker: Dr. Philip G. Ryken, president of Wheaton College.

Jackson

May 17, 10 a.m., First Presbyterian Church, Jackson. Speaker: Dr. Ligon Duncan, chancellor and CEO of RTS.

Washington

May 30, 7:30 p.m., McLean Presbyterian Church, McLean, Va. Speaker: Dr. Ligon Duncan.

A Gentleman and a Scholarship

On March 6 RTS-Jackson honored a beloved professor who passed away in 2012, publicly launching a scholarship fund in his name. The celebration of the life and work of Dr. Knox Chamblin, held at the library on campus, featured several speakers, including his daughters, Claire Holley and Beverly Harmon. Claire, a Los Angeles-based singer/songwriter known for her rootsy style, performed at the event.

Dr. Ralph Davis, a longtime professor colleague of Dr. Chamblin, delivered some of the honoring remarks. He characterized his friend as “humorous,” “thorough,” “faithful” and “balanced,” recalling, “[At RTS-Jackson] our biblical studies division would have a weekly prayer time. The rest of us might note prayer requests on a slice of paper, but Knox had a notebook. Perhaps several weeks later he might ask one of us about a certain matter or person we had brought up for prayer. It was in Knox’s book — he had continued to pray about that; he had not forgotten.”

With such pastoral care, Dr. Chamblin helped model the pastor/scholar ideal. Now, through the Knox Chamblin Scholarship, RTS-Jackson has established a new means of helping prepare the next generation of pastor/scholars.

For information about contributing to the scholarship fund, contact Lyn Perez at lperez@rts.edu.

Samples of Claire Holley’s music can be heard at claireholley.com/music.



Claire Holley, one of the daughters of the late Dr. Knox Chamblin, performs a song during the event that launched a scholarship fund named for him.



IMMERSE YOURSELF



If you are a serious student of the Word, or if you wish to teach the Bible as a layman, or if you want to get a head start on seminary as you prepare to be a pastor, RTS has an opportunity just for you. To better understand the Bible, attend the Summer Institute for Biblical Languages at RTS-Jackson.

The best way to learn a language is by total immersion — and for three hours a day, five days a week for eight weeks, you can do just that at the SIBL. You'll receive a thorough

introduction to biblical languages in an encouraging yet intensive group environment.

Learn Hebrew and Aramaic from Dr. Miles Van Pelt, Greek from Dr. Ben Gladd, and Latin from Dr. Guy Waters. In just those eight short weeks, you will complete a full year's worth of language study.

So take the plunge today and register for the SIBL in Jackson — an investment in the study of timeless languages will reap eternal rewards.

