



"The great trumpet will be blown,
they will come,
who are about to perish"

The Trumpet

Isaiah 27:13 (NKJ).

Christ Reformed Church Washington, DC. - Dr. Brian J. Lee

In November, Christ Reformed celebrated four years of worshiping in Washington. I wanted to take this opportunity to bring up to date those who have supported our mission work in the nation's Capital.

Our fourth year of ministry was also my first full year focusing exclusively on pastoral ministry. Being able to focus on the one job of pastor and church planter opened doors for many new outreach opportunities. Looking back and taking stock, I realize that 2011 was a very busy year indeed.

We kicked off 2011 with a series of lunches on Capitol Hill addressing the topic of "Christianity & Politics 101." I was subsequently asked to deliver a number of lectures on this topic, including to a conference of the Christian Legal Society and luncheon with over 200 congressional staffers hosted by the Center for Christian Statesmanship. This series led me to become a regular contributor to The Daily Caller, a political news and opinion website in DC (dailycaller.com/author/brianlee). Each of these opportunities has enabled me to promote the work of Christ Reformed Church both directly and indirectly, and we are grateful that we have been presented with so many open doors.

"Christianity & Politics" was also the topic for our annual speaker series in October. Michael Horton, Darryl Hart, and former Bush Speechwriter Michael Gerson (among others) visited with us at Christ Reformed. One highlight of this series was our largest worship service yet, with 75 in attendance to hear Dr. Horton preach.

An unexpected result of my full-time work this year was the discovery of a new home for Christ Reformed. As a result of neighborhood outreach, I developed a relationship Grace Reformed Church, a

ultimately led to a move into our new facility in July.

Why the move? While only a few blocks away from our former home, the new location is far better. We now share a city block with a Whole Foods market and a bustling retail and dining sector. There are 12,000 residences within a half mile of our front door. At our Christmas Lessons and Carols service, people were continually walking by, popping their heads inside, and asking about our church. We aim to build a presence in this community, and have our doors open as frequently as possible.

The new facility also offered far more amenities for a comparable price, including air conditioning (pew!), a kitchen and fellowship area, dedicated space for our teaching service, and an office for me to use as a pastor's study. We now feel as though we have a home in the city, and pray that we may continue in this location for many years.

Of course, churches are not made up primarily of buildings and events, but people. The greatest delight this year has been truly serving as a pastor for the first time, visiting with our flock, spending time in their homes, catechizing and interviewing new members. We were also finally able to launch our catechism service on the Lord's Day, helping us grow deeper spiritually as we explore together the foundations of our faith.

Though we have welcomed many new members this year, we have also experienced the loss of departing families, an all-too common part of life in DC. This year, departures hit our leadership, as we bid farewell to an Elder and a Deacon and their beloved families. We have now lost 3 of 4 officers during our brief existence. Developing leadership is one of the great challenges of a young church, and I covet your prayers that the Lord will supply this need at Christ Reformed as he has supplied so many others.

The other pressing need is finances. Throughout our history, our core group of members has been exceedingly generous, and this year our internal offerings provided for more than half of our budget. But this still leaves us dependent upon churches and outside individuals. Our budget for 2012 is \$165,000, of which we are seeking \$75,000 from external sources. We are very grateful for the abundance of year-end giving that we received toward this goal in December, both from churches and from faithful individuals.

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I believe now, much more strongly than I did four years ago, that believers in general radically underinvests in the mission work of planting churches here at home. We bemoan the state of the church, yet we do little to plant vibrant churches where God's Word is central, Christ is preached, and sinners are comforted with the Gospel.

Part of this is emotional. Church planting is hard work, and we are unaccustomed to the slow working of the means of grace.

But we learn from the sower casting his seed. He watches it get snatched up by ravenous birds, choked by weeds, burnt by the sun. Only a fraction grows to fruitful maturity, and that after a long season of growth. It is far more rewarding for us to give a charitable gift that builds a house or feeds a child tomorrow, than it is to buy a sack of spiritual seed that bears fruit five, ten, or fifteen years down the road. Yet this long-term investment is dearly needed. We plant, we water — God gives the growth.

Thank you for your prayers and support of the work of the saints in Washington, DC.

Spanish ministry at Ontario United Reformed Church

On behalf of the Spanish ministry at Ontario United Reformed Church, I want to thank all of you for your financial and prayerful support throughout the year. We are so grateful for the support that we have received from individuals, families and sister churches in our federation. Your partnership with us in the Gospel ministry is a tremendous source of encouragement (Philippians 1:3-8)

We are the only Spanish Reformed confessional church serving Los Angeles, Riverside and San

Bernardino, and Orange counties. The Spanish members are well aware of this fact, and we actually have members and regular visitors who come from all of these counties.

This year has been encouraging in terms of evangelism and outside support. With regards to evangelism, Ontario URC has worked with a local organization called Food for Life which gives boxes of food for needy families. Food for Life partners with churches so that churches can witness to these needy families from the local neighborhood. At the Thanksgiving event in downtown Chino, over 400 needy families came for the food distribution. This great turnout was due in large part to the six churches which organized the event. On December 10, Ontario URC was the hosting church for the food distribution. We had approximately 220 people attend our event. At both events, the majority of the people were Spanish-speakers from the surrounding communities. They were greatly encouraged to receive Spanish Bibles and Spanish Christian literature. We have had several visitors come to our Spanish services as a result of our contact with them at these events.

In terms of fundraising, we praise God that we have surpassed our goal for this year in terms of outside support for the Spanish ministry. The extra money that was received will be counted towards 2012. This is wonderful news because our fundraising goal for 2012 will be higher (\$25,000) as Ontario URC weans us off their support. So your contribution is helping the Spanish ministry stay well funded.

This outpouring of support is very encouraging news because 2012 is a critical year for our ministry. Since Ontario URC has seen a decline in their general fund offerings, they are unable to provide for the Spanish ministry beyond 2012. However, with a broad base of outside support within our federation, we are praying we can continue for the long term. For 2013, we will need \$44,000 in outside support. I am planning to make this annual financial need known at the upcoming Synod meeting this summer. We need at least 7-8 churches to commit to a \$500/month or \$6000/year to meet our budget. We need your help.

Given the socio-economic realities of the Latino community, it is difficult to be a financially independent church. Many Spanish speakers are struggling first generation immigrants who can

barely provide enough for their own families. Without your financial help, we will not be able to continue our outreach to them. I will keep all of our supporters aware our financial status throughout the year. Please pray that the Lord would continue providing and guiding the Spanish ministry. On behalf of each of us here, we extend to you our warmest Christmas and New Year's greetings. May the Lord watch over you and care for you in the upcoming year.

In His service, Pastor Ruben

HISPANIC CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

A Ministry of Covenant Reformed Church of Toronto in Partnership with Faith United Reformed Church of West Olive, Michigan

MINTS-CA Convention Report Newsletter –
January 16-20, 2012

Dear Supporters of Hispanic Christian Ministry:

In every ministry there are landmark events that mark significant development. By the grace of God, the ministry of MINTS in Central America (MINTS-CA) just went through one of those milestone events on January 16-20 at a retreat centre in Nicaragua. After a year of planning, and with the generous gift of a church underwriting the costs, the event took place, going beyond the expectations projected for the occasion. God has been at work throughout this event.

There were 30 national delegates at the conference, representing each of the seven countries in Central America with the exception of Guatemala, whose delegates had travel problems and had to return. It was a great opportunity for leaders of MINTS Centres in Central America to meet face-to-face. What was encouraging for me was that I led only one of the presentations, a 2-hour seminar on administration training. It was a blessing to see national leaders lead the conferences and seminars. I coordinated the event but I had the support of a planning team made up 4 national leaders. During the convention the national leaders amazed me with their gifts of leadership. Some of the leaders know far more than I do about the used of technology in leadership training. I learned a lot from them!

The first day was spent listening to the invited conference speaker, a national Colombian MINTS professor, who did an 8-hour conference on the subject of Spiritual Warfare, and has written a book (a MINTS course) on the subject. He was well received. It motivated MINTS-CA leaders to reflect on the fact that if he (a national) can do it, so can we (also nationals). The second day was spent with each centre sharing the history, experience, goals, accomplishments and challenges of developing MINTS Centres. For example, MINTS-El Salvador introduced their web page:

(<http://simesvirtual.jimdo.com/>).

That was an opportunity for sharing ideas, and also provided opportunity for each centre to realize that they are not alone in dealing with the challenges and frustration of student desertion, struggling attendance, etc. The third day we had seminars led by MINTS-CA national leaders on the following themes:

- 1) Administration – Developing a MINTS Centres, communication, student data administration, etc.
- 2) Video-conferencing – A methodology which could complement the “on-site” course conferences
- 3) Using E-Sword (a free Bible Study software program integrating Scripture with solid commentaries)
- 4) How to Write a MINTS Course – Training for Master’s thesis of writing a course and the DMin program.
- 5) Presentation of Project 66 (MINTS-CA students to write one MINTS course for each book of the Bible). The delegates went home with a packet of five books written by MINTS-CA students and professors!
- 6) Integrating ThirdMill curriculum with MINTS – (a Reformed Theological Education video-based program)
- 7) Introduction of the MINTS-CA Web Page (<http://www.mintsca.co.cc/>)
- 8) Establishing a vision for the future of MINTS in Central America

In addition to national participation in the meal devotions, in the evenings we had singing and a message. We went from 7:30 am to 10 pm with two hour lunch and supper breaks. At the concluding session (A vision for MINTS-CA) they chose a logo for MINTS-CA (above) and formed a board of directors with a representative from each country. This will mean a bit of a different way of working in



MINTS-CA, but it will be a great way to train some of the more prominent leaders to take on growing leadership roles amongst their peers.

To God be the Glory!

Rev. Eric Pennings, Missionary, Covenant Reformed Church of Toronto, Miami International Seminary (MINTS) Central America Regional Coordinator

Canadian Donations: Hispanic Christian Ministry, c/o Covenant Reformed Church, 265 Albion Road, Toronto, Ontario M9W 3P1

US Donations: Hispanic Christian Ministry, c/o Faith United Reformed Church, 8270 120th Ave.,

West Olive, Michigan 49460

The formation of Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary in Danville Correctional Center brings new meaning to Psalm 146:7, "The Lord sets the prisoners free." May many prisoners bound by the chains of sin experience the true freedom found only in Christ!

Ongoing URC Missions

Foreign Missions

Armenia	Costa Rica
Honduras	India
Mexico (Tepic)	Philippines
Trinidad	

Church Plants

Sioux Falls, SD	Toronto
Washington, DC	Niagra Falls Ontario

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