



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

The Trumpet

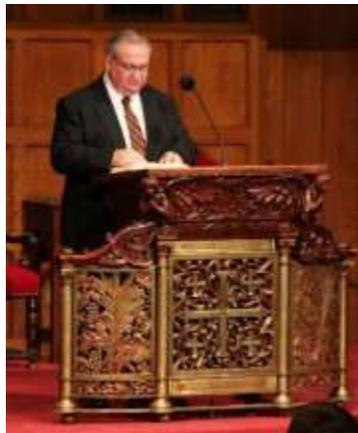
Isaiah 27:13 (NKJ).

Ch Ch Ch Chuh CHANGES...

MESSIAH'S REFORMED FELLOWSHIP - New York City

Ch Ch Ch Chuh CHANGES... that is the word of the year here at MeRF! We have experienced many changes in our church recently, but that is just part of urban ministry.

First—let me thank all who prayed for me, sent notes, emails, cards and even gifts during my recent illness. On March 2, I had my cancerous prostate removed. Testing



showed that the cancer had not spread. Blood tests in June will determine if I'm cancer free! My family and I are deeply humbled by your concern for us. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. What a joy to be part of the family of God (Matt. 19:29).

January brought our first changes. Our lease was not renewed downtown and so we needed to find a new space to worship. The whole process was extremely difficult. At the same time, sixty-eight churches around the city were threatened by Mayor Bloomberg's administration with eviction from the public schools where they were meeting. So, in a city where space is at a premium to begin with, it suddenly became

the Lord led us to a space on East 22nd street at a small, private French school. The rent was \$39,000 a year (for Sundays only!).

A blessed change came on January 13th as we officially organized as a separate URCNA congregation. We now have two elders and one deacon and were welcomed into Classis East as a full church member. Over two hundred people attended the organizing service from five states. It was a glorious evening.

We continued to search for an alternate worship location. Again though, God provided an even better space! We now rent from a Seventh Day Adventist church on West 45th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues (just west of Times Square). This area of town is called "Hell's Kitchen". Why, you ask? Check it out at www.wikipedia.org. The rent here is high, but less than our previous location, thankfully. This is also why we continue to be dependent on your support.

It is a great facility with everything we wanted – a 300-seat auditorium complete with padded pews, an organ and grand piano, a dining hall and full kitchen, four floors, and parking on the street (a HUGE advantage in this town!) Now, with the extra space, we do hope the Lord adds to our numbers.

In any case, that is already happening – with babies! You may recall that a few newsletters ago I told you about the singles getting married in our church. We now are blessed to have 5 pregnancies! Our group has gone from primarily all singles to a congregation filled with new life. Further good news is that there are more new

relationships moving towards marriage as well.

This is somewhat ironic, you know. I have been travelling around teaching other congregations about evangelism and local outreach. Now, right here in the big apple we are engaged (punny, huh?) in some "Dutch evangelism" of our own as MeRF grows biologically!

More change. Providentially our Ground Zero area ministries have all undergone dramatic shifts as well. Recall that we had three main ministries –the Wall Street Bible study (teaching worldview and Christ's Lordship over business, finance, and economics), teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) at a local NYC public High School, and a visitation ministry at the local hospital. ALL of them have ceased or scaled back.

For unknown reason, beginning in fall 2008 with the economic shake-up on Wall Street, the attendance at our Tuesday, Wall Street study continually dwindled.

My Christian contact at the local public high school was laid off, school also changed principals and abolished the Business Advisory Council, the Parent Association (formerly responsible for sponsoring our ESL classes) ceased to function. In one fell swoop, and in one month; our fruitful ministry among non-English speaking immigrants was over. Our hospital ministry has also seen changes. The meditation room (as close to a chapel as it got) was renovated into a doctor's lounge, leaving no space for the staff prayer meeting and no new space available. Also, our church members that were volunteers had their ministry severely impaired due to one patient complaint (unfounded, as an investigation showed). Now instead of visiting all patients, they are only allowed to visit a handful. I remain the protestant chaplain and am still on the ethics

committee, but our ministry presence and influence is drastically impaired.

So, it seems that the Lord was preparing us to move uptown to W. 45th street and we are praying for Jehovah to show us how and where we can minister in the Hell's Kitchen and Times Square areas of Manhattan.

Years ago, as a fairly new convert, I recall writing on the inside cover of my Bible a quote from C.T. Studd, a 19th century English missionary to India, China, and Africa:

*Some want to live
within the sound
of church or chapel bell;
I want to run
a rescue shop
within a yard of hell*

Has the Lord answered my prayer? We will certainly find out as MeRF now takes up the challenge of ministering to the people of Hell's Kitchen. Please pray to the Lord of the Harvest to give us a new harvest in this

part of town.

Our seminarian, Sam Perez, graduates this spring as well as welcoming his first child. Sam plans to plant a church just a stone's throw across the Hudson River in NJ. We expect a summer 2013 launch. There is already a core group with many from MeRF.

Please continue to pray for us as we go through all these changes. We are confident in that, for what the Lord requires, He provides. We trust His grace and have faith that He will continue to lead and bless as He has done so many times before.

Thank you all for remaining faithful to this work here in New York City. Our blessings are yours as well!

*His servant, and yours,
Paul Murphy*



Technology Effective at MINTS in Columbia

MINTS has been working in Columbia since 2002. MINTS is approaching 450 graduates and the number keeps growing. It is encouraging to see our graduates develop new churches as well as work with MINTS study groups.

I visit the groups equipped with 16 KB usbs (memory stick) for each group. It contains all of our courses (over 100 in Spanish), teacher instructions, academic and administration documents, a 7,000+ volume digital Spanish theological library, in other words, a compete seminary institution. Each study group leaders receives the usb and one by one copies the information to the lap top and computers of the students. If the student does not have a computer, he can store this information on his own usb and use someone else's computer. The materials can only be used for educational purposes.

On this trip I am promoting the completion of Project 66 Columbia. Our senior Bachelor students and master students are writing commentaries on each of the books of the Bible. All of the books have been designated. Fifteen Colombian commentaries have been approved so far (www.mints espanol.co.cc) and so we have 51 to go.

Cartagena. March 19. Jose Rios, one of our first graduates on the north coast, has several study groups in Cartagena. Jose is a full time school teacher and a leading pastor in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Colombia. Jose is an avid reader and enjoys securing reading materials for his students. I introduce my course on the Free Growth of the Church to a group of about 12 students and an equal number of visitors.

Barranquilla. March 20, 21. I take the shuttle van over to Barranquilla. These drivers are in their INDY 500 every day! It's good to stay at the home of Pastor Rafael Leal. We spend hours catching up on the

news and problem solving. Our graduation this evening is a group that Jose Rios, one of Rafael's disciples, formed in Barranquilla. There are 8 graduates, mostly OCPC pastors. They represent a growing church movement. Helping here as secretary for MINTS is Maria Fernanda, one of our students from Villavicencio, our first group in Colombia, and her husband, Gabriel.

Santa Marta, March 22. Before going to Santa Marta, on Thursday morning met with a group of church ladies who are studying to complete their bachelor degree. They work with a Baptist project that uses MINTS courses. They are counselors, Sunday school teachers, youth workers, family counselors and teachers. They are studying a course that I wrote, so hopefully I was able to give them a good orientation.

Took the shuttle bus to Santa Marta. There was a strike on the road; residents did not receive portable water. So we have to wait until the water truck arrived. We finally arrive in Santa Marta. Pastor Jaime Leal is busy with developing churches leaders as well as keeping up on the demands of an orphanage and Christian school. The class in the evening goes well.

Fusa. March 23. I check my email before "hitting the road again" and was pleased to see that the Presbyterians seminary in Villahermosa, Mexico is going to use MINTS to open a study center in Oaxaca. They will use our graduates as teachers.

Today I fly to Bogota and meet with Dr. Ismael Quintero. It feels good to make the transition from the hot tropical coast to cool mountainous region of Bogota. Ismael and Juan Jose Davila pick me up and go right away to Fusa, where a MINTS graduate has a group of students waiting. The group in Fusa was founded in the charismatic tradition but now are discovering Reformed theology. Their learning curve is impressive. In the evening we return over the treacherous mountain roads back to Bogota.

Bogota, March 24, 25. Met with Ismael in the morning, organizing student materials

and registrations as well as planning future events. In October we hope to celebrate MINTS 10th anniversary in Colombia. In the afternoon about 50 persons meet at the Ebenezer Church for the conference. We had a blessed time together. Bogota has 8 study groups and they are very well organized.

On Sunday I visit the Ismael's congregation, Amor y Vida. What a delight. The church has grown with new families. Kids all over the place. The church is celebrating their 11th anniversary next week. They support 4 other churches and all the pastors, elders and deacons are MINTS students. I am grateful the Lord is using us to build His precious Church. Also, Amor y Vida have established a foundation that works with the homeless nearby. They modeled their work after our homeless ministry in Miami.

I say goodbye to my host family. The husband is a well known university professor but he is agnostic. We spoke at length about evolution, faith, the Bible and other relevant topics. Upon leaving I gave him a Spanish copy of R.C. Sproul's, Now That is a Good Question. I think he will enjoy it.

Trip home goes smooth. It is good to catch up on family news and church events. I have to scramble to get \$5,000 over to Max Van Til, who together with a work team from Toronto Christian High School students, are rebuilding a house of a church member with six children that burned down in Sabana Grande de Boya, Dominican Republic, our former mission field. This is a special diaconal project we are raising money for. If you are interested in donating please designate your gift to Hegeman ministry and below, Building Project, and send to:

Trinity Reformed Church, 2220 Hancock Bridge Parkway, Cape Coral, Fl., 33990, or,

Covenant Reformed Church, deacons, 265 Albion Road, Toronto, ON, M9W3P1, or,

MINTS, 14401 Old Cutler Rd., Miami, Florida, 33158

Yours in His mission, Neal Hegeman

Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary Begins Classes

Spring 2012 witnessed the inauguration of a new Reformed seminary. The location of the new theological school is the Danville Correctional Center in Danville, Illinois.



For a decade, members of United Reformed churches in northwest Indiana and Chicagoland have traveled to Danville for worship services on Sunday. Manny Mill, the director of Koinonia House National Ministries, initially encouraged the men to meet some of the Danville men at the gate. But men from DeMotte, Indiana ran into the problem that Christian neighbors leaving an Illinois prison could not be paroled to Indiana. Then Manny encouraged the men to look into starting a theological school in Danville. For many years, Manny has taken hundreds of visitors to Angola Prison, the Louisiana State Penitentiary, where the New Orleans Baptist Seminary has been operating a satellite campus since 1995. The theological school in Angola educated men who began to transform the environment in the prison that has 4,000 lifers and 1,000 men on death row. Since 1995 violence has gone down another 75% in Angola. Now graduates of the seminary are being sent out two by two to other penitentiaries within the state of Louisiana. A number of

churches operate within Angola. The inmates built one large church building with donated funds—it seats around 700 people.

There was the hope that Mid-America Reformed Seminary could establish a satellite campus in Danville. But accreditation issues ended that desire. A board of directors was formed in the summer of 2011 with the goal of starting an independent Reformed seminary that would be dedicated to providing theological education for men imprisoned at Danville. Danville C.C. is a medium/high security facility that is the home to 1,800 men.

Rev. Nathan Brummel was hired in December 2011 to be the first administrator and professor of the new prison seminary. Professor Brummel moved to the DeMotte, Indiana area where he is now an associate pastor at Immanuel URC on loan as a professor of theology to Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary.

The new school was inaugurated in Spring 2012 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony that Warden Keith Anglin hosted. Jon Hoek, President of the board, began with a meditation and by introducing the various guests. President Hoek spoke of a “theology of weakness”—acknowledging that weak, imperfect men have supported this project, but God alone had opened doors and blessed the work. Then Dr. Nelson Kloosterman and Professor Brummel gave lectures that laid out the vision and mission for the new Reformed theological school.

Dr. Nelson Kloosterman lectured on the Reformed theological education and social justice. He emphasized that Reformed theological instruction is Bible-based, Christ-centered, a community endeavor, and it is only “worth it’s salt” if it is life-changing. Being Christ-centered, Reformed theological instruction should lead the students to love Jesus better than they loved Him before! Kloosterman stated that social justice from a Reformed perspective is other-directing. The fruit of instruction is that students will have hearts and hands

willing to serve other people. Christians who exercise social justice “learn to apply God’s Word and principles to real concrete specific life.” The lecture concluded with a discussion of the opportunities and challenges of theological students living out their faith within the prison context. They have an opportunity to demonstrate the power of the gospel. The prison environment is a needy environment, but it can also be a model environment. “The Lord is doing great things among Christians in prison.” Therefore it is not only a place for evangelism but “a field for cultivation and development.” Dr. Kloosterman concluded by warning the new students how knowledge without love puffs up. The students were exhorted to grow in both knowledge and love because they “need a knowledge that is directed and led by love for God, each other, and the wider population.”

Professor Nathan Brummel then lectured on “Theological Education for Moral Rehabilitation.” He discussed some of the unhelpful Pelagian connotations of the word “rehabilitation”, a term that is widely used in secular circles. Maybe it would be better to talk about “Theological Education for Moral Rehabilitation.” He pointed out that Jesus taught that theological knowledge is useful for moral transformation. During His high-priestly prayer, Jesus prayed: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17) Therefore Reformed theological instruction weds together the life of the mind with godly character formation. He pointed out that the students had begun to learn the rigorous nature of theological education within the Reformed Protestant tradition. To know God as He truly is must result in a transformed life of piety. Gisbertus Voetius, a brilliant theologian and prolific author held to the thesis that “the orthodox faith gives attestation to itself in a godly and upright life.” He assessed theology by giving the “test of edification.” Does the teaching promote a transformed life? Therefore theological education within the Reformed tradition seeks to impact the



whole person. It seeks mind renewal, life transformation, and growth in spiritual communion with God. Professor Brummel concluded with a prayer that he would see “intelligent piety” in his students.

The students are undergoing a transformation in their thinking. They are beginning to perceive something of the grandeur and majesty of the Triune God.

Warden Keith Anglin and Professor Nathan Brummel launch the new prison seminary. Imagine a ribbon-cutting ceremony where scissors are not allowed! But the cardboard scissors did the job!

The first performance by the new seminary choir! The students sang “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” The men are learning to sing the Psalms of David and the great hymns of the faith, using the Psalter Hymnal. Each day two students introduce a Psalm and explain why the Christian should want to sing it. Then the class sings the Psalter number. Thankfully one of the students is a good piano player!

Included in this picture are some of the board members along with officials from the Illinois Department of Corrections. Pictured from left: Dr. Nelson Kloosterman, Dr. Michael Vander Sluis, Professor Nathan Brummel, Assistant Warden Victor Calloway, Ms. Fuse, Warden Keith Anglin, Chief Jaclyn R. O’Day, President Jon Hoek, Don Hoekstra, Dan Kingma, and Brian Sluiter.

Join Constant Contact through our website to receive updates about the seminary!

Contact Professor Nathan Brummel at 616-822-2397. divinehopedanville@yahoo.com

Send Donations: Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary, 1 Ivy Lane, Dyer, IN 46311

Write checks to “Immanuel URC” and place “Divine Hope Seminary” in the memo.

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