



The Reformed Parish

November 29, 2023

Greetings, friends and prayer-partners.

The Lord has definitely given me some initial encouragements as I pioneer a new parish mission and reach out especially to the Hispanic community in the area.

First of all, it appears I've found a new Latino Barnabas! A part of my vision has been to reach out to Hispanic churches, leaders, and potential leaders who are more biblically-oriented and thus possibly open to the Reformed faith. So I repeated a little exercise I had done in Rhode Island. I culled the internet for "iglesias" in the area, retrieved their phone numbers, and sent out a group text of an **R.C. Sproul video with Spanish voice-over**. Very shortly, there was a bite. And what a bite it was! This fellow—replying in Spanish—indicated that he was a pastor committed to the doctrines of grace and expository preaching, and that R.C. Sproul was one of his favorite preachers. Before long, we had FaceTimed; and then came an invitation for Aubrey and me to their house for dinner, with authentic Dominican cuisine. ¡Delicioso!

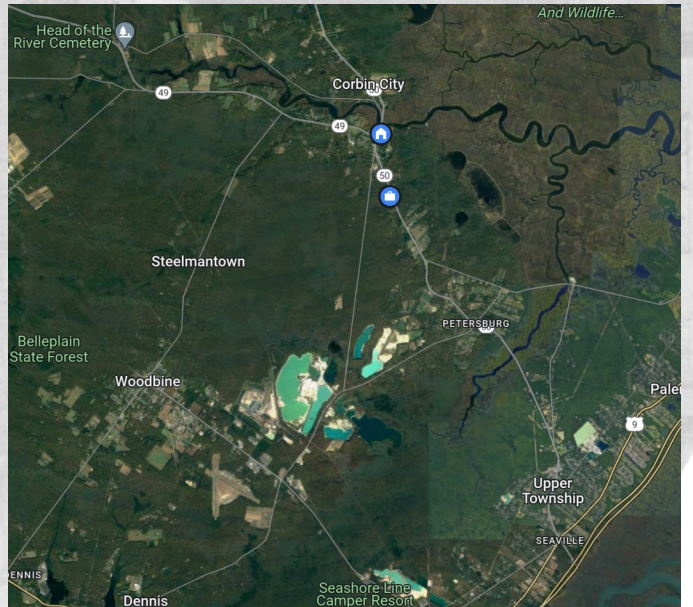
My new pastor-friend, "Lazaro," had been a lawyer back in his home country when he felt the call to the ministry and took a church here in the U.S. He eventually broke with his Pentecostalism when he was exposed to Reformational preaching and teaching and has been laboring in his church without pay for many years. It is clear he is a serious student of the Bible and has a passion for "big God preaching." But he has admittedly become something of an outcast in his Hispanic evangelical circles and has been laboring more or less alone. Consequently, he has been very interested in ministerial friendship—and he's even mentioned the possibility of my coming to preach for him. He admits that his church has a ways to go in terms of reformation; but God takes us where we are at, right? Whatever the future holds, I'm excited about this new partnership. Please pray for "Lazaro," and especially as he is working full-time in a physically demanding job, is not getting any younger, and yet selflessly serves the church.

After some reconnaissance, I've adopted the small town of Woodbine for my parish outreach. It's 8-9 minutes south of our church building, and it's clear that there are sizeable Hispanic and African American populations. I've already established some good contacts and have been invited inside homes more than once. Hopefully more reports to come of God at work in Woodbine!

Yours in His service,

Michael Ives
reformedparish.com (outreach)
westportexperiment.com (theology & missions)

November 2023
Quarterly Update



The Reformed Parish

Please pray for us!
And if you are able, could you help me as I raise monthly support?
Click here to donate.

Shore to Shore:

Rhode Island to South Jersey

And beyond



As you may have heard, I've taken a call to serve our congregation in South Jersey. We're so grateful for our new home and church family, but also for the opportunity to return to Rhode Island periodically to see Gabriel and Mikayla and also keep outreach leads back there alive.

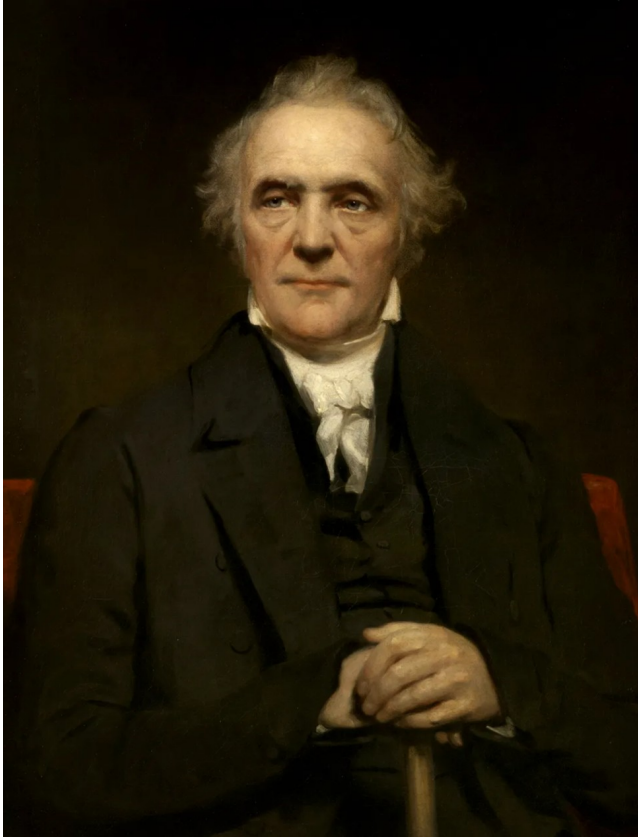
Yet this decision was not totally straightforward. I no longer have much of a 'runway' to launch a full-time cross-cultural ministry, as I had earlier planned. Taking this call has meant surrendering a full-time salary, as the S. Jersey church can only manage to support me at a third of that amount. They are fully supportive of my laboring there with an explicit view to serving the local congregation and engaging in aggressive missions, especially to Hispanics. They also understand that my vision reaches beyond their local witness.

So I am increasingly visiting other churches to preach and give RPM presentations. If your church would be interested in **giving me an opportunity to serve** in this way—even if it's just a pulpit supply need—please drop me a note at michael@reformedparish.com or call me at 609-459-3580.

I'm happy to report that progress has been promising! As of now, I am just over **20% of the way there** for monthly support, between my presbytery's commitment and the generous giving of many friends. We give God thanks! And for those of you have contributed, I am in your debt.

But I could really use your help. If you can make a monthly commitment of any amount, however small, it would be a tremendous blessing. And one-time gifts of course would be wonderful. My hope is to give myself full-time to cross-cultural missions here in the U.S., become fluent in Spanish, do outreach on the parish model, and all the while working closely and organically with one of our established local congregations. This is my passion. **Donation options are here.** But please don't feel pressured. I would rather have just your prayer support if you are already fully committed in your giving. Thank you.

*“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14).*



The omnipotence of Christian charity

“If he go much among them through the week, the unfailing result in time will be, that they shall come much about him on the Sabbath. This is the ligament, and we know not a more important one in the whole mechanism of human society, by which to elevate a degenerate population, and again to place them on that higher moral platform from which they have descended. There is no romance, there is a sober and home-bred reality in all the steps of this operation. On the very first movements of the clergyman, he will meet with the smiles of encouragement and welcome from every quarter of his parish, with a thousand promises of attendance on his church, many of which in the first instance will not be realized; but, with every month of perseverance in the assiduities of his office, he will find a lessening reluctance on the part of his people, and that even the obstinacy of their practical heathenism is not unconquerable. It will at length give way under the power of his sustained and duteous attentions. Providence will open a door for him, even to the most ruthless of the families; and, implicating his presence with the sicknesses, and the deaths, and the funerals of every household, he will, on the sheer efficacy of his Christian worth, and with no other engine by which to make his way than Christian kindness, obtain an ascendant over the hearts of his people, only to be won by the omnipotence of charity.”

Thomas Chalmers, *Collected Works*, 18:73-74

West Port Experiment

On parish missions, the care of souls, and all things Reformed