



**🇨🇦 Regina, SK**

*Pastor Brian and Julie Cochran*

***Greetings to our brothers and sisters in Christ from Regina, Saskatchewan!***

Our history as a church began back in 1975 when a small group of believers started meeting in homes in hopes of establishing a reformed church in Regina. We spent many years as Grace Presbyterian Church, a mission work of the Presbyterian Church in America, and then 7 years as an independent church, before joining the URCNA in 2010. We are thankful to God to celebrate 10 years of His sustaining grace in the URCNA!

This year has been full of ups and downs due to COVID-19. When the virus came to Saskatchewan we temporarily suspended our in-person worship services and started up a YouTube channel where we posted AM & PM sermons by Rev. Cochran. We also posted morning and afternoon home worship liturgies to go with each sermon. Our pastor took us through various Psalms to encourage us to lament and trust God’s promises in Christ during these troubled times. We are thankful that we are meeting again for morning worship, though at a limited seating capacity. We continue to pre-record our afternoon sermon and post it on-line.

We thank God that He continues to add to our number. So far in 2020 Caleb Polvi, Todd and Kim Girgulis, and Jimin Kwag all joined our church. We also rejoiced to welcome four new covenant children, Athanasius Thomas, Ivana Jeftic, Luna Lawrence, and Wesley DeJong. We recently witnessed the baptism of Athanasius and Ivana. We look forward to Luna and Wesley’s baptism soon. It’s such



a joy to witness God’s covenant promises to us and our children in baptism. We also look forward to celebrating the Lord’s Supper again in early August.

Rev. Cochran recently led a profession of faith class via Zoom for four youth, Tatem Airey, Alexa Cullen, Michael VanderHooft and Keegan VanderHooft. Having been interviewed by the Consistory we look forward to their public profession of faith and welcoming them to the Lord’s Supper soon!

One of our deacons, Wayne DeJong, was recently granted a one year sabbatical after over 4 years of faithful service. Another deacon, Ryan Vandenbos, who served faithfully alongside Wayne during that time, just moved to Calgary, AB. He had a good excuse as the Lord led him to his wife, Kim Welfing (now Vandenbos!). We rejoice with them as they begin married life in Calgary as members of Bethel URC. That leaves us with one deacon and two elders in Regina. Please pray that God will strengthen our current office-bearers and raise up more to serve as elders and deacons at Redeemer.

In addition, please pray that God will continue to help us to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which [we] have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3). And may God “do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).



## Chicago Heights, IL

*Pastor Ruben and Leah Sernas*

### *Greetings from El Pacto de Gracia in Chicago Heights, Illinois!*

I pray that you, your family, and your church family are healthy. I want to briefly describe our mission field.

Chicago Heights is located in the South Suburbs of Chicagoland. The city has a population of 30,000 people. According to the 2010 census, Hispanics comprise 34% of the population. The neighborhood known as the Hill has many first-generation immigrants from Mexico. As you drive around the Heights, you notice a few large Roman Catholic churches and several small Pentecostal churches.

None of our core families grew up in Reformed households. Just like most Hispanics in the United States, our families come from Roman Catholic or Pentecostal backgrounds. The members and regular visitors of El Pacto are first-generation Reformed Christians.

As I minister within the Hispanic community, my experience has been that Hispanics believe in the inerrancy and the inspiration of the Bible. When I carefully explain the biblical text, its context, and its practical application, my ministry is usually well received. I say "usually" because I have had disagreements with people I meet in the community. Some people believe all religious perspectives are valid. Some people defend the veneration of the Virgin of Guadalupe. When I begin to disciple people in my mission field, it is not surprising that the process of discipleship is a lengthy process.

As these young Christians become more grounded in God's Word, they become more discerning between true and false teaching. This past Sunday Teo (one of our members) shared with me a conversation he had with a co-worker who is a Jehovah's Witness. They had a heated discussion about the Trinity. In a different conversation, David (another member) mentioned the popularity of a Guatemalan prosperity gospel preacher named Cash Luna. Although Cash Luna is popular in Latin America and the United States, David knows that he is a false teacher.

The Christian life is not meant to be a purely intellectual exercise in which we distinguish between truth from error. Rather we seek to honor the Lord in all aspects of life not only in our understanding of right doctrine. We are thankful for our



members who strive to honor Christ both inside and outside the home. Margarito (another member) is married to Marta, and they have six children. Whether he is at home, work or church, we praise God for raising up godly men like Margarito who are pillars of the church. As I minister to the members and regular visitors of El Pacto, please pray for the Lord's blessing upon our worship service, adult Sunday School, Bible study, English class and prayer meetings.

May God give us much grace in our ministry to Hispanics in Chicago.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Sernas

## Video Interviews

*For more information on our missions in Regina and Chicago Heights, video interviews with **Rev. Cochran** and **Rev Sernas** are available at [urcnamissions.org](http://urcnamissions.org)*

# Changing the “Culture” of the Church

By Pastor Paul Murphy, church planter in NYC

*In my last article, I said that in order for us to see local churches fulfill the Great Commission we need to make changes.* Specifically, we need to change the expectations of the local church and her members. Every church is a missionary church and every Christian is to give verbal witness for Christ. But how can those changes be made? Let’s consider that.

***Change should start with leadership. The Council must provide leadership to the congregation in this matter. Each office can contribute to creating a culture of evangelism in the congregation.***

Pastors can do so in various ways. Of course, there can be evangelistic services held for the community. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones used to hold regular services that were evangelistic in nature, different from called worship for God’s people. Mark Dever has helpful a suggestion when he states, *“Make sure your sermons both instruct people about the gospel and appeal to people to respond to it.”* (The Gospel & Personal Evangelism, p. 116) The preacher should be available after the service to talk to people who have just heard God speak to them.

Congregational prayer is a wonderful way to keep the evangelistic obligation before the congregation. Pray for the lost, pray for missions and missionaries, pray for the hearts of congregants that they would have the heart of God for the lost, pray for opportunities and open doors for the gospel, for courage to take advantage of those times. Pray for family members or congregational members who may be wandering sheep. Pray with passion and conviction so that people sense the burden.

The evangelistic task should be constantly held before the congregation’s members so they see it is not an option but an obligation. Catechism classes, profession of faith classes, house visitation and new members’ classes are all opportunities to promote a culture of evangelism. Here’s an idea – aim intensely for the next generation. I believe it is better and easier to instill and inculcate this into them than it is to try and change the present generation. Some ideas? Why not add a field Ed component to catechism? Let the young people (High School students) go to a local mission work and participate. Send young people to one of our many mission fields to conduct evangelism. I have personally seen this revolutionize lives. We tend to underutilize the younger members of our congregations. They too are members of the church and should be expected to assume their responsibilities as such, including evangelism.

Of course, we could better utilize the senior members of the congregation also. They are often the ones with discretionary time and are an enormous resource of experience and wisdom. What a potential asset to be tapped for evangelistic use!

***2 Timothy 4:5 states that ministers must “do the work of an evangelist”; so preachers should lead by example and consistories should ensure that the minister is not so overwhelmed with caring for the flock that he has no time for evangelism.***

In many of our towns the minister is still a respected member of the community. He can build relationships

with outsiders in the hope of having them come to worship and also to faith in Christ.

Finally, the minister should equip the saints to evangelize (Ephesians 4:12).

### ***Elders also play a role in cultivating a culture of evangelism.***

1 Peter 5:3 says elders are to “be examples to the flock...” As the ‘fathers’ of the congregation (1 Timothy 3:5) they ought to see that they are good examples in every area of life, including evangelism. The credentials submitted at Classis meetings ask every council if the elders engage in and promote the work of evangelism. Clearly, it is a responsibility of the elders.

One of the qualifications for elder is that they be hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2). I think this is fascinating. In being hospitable, elders have the opportunity to show visitors and outsiders what a Christ-centered home looks like. I have had the privilege to be in many of our people’s homes over the years. They are usually stellar examples of Christianity. Order, peace, respect, love, kindness, piety are all clearly evident in those homes. What an amazing testimony to the grace of God! Compare that to the homes of unbelievers where chaos reigns, selfishness prevails, and disharmony is the rule. There could not be a more stark contrast. By just having unbelievers in your home, without saying a word you are showing people what difference Christ makes in the lives of His people. They will be led to ask you for the

reason for the hope that you have (1 Peter 3:15). The elders should be leading the charge to invite people into their homes. When visitors attend worship they should always have hospitality offered to them. It is a powerful witness!

### ***Deacons too are instruments to develop a culture of evangelism in the congregation.***

Deacons are stewards of congregational resources. The deacons should be aware of the gifts, talents, and abilities of the members. These then can be mobilized for ministry in service to the community. Diaconal ministry can be an effective outreach arm of the church. I will address this more in future articles. For example, deacons can conduct mercy ministry, financial stewardship, ESL (English as a second language) classes, and citizenship classes. Of course, this should all be done wedding word and deed. But it should be done. And the deacons can be the overseers to see it completed.

I trust you can see how such changes would alter the ‘infrastructure of the local church’. Implementing such changes would go a long way to creating a culture of evangelism.

***Next month Pastor Murphy will address,  
“What can the members do?”***