

The BBI BULLETIN

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Issue 3

Training for Ministry

Sept, Oct, Nov

Rightly Dividing God's Word



Pastor Andy Kern, Dean of Academics

Recently, my wife, Sarah, and I were blessed with the opportunity to travel to Brazil. You may be familiar with BBI Brazil, which is BBI's extension campus in Brazil, in which Paul Craesmeier serves as Director and our primary professor, and his wife, Mariana Craesmeier, serves as administrator. During this trip, we were able to experience a new culture, meet several of our brethren in Christ, including numerous BBI Brazil students, and minister in various ways. We were primarily in São Paulo, Brazil, where I spoke at the BBI Brazil Missions Conference on the theme of "The Missionary Church," shared a message at one of the local church gatherings, and my wife also taught a Bible study to a group of ladies. In between these opportunities were many conversations about the ministry of BBI Brazil and other ministries in general. We were able to visit with missionaries Bernardo and Carol Craesmeier further south in the area of Tijucas, Brazil, where we attended some Bible studies, saw the camp ministry there, and met more BBI Brazil students. We are happy to report that the gospel of grace has had a powerful impact on the people there, reminding us that God is working in all the world. Throughout this trip, God demonstrated His faithfulness in how He works in our lives and furthers the gospel through the ministry

of His people. I want to share several takeaways from this trip.

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Header picture: Andy and Sarah look over the city of São Paulo at night. Top Left: Andy speaks while missionary Paul Craesmeier translates to Portuguese. Top Right: Andy holds a sign for the BBI conference in Brazil. Bottom: BBI Brazil conference attendees.

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THE INSTITUTE UPDATE

Blessed and Honored

As we complete twenty-nine years of ministry training, we are both blessed and honored to be used of the Lord to prepare pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders. These individuals are dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ and desire to reach others with the transforming power of the gospel of God's grace.

All of our instructors, staff, and financial partners are unified in their commitment to ensure that *Berean Bible Institute (BBI)* remains focused and faithful in providing essential biblical training for those who seek to serve Christ.

Congratulations Are in Order

We give praise to the Lord whenever a student completes a certificate or degree program at *BBI*. These accomplishments are milestones that reflect progress, discipline, and spiritual dedication. We are truly blessed by the commitment of our students to serve the Lord.

Please join us in congratulating the following students:

- ***Certificate of Biblical Worldview***
Mr. Timothy Board II
- ***Certificate of Dispensational Studies***
Mr. Fikresilase Ayalew and Mr. James Johnson

Women Reaching Women

Several months ago, *BBI* had the privilege of hosting a special luncheon with five godly women who have a heart for ministering to other women. These guests were invited based on their leadership in women's Bible studies and previous involvement in training women.

The purpose of this gathering was to discuss the possibility of revising and expanding our women's ministry curriculum. Our goal is to develop a Certificate in Women's Ministry, offering solid biblical training and practical tools to equip women to reach other women for Christ.

We recognize the many vital roles women serve in the local church and hope to strengthen their ministry with sound doctrine and encouragement.

God Working Through You

As the end of the year approaches, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our financial supporters. We believe your support is a response to the Lord's leading, and we do not take that lightly.

If you believe in the mission and impact of *BBI*, we ask you to prayerfully consider including *Berean Bible Institute* in your year-end giving. Your partnership plays a critical role in preparing the next generation of Christian leaders.

Thank you for being part of the *Berean Bible Institute* family.

To God be the glory!



Dr. Robert Nix, President of *Berean Bible Institute*

When you financially give support to the Berean Bible Institute, you are joining a network of believers who partner together not only in support of *BBI*, but its mission and message to train pastors and Christian leaders for the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God
(Acts 20:24).

Reflections... continued from page 1

I returned home with a greater commitment to hospitality and service. We were incredibly blessed to stay with Paul and Mariana, and their son Matthias, for a large part of our trip. They were gracious hosts, and Mariana provided for any potential need before we could even ask. This same kind of hospitality toward the people there has been a large contributing factor in the growth of the church that Paul and Mariana have planted in São Paulo. Additionally, we experienced the hospitality of the church and witnessed the brethren working together to clean, decorate, and further prepare for the BBI Brazil Missions Conference that was hosted in the Craesmeyer's home. The group displayed the kindness of Christ in a multitude of ways as we shared meals and fellowshiped. Further, we later visited the area of Tijuca, Brazil, where we stayed with missionaries Bernardo and Carol Craesmeyer, experiencing their gracious hospitality as well as that of some of the other brethren in that area, who hosted the home Bible studies we attended. The personal warmth of our Brazilian brethren left us feeling right at home throughout our trip. It is this kind of hospitality that often opens doors for ministry and is central to the encouragement of the saints. Paul, in Romans 12:13, calls us to be *"distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."*

I returned with a greater awe of how God faithfully works to bring the gospel to people across cultures. I

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would recommend that anyone who has the opportunity to travel and experience a different culture, especially in a ministry context, do so. It gives us a more specific appreciation for how God works in the world and through our missionary brothers and sisters.

The Brazilian culture in São Paulo was new and unique to us in several ways. The city is enormous and sprawling, with over 22 million people. There are walls lining each property, for security is a key concern, and many add spikes, razor wire, or other deterrents along the tops of the walls. There are motorcycles everywhere, zipping in and out of traffic, between vehicles and buses, and each driver has to be very watchful. We tried new, delicious foods, such as a deep-fried pastry stuffed with meat called pastel; a hairy fruit called rambutan; and what is called Romeo & Juliet, the combination of white cheese and goiabada, made from guava fruit. The culture there has been shaped over the years by a combination of the indigenous population, the Portuguese who settled there from Europe, African heritage, as well as large Italian and Japanese communities. A majority of Brazilians are Catholic, but Catholicism is decreasing while Pentecostalism is growing. All these things and more create a unique place on the earth with many ministry opportunities.

Yet, the gospel speaks to every human's need for salvation from sin through faith alone by grace alone in Christ alone. In the church in São Paulo, we met several joy-filled believers who had come from the bondage of a pseudo-Christian cult to find freedom in Christ through the gospel. Two times we witnessed our brother Paul share Christ with Uber drivers, the second of whom trusted the Lord right there in the car. No matter where one is from, in what culture he was raised, what people group he descends from, what his house looks like, what he likes to eat, or the kind of car he drives, that person needs the gospel of Christ. God, in His goodness and faithfulness, has provided the source of salvation in Jesus Christ. Additionally, He has provided witnesses of the gospel through His people, those who have already trusted Christ, whether it be a missionary, a pastor, a neighbor, a friend, a coworker, a family member, or some other relationship. 2 Corinthians 5:20 states, *"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God*

were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." We are the ambassadors of Christ, meant to bring the gospel to every soul. This is our calling in all settings of life.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.
2 Corinthians 5:20

I returned from Brazil with a greater appreciation of how the Lord works in overcoming the barrier of language. Often, one of the most difficult aspects of any type of cross-cultural ministry is navigating a different language. The national language of Brazil is Portuguese, and we were thankful for the individuals we met who were bilingual and could speak English, but for most communication, my wife and I needed a translator. I preached through a translator for the first time, and to be honest, it was a somewhat awkward experience. Thankfully, I was blessed to have Paul Craesmeyer as my translator, and we were able to develop a rhythm in speaking for these opportunities. Language was the clearest and most challenging cultural barrier for us, but the Lord met this need as well.

I have also grown in my gratefulness for those who do the tedious task of translating written works. We were able to reconnect with missionaries Wezel and Deise Oliveira. Wezel is Word of Grace Mission's translator, working on bringing English books into Portuguese. He has been a blessing to the ministry of BBI Brazil in making it possible for some of our choice textbooks to be made available in the language of our Brazilian brethren.



Word of Grace missionaries from left to right: Bernardo and Carol Craesmeyer; Deise and Wezel Oliveira; Mariana and Paul Craesmeyer.

I returned with an even greater conviction of the need for discipleship and training for ministry. Throughout our trip, we saw an effective pattern of bringing believers to an increased spiritual depth through regular church gatherings, home Bible studies, ladies' studies, and the ministry of BBI Brazil. Spiritual growth requires a personal humility that enables learning and a passion for God's Word, the truth that changes lives. When this is modeled by spiritual leaders, as we saw being done in Brazil, that creates an environment where other believers learn the importance of humility and studying God's Word. We saw many younger believers with a hunger for God's Word and how to apply it. One of our favorite encounters in Brazil was when a young couple asked us several questions about following the Lord as a family and in ministry. We were able to share different ways the Lord has worked in our own lives and how His Word has guided us. The ministry of Bernardo and Carol has led to several well-trained men, some of whom have taken BBI Brazil courses, to lead Bible studies and disciple others. Paul and Mariana have also trained upcoming leaders in the faith and are seeing the fruits of that. BBI Brazil has become a large part of how new Grace leaders are being trained and are growing in their faith and ministry skills. They are following the Apostle Paul's instruction in 2 Timothy 2:2, *"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."*

Our journey to Brazil was truly inspiring, enriching, and educational. It enlarged our perspective of God's great work in the world through the gospel of grace and through His people. It allowed us to minister alongside our BBI Brazil leaders and connect with the students. We are very thankful for that opportunity, and Lord willing, would like to return one day. Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Brazil, and for the ministry and students of BBI Brazil!



Vamos estudar!

For Our Learning

Pastor Matthew Ritchey, Managing Editor

Confident Belief

God delivered the instructions for the tabernacle as part of the law entrusted to Moses. This tabernacle allowed God, in the presence of the Shekinah Glory, to dwell among the people as they traveled in the wilderness. This tabernacle was literally a tent that was temporary in nature and practical in construction.

The temple was a different matter; it was permanent in nature so it could not be moved. Although it used the pattern set forth in the law, it was not commanded by God. It was a desire of David's heart, but he was disqualified so God allowed David's son Solomon to erect the temple.

Much planning and many years later, the temple was finished and ready to be consecrated for worship. Before the sacrifices, Solomon gathers the people to dedicate the temple saying, *"I have surely built you an exalted house, and a place for you to dwell forever"* (2 Chron. 6:2), pointing out that the temple symbolized God among the people. After giving the people a history lesson regarding the building of the temple, Solomon announces the faithfulness of God's word stating, *"I have filled the position of my father*

David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built the temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel" (v.10). Solomon's speech praises God and requests that the Lord attend to the people's prayers made toward the temple. *"Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication...that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night...And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive"* (vv.19-21).

After Solomon respectfully ended his prayer by restating his request for the Lord to remain attentive to the needs of the people and adhere to the mercies shown to David (2 Chron. 6:2), God shows His approval in an amazing way. *"Fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house"* (2 Chron. 7:1-2). When God's glory was seen, notice the people's response: they fell down in worship and verbally acknowledged the goodness of God (v.3).

Later, the Lord appears to Solomon to let the king know that He had heard Solomon's request and was prepared to abide by the appeal, granted the people remained faithful to the covenant. Yet, even if the people did find themselves under the judgment of the Lord, when they acknowledged their sin and turned to Him, the Lord would restore the people back to His blessings (2 Chron. 7:14).

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Note, even though the Lord does not need a place to dwell made with men's hands, He agreed to "dwell" in the temple in order to benefit the people. *"Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually"* (vv. 15-16).

Before we leave the subject of Solomon's temple, King Jehoiada has some important information regarding the temple. We are reminded that only those who had been consecrated (the priests) were permitted to enter the temple; no one else was allowed to enter (2 Chron. 23:6). This echoes the instructions given for the tabernacle where even the furniture needed to be ritually cleansed in the prescribed manner and no additions could be made to the décor. Jehoiada assigned gatekeepers to make sure that nothing unclean was able to enter into the temple (v.19).

Understanding this should make us appreciate the fact that the Apostle Paul announces that our body is *"the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you"* in 1 Corinthians 6:19. As a temple, we needed to be properly cleansed and consecrated (made holy). This we are through the Lord Jesus Christ. *"You were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in*

the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). In Christ, we have been prepared to be the temple of God. We did not make the arrangements to prepare ourselves; the price and work has been done through the Lord Jesus Christ. While God's glory dwelt with the people in the time of Moses through the Shekinah Glory, God himself indwells us in the Holy Spirit. We have God the Holy Spirit literally living within us perpetually and permanently. As the temple served as a reminder to the people of the presence of God, the Holy Spirit is the presence of God in our lives and empowers us to live in the holy way we have been set free to live (Rom. 8:14-17).

When we recognize ourselves as the dwelling of God, the holy calling we are called unto, and empowerment that come from within, it should be all the motivation we need to bring honor to God, deservedly so. We don't have to pray that God will stay with us or beg for Him to hear us because the Holy Spirit indwells throughout this life (Eph. 4:30).

We have no excuse not to bring glory to God through our words and actions. Prayerfully, as the glory of God is seen through us, the temple of God in whom the Spirit dwells, others will have a similar reaction to those in Solomon's day in that they humble themselves and acknowledge God for what He has done through Jesus Christ.

Pray for students around the world to follow God's call into ministry.

Pray for BBI as we train and prepare them.

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Bible Answers to Bible Questions

& Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

QUESTION: If water baptism is not for today, why was Jesus water baptized? When a believer does get water baptized, where does that person go when they die?

ANSWER: Israel was to be a kingdom of priests (Exod. 19:6). According to the Law, one of the sanctification rites to enter the priesthood was a cleansing, which was done with water (Exod. 30:19-20). Jesus is the High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16), so He was abiding by God's requirements to enter the priesthood when He submitted to water baptism.

Ultimately, the Scriptures say Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:13-15). This identified Him with humanity, the nation, and the righteous requirements of the Law. Today, our identification does not come through any physical symbolism but through the identifying work of the Holy Spirit who identifies us with the work of Christ (Rom 6:3-5), the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), and the possession of God (Rom 8:15-17).

To address the second part of your question, while I would certainly dissuade the practice of water baptism, the act of water baptism has no bearing on a person's salvation. It comes down to where the person's faith is resting. Is the person's faith in the work (e.g., water baptism) that he is doing to save him? That is not how one is saved today, for it is *"not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us..."* (Titus 3:5). Or, is their faith truly in the work of Jesus Christ alone for salvation and they were water baptized because that is what their church told them to do? If a person's faith is in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ to save them, they will be in Heaven. God knows the hearts, and God's grace is sufficient to overcome any misunderstanding on our part.

QUESTION: I have been a mid-Acts dispensationalist; but since Paul water baptized and there is only one verse (1 Cor. 12:13) Paul wrote that said baptism was by the Spirit, so people assume all other places Paul talks about us being baptized into Christ are assumed to be Spirit baptism just based on that one verse. That's scarce I think.

The Spirit baptism is not based upon one verse; 1 Corinthians 12:13 is just the most obvious and matter-of-fact. I will repeat the old (but true) argument: Paul says there is one baptism for the Church, the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:4); 1 Corinthians 12:13 obviously mentions a SPIRITUAL baptism, so this is plainly the one baptism Paul is talking about.

Colossians 2:11-12 also speaks of a baptism *"made without hands,"* and Romans 6 is a baptism that saves. If it is not understood as a spiritual identification with Christ, then one must be water baptized to be saved.

The subject of water baptism would take much more space to detail, for it would include knowing why water baptism existed in the first place (i.e., it was to initiate someone into the priesthood; Israel is to be a kingdom of priests). Since we are born *"dirtied"* by sin, we need to be *"washed"* clean. Under the visual, prophetic program, water baptism did indeed symbolize an outward sign of an inward decision. God required it to be this way (Exod. 30:17-21; Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38). Yet, even Israel looked forward to a day when they would be permanently cleansed by the Spirit (Ezek. 36:25-26; Zech. 13:1; Matt. 3:11).

In this Age of Grace, our washing comes about the moment we believe and the Holy Spirit identifies us with Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Titus 3:5 records our washing came about through the washing and renewal of the Holy Spirit.

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The BBI Bulletin is the official newsletter of the Berean Bible Institute Inc., and is sent free of charge to any that request it. The mission of Berean Bible Institute is to train Pastors, Missionaries, and Christian Leaders for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God given to and through the Apostle Paul. *Berean Bible Institute, Inc. admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.*

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