
Sunday, March 18, 2018
Did You Know?

Becoming a Bible-Centred Church

If you've visited Pastor Rolando's ministry in Guadalajara, you know that similar to most Latin Americans, they are Charismatic in their Christian expression. Their expression appears in their exuberant singing and worship, which I love. And, though I do love that they earnestly seek the touch of God with sincere faith, I do have some issues with, at least, their version of Charismatic Christianity. Most obviously, there is not as strong a focus on God's Word as I would like to see, and as a result there seems to be a lack of depth in discipling Christians into maturity. Now, this could be a conclusion reached on insufficient data, but I have known this ministry for over a dozen years and have known Pastor Rolando for over 20. I consider him a very close friend and partner in the ministry.

So, over the years I've been trying to help Pastor Rolando become, not only a more Bible-centered pastor, but Reformed in his theology. I've given him many books from modern-day Reformed authors. I've invited him to attend Christian conferences like The Gospel Coalition, which is Reformed in theology and saturated with expositional preaching. I would send him YouTube videos of Spanish Reformed Christian worship bands and when I visit him and am expected to preach, I give them straight, unadulterated Bible sermons.

Then, a year ago he shared that he had begun listening to John MacArthur. "Oh boy!" I thought to myself, "This is the end of his charismatic faith." If you don't know MacArthur, he is not a fan, whatsoever, of the Charismatic movement. As well, about 4-5 years ago I noticed that his congregants started to address him as 'Apostle'. It bothered me; so, I asked him, "What's the deal?" and he shrugged his shoulders and sheepishly said that his congregants started to call him that and it stuck. Well, I couldn't help but stick my nose in and explained the Bible's definition of Apostle and that the office died at the end of the 1st century.

Now, fast forward to the fall/winter of 2017. Pastor Rolando texted me one day urgently asking me to pray for him because many people had left his church. I asked him why? He told me two reasons. First, he stopped using the title 'Apostle.' Second, he stopped some of the charismatic expressions of his ministry like the 'shake and bake' prayer times after Sunday services and his "Three Days of Power" retreat. My initial reaction when I heard this was, "Oh no. This is all my fault! I'm the one who introduced him to Reformed theology and being more Bible focused." But then, immediately afterwards, I thought, "Perhaps, God is doing a reset; perhaps this is the beginning of something new." So, I encouraged him as best I could.

Last year when I was in Mexico I suggested that when I come in 2018 I would lead some kind of Bible seminar. We decided together that I do a seminar on how to do inductive Bible study. Well, 70 people came out to learn, with incredible enthusiasm, how to study the Bible for themselves. The people just ate it up and were excited to go back to their respective ministries and put what they learned into practice. I am hopeful for my friend Rolando and his ministry. Would you pray a Sola Scriptura prayer for him? Thank you.

Soli Deo Gloria.
Pastor Peter