



Joining the
HARVEST

PRAYER NEWSLETTER AND UPDATE OF THE REGIONAL HOME MISSIONARY (PMA): MARCH 2024

Devotion: What Are the Primary Characteristics of An Ideal Seed-Group in a PMA Bible Study or Church Plant?

We are thankful that in the PMA right now we have a new bible study that has begun in Culpeper, Virginia, and we are praying and planning for another new bible study beginning in Berryville, Virginia, in early summer 2024. As we pray and plan, what are some of the primary characteristics of an **ideal seed-group** (often called a “core-group” as well)? Because church planting is front-line spiritual warfare as well as part of our sanctification (John 17:17-18; Eph. 6:10-20), we need to consider these characteristics, and pray that our God would faithfully gather groups that have a kind of built in potential for biblical success in growth in grace and fruitfulness. Jesus promises us that if we abide in Him, and His word abides in us, we will bear fruit that will last (John 15:1-16).

These characteristics can be easily summarized in seven, three-word sentences: (1) He sat down; (2) I need Jesus; (3) Please forgive me; (4) I die daily; (5) Here am I; (6) Pray for me; and (7) Come, Lord Jesus. Let us look briefly at each of these by asking specific questions.

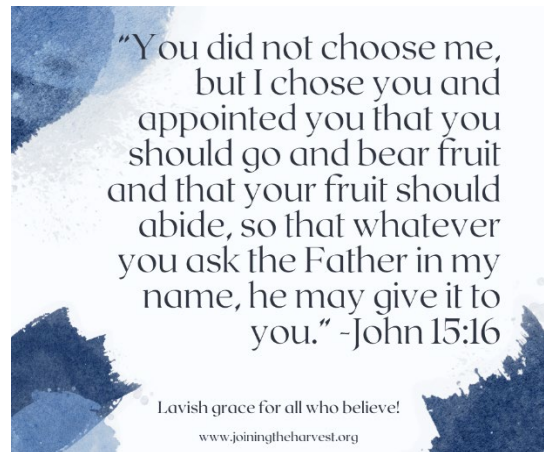
These are a few questions that the RHM and the PMA Home Missions Committee are asking in evaluating the potential success of a bible study seed-

group. (1) **He Sat Down:** Are the folks in this seed-group focused on Jesus and His gospel primarily? Do they truly believe that Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth and has promised to build His church, storming the gates of hell? Are they committed to serving ultimately Him and not self (Heb. 1:3-4; Matt. 28:18-20)? If they are Christians and not merely new converts, have they demonstrated their humility before Christ by being a baptized and faithful member of His Church? (2) **I Need Jesus:** Are the folks in this seed-group self-aware of their own need for Jesus each day, especially in doing the challenging work of spiritual warfare and sanctification of potentially establishing a new congregation of saints? Are they aware of their weaknesses and watchful of the sins that easily beset them, while being confident in the transformative power of Jesus and His Holy Spirit? (3) **Please Forgive Me:** Are the folks in this seed-group aware of the sins that easily beset them, and are they daily repenting of their own sins, removing planks from their own eyes, and living by faith in Jesus’s promise of goodness and mercy towards them (Matt. 7:1-5; Heb. 3:12-13, 19; 12:1-3)? (4) **I Die Daily:** Are the folks in this seed-group those who die daily to sin and seek to live unto righteousness in Christ by His Spirit? Are the folks in this study and seed-group because they want God’s dream and will fulfilled in the life of this potential congregation, or because they are looking merely for something for themselves? Are they merely serving convenience or comfort, or are they seeking to die daily to serve Christ? If the folks in a seed-group are not willing to die from the outset to Christ and to others, then there is no hope of establishing a Gospel-oriented, fruitful congregation (John 12:24-26; Phil. 2:1-5; Eph. 4:1-3). We are by nature those who seek greatness and recognition in the wrong way. We must be willing to die and as our Lord Jesus says: “*The Son of Man has come not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many*” (Mark 10:45). “*Truly, truly, I say to*



you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but **if it dies, it bears much fruit**” (John 12:24).

(5) **Here Am I:** Are the folks in this seed-group servants? Are they seeking to be great in Christ by His Spirit in being great servants of others, considering others more significant than themselves? Are they looking for how they can be a blessing or are they merely seeking more convenience and comfort? Are they seeking to serve so that others might prosper and be fruitful and the congregation would thrive? (6) **Pray For Me:** Are the folks in this seed-group prayer warriors? Are they those who pray regularly in seeking the LORD in private devotion, family worship, public worship, and praying at all times and in all ways for others? Are they praying in the power of the Spirit knowing that nothing will be accomplished without prayer and full dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ? (Matt. 7:7; Eph. 6:10-18). I have found that there are **four primary bible study/church plant poisons or killers:** 1. **Selfishness** (Phil. 2:1-4); 2. **Impatience** (Eph. 4:1-3; 1 Cor. 13:4); 3. **Unforgiveness/Judgmental Spirit** (Matt. 5:3-12); 4. **Over-love of Convenience/Comfort** (John 17:17-18; James 4:1-6). Does this seed-group desire a bible study or new congregation primarily for their own convenience or comfort, not ultimately for the glory of Christ, the worship of the Triune God, the unity and peace and fellowship of the saints, and the seeking and saving the lost!? Are they praying against their own propensity to selfishness/vainglory, impatience with God and others, lack of mercy, and the god of convenience/comfort? Are they praying for boldness in prayer in evangelism and inviting sinners to join them so that Christ will be build His church not merely through transfers, nor merely through covenant children (although these are wonderful!), but through new converts? (7) **Come, Lord Jesus:** Are the folks in this seed group serving eagerly in anticipating the immanent return of Jesus Christ? Are they living as good Spirit-filled stewards of their time and resources, seeking in all things to please the Lord (2 Cor. 5:9-21)? Are they living ultimately for the *“Well done, my good and faithful servants”* (Matt. 25:21, 23)? Are they living with an urgency in evangelism in faithfully living out their faith, and praying for and inviting their neighbors to join them in the study and the potential new church plant because they are ambassadors of Christ who desire to establish a Gospel-Embassy, and they know today is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 5:18-6:2)? *“Whoever loves his life loses it...will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him”* (John 12:25-26).



These are seven, three-word characteristics that can be most useful in evaluating the spiritual health of every Christian, but particularly of a seed-group meeting with hopes to be a church plant and mission work one day. Remember, these characteristics can only come through the grace of the Lord Jesus, and by His powerful Holy Spirit, but come, they will, in fullness according to Christ's promise: *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you”* (John 15:16; cf. 2 Peter 1:3-11). Join me in praying to our faithful God to call, gather, form and transform people into fruitful bible studies with a goal of becoming worshipping congregations of the Lord Jesus Christ, embassies of the New Heaven and the New Earth!

Thank you for your prayers, and continue to join us in praying for these new bible studies and our mission works in the Presbytery of the Mid Atlantic. Join me in prayer, but in also considering these seven, three-word sentences with me before God, that we, too, might continually grow fruitful and increase in His grace!

I am your brother and servant in Jesus, Charles Biggs, Regional Home Missionary of the PMA

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Highlights/Praise and Prayer Requests from Our Mission Works

Pray for Acacia Reformed: Grace and unity in congregation; hospitality being practiced weekly; visitors are welcomed; some families have left; pray for Pastor John Paul, Elder Stephen Mouring, and Deacon Jared Grigg; new worship space open and very useful; serving with Culpeper Bible Study.

Pray for Word of Life: Joyful and growing in the gospel; visitors are welcomed; new building space beginning March 17; three new communicant members; one new convert and disciple; one family has left; pray for Pastor John and Elders Peter Lee, Bob Trombadore, and Charles Biggs.

Pray for Good Shepherd: Unified and growing in grace through difficult trials; two families have left; season of fasting and praying with an evangelism/outreach strategy for the next few months; thankful for new, visible building in center of Onley, VA; pray for Pastor Will Sloan and Elders Dan Cooke, Francis Vandelden, Gerry Taylor, and Charles Biggs.

Pray for West Creek: Unified, growing, new visitors are coming (new convert has been attending); weekly hospitality and fellowship meals are practiced; season of fasting and praying, seeking a church planter/organizing pastor; pray for pastoral search committee, and Elders John Waddill, Alex, Jeff Downs, Lacy Andrews, and Charles Biggs.

Please PRAY for PMA: Our faithful God would continue to increase our faith, stir up our zeal, and grant us humble and compassionate hearts of love in our church planting and evangelism in the Presbytery of the Mid Atlantic (Pray Rom. 12:9-13). Please pray for continued wisdom for our Home Missions Committee (Malkus, Barnes, Lee, Taylor, Van Damm, and Franks). Please pray that our established congregations and our mission works would be characterized by Ephesians 4:1-3 and Philippians 2:1-8 (memorize, meditate upon, and pray these scriptures regularly with me!). May our established congregations and our mission works to continue to be faithful in daily, eager, earnest, deliberate evangelism by the power of the Holy Spirit in welcoming neighbors and family to Christ and to worship, trusting our faithful God for all the results. *There is no failure in faithfulness.* Pray for a faithful pastor for **Providence OPC, Charlottesville, VA**; praise God for **Rev. Bryce Souve, the new pastor at Bethel Reformed, Fredericksburg, VA!** Our God is faithful (installation service planned for **April 6!**).

Regional Home Missionary Schedule

Recent and upcoming visits planned through May 2024: Ministry of the Word/RHM and Evangelism Presentations (Goals: visit each mission work at least once quarterly; visit each established PMA congregation every 6-8 weeks):

Recent Visits/Ministry

- Word of Life- 1/7
- Culpeper Bible Study- 1/9
- West Creek- 1/14 & 1/21
- Trinity Reformed, Lanham, MD- 2/4 (AM)
- Grace, Vienna, VA- 2/4 (PM)
- Culpeper Bible Study- 2/6
- West Creek- 2/11 & 2/18
- Loudoun Classical School- 2/22
- Acacia Reformed- 2/25
- Word of Life- 3/3
- West Creek- 3/10 & 3/17



- Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Missions Conference- 3/5-8

Upcoming Visits/Ministry

- Cottage School- 3/21
- Good Shepherd OPC- 3/24
- Culpeper Bible Study- 3/5, 4/2, 4/30, 5/7
- Bethel, Fredericksburg- 4/6
- Knox OPC, Silver Spring- 4/7
- West Creek OPC- 4/14 & 4/21
- Ketocin Covenant OPC- 4/28 & 6/1
- All Saints OPC, Suffolk Virginia- 5/4-5/5: Evangelism Conference (J. Montgomery and me)

Join us for the Culpeper Bible Study!
1st Tuesdays of Each Month / 6:30 pm - 8 pm

Ephesians 1:3
"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places..."



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Coming Soon

- **GTPS Missions Conference** - March 5-8 (pray for my learning, fellowship, contacts).
- **June/July- Berryville Bible Study** begins in fellowship with Ketocin Covenant (KCPC). Please pray for [KCPC's capital building program](#) that will provide a permanent home base for future church planting and evangelism work.
- **October- PMA Church Planting and Evangelism Conference with Chris Byrd**
- **RHM Study Projects on Missions/Evangelism:** Book reviews; digest of missions conference; producing evangelism seminars.
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Prayer for RHM: Our Lord graciously promises us 'All things are possible for one who believes' (Mark 9:23). Pray that our faithful God would continue to increase our faith, stir up our zeal, and grant us humble and compassionate hearts of love in our church planting and evangelism efforts. Please pray for my family and me as we travel throughout the PMA and PSE. Pray that I would continue to be a Spirit-filled humble servant, compassionate shepherd, and zealous, winsome evangelist for the glory of God and the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you as your Regional Home Missionary! Thank you for your prayers and encouragement in the LORD!

Coming in June 2024
A Reformed Bible Study in
Berryville, Virginia



"Come to me, all you labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
- Matt. 11:28

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