From the Pastor’s Desk
By Rev. Freddy Fritz

Five Reformation Blessings

On October 31, 2018 we will celebrate the 501st anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

The Protestant Reformation gave us many blessings. Briefly, I would like to highlight five.

First, the Protestant Reformation gave us “sola Scriptura” (Scripture Alone). How do we know about God, his person and work, and his will for our lives? The Word of God alone is our only sure and ultimate guide. Scripture has been given to us by God himself. And in his Word he reveals to us all that is necessary for faith and salvation. We don’t have to guess what God wants from us. He tell us—in Scripture! What a blessing!

Second, the Protestant Reformation gave us “Sola Gratia” (Grace Alone). Can we buy or earn our salvation? The good news is that our salvation is solely by the grace of God. There is nothing we can do to earn or buy or merit salvation from God. But, by his amazing grace, God saves sinners! Salvation is a gift from God, from first to last. The only thing we contribute to our salvation is our sin. God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to the cross to pay the penalty for all the sins of his elect. What a blessing!

Third, the Protestant Reformation gave us “Sola Fide” (Faith Alone). How do we receive the gift of salvation? We receive the gift of salvation by faith alone. We do not need to add any of our works to receive salvation. We simply believe that the finished work of Christ is sufficient to save us to the uttermost. What a blessing!
Fourth, the Protestant Reformation gave us “Solus Christus” (Christ Alone). In whom is our salvation found? Salvation is found only in Jesus Christ, as Peter said to the Jewish council in Acts 4:12, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Christ is the perfect and only Mediator between God and us who is able to save us. What a blessing!

And fifth, the Protestant Reformation gave us “Soli Deo Gloria” (To God Alone Be Glory). Who gets the credit for our salvation? Since salvation is a gift of God by the grace of God received by faith alone in Christ alone, we get zero credit. It has been said that the gospel could be simply stated as follows: God saves sinners. It is God alone who saves. He does the work of salvation from first to last. And he saves sinners who deserve only his wrath and justice. And so, every saved sinner proclaims with every fiber of his or her being: To God alone be glory! What a blessing!

I invite you to join us in our annual Tampa Bay area PCA churches Reformation Worship Service. This year it will be held at Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 28. The speaker will be one of our newest church planters (and a former two-time World Kick Boxing Champion), Reverend Jimbo Mullen. You will be blessed as we give thanks to God for the five Reformation blessings.

Freddy
Hello All,

The Women’s Ministry is enthusiastically planning its last two events of 2018. On October 13, we will host a Sister-to-Sister tea party to be held at the Church from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Feel free to wear your favorite fascinator or hat. We will once again enjoy fellowship, friendship, and great food. Come and have a cup of tea with us.

Our second event is the Women’s Ministry Christmas Brunch, which will be held on Saturday, December 1, 2018, in the sanctuary. This signifies the beginning of the Advent Season, our spiritual preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ. Our theme this year is “Rahab, Part of the Christmas Story,” and we are excited to have as our speaker, Mrs. Betty Combee, who attended TBPC when they met at the old Varsity 6 Movie Theater on Fowler Avenue in 1979. 2018 is a very special year for the Women’s Brunch as it is the 30th Anniversary of when our very own, Marianne Cali, established the event.
There are several opportunities for participating in the event preparation. Here is the list of volunteer opportunities and the coordinators:

**Hostesses:** Suzanne Swenson is the acting coordinator. There are 13 openings.

**Servers:** This is an opportunity for the men to participate. Pete Rotolo is the server coordinator.

**Prayer team:** Randi Mallory is the coordinator.

**Cooking team:** Marianne Cali is the coordinator.

WM meeting dates (more information will be provided as we get closer to the event):

October 14, November 11, and December 9
WM15 meetings after worship in the Youth room

November 3
Coordinator and hostess planning meeting 10:00 A.M. at Suzanne Swenson’s home.

Saturday, November 24
Hanging of the greens, 9:00 A.M. in the sanctuary

Saturday, December 1
Christmas Brunch

*Blessings,*
*Suzanne Swenson*
"Immigration Laws are the only laws that are discussed in terms of how to help people who break them."

Thomas Sowell
Renowned Economist, Professor, and Journalist.

Our country is entrenched in a highly emotional dispute about what our policy as a nation should be towards migrants who have entered our country illegally. The disputes on these matters reflect immigration challenges for America that stretch far beyond our southern border, the principal focus of our current national discussion. Nevertheless, events there have alerted Americans to greater and more frightening outcomes of our immigration policies and strategies.

**Security:**

Think about your home for a minute. Do you have a home-security system? If you don’t, you may want to get one. Even as far back as 2010, according to FBI statistics, “there were an estimated 2,159,878 burglaries” in America.

Not interested in a home security system? Perhaps you should consider living in a gated community of some sort. If you take that route, you’ll join somewhere between 8 and 42 million Americans who have. In general, the most common allure of living behind a gate comes from the heightened sense of security those barriers represent.

Just like our homes, our country needs security measures to keep us safe. One component of those measures is patrolling our nation’s borders to prevent illegal entry. When that measure fails, a second, deportation, comes to the fore. Thus, our national immigration debate is principally centered on differing views about whether or not these two measures—or any measures at all—should be used to discourage, prevent or sanction illegal entry into our country.

Why, though, is there any debate on what should be done about those who cross our borders illegally? Well, when a migrant’s first action with respect to the country they desire to become a part of is an *illegal action*, it could hardly be called a foul if that country treated them as someone who committed a crime.
Part of the outcry regarding this crime is the resulting tear-jerking side effect of separating children from their parents. By the way, doing so, though in smaller numbers, was also a policy of both the Obama and George W. Bush administrations.\textsuperscript{v}

But illegal-immigrant families who willfully broke our laws are not the only ones who now live with the pain of family separation resulting from illegal immigration. The family of Mollie Tibbets, for example, will forever be split from her. Mollie was a University of Iowa student who was reported missing on July 19, 2018. Her brutalized corpse was found on August 23rd.\textsuperscript{vi} An illegal immigrant confessed to her murder and led law enforcement officers to her mutilated body.

The same is true for the family of Kathryn Stienle who was shot and killed while walking with her father on Pier 14 in San Francisco. The shooter was an illegal immigrant who had been deported five times.\textsuperscript{vii}

Some will say there are far more Americans killed by other Americans than by illegal aliens. No doubt. Even so, if the men who killed these two women had not entered our country, it’s all but certain that Mollie Tibbets and Kathryn Stienle would still be alive today.

Still, some Americans are livid that our country is taking any measures to prevent immigrants from entering, legally or not.

“Don’t stop anyone at the border; don’t deport anyone who made it across; eliminate the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE).” Makes you wonder if those who have such an open-borders mindset apply it to their own homes. If so, they will certainly save quite a bit of money on security systems, fees for living in a gated community and door locks.

It’s a sad truth that many migrants are fleeing their home countries to escape oppression, poverty, crime and a host of other ills. Nevertheless, our sympathy for their plights must not lead to complicity with their illegalities by ignoring laws that protect us as a nation and reflect our character as a country. That can only lead us to a place of widespread anarchy and complete absence of security.

In a piece for National Review in June 2018, Andrew McCarthy (formerly an Assistant United States Attorney for 18 years in the Southern District of New York\textsuperscript{viii}), addressed this challenge in a recent article, "The Asylum Crisis is a Security Challenge, not a Legal Problem."\textsuperscript{ix} The article’s most salient point is this:

“The ‘rule of law’ is not a magic wand. It is possible only in a community that has agreed to live under its provisions.” “Even within such a community, it must [be] enforced by the power of the state.” “Law Enforcement is manageable as long [as] resources are commensurate with the reasonably expected degree of law-breaking. The situation is different when we are dealing with outsiders who seek entry into the community. By nature, this is more of a security challenge than a legal one.”\textsuperscript{x}

Could illegal immigrants ultimately overwhelm our law-enforcement resources and thus threaten our society? Certainly those families and refugees at the center of the current
debate couldn’t. What sort of outsiders could pose such a security challenge? Retired U.S. Marine Corp 4-star General John Kelly would\textsuperscript{x} name a few. His resume certainly speaks to ample expertise in such matters: U.S. Director of Homeland Security, former Commander In Chief of United States Southern Command (whose Areas of Responsibility includes Central and South America,\textsuperscript{xi} places where the journeys of many migrants to America originate), and current White House Chief of Staff.

Consider this corroborating evidence to Mr. McCarthy’s conclusion from Kelly’s 2015 session with the Atlantic Council:\textsuperscript{xii xiv}

“\textquote[The existing criminal networks that bring drugs and people from Central American [e.g. to the US] are growing in sophistication and the criminal enterprises are earning the gross domestic product (GDP) of a small country...}"

“\textquote[There’s nothing these groups can’t move”—from drugs, to heavy weapons, to precursors for methamphetamine, to counterfeit software, to illicitly mined gold and sex slaves. He added, all that movement “pays criminally well”—$84 billion in cocaine sales alone; $650 billion overall. If the networks were nations, they would have a gross domestic product greater \textquote[than all but 20 countries].” With submarines, jets, trucks, and a logistics operation that “Amazon would envy . . . they are no longer the cocaine cowboys” or even cartels. Many of the problems in the region, such as the mass migration of children from Central America arriving on the U.S.-Mexico border are \textquote[the direct result of our drug consumption] in the United States. “In many ways [parents] are trying to save their children” from the violence in their own countries.\textsuperscript{xv}

Clearly then, we must guard our nation’s borders to ensure we are protecting ourselves from true security threats like these. Lax security procedures for families of migrants would also be lax for those bent on evil.

On the flip side, we certainly don’t want to return to the extreme immigration policies of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. They were in reaction to what has been called “perhaps the most extensive investigation of immigration in the history of the country.”\textsuperscript{xvii} The 41-volume Dillingham Report of 1911 resulted from a three-year study of U.S. immigration by a small team of lawmakers and laymen to \textquote[find a compromise between proponents and opponents of immigration].” Sadly though, their research and recommendations were largely ignored. Instead, the nation adopted policies that significantly curtailed immigration and ultimately spawned a quota system designed to filter out those migrants that were deemed undesirable. Country of origin was a major discriminator as was the ability to pass a literacy test. It wasn’t until the passage in 1965 of the Immigration and Naturalization Act, that the quota system was finally abandoned.\textsuperscript{xviii} That’s good. Basing entry into our country on quotas is inconsistent with the values that have attracted so many migrants to our shores.

\textbf{Culture :}

If America’s current permeable immigration growing disregard of immigration ultimately
invited an influx of the sorts of denizens General Kelly described, it’s unlikely they would be drawn here by the idea of sewing themselves into the fabric of our country or adopting our historic values or even making a pretense of submitting to our laws. Of course not. Instead, as their influence spread, our culture would slowly be swallowed up in their twisted immorality, a state of affairs that would be extraordinarily difficult for us to reverse. Porous borders make such a nightmare scenario significantly more possible.

**The Better Way:**

Believe it or not, God’s word addresses immigration in an easy to understand way:

1. “You shall not wrong a sojourner (i.e. immigrant) or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.”

2. “If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land.”

Put another way:

Host nations: Welcome immigrants who follow the law.

Immigrants who seek to be “as a native”: Follow the laws of the country to which you seek to immigrate. (The Book of Ruth is an excellent example of how host countries and immigrants should behave in this regard.)

Seems pretty simple, doesn’t it?

---

Endnotes:

2. http://www.famouseconomists.net/thomas-sowell
5. https://www.factcheck.org/2018/06/did-the-obama-administration-separate-families/
13. *an organization that “promotes constructive leadership and engagement in international affairs*
These covenant children were baptized
September 16, 2018

Jonah Elias Jeffries,
Covenant child of Billy and Trina Jeffries

Ava Leilani Almonte, Covenant child
of Robert and Christy Almonte
Happening in October

Sunday, October 7
Benevolence Offering will be collected at church to benefit Hurricane Florence victims.

Sunday, October 7 at 12:15 P.M.
Children’s Church Meeting

Saturday, October 13 from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.
Sister-to-Sister Tea Party (see page 3 of this newsletter).

Sunday, October 14 after church
WM15 meeting in the Youth room

Sunday, October 14 at 5:00 P.M. Soups On!
Light meal prior to the Sunday evening service. RSVP to Lesley Schmidt at church or at jrslks92@yahoo.com. Hosted by the Hospitality Committee.

Sunday, October 14 at 6:00 P.M.
Evening worship service. Childcare is available.

Sunday, October 21 at 2:00 P.M.
Memorial Service for Judy Vander Ploeg at Christ Central PCA located at 6202 N. Himes Avenue, Tampa, 33614

Sunday, 6:00 P.M. October 28
The annual Tampa Bay area PCA churches Reformation Worship Service at Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church
October Birthdays

October 01, Jim Childers
October 07, Anthony Contrata
October 11, Joyce McNulty
October 17, Bonnie Hutton
October 23, Alan Polasky
October 26, Sean Justice
October 30, Rosa Mojica

October 02, Noelle Chew
October 08, Jack Diaz
October 16, Lindsay Montoney
October 22, Norman Beck
October 26, Lexi Becker
October 27, Cade Darbyshire
October 31, Nathaniel Barquin

October Anniversaries

October 01 George & Melissa Noel 13 Years
October 14 Anthony & Rachel Contrata 1 Year
October 14 Roger & Dee Kaiser 23 Years
October 22 Adam & Kyrsteen Webster 7 Years
October 23 Joe & Cindy Burns 35 Years
October 23 Tokini & Zainab Karibi-Whyte 14 Years