

ABSS 2024

Summary of Speakers and Topics

This year's presenters:

Jeremy Barrier (Florence, Alabama) (*keynote presenter*)
"Renewal of God's Creation" (Lessons from Galatians)

Mike Glover (Aughton, UK) *"The Supernatural Events around the Cross"*

Justin Dauner (CEM - Marseille) *"The Ruler of the Kings / Jesus' Lordship"*

Craig Young (CEM - Marseille) (*won't be with us*)

Gijs Bardoel (Pelt, Belgium) *"Evangelism through Relationship"*

Kirk Ruch (Vancouver, Canada) *"God's Intrusion for Kingdom Living"*

For our Saturday seminar (ABSS II) **Jeremy Barrier** will present on: *"Reading the Bible"*

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Jeremy Barrier (Florence, Alabama, USA)

Renewal of God's Creation

This is a meditation on Paul's letter to the church in Galatia with the purpose of reclaiming Paul for those of faith who have grown tired of thinking that Christians are the people who draw lines, make distinctions, and police religious borders. This is an attempt to reclaim the vision of Paul that is beyond Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female: the new creation. Ultimately, the vision of Paul was not Paul's vision, but God's vision of the cosmos. As we reclaim this vision of a new creation, we begin to reclaim God's new creation experienced in our lives and within the world around us. God, as the grand creator of the cosmos, is attempting to inject the same creative process into the cosmos through humans. Rather than simply seeing humans as the destroyers of the cosmos, Barrier invites us to consider this beautiful thought: "The earth could be renewed daily by . . . humanity."

Dr. Barrier is a Professor of Biblical Literature at Heritage Christian University and a missions minister for the Madison (AL) Church of Christ. He has been encouraging and strengthening churches throughout Europe, Asia and South America for the last 25 years. Annually, he teaches in various schools, institutions, and leadership training programs in India, the Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Peru. He and his wife, Robin, have two children, Samuel and Sophia. For hobbies, Dr. Barrier enjoys camping & hiking with his family, and early american woodworking and timber framing. His research interests include the Pauline Epistles (especially Corinthians and Galatians), second century ancient Christian novels (such as the Acts of Paul and Thecla), and Coptology. Following a research fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (2012-13, 2018, 2023) at the University of Regensburg (Regensburg, Germany), he is presently working on a series of articles related to the *Gospel of Judas*. Recently, he was given a distinct honor in being nominated to be a member of the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* (SNTS, i.e., an international society of New Testament scholars). He primarily teaches graduate and

undergraduate courses related to the New Testament and early Christianity, Greek, and Old Testament Studies.

Mike Glover (Aughton, UK)

The Supernatural Events Around the Cross

When Christ was dying on the cross, it is often overlooked or quickly just read over that miraculous events were happening in the background. These events were not accidents or random events. The more we look into them, the more we understand the power and work of God. The supernatural events are as follows. 1. The 3 hours of darkness. 2. The veil of the temple was torn into two. 3. An earthquake. 4. The graves opening up and dead people being raised to life.

My name is **Mike Glover** and I am married to Funmi, who is a major source of encouragement in my ministry. I am a graduate of the British Bible School and have many years of experience working with different congregations, along with preaching and teaching the Word of God to adults and children. I currently serve with the congregation that meets in Aughton, England.

Justin Dauner (Marseille, France)

The Ruler of Kings on Earth

"Jesus is Lord!" This statement is at the very core of the Christian faith. The apostles proclaimed the good news of a crucified Christ whose authority surpassed that of even kings and emperors. How would this audacious statement have resonated with a Gentile audience in the first century? We will look at two cultural traits which would have shaped a typical Gentile's understanding of the Good News:

Jesus' Lordship and Sin (It's Even Worse Than You Think)

In creating the world, God made himself the benefactor of all that exists. His generosity demands a response of love and service on our part. In other words: To a first-century Gentile, sin is much, much worse than a simple failure to obey a moral law.

Jesus' Lordship and Grace (It's Even Better Than You Think)

Our comments from the first session have an important corollary: If sin is so much worse than we are tempted to believe, then God's grace is that much greater! God's willingness to seek reconciliation with sinners goes beyond what any Gentile of the time would expect.

Justin Dauner graduated with a Master's degree in Theology from the *Faculté Libre de Théologie Réformée* (Aix-en-Provence, France) in 2014. Together with his wife Alicia, he worked as a missionary with churches in Wiesbaden and Cologne (Germany) for six years. During this time, he also taught New Testament classes for the Pepperdine campus in Heidelberg, Germany. Justin and Alicia have recently moved to Marseille to assist with missionary efforts there and for Justin to teach at the *Chrétiens en Mission* Bible school.

Craig Young (Marseille, France)

“I Don’t Want to Die Before I Die”

Walking in the valley of the shadow of death, grieving with hope - Reflections on living in the reality of our mortality.

Craig Young has been ministering in France with his wife Katie for the last 34 years. He is one of the shepherds of the Chapelle de Fuveau Church of Christ in Marseille. He directs and serves as professor for the theological training program Chrétiens en Mission in the same city. With a big heart for the next generation, he also serves as director for Harmony Bible Camp and helps oversee the Centre Bonnefoi where the camp is held. Craig’s favorite place to hang out with the next generation is on the soccer field.

Craig has a doctorate in missiology as well as a masters in global leadership from Fuller Theological Seminary. He previously received a masters in civil engineering. Craig and Katie, married now 36 years, are the proud grandparents of Daniel Presthus. They also thank God each day for their two daughters and two sons-in-law to match: Emilie and Robin Presthus, and Esther and Jackson House. They all love to sing together.

Gijs Bardoel (Pelt, Belgium)

Evangelism Through Relationship

We live in a time where we can develop relationships with people without even having to meet them in person. Social media seems to be a great tool to evangelize, meet people and bring people to Christ. Is this the way churches should be evangelizing and what are the challenges? During these sessions we will look at different ways to evangelize in Europe, and what, according to Jesus, is the most effective way.

Gijs is 27 years old and married to Arine since 2021. They are both Dutch and live just across the border in Belgium. After Gijs graduated with his Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering he subsequently completed a Masters in Ministry at Heritage Christian University in 2019. Since then he has been serving in local churches in the Netherlands and Belgium. Currently, Gijs and Arine serve together with Paul and Carol with the church in Antwerp. Gijs and Arine have a passion for youth ministry and are involved in organizing youth activities and Bible camps. About two times a year they travel to Asia to help and encourage Christians in places such as India, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. Beside their ministry, Gijs and Arine are entrepreneurs who always have projects to work on.

Kirk Ruch (Vancouver, Canada) *(Kirk will present via Zoom)*

“River, Wind, Fire: God’s intrusion for Kingdom Living.” (session 1)

Practical Biblical pneumatology: river, wind and fire are three OT images that grow into the NT and help us engage God’s intent and heart among us now. After Genesis 3 the Spirit has “always” worked counter-culturally - guiding God’s faithful people into counter-cultural Kingdom testimony. So it’s a natural confluence to speak of living in the Spirit and living counterculturally* in His power to demonstrate God’s Kingdom “for the nations.” We will also explore simple Biblical praxis for engaging the Spirit, and some general pointers re: what to expect.”

“Waking Up in Babylon: Spiritual formation, strengthening our identity and mission.” (2)

What can we learn from the Biblical story of God’s people in exile? Some aspects of our RM heritage position us well for growing in countercultural spiritual formation. Working with what we have, how can we better cooperate with the Spirit in spiritual formation, God’s mission and living out our identity in Him?”

Kirk has been serving churches in Canada with his wife Lori for the past 43 years – first in Ontario, and since 1983 in metro Vancouver, British Columbia, where he worked with the South Burnaby congregation for 32 years in pastoral ministry and evangelism. Since January 2022 Kirk has done interim ministry for churches in BC, and is training to become a spiritual director. From 2010 he and Lori taught five 3-week condensed courses at the Ukrainian Bible Institute in Donetsk and Kyiv, and they feel a strong connection to the friends in that work. Kirk did undergraduate studies in Bible at ACU, 2 years of ministry training in the St. Louis Internship, and in 2021 he completed a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from Regent College in Vancouver. Vancouver is “the world in a city,” and Kirk loves sharing Good News with people from many countries, learning from them, building bridges with them. He’s especially interested in spiritual formation and evangelism in post-Christian and post-“communist” societies, and looks forward to learning from European Christians via ABSS. Kirk and Lori have 4 wonderful adult children, and as of February 24, 12 even better grandchildren. Kirk M. Ruch riverwindfire.com

(* btw, my spell checker may not like ‘counterculturally’, but ‘countercultural’ is a word so we will run with it, Kirk. 😊)

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And.... presenting for **ABSS II**

(Saturday Seminar - 18 Feb):

Jeremy Barrier

Reading the Bible

Why attend a seminar on “Reading the Bible.” Do we attend seminars on “How to Read *Harry Potter*”? The Bible isn’t just *any* book. It is special and deserves some special attention. However, there are numerous ways to read and study the Bible, and numerous ways that people view the Bible. This seminar is on the basics of Bible study, the Bible in general, and the different ways that people have read the Bible from the first century down to the twenty-first century.