we’re calling it “ARISE 2.0.” The program is completely based around the biblical narrative, and moves chronologically through it. From Pre-Creation to Creation to the Fall to Covenant to Messiah to Church to Re-creation, these seven “chapters” from the narrative are the intentional backdrop of every class. This configuration allows for so many possibilities and improvements. We’re so excited, we can hardly contain ourselves.

The program is new, but the goal is the same: to make disciple-making disciples of Jesus Christ!

We know that is something we can all get excited about!

And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a city for help” (Isaiah 5:7). The church may seek to worship God all she wants, but according to the Old Testament prophets, worshiping God without a commitment to social justice is meaningless to Him. In the absence of justice, religious performances are an offering that does not reach God (Amos 5:21-24, NIV).

Though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Even though you bring me choice fellowship offerings, I will not listen to the music of your harps. Away with the noise of your songs! I will have no regard for them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will have no regard for them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will have no regard for them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs!

Of course, the shifts that are happening at ARISE have to do with the students that have been part of the program. The shift began, and has continued from its early years. The watchword then was to train Bible workers, of course, want the same thing!) Some will do this as tradesmen, and still others as teachers, some as nurses, others as teachers, some as tradesmen, and still others as teachers, salesmen or chefs! Bible workers, of course, want the same thing!) Some will do this as tradesmen, and still others as teachers, some as nurses, others as teachers, some as tradesmen, and still others as teachers, salesmen or chefs! Bible workers, of course, want the same thing!) Some will do this as tradesmen, and still others as teachers, some as nurses, others as teachers, some as tradesmen, and still others as teachers, salesmen or chefs!

OCTOBER 2012

Events Schedule

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This year, though, has been a leap forward. In the year leading up to this program, Ty, James, Jeffrey, Randy, and I, along with other members of the Light Bearers team, sat down at the “drawing board” and took everything off the table. We essentially wiped the slate clean and started from scratch. It was scary, for sure, but we knew we were onto something.

After many meetings over many months and much refining and re-refining, we arrived at a whole new way of doing ARISE. In house and instructors that make it up, I can say confidently that the program has improved every year since we started a decade ago in partnership with the Michigan Conference. It doesn’t mean the earlier programs were bad—no way!—but that the programs have kept improving incrementally every year.

It’s hard to believe that we just began our 10th ARISE class! In many ways, it seems like it was only yesterday that I sat down with Nathan Remier on the living room floor of his Bay City, Michigan trailer to hammer out the details of what the course would look like. In the intervening years, the four-month ARISE Cornerstone Program has trained nearly 500 students! All I can say is, What has God wrought!

When ARISE was first conceived it was largely a training program for would-be Bible workers. The Michigan Conference was eager to hire Bible workers, and we were eager to train them. Over the years, however, our focus has shifted somewhat. Yes, every year we still have students who go on to be excellent Bible workers, but the program overall has not been geared specifically to that end since those early years. The watchword then was Bible workers. The watchword today is disciples. Here’s why ...

Typically, less than 20% of the students in any given ARISE program even have an interest in becoming Bible workers. The other 80+% are interested in two things: getting to know God through His Word and learning how to share Him confidently with others. (Aspiring Bible workers, of course, want the same thing!) Some will do this as nurses, others as teachers, some as tradesmen, and still others as students, salesmen or chefs!

After the first few years it became obvious that if ARISE’s primary goal was to train Bible workers, we’d be catering to 20% or less of the class. So the shift began, and has continued to the present. Every year we review and evaluate the program overall and the individual components, classes, and instructors that make it up.

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Mission Update
The Newsletter of Light Bearers

ARISE 2.0

By David Asscherick

It’s hard to believe that we just began our 10th ARISE class! In many ways, it seems like it was only yesterday that I sat down with Nathan Remier on the living room floor of his Bay City, Michigan trailer to hammer out the details of what the course would look like. In the intervening years, the four-month ARISE Cornerstone Program has trained nearly 500 students! All I can say is, What has God wrought!

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This year, though, has been a leap forward. In the year leading up to this program, Ty, James, Jeffrey, Randy, and I, along with other members of the Light Bearers team, sat down at the “drawing board” and took everything off the table. We essentially wiped the slate clean and started from scratch. It was scary, for sure, but we knew we were onto something.

After many meetings over many months and much refining and re-refining, we arrived at a whole new way of doing ARISE. In house

continued on p. 4 . . .
When the Church Forgets Justice

When most people think of the word “church,” they usually think of Christians, the teachings of Jesus, and the New Testament. But it’s interesting that the idea of “church” is actually an Old Testament concept. The word ‘church’ comes from the Greek ecclesia, meaning “called out ones.” Abraham was called out by God and told that his descendants would be a blessing to the world (Genesis 12:1-3).

Those descendants are the Jews. They were the original church of the Old Testament. In the book of Acts, Stephen refers to them as “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38, KJV). The New Testament church is simply a continuation of the Old Testament church. So in order to understand the essence of what the church of today is supposed to be like, we need to understand the original church of the Old Testament.

The record of their experiences has been preserved “as examples” and are “warnings for us” (1 Corinthians 10:1, NIV). We learn from their triumphs and failures. There’s an aspect of their experience that deserves our attention. It’s the subject of social justice. It’s interesting to see the role that justice played in their purpose and identity, and the expectations God had on them.

In The Israel of God in Prophecy, Dutch theologian Hans LaRondelle highlights the basic reason for God choosing Israel as a prototype in the ancient world. “In short, Israel was chosen to represent the attractive character and saving will of Yahweh to the Gentiles.” He continues: “The purpose of the election is service, and when the service is withheld the election loses its meaning, and therefore fails. . . If she (Israel) ceased to acknowledge Yahweh to be her God, then she declared that she no longer wished to be His people. . . Her high calling was the gospel. Now we have a message, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” Will not our members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, who has been preserved as examples and warnings for us?”

Whenever Israel loses a sense of her purpose, the whistle blowers (prophets) emerge with messages of warning to call her out of the two dangers that consistently loom over her: 1) apostasy from God and 2) social injustice. And both of these dangers are related; the latter is the result of the former. Apathy toward others is an unavoidable indicator that we’ve strayed from the heart of God.

This concept of justice runs like a thread throughout the prophets of Israel with each of them singing the same tune.

Listen to Isaiah’s plea: “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Isaiah 1:16-17, NKJV).

Listen to Jeremiah’s declaration: “Thus says the LORD: Execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place” (Jeremiah 22:3, NKJV).

Listen to Ezekiel’s rebuke: “The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. In your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow” (Ezekiel 34:4; 22:7, NKJV).

Listen to Micah’s summary: “He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD really wants from you: he wants you to promote justice, to be faithful, and to live obediently before your God” (Micah 6:8, NET).

Social justice is so central to Old Testament theology that God identifies Israel’s failure on these very grounds: “For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, the mark of the Divine indulgence or favoritism, but a summons to a task exacting and unceasing, and election and task were so closely bound together that she could not have the one without the other.”

When The Church Forgets Justice

By Jeffrey Rosario

The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church His fullness and His sufficiency shall be reflected to the world and through the church will the riches of the grace of Christ; of darkness into His marvelous plan that through His church the church is the repository of the love powers in heavenly places,” the and through the church will be called out of darkness into His marvelous power. . . Her high calling was the gospel. Now we have a message, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” Will not our members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, who has been preserved as examples and warnings for us?”

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