

Candidate Week – Wrap-up

Thank you for participating in attending the meetings and/or reading the daily updates of the meetings that were held on campus during candidate week. The Town Hall meeting time didn't allow us to get through all the questions received, here are those questions and Jason's answers gathered during the search process or during the week.

Please be in prayer for Jason and Shannon and their family, it has been a full and demanding week. Jason will be teaching again on Sunday morning at all three services.

Remember the business meeting on Sunday evening is to vote on the motion:

I affirm the Lord's leading in the elders' recommendation of Jason Swanson and agree to call him as Senior Pastor.

Now for the questions

Q: What are your views on the gifts of the Spirit [sign gifts]? Do you think they are still for today or did they cease with the apostles? What do you believe to be the purpose and nature of the spiritual gifts and how did you see them operate in your church in PNG?

I believe the sign gifts ceased with the apostles. The purpose and nature of the spiritual gifts is to edify and build up the body of Christ for the work of ministry so that believers would become mature (Eph. 4:11-13). I saw the gifts function as believers used their gifts of teaching, helps, administration, hospitality as well as giving which enabled other believers to grow in Christ likeness as well as to be blessed by other believers (Romans 12:3-8).

What are your expectations of us as a church in supporting you, your ministry and your family?

My expectation for the church for how you all would support me, my ministry and my family would be one and the same; namely, that you all would welcome us into the family of Christ at RBC and treat us like a part of the body.

How do you explain and define "freedom in Christ"; or "Christian liberty"; as this concept relates to your own everyday life?

I would define "Christian liberty" as giving up something I could do but choose not to for the sake of others or my own spiritual growth, holiness and Godliness. All things are lawful but not all things are profitable (1 Cor. 10:23). What this looks like in my everyday life is that watching certain television shows, movies, music, food, alcoholic beverages... may be permissible for me but not "wise" nor profitable so I will go without them.

What have you observed are some of the trends in missions?

I believe some of the current trends in missions are to emphasize more of a social gospel which focuses on meeting the physical needs of people without putting proper emphasis on the Gospel

of Jesus Christ which will determine the eternal state of the unsaved. This has revealed itself in a growing number of organizations who no longer see the need for church planting, Bible translation or Gospel ministries but pour all their resources into meeting ONLY the physical needs of the people in foreign lands.

Who has affirmed your strength in preaching and who has encouraged you in the development and the use of your gift?

The former pastors and elders of my home church in Redondo Beach including pastors: Sam Tabiando, Keith Essex, Cecil Sirwardene and Rob Rottweiler. Many of pastors and elders in our supporting churches throughout our years of service on the mission field such as Ron Brown, Wayne Freedman, Myron Drent and Trent Means along with others who were quite influential in encouraging me to pursue the ministry as a pastor.

What is your distinction of theology on Lordship Salvation?

My distinction of theology on Lordship Salvation is that I am not as much comfortable with preaching “Lordship” as I am with repentance because I believe there are for more Scriptures which clearly teach the sinners must believe and repent in terms of salvation calls than there are Scriptures saying that sinners must make Jesus “Lord of your life”. I do believe that James as well as other Scriptures teach that believers MUST make Jesus Lord of their lives and live accordingly I just do not believe that it must be something mentioned in an initial Gospel presentation. I am fine with people who want to follow MacArthur on such a thinking but I prefer to not do this.

In dependence on God and the work of the Holy Spirit in you, what spiritual disciplines do you practice and enjoy that bring you into a deeper relationship with Him and cause you to know Him more intimately?

Definitely prayer, spending time in the Word and meditating on the Scriptures as I consider a particular aspect of God’s Word that I have recently read. Spending time with my Lord in prayer allows me to focus on Him more clearly and asking God to teach me something about His perfections while I read the Word or about my sinfulness and need of His grace really gets my heart in a place of worship. I also enjoy singing worship songs.

Are there any spiritual disciplines you desire to practice more fully in order to deepen your relationship with God and know Him more intimately? If yes, what is your plan for doing this?

Since starting seminary I have read hundreds of books but it was always more for school than actually “soaking” them up and truly absorbing them. I can’t wait to actually go back over some of those books and read again this time for my own personal study and personal growth. I have also never been a guy that “journals” very much when it comes time to prayers and time with the Lord but I plan on starting that very soon as well

Your convictions concerning eschatology.

- Pre-tribulation: This would be my eschatological position because I believe it most accurately represents the clear teaching from Scripture. This view usually goes along with a dispensational viewpoint which I also take.
- Pre-wrath: This is the view where Christians will be taken in the Rapture approximately three-fourths of the way through the Tribulation period. I do not take this view.
- Post-tribulation: This is the view that teaching that the Rapture and Second Coming are facets of a single event which will occur at the end of the Tribulation period where in the Church will be on the earth during the Tribulation period. I do not take this view.
- A-millennial: This view teaches that the church has replaced Israel and that the millennium is being fulfilled spiritually through the institutional church in the present age. I do not take this view because it demands a hermeneutic that is not a literal, historical grammatical hermeneutic.

If you could ask us any question, what would it be?

You guys didn't ask me about marriages and funerals. Those are things I look most forward too. I know that seems morbid, in PNG it was kept from me. I was a little involved in pre-marital counseling but everything was pre-arranged. The opportunity to preach the gospel, there is no better time than at a funeral. It would be a wonderful opportunity to rejoice with a faithful believer. Death isn't easy, but it was all around us on mission field. Similarly with marriages, I can't wait to get ahold of a couple and doing that work. I take these things seriously, I love counseling,

What do you see are your leadership strengths, and what areas of leadership do you see you need to be strengthened, grow in, and for which you need to receive support?

Most people say that I am a gifted communicator as well as a good preacher. Others have said I am great in discipleship. I love both preaching and counselling and dumping my life into people. But, I believe that one of my greatest strengths is my love for people and my desire to see everyone take God's Word and live it out. I am a shepherd at heart. I cannot and will not merely "PREACH the Word". Please don't get me wrong, the Bible is key and it is absolutely essential to stay true to the text and clearly communicate what God's Word says as God intended it. I love to study the Word of God, uncover the gems it has to offer and preach it. But I also love to apply God's Word to hurting people. I love to make application of God's Word so that people have an idea on how God wants to use His Word to help them change. I also believe God has gifted me with creativity and leadership skills to lead people and be an innovator in giving people unique ways to grow in Godliness and apply God's Word to their lives.

I believe the weakest area in my personal ministry would be my administrative ability. While we served in Papua New Guinea the church that I lead was a small church (200) with relatively a small number of working parts. I was not in a position that required a daily secretary to help organize my days, lead strategy meetings or balance a budget. My time in seminary has been very good for me in helping plan out my daily schedule, strategize for my upcoming year in order to get all my goals accomplished as well as juggle many different responsibilities. Organization skills would not be one of my strengths and I feel needs some growth but I am very good at delegating responsibility and am not a micro-manager by any stretch of the imagination.