“Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His Name; make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing Psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy Name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore! Remember His marvellous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,” 1 Chronicles 16:8-12

Working for Reformation Today
This was my fourth Mission in four months. We have been promoting 2017 as Reformation 500 for many years, actually, since my Mission to Europe in 2005, so it is understandable that we have received many invitations to conduct Reformation 500 conferences in so many countries.

Across the Atlantic
The day after Resurrection Sunday, I flew off to Pennsylvania, where I was a speaker at the Reformation 500 Conference. Leaving Cape Town after an intense flurry of activity, I had hoped to catch up on some sleep on the International flights, but that was not to be. The seats were so crammed that one cannot help but be jostled, bumped and pushed by passengers to the left, right and behind. Being a light sleeper I found it impossible to sleep for more than a few moments at a time before being jostled by one of the neighbours in such close proximity on these crammed flights. There was also a lot of intense traffic in Philadelphia and my host, Ben Francis and I, barely had time to quickly change and dash off to make the evening meeting of the Reformation 500 Conference. At that stage I had been awake for 2 days and nights.

Reformation 500 Conference
This was held in scenic Lancaster County amidst Amish and Mennonite communities. The
presentations I was requested to present, included: A Geo-Strategic Overview of the Greatest Century of Reformation, A Call to Prayer for Revival, How the Reformation Changed the World and the Church, John Calvin and the Huguenots, The English Reformation, Martin Luther and the Reformation in Germany, Ulrich Zwingli and the Swiss Reformation and Reformation Today.

(You can hear these messages on our Sermon.Audio page.)

Great Speakers and Fellowship
Also speaking at the Conference was Dr. William Einwechter, a long-time friend and supporter of our Mission, author of Walking in the Law of the Lord and Ethics and God's Law. His presentations on The Just Shall Live By Faith, The Theology and History of Reformation Bible Translations and Sola Scriptura in Worship, were outstanding. Rev. Steven Hamilton from Northern Ireland and I had numerous friends in common, including the late Dr. Ian Paisley of Martyrs Memorial Church in Belfast. There was much to discuss and praise God for.

Educational Projects
Most of the homeschoolers who participated in the conference were from Mennonite families. Benjamin organised educational activities of printing and woodcuts, copying Scriptures with quills and bottles of ink and educational projects that had the students scouring the over 40 Reformation displays he and his family had put together in a major labour of love throughout the previous year. I decided to take the home schoolers exam and sat down thinking I could complete it all from memory. However, Ben’s questions were so involved and demanding that I found myself only able to answer half from memory and for the rest needed to carefully read the displays on the Reformation in Hungary, Spain, Sweden and Italy, to find the required answers!

Were the Anabaptists Persecuted for their Faith?
Conducting a Reformation 500 Conference in Lancaster Country amidst Mennonites and Amish people, it was inevitable that I would asked: Why did the Reformers kill Anabaptists? This is a volatile subject and there has been an enormous amount of misinformation on the subject. My
answer was: The Reformers did not kill anyone for their faith. The early Anabaptists were violent revolutionaries. Thomas Muntzer and John of Leyden, who incited the Peasant’s Revolt of 1524-1525, have been claimed by Frederick Engels and Karl Marx as “the world’s first communists”.

Violent Revolutionaries

Muntzer issued proclamations damning all land owners, magistrates and Reformers to death: “I would like to smell your frying carcass” he wrote to Luther. Muntzer exhorted his followers: “Let your swords be ever warm with blood!”

Muntzer’s army of Anabaptists struck terror throughout the country sides, robbing, burning and destroying homes, churches, castles and monasteries, looting and massacring old and young, men and women.

The Reformers Were Opposing Revolutionaries Not Pacifists

Naturally, the Reformers dissociated from these violent revolutionaries and called on the princes to restore order. This was a matter of resisting violent revolution by communists. Just as it would be unfair to confuse the later generations of pacifist Anabaptists with these violent revolutionaries, it is not fair to blame Reformers who opposed the violent revolutionaries with interfering with the religious freedoms of the later pacifist Anabaptists.

Anabaptists Only Flourished in Protestant Countries

The fact is that Amish and Mennonites only flourished in Protestant controlled areas. They were eliminated from Catholic controlled areas, such as Spain, Italy, France and Belgium. The Anabaptists of today can trace their ancestors to Protestant countries: Germany, Holland and Switzerland, where religious toleration and freedom of conscience were respected.

Ministry of the Word

We also had the opportunity to explore the best library of Anabaptist and Mennonite writings and ancient Bibles in North America. On Sunday, I preached at Immanuel Free Reformed Church on 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Be Steadfast, Immovable…” and in the evening gave a Mission Report.
Gettysburg

Monday, my hosts, William Einwechter and Benjamin Francis, drove me through to Gettysburg to explore this extraordinary historic battlefield. The Gettysburg National Military Park includes over 1,300 monuments, over 400 cannon, 148 historic buildings and 3 observation towers providing an extraordinary education in one of the most decisive battles in recent history.

The Catastrophic Cost of Friendly Fire

Military Academies to this day study this battle, which could have easily gone the other way. The loss of General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson to friendly fire after his extraordinary victory at Chancellorsville, just two months before the battle of Gettysburg, deprived General Robert E. Lee of his most successful commander. As gifted as Robert E. Lee was at strategy, General Jackson was one of the most gifted tactical commanders of American history. Many military historians are convinced that had Jackson been at the battle of Gettysburg, he would have ensured that General Lee’s order to seize the high-ground was fulfilled on the first day. That would doubtless have reversed the situation, where the Union army would have been forced to fight up-hill to seize the high-ground. Failure to promptly exploit an enemy’s retreat and seize strategic ground swiftly, can determine and doom a campaign. To this day, how many of our missionaries and ministers fall to friendly fire, or fail to seize the high ground?

Idaho

Early the next day I flew to Boise, Idaho where David Barrett had arranged a whole series of school meetings, radio interviews and the 32nd Rocky Mountain Biblical Worldview Conference. The theme of the Conference was: Reformatt: Yesterday and Today. Well-known author and radio personality, Kevin Swanson, was also a guest speaker at this conference.

School and Radio Ministry

I gave presentations on Martin Luther – Captive to the Word, The Church Fathers of North Africa and Winning the Vikings to Christ at the Well Academy. I also did a whole series of radio interviews with The Gospel Changes Everything with Josh Bales and four interviews with Matt Slick Live.

Rocky Mountain Biblical Worldview Conference

The Reformation: Yesterday and Today Conference was enriched with music from the Overman Family and the Covenant Academy Bell Choir. Our first session was a panel discussion on Can Reformation Come to America? My presentations included: Reformation vs. Islamisation, Identifying Battlefields for Reformation, 25 Steps for Reformation Today, John Calvin – A Heart Aflame and A Mind Renewed and John Knox and the Reformation in Scotland. (These messages were filmed and will soon be on our www.frontline.org.za website). It was a joy to meet many home educators and to answer scores of questions from eager students.

California

Then I had to race to the airport to fly via Portland, Oregon, arriving late at night in San Jose, California. There I was hosted by the Home Church who have been good friends for many years. Early the next morning, we were off to the church. My first appointment was presenting an update on the Mission’s activities and vision for the future to their GO-team (Global Outreach). For the main service, my sermon was: Steadfast. Lunch time and the evening were packed with great fellowship and fielding many perceptive questions and discussions, which ranged around many aspects of Missions, discipleship, history and eschatology. I was then driven to a new hosts’ home and the next morning, after catching up on laundry, I was taken to meet with pastors and missionaries, including from Nigeria and strategic plans for the future were solidified.

Answers in Genesis

The next morning, I was up early to fly back across the country from California to Cincinnati, Ohio and the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter. Back in 2008, I had the privilege of being given a personal guided tour of the Creation Museum by Answers in Genesis Founder, Ken Ham. Many additions and expansion have been made to the extraordinary Creation Museum since. I enjoyed an hour-long interview with Ken Ham in his office and then met with his brother, Steve Ham, the International Co-ordinator of AIG and Mark Looy, Co-Founder of AIG. Tim Chaffey, Content Manager of the Ark Encounter, gave me a personal guided tour of the spectacular, made-to-scale Ark.

The Ark Encounter

The Ark Encounter is the largest free-standing timber-frame building in the world: 510 feet long, 85 feet wide and 51 feet high – based on the Bible’s dimensions (300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high). 3.1 Million board feet of timber was used for the Ark structure. Amish craftsmen and carpenters were primarily responsible for the construction of what is now the largest timber-frame structure in the world. The Ark includes 290,000 board feet of bamboo flooring, 300,000 screws, 50,000 wood-peg, bolts, washers and nuts and 66 huge lodge poles (each 55 feet tall).
The Ark's 132-exhibit bays house world class exhibits with fascinating details on geology, history, technology, the world before the Flood, how the Ark could have been built, ventilated, lit, provided sufficient food and water for the thousands of species, comparisons with other Flood narratives in different cultures around the world, the post-Flood world, Babel, the evidences for a world-wide Flood and much more. Having spent two days carefully examining every exhibit on the Ark Encounter, I have no doubt that one can learn far more from a thorough exploration of the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum than most students could learn in a month, or even a year, in the average classroom. It is an absolute must for home educators and Bible students.

After two extraordinary, informative and inspiring days, I dashed back to Cincinnati airport to catch a flight through to Tennessee where my host was waiting to drive me several hours to his farm where I would be staying. We arrived after midnight. Early the next morning we were off to a sheriff and pastors' meeting and then to a public meeting that had been advertised: Men of Courage – Behind the Enemy Lines for Christ. Here I met friends who had completed our Great Commission Course. Early the next morning, we went to a Men's Breakfast where I presented Faith Under Fire in the Middle East.

Reformation Today
I was then collected by another host and driven through to Geoffrey and Victoria Botkin for strategic discussions and video interviews, dealing with Europe, Islam and the Reformation. Early the next morning at the Sunday Church service, I preached on: Choose You This Day and at an afternoon seminar I gave a presentation on: The Battle for the Soul of a Continent.

Filming in Nashville
The next morning we drove through to Nashville, where I had nearly four hours of video interviews with Chris Pinto of Adullum Films on the Reformation and then headed off to the airport for the long flight home.

Mission in a Nutshell
In three weeks, I completed 40 meetings in 5 states, stayed in 7 homes, ministered at 3 conferences, 5 TV interviews and 7 radio programmes.

Africa Reformation Overland Missions
By God's grace, our Missionaries, John, Rachel and Francis completed Missions to Namibia, Zambia and Tanzania. Abrie and Taryn completed Missions to Lesotho, Swaziland and throughout South Africa. We have invitations to conduct Reformation Conferences throughout Africa, as far afield as Nigeria. Please pray for our ongoing ministries and upcoming Missions across the border.

Thank you for all your prayers, encouragement and support.

May God continue to be your joy and strength.

Yours for the fulfilment of the Great Commission
Dr. Peter Hammond
Director