MISSION NEWS

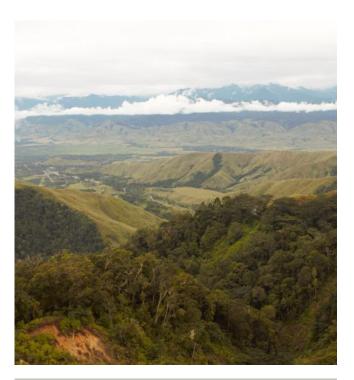
Mission Activities of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia

Volume 18 • Issue 1 • February 2022

PSALM 68: OUR MISSION

Guest Editorial

Rev. W van der Jagt



What would be your response to the question, "Do you want God's blessing on your life?" I'm pretty sure that you would respond in a positive way: "Yes, of course I want God's blessing on my life." It's not very difficult to understand why we should seek God's blessing. We want to be happy! We want to enjoy life! We want things go well with us and our children! Although there is nothing wrong with this as such, there is a much more important reason why we should ask for God's blessing on our lives. Psalm 67 tells us. We should seek God's blessing so that our gladness in God will spread to all the nations.

The Psalm reflects the blessing that the Aaronic priests had to pronounce on Israel. Twice the Psalm refers to this, "The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." (Num 6: 24-26). The Psalm is also rooted in God's covenant promise to Abraham, "I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 12:2-3). In fact, the Psalm is no less than the Old Testament expression of the Lord Jesus' instruction, that we are to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6: 10). The theme of Psalm 67 is a major theme of God's Word: as God's children we should seek God's blessings so that our gladness in God will attract many more people and they may too believe in and glorify God. We must say that mission is not a program in the church, it is thé program of the church.

It's easy to say that we want God's blessing, but it does not come automatic. We must diligently seek it. God is ready to pour out His blessing on His people, but only when we order our lives rightly before Him and seek God Himself as the supreme blessing. "God be gracious to us and bless us" (v.la). We all desperately need God's grace and His blessing. And we realise that God's grace means that we get blessings we do not deserve. We deserve God's judgment for our sins, but He gives us a free pardon and eternal life through Jesus Christ who paid our debt. The Christian life from beginning to end depends on God's grace. We received Christ because of God's grace; we walk in God's grace (Col. 2:6). We enjoy all of God's blessings because of His grace that He ordained for us in Christ(Eph.1:3-6). But grace is not easy to receive because our pride makes us think that we earned or deserved it. You ask God for something you can never earn - His grace and His blessing.

Then the psalm continues, "and cause His face to shine upon us" (67: 1b). This comes out of the Aaronic blessing and is a theme in several other Psalms (31: 16; 80:3,7,19; 119:135). To have God's face shining on us is the opposite of a scowling or angry face. It means to have His smile or favour upon us. God's face would shine on His people in the person of Christ, who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person.

At the end of our psalm, which ties back into the beginning, the psalmist repeats the name of God three times in connection with His blessing: "God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, ...". This emphasizes that we cannot separate God's blessing from God Himself. He is the blessing, to have Him as our

God. You can have everything that the world counts as blessings, but if you don't have God, you are not truly blessed. And, you may not have anything that the world counts as blessings, but if you have God and His smiling face in Christ, you are still truly blessed in whatever situation you are in.

All this makes clear that when we seek God's blessings it can't be a selfish request: "God, bless me with a wife and children and a house and a better car and a good job, so that I will be happy." Those things may be legitimate requests, but the prayer should be that God would bless you with those things so that you and your family and all of your belongings may be used to further God's glory among the nations. It's the same principle that the Lord Jesus tells us: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6: 33). Seek God's blessing for the sake of the nations. The blessings we receive are to be directed to the mission in this world so that other people may come to praise our God. "God be merciful to us and bless us, ... that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations." (v 1-2). And every Sunday we will receive God's blessing at the end of the churchservice so that God's people will sing this mission song at the top of their voice.

> "The blessings we receive are to be directed to the mission in this world so that other people may come to praise our God"

CHAIRMAN'S MUSINGS

Southern River Mission Board

Frank Janssen

A holistic approach! I am not even sure when the word holistic entered into the conversation. However, in the past couple of years, during the discussions about the work being done in PNG, the word holistic did indeed appear. It was with this word that the Board took a proposal to the Cooperating churches (Co-Op) last year in April 2021 and then again in November, for the work of the mission board to look holistically at the whole of PNG and not just be limited to NE-PNG. In April the Co-op gave in principal support to the approach, but requested further information, of which

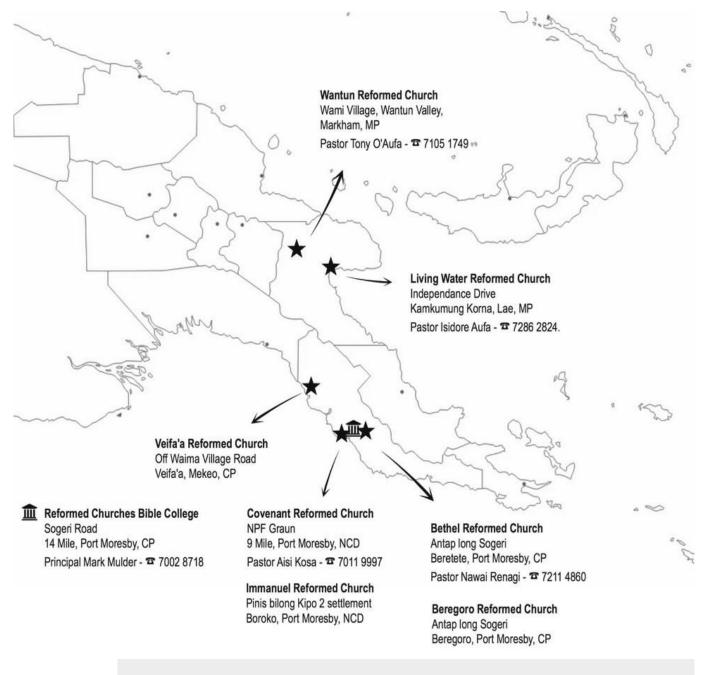


was provided in November. It is with much thankfulness that the proposal was approved, and the Southern River Mission Board is now mandated with the work in PNG and not just limited to Lae and the highlands.

So, what does this decision mean, and how does it affect the field? In essence this doesn't affect the work that we are currently doing in Lae, Wantun, Hila and the highlands. In this respect there is no change to the work. However, with respect to Port Moresby, the change is quite a big one.

Firstly some background. In 2017 and 2018, the missionaries had in depth discussions with all the local church plants and their Pastors. What came out of this is the need, especially on the Port Moresby side, for more assistance from Missionaries, not only in the

> "There is a saying that many cooks spoil the broth, but in this case, God is clearly at work, allowing us all to work together for one purpose, and for that, to God be the Glory forever."



Current locations of Church plants (excluding Hila; not yet shown)

current church plants to support the Pastors and congregations, but also in outreaches in Port Moresby itself. This request was then discussed at on on-field conference (all the Reformed Ministry (RM) staff with the 3 international boards). Toronto were not in a position to increase their level of involvement and so sent a request for help to the Armadale Mission Board. Armadale consistory appointed a review committee who in turn provided recommendations, and then discussions with FRC Armadale and the Co-Op, it was agreed that Australia could indeed assist in the Port Moresby region as well, and not only that, but also no longer just restrict itself to NE-PNG but have a holistic approach.

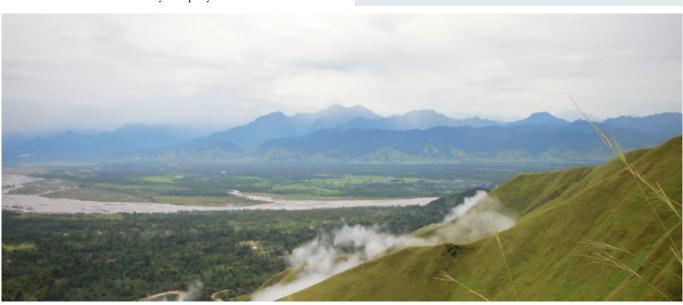
And this is where we find ourselves now. With this mandate, the calling committee is now active in looking for another missionary for the work in the 4 church plants in Port Moresby. The Board is also in discussions regarding where and how to house the new missionary and how to work alongside those already working in Port Moresby

The Board has been blessed by the all the ex-pat field workers (called RM, not only Australia's, but also New Zealand's and Canada's) that they made themselves available for a mini-Zoom conference. This way, there can be clear communication between all the parties to make sure that we are all on the same page. It was an enjoyable Saturday morning, talking to people in Byford, Moresby, Albany, Cairns, Port Ukarumpa, Lae, and Lyndon (USA). We were able to talk about the practicalities of the mandate and start discussions about the path forward. Upon reflection, it is indeed a blessing that there is very good co-operation between all the workers on the field and also the three international boards that have input into the work. There is a saying that many cooks spoil the broth, but in this case, God is clearly at work, allowing us all to work together for one purpose, and for that, to God be the Glory forever.

Hopefully, in upcoming Mission News articles we can let you know about the progress. This can be a long journey, so we continue to beseech your prayers for the work.

Prayer points:

- Please pray for the national Pastors and the congregations, so that each and every Sunday Gods word can be declared and that many more people in PNG may come to hear Gods word.
- Please pray that God will guide the work so that a call can be made for a missionary in POM and the harvest that needs to be attended to can be.
- Please pray for the Mission Board that it works with this new Mandate in a way that builds on the work that has been done before and in a manner that helps the Reformed Churches of PNG.
- Pray for the workers earnestly and constantly that Gods word can be spread to the many who haven't heard the Gospel in PNG.
- Pray that we all keep Mission work alive in our families and church so that we can continue to support the spreading of Gods word not only in PNG but also in our local areas.



HOW TO PLANT A CHURCH (IV) GATHERING IN WORSHIP

Southern River Mission Board

Pastor Ryan De Jonge, Lae PNG



The weekly gathering for worship is the heartbeat of the church. Where that heartbeat is strong, believers flourish. Where that heartbeat is weak, it is both a symptom and a cause of other spiritual sicknesses. We want to encourage a strong, healthy heartbeat when we are planting new churches. The fifth step of the Pauline Cycle, Gathering in Worship, provides some of the categories that we need to keep in mind not only when a fledgling church begins to worship but at all times of a church's life. A baby needs to have a strong heartbeat to survive, but so does a fully grown adult.

The first category to keep in mind is belongingness. As the Apostle Paul says, believers are members of the household of God (Eph 2:19). Every Christian belongs to the church and ought to join themselves to it (Belgic Confession Article 28). This is an important principle to establish at the outset when we talk about gathering in worship because it helps to set some parameters for us. For example, a believer should never be barred from gathering with the church, except in the most extreme circumstances, where life and death are at stake. This is why regulations such as mask and vaccine mandates have become so controversial. The principle of belongingness also includes the fellowship that believers share in Jesus Christ. No believer is an island. We have duties and obligations to fulfill for one another because this is how a well-functioning household thrives.

The remaining categories in this step of the Pauline Cycle are more practically focussed. The second is about group size. This is the perennial question that we face when planting churches: How many members do you need for a group to be viable? One helpful measure is the rule that the ancient Jews had for starting a new synagogue. They said that a group must have at least 10 men present before a new synagogue could be established. I'm not sure what the logic behind this rule was, but I suspect it had to do with the tithe. Ten men, i.e., ten breadwinners of the family, giving 10% of their income would be able to support 100% of their pastor's salary. When we were considering whether the Living Water congregation in Lae could institute, this rule of 10 helped our deliberations.

The meeting place of the congregation is also important. Here, however, things like climate and local practices play a big role. The congregation in Wantun has met in the shade of a mango tree since 2014. While they are planning to build a church building and it is an important step for them as a congregation, it has not been a priority because even during the wet season it rarely rains at midday when they meet for worship. In Hila, the climate is colder and it frequently rains all day, so, from the very beginning, they have had to meet under a tarp and have been working diligently to gather materials for a more durable and permanent structure. In other parts of the world, missiologists and missionaries have had very interesting discussions about church design. In Western countries, we have certain expectations of what a church should look like, and while those have changed over time, there has always been something distinctive about a Christian church. But what do you do in places where there is another dominant religion? Should a church look like a mosque, gurdwara, or pagoda? By and large, Christians have been quite pragmatic on this issue and have emphasized that what is most important is that believers meet.

Another aspect of gathering is the meeting time. Even more so than meeting place, this is a matter more of preference than principle. Yes, there are some debates about whether to meet on Saturday or Sunday, but most Christians throughout history have recognized Sunday, the first day of the week and the day that Christ rose from the grave, as the day upon which to gather. What time to meet on Sunday comes down to what works best for the members. In Lae, worship usually starts around 10 am. In Wantun, where the members are spread out, it starts at noon. In Hila, where everyone lives close to each other, it is 9:30.

In Reformed churches, we have two worship services on Sunday. When to have this second service can also vary greatly. Some churches have an evening service, a nod to those passages of Scripture that speak of evening prayers (called vespers). Most of the Reformed churches that I was familiar with growing up had the second service in the early or late afternoon. In Langley, where I served as pastor before coming to PNG, we met at 2 pm. I was told that that time was established because it worked best for the dairy farmers. By the time I arrived, there were no more dairy farmers in the congregation, but the time remained. In PNG, all the Reformed churches hold the second service almost immediately after the first because

"Where that heartbeat is strong, believers flourish. Where that heartbeat is weak, it is both a symptom and a cause of other spiritual sicknesses. We want to encourage a strong, healthy heartbeat when we are planting new churches." travel to and from church is either timeconsuming, expensive or both. The timing of this service has a noticeable effect on the structure and length of the service. Rather than going through a structured liturgy again, the service is greatly simplified to an opening prayer, a song, a lesson, and then a closing song and prayer.

One interesting aspect of culture to take note of here is the difference between a time-oriented culture and an event-oriented culture. PNG, unlike Australia, is an eventoriented culture. This means that the starting time for the church service is not based on time. Yes, there is a generally agreed-upon starting time, but what matters most is not what time it is, but what time is right. For example, if it is a rainy morning, you can expect church to start late, because it will take people longer to get there. Also, if the pastor has not arrived yet when it is "time to start church," then church will not start. My brothers and sisters in PNG are horrified when I tell them that in Canada if I were to arrive late for church, they would start the service without me. While I am still very much a timeoriented Westerner, I am learning to appreciate the eventorientation of Papua New Guineans. If given a choice between starting "on time" or starting at the time that everyone is present and ready to start, I find that the latter is more compassionate and kind and best fits with the priority of the worship service, which is that God's people would be united in their worship.

When and how to gather for worship are important considerations for a new church plant. While there are some important principles to guide our decisions, there is a lot of room for flexibility and for considering context. Every church is going to work out the details differently, but what matters is that God's people meet together for heartfelt, God-honouring worship.



"...what matters most is not what time it is, but what time is right"

NEW HOPE UPDATE

New Hope

Femmy Dethan-Bouwman

January 2022

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:18-19

New things at New Hope...

There is something about starting a new year, I love hanging up the new calendar, just as I thoroughly enjoy starting a new notebook for my diary! I think it is safe to say, we all love things new, that clean, neat, uncluttered feel, who can dislike that!?

Currently the building of the new girl's dormitory at New Hope is well underway. The old dormitory had it's roof ripped off by Cyclone Seroja last year and was beyond fixing. It is amazing how much the carpenters were able to accomplish despite the heavy rains. The roof is up now, so all the finishing can be

completed without being bothered by the rain. The girls, who are staying in rather cramped quarters with the Tefa household (New Hope house parents) are very much looking forward to their new accommodations!

We are excited and at the same time very concerned about the birth of a new baby in the extended New Hope family, Hannah Alethea. We know Hanna's mother quite well since she stayed with us at New Hope during her High school and college years at STAKRI. This is where she met her beloved, Jacob, serving as an internship student work in the Reformed Church of Bila. Lea was around 8 months pregnant when she came to us about two weeks ago, worried about abdominal pain. Nurse Esther came to check her condition and discovered that her blood pressure was extremely high, spiking in the 200's! She took Lea to see an obstetrician who wanted her admitted to the hospital immediately having diagnosed Lea with a severe case of Pre-eclamsia. As typical with this condition, the baby was found

Please pray for:

- A speedy recovery for Lea and Hannah
- Three of the New Hope Children who come from a Roman Catholic background, Sally* especially is very dedicated to her roots and as of now aspires to become a Nun. Although they are Roman Catholic, the parents/guardians have signed the New Hope agreement and are aware and agree with the rule that the children attend the Reformed Church and school, and participate in all Bible studies.
- The construction of the new girls dormitory.

underweight and the lungs had also not developed fully yet. When Lea showed signs of seizures the doctors performed an emergency C-section. Tiny little Hannah weighed only 1.3kg, but thankfully cried rather loud. She is still in intensive care on oxygen to help support her until she has reached a weight of 2 kg. Lea experienced excessive bleeding after the surgery and remained in intensive care also for 2 days. We are so thankful that the bleeding stopped and with a couple of transfusions she is on the mend. The whole situation is rather overwhelming for this couple who thought to have a normal delivery at home or at the local clinic. Please pray for this new couple who started their new family with a very hard time.

The children at New Hope are doing well, busy with school and also extra curricular activities every Saturday. They get to choose to further develop in the areas of sport, music and English. The study season in the Dalam Tuak Church is about to start up again as well, so there will be catechism classes, Ward Bible study and young people's to attend. The children very much enjoy this. About every six months we have the children write a bit about themselves, background, what they enjoy and what things they do not enjoy as much, their dreams and hopes and also struggles they face. It is not always easy to read these letters, for their past experiences are often anything but difficulty and distress. It is therefore so encouraging to read how God's word has changed their lives since coming to New Hope. Most letters mentioned the following:

"I hardly ever went to church back at home." "The sermons are actually about the Bible instead of talking about personal stories and experiences". "I learned to pray and enjoy the bible discussion we have after supper". Talking about things new, nothing is better than a new found faith, hope and confidence in Jesus Christ.

Blessings.

*Name change for confidentiality



"...I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

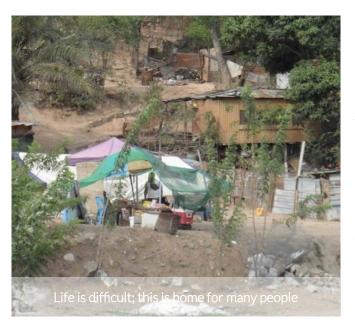
Isaiah 43:18-19



COLLEGE CORNER

Reformed Bible College, PNG

Mark Mulder





Ever wondered what it would be like to earn next to nothing and have no social security to provide financial assistance? Most of our brothers and sisters here in Papua New Guinea are faced with that situation. Surviving from day to day is a challenge and it's little wonder that they grab hold of any opportunity to be able to get what they need. The minimum wage in 2021 was K140/week (about \$60) according to the Bank of Papua New Guinea and they're expecting (hoping?) that to climb K180/week (about \$75) in 2022. (https:// tradingeconomics.com/papua-new-guinea/minimumwages) When you factor in that the cost of living in Papua New Guinea is, on average, 10% higher than in United States (https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/ <u>country result.jsp?country=Papua+New+Guinea</u>) than I'm sure you'll appreciate how difficult it is for many of our brothers and sisters.

One of the basic necessities of life is food. In a survey conducted between 2016 and 2018, eight questions were asked about hunger, such as whether anyone in the household had been worried over the previous year about not having enough to eat, or had skipped a meal, or ate less than they wanted. The answers to these questions, certainly support the notion that there is widespread hunger in PNG. For example, 56% were worried at some time over the previous year about not having enough to eat. 44% ran out of food. 32% said they went for at least one whole day without eating. Can you imagine? It is not surprising that we often get asked for money so that food can be purchased. The challenge for us is to find the right balance between giving and determining when you might be being used. Oh for the wisdom of Solomon.

Our churches are comprised mainly of people who are at the bottom of the economic ladder. No wonder, then, that our churches struggle to provide adequate financial support for our national pastors. We feel those struggles. We're also confronted with moments which bring tears to your eyes. One of our security guards, Joe, has recently been coming to our church very regularly. He loves the church, and every Saturday afternoon he collects We are looking forward to the arrival of the Versteegs beautiful flowers so that he can decorate the area in front from Canada, who will be helping out during blocks 1 and of the lectern. Just recently Joe had a Sunday shift and so was unable to go to church. As we were making our way out of the college grounds he came up to me with a little side without teaching commitments. envelop which contained some of his hard earned money. "Please Mr Mark, can you put this in the collection basket as I can't go to church today and the pastor needs to have some money." It's moments like these that make you feel so small. I'm giving out of my wealth; do I give till it hurts? There are many more stories like this and it's why working with these people is such an amazing experience. We are humbled every day. What a privilege it is to help and serve our brothers and sisters. Thank you, Lord, for directing us here.

By the time you read this the college should be full of students and classes should be in full swing. In fact, this year it's looking like we'll be having the biggest intake of students ever! The diploma class is likely to have 6 students, while the certificate class is likely to have 15 students. We also have a student who has completed his studies but would like to come back to complete the Proficiency in Preaching program, which was set up to assist men who wished to enter the ministry. He'll be here for about 4 months.

It sure will be good to have lots of people present again, as it's been very quiet over the Christmas break. With the Kleyns and Richard 't Hart in Australia, and all students, bar 4, having gone back home, the college grounds have been very quiet. The Vaatstras and us have had a good

"Please Mr Mark, can you put this in the collection basket as I can't go to church today and the pastor needs to have some money.""

time with the students and we're very thankful that the surrounding community did not take advantage of the low numbers and remove items that don't belong to them. J

2, dv, which will allow Ps Cor (block 1) and Ps Hans (block 2) to work in the churches on the Port Moresby

Another very exciting development has been the news that the Southern River Mission Board will be looking for another missionary to work in the Port Moresby region. This is sorely needed and it was wonderful to zoom with the Board and discuss what that might look like and how it might work. Again, we are so thankful that we are receiving this support and we pray that the LORD will bless the planning and calling. Whatever happens, we know that our Father has a plan for his church here in PNG and that gives us peace.

Exciting times!

In Christ Alone.



GREETINGS IN 2022

Guest Article: Children of Light, Sumba

Isabel Pakering (nee Postmus)

With thankfulness to the Lord our God, we have entered the new Year of our Lord 2022. We wish all of our readers and supporters a joyful and blessed new year in God's service. May our work continue with prayer and faithful endeavor, in whatever tasks that lay before us. We pray that God's work in us is to His honour and glory, for the growth of His Church, and for the coming of His eternal Kingdom.

Summary of Projects: In the past year 2021, and through the coming year 2022, we may thankfully report that COL, through the Yayasan Soli Deo Gloria organization (YSDG) in Sumba, has and continues to manage the following key projects:

A Reformed Senior High School : This school has students in Years 10, 11 and 12, a total of approximately 70 students across three grades. The numbers are a little down this year, as for many other schools in Sumba, mainly due to the side effects of Covid on education outcomes and pathways. There are approximately 10 permanent full-time teachers and 5 parttime teachers. The school has level C grade accreditation with the Indonesian education department. The school also runs an extra-curricular religious education program with additional Bible, Catechism and music (Psalms) instruction in the boarding home.

A Boarding Home for the Reformed Senior High School

This is where the students live outside of school hours, but return to their home villages in the countryside whenever possible. There are a few part-time boarding home supervisors who coordinate and oversee the physical, practical, health, educational, spiritual and emotional needs of



the students as much as possible. Two of the supervisors have a nursing background, and two have an education and pastoral background, and manage the extra-curricular religious education program.

A village student school support program for Middle School students in the Reformed Churches : These students in Years 7, 8 and 9, live in the countryside in Sumba, and mostly live in poverty. They are supported for school fees and needs, which encourages them to attend and continue education via YSDG contact and sponsorship. These students are also encouraged to continue on to the Reformed SHS at the end of Middle School. Travel and outreach to various villages and communities has been challenged by months of Covid restrictions and the effects of Cyclone Seroja, flooding, and damages roads, during 2021.

With thankfulness to the Lord for your prayers and support, we will continue to work and pray in 2022, that God's work with His covenant children in Sumba will carry on. We hope that the Lord will use this for His powerful Church-gathering work in Sumba and Indonesia. We pray for God's blessing on our work, as we labour humbly with many shortcomings and weaknesses. May the Lord's saving work shine through in our daily struggles to teach and support these covenant children in their teenage years, as they grow to become the next adults in a generation of people in the Reformed Churches in Sumba.

Thank you for your support!





Students cleaning a patch of ground near the boarding home and school buildings



Students getting water from the well for cleaning duties



Students presenting food prepared in class in a practicum food preparation lesson



A boarding home supervisor leading students in extra-curricular instruction in the evening



Students on cooking duty, preparing food in large pots on an open fireplace in the new fire kitchen

KIDS MISSION CORNER

What mission work is your church involved in?

One of the most important things any of us can do to support their church's mission work, is to pray and ask the LORD to bless the work and those who carry out that work. That means knowing who our missionaries are, where they are working, and then praying for them and their work.

Paul and his fellow missionary workers ask the Thessalonian church to "pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you" (1 Thessalonians 3:1).

So on today's Kid's Page, take some time to remember where your church is busy with its missionary task, and how you can ask the LORD to bless this work.

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MY CHURCH DOES MISSION WORK IN:

DRAW THE FLAG OF YOUR CHURCH'S MISSION COUNTRY:

MY MISSIONARY'S NAME IS:

LIST SOME OF THE WAYS YOU CAN REMEMBER MISSION WORK IN PRAYER:

- •
- •

BIRTHDAY CALENDAR

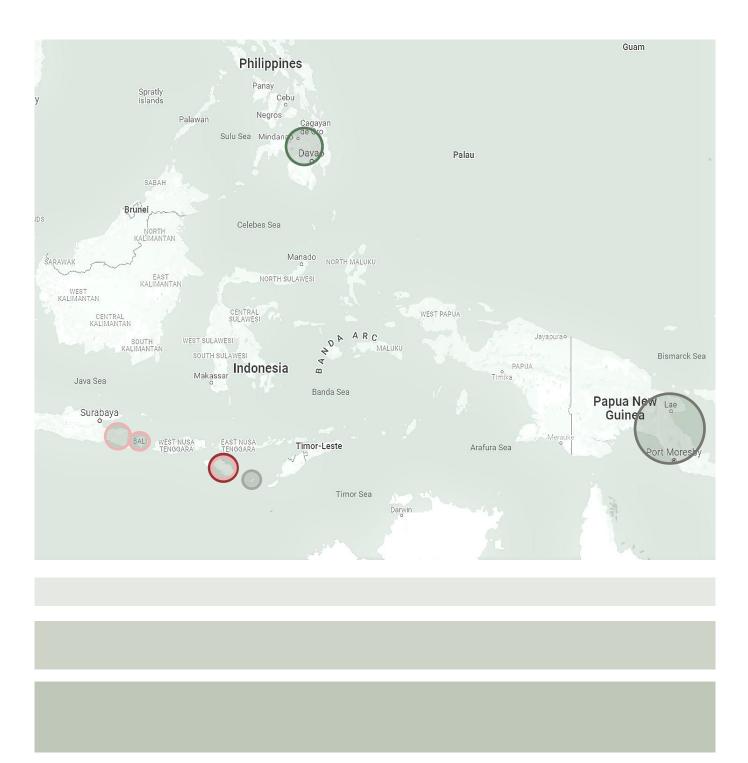
February-May

- James de Jonge 13.02.21
- Calvin vanderWal 18.04.13
- Rev. Ryan de Jonge **10.05**.
 - Silas Pol **21.05.20**

Mrs. Ruth deJonge 24.05.

MISSION COMMITTEES

Indonesia • Papua New Guinea • Philippines • Sabu • Sumba



Mission North East Papua New Guinea



Sending Church: Southern River Cooperating Churches: Armadale, Byford, Darling Downs, West Albany Supporting Churches: Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Launceston, Legana, Melville Chairman: F Janssen (SR) General Deputy: R Dekker (DD) Meeting Secretary: R Plug (By) Report Secretary: D Hordyk (By) Treasurer: E Eikelboom (By) Members: K Bruning (A) B Dykstra (A) N Huizinga (A) J Swarts (DD) V vanDyke (DD) E VandenBos (SR) D teWierik (SR) N Dekker (WA) Missionaries: Rev R & Mrs R DeJonge, Rev D & Mrs E Pol Mission Workers: Mr B & Mrs M van de Kamp Web: www.frcmissionpng.org ; https://www.facebook.com/ groups/271603523844307

Mundijong Mission (LITINDO)

Chairman:	H deJonge
Secretary:	R Bosveld
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Mission Aid North East PNG



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