

A group of people, including children and adults, are gathered on a wooden structure overlooking a river. The structure appears to be a bridge or a walkway. In the foreground, a blue boat is visible, with the text "ALOKASI DANA DESA TAHUN 2015 KAM" written on its side. The background shows lush greenery and trees.

MISSION NEWS

Mission Activities of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia

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FINDING THE LORD IN THE DARKNESS: JONAH

Guest Editorial - Part 3

Rev. D. Pol

Up to this point in the book of Jonah we have seen a remarkable shift in Jonah due to the grace of God. This man, who had run away from God, now has been returned to God's service, returned to his position of honour as a prophet of the Lord and he promptly went to work. Yet even now he wasn't ready for God's mercy. His message was simple. He preached from one end of Nineveh to the other, foretelling destruction.

And then, something shocking happened. The people *listened* to him! That wasn't supposed to happen! Our Lord Jesus Christ said that he came *to seek and to save that*

which was lost (Lk 19:10), but Jonah just came to watch the world burn. These people had hurt his people. He was ready to see them pay. But they responded to his preaching! That wasn't supposed to happen.

They fasted and put on sackcloth. They withheld food and water from their animals and clothed them in sackcloth too. Last Sunday it was pointed out to me that those animals would start complaining. Cattle and other beasts make a lot of noise when they're not being fed or watered. The people cry out. The animals make a racket. What a noise would have gone up to heaven!

Still, he had promised and prophesied destruction and he could at least await that. So he settles in. And then nothing happens. Forty days passed and... nothing. There's no fire and brimstone, there's no enemies that come and tear down the walls. The people return to their daily routines. The markets are bustling with life again and people are living.

The *normalcy* of it displeases Jonah. Here are a people who have contributed to the death and destruction of thousands upon thousands. Families torn apart. Nations enslaved. What happened to the Lord's wrath? What happened to his righteous judgement? We read here that it displeased Jonah exceedingly. Literally translated, we read: "It became evil to Jonah as a great evil." You can't express it any more strongly than that in Hebrew. He saw it as a *great evil* that they survived. *What is God doing?*



What about you?

At this point I want you to stop and think for a moment. Is there **anyone** in your life that you *yourself* feel is less worthy of God's mercy than you are?

Maybe in your life you've had someone sin against you. They wronged you or someone you cared about terribly. They've repented, apologized and asked for forgiveness. And now nothing is happening with them. Sure, they may have faced some punishment, but not near enough for your taste, or my taste.

They repented. And now they're supposed to be right with God? How's that fair? Is nothing supposed to happen with them? Don't they deserve the wrath of God?

Many of you may have such people in your lives. People who, unconsciously or not, you've assigned a place of being less deserving of God's mercy than yourself. Maybe it's because you're angry with them. Maybe they've done something to you. You might not wish hell on them, but you resent the fact that God allows them to carry on their day to day lives seemingly untroubled.

But what does God teach us about this?

We read in Romans 12:19, "*Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*"

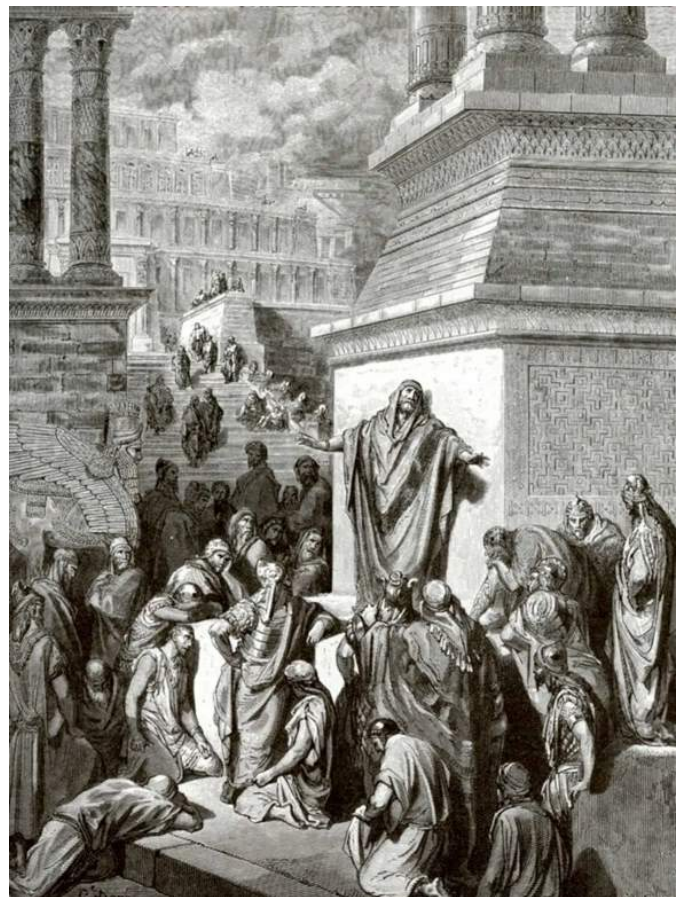
It's not our place to be bitter about someone else's treatment. Certainly, we need to recognize that the consequences of their actions lie at their feet. And they'll face those consequences, be it embarrassment, needing to apologize and ask for forgiveness, pay fines, maybe even face jail time. At the end of the day, they may even face the fires of hell. But who are we to judge the way that God allows them to live while on this earth? Who are we to say: This person is *such a threat* and is *so distasteful*, they don't deserve to carry on. God is *wrong* to let them carry on. In fact, I think they don't even deserve *salvation*. Do we *truly* leave it up to the hands of God to carry out his will with that person?

When Jesus says he came to seek and to save what was

lost in Luke 19:10, that includes many who are so lost that no one else can get to them. That includes unsavoury characters. That even includes those whom you dislike and perhaps even despise. If anything, they're in greater need of seeking and saving than most other people. If you don't look for their good in this way, hear this question from the Lord: *Is it right for you to be angry?*

God cares about creation. God is deeply concerned for his creatures. It grieves and angers him when they go astray. Yet there are times when he'll allow someone to stray in order to let his glory shine through. He will allow some to be vessels of wrath in order to highlight his justice.

Recognizing that, **how much more joy** should there be when he chooses to have some for vessels of mercy! When we recognize that God can redeem even those whom we see as lost causes, what a reason for joy that should be!



NORTH EAST PNG MISSION

Chairman's Musings

Frank Janssen

Sometimes the timing of things just don't quite line up. Last time I couldn't tell you about the call to Candidate Tim Slaa, even though when you read the article you were quite aware of the call that got extended. This time around, I can't share our joy or disappointment about the answer to the call, as we are still yet to hear, but the Lord Willing by the time you read this, we will have the answer. So, forgive me for not being able to be clear in our expressions at the time of writing, as we are still waiting to hear. May God give Brother and Sister Tim and Alana His grace whilst they consider the many calls they received. We were saddened to hear that Rev Cody Swaving declined the call from Toronto to take up the task as Missionary at RCBC, we hope and pray that the Lord in His time will provide for a Missionary at RCBC.

Pastor Ryan's parents came to visit them in June. We thank God that this opportunity is available (after a few years of closed borders). Pastor Ryan and Ruth got to enjoy a holiday in June and have a break from the work. It is important that the workers take these breaks so they don't suffer from burnout and they get time for refreshment. They were also able to travel to Madang for a part of their break, they hadn't yet seen this part of PNG.

After their holiday, the family travelled to RCBC as Pastor Ryan is teaching in block 4. Sister Ruth and the

family joined Pastor Ryan for the first two weeks (as school was still on break) but returned to Ukarumpa to make sure that they were back for the start of the school year. Pastor Ryan does wear another cap in PNG, he is the Chairman of the Board of Governors of RCBC, it has been a tradition that a Missionary from NE-PNG does this role so that it is independent of the workers at RCBC. No doubt Pastor Ryan will get some hands-on experience whilst teaching in block 4. The SRMB supports the fact that each year (or second year) one of our missionaries teaches at RCBC for a block, it allows them to keep in touch with the students who might end up, by the grace of God, Pastors in the RCPNG.

Ben and Merinda on the other hand haven't gone on holiday yet, as they are soon to go to Canada (when you are reading this, the Lord willing they should be there). They have moved houses in Ukarumpa as their previous house wasn't quite suitable and due to the 2-year moratorium that restricted flexibility, we now have full rights in our partnership. Given that you are currently reading the Chairman's Musings (must find out one day how this started), maybe it's appropriate at this point to muse about Ukarumpa. It has been two and a half years since the move. The move was managed and approved via the various committees, Board and Co-Op churches. It was a big decision, but one that the field and board were very confident about. But you never know. What

we can do now is reflect on a move that has exceeded all our expectations both for the work and the structure of the work being done in NE-PNG and for the families. Whilst there is still some sense of loss of interaction with the communion of saints with the congregation of Lae on a Sunday, the families have been able to work in a more climate and socially friendly environment than experienced in Lae. However, the house in Lae still gets a lot of use by those travelling to Lae (in fact all 3 families went to Lae in May for Lord's Supper).

All is well with Pastor David and Erika, they recently went down to Lae for the Youth Bung. This was a well-attended event and it seems that the message reached the youth, as, the next week, there was an increase in youth at church in Wantun. What a blessing indeed. We will soon see Pastor David and Erika on our shores (due to Covid they haven't been to Australia since taking up their task in PNG) and we look forward to seeing them.

By the time you read the next Musings, D.V., some board delegates will have gone to PNG to meet up at the

on-field conference. This is when the three Mission Boards (Southern River, Toronto and New Zealand) meet with the workers on the field and reflect on the past three years and discuss and propose items for the next 3 years. This is always an exciting event to see how God is working in PNG. For the first time, there will also be a separate meeting of the three boards with the National Pastors and their wives (no RM workers will be present) this will give an opportunity for the National Pastors to directly communicate to the Boards the work of the Spirit in PNG. I for one am looking forward to this day.

Back home in WA, for the Board, we are about to prepare to head to Albany for our board meeting. Once per year, we get to travel down south to meet face-to-face with our West Albany board members, and it's always a memorable time. Whilst the Mission News is about the mission work in PNG, it is good to reflect on a Board that works very cohesively and with each member having their own tasks, it's good to see that many hands supporting the work in PNG.





PRAYER POINTS

Pray for National Pastors as they continue to preach Gods word to the churches in PNG.

Pray for a blessing for the on-field Conference, that all the Foreign Boards can have a good catchup with the workers on the field and the National Pastors and their wives.

Pray for the calling process for Missionaries in PNG from both Canada and Australia.

Pray for Missionaries, the workers and their families that the Grace of God may surround them whilst they work in PNG.

COOPERATION

North East PNG Mission

Rev. R deJonge

I am currently spending a month at the Reformed Churches Bible College (RCBC), and the experience has allowed me to reflect on how much of our mission work in PNG relies on cooperation. Consider these points with me, and I think you will agree:

1. Without the support and cooperation of churches in Western Australia, we wouldn't even be in PNG in the first place. Foreign mission is an expensive endeavour as travel, vehicles, stipends, and communication-- to name only a few items on the budget—aren't cheap.
2. To work effectively here, we must have good cooperation with the other national leaders. This requires cross-cultural insight, humility, repentance, constant communication, and much grace for one another. Without the mutual support between mission personnel and national leadership, the work would quickly grind to a halt.
3. Our work here involves not one but three mission boards—Southern River (Australia), New Zealand, and Toronto (Canada). While we don't work closely with the other boards in Northeast PNG, when we are at the RCBC, the input, direction, and cooperation of these other boards are evident.
4. Behind these other boards are other churches, which must also be in lockstep with the mission work to continue providing the prayer and financial support needed to support the personnel here: the Kleyns, Mulders, Vaatstras, and Richard 't Hart.
5. Mentioning those names recalls that good cooperation is an absolute must between all the members of the Reformed Ministries team. We all need to walk the fine line between knowing and understanding what the others are doing, sharing a common approach, especially in delicate cross-cultural matters, yet avoiding sticking our noses in others' business or taking disagreements and differences personally.



Shannel Slobe, wife of former Mission Support Worker Julian Slobe, cooking PNG food at an event they organised for the Bunbury church to raise awareness and support for the work in PNG.

6. A big reason why these relationships are so important is that the RCBC and the work in the Port Moresby and Central Province area are crucial to the work that we are doing in Morobe and Eastern Highlands. At a recent Classis in March, 8 of the 10 Papua New Guinean leaders present were taught at the RCBC.
7. This excellent cooperation between all the stakeholders has allowed Southern River to extend a call to Candidate Tim Slaa to work with the churches in the Port Moresby and Central Province area. Just extending the call is an amazing testament to the spirit of cooperation that exists on all levels. Should Candidate Slaa accept, he will have the opportunity to strengthen and deepen it.
8. As I write this, I am here without my wife Ruth and our children, as they have all gone back to Ukarumpa to begin the new school year there. Absence, as they say, makes the heart grow fonder. It also makes you realize how much you rely on and appreciate the cooperation of a good wife. She is a blessing from God. But that doesn't only apply to me; it applies to Pastor David, Ben, and our colleagues over here, not to mention the men and women on the various boards and their spouses, the wives of our national pastors and church leaders, and on and on.

I could go on for a long time. But I hope that the point is clear, and in reading this you have also gained an appreciation for the important role that so many people play in the work of building up the Reformed Churches of PNG and spreading the Reformed faith throughout PNG. This includes you, the reader. Thank you for your support. May God bless and only increase the support and cooperation we experience in the work of mission in PNG.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now (Philippians 1:3-5).



Pastor Aisi leading the worship service in which two men were commissioned as Candidate Elders in the 9-Mile congregation.



The DeJonge family celebrates Matthew's 15th birthday together.



The Pol and van de Kamp families enjoy a farewell dinner with Quentin Vermeulen at the conclusion of his one month internship from CRTS.

MISSION PRESENTATION

Whats New?

Pastor David Pol, Missionary in North-East PNG for the Free Reformed Church of Southern River.

Hila, Wantun, Living Water Reformed Church in Kamkuming, Lae: all of these are names that are familiar to us. But much has also changed for the better in the last year and a half. The congregations have matured. Their numbers have grown. Several outreaches have happened and by God's grace, those efforts have borne fruit. The presentations will touch down on all of these recent events and more. Get a taste of the life that we lead on the mission field and come along with us as we travel back down memory lane to the bustling city streets of Lae, the cool mountain air of Kundiawa, the peaceful riverside existences of Wantun and as we meet with the faithful and steady hands at the helm in Hila. God has been good to us in the past year. Join us as we reflect on his sovereign hand in what has been done so far and together confess "Thus far, the LORD has helped us" (1 Sam 7:2).

Youth Presentation 31st October

@ Southern River Church

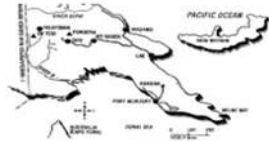
School Tour

Kelmscott John Calvin School	24th October
John Calvin Christian College	31st October
Byford John Calvin School	7th November
Albany John Calvin School	13th November
South-West John Calvin Christian College	21st November

Church Presentations

FRC Southern River	25th October
FRC Darling Downs & FRC Armadale	1st November
FRC Byford	8th November
FRC West Albany	14th November
FRC Capel	21st November





Mission-work in North Eastern Papua New Guinea

The Southern River Mission Board invites applications for:

Foreign Mission Summer Internship (x2)

The SRMB along with our mission personnel in PNG have recognised the lack of opportunities for men beginning their pathway to ministry, to have exposure to foreign missions. This internship will D.V. provide an opportunity for men with ministry aspirations to gain insight into mission work done in foreign countries.

The internship will be based in Ukarumpa, PNG and go for approx. 4 weeks during the summer holidays.

Activities during the internship include:

- Accompany mission personnel in their work including outreaches and visits to the local churches and villages.
- Do assigned readings in mission and culture.
- Write short reflection papers.

The ideal candidate would be a male who is:

- A professing member of a FRCA church.
- Attending or planning to attend university for pre-seminary studies.
- Aspiring for the ministry and/or mission work.
- Desiring to learn more about mission work and cross-cultural ministry.
- Excited by the challenges and hard work of a learning internship in PNG.

The SRMB will provide all accommodation and food for the successful applicants. The intern will be required to pay for flights, visas, medical costs and insurance. The SRMB encourages applicants to speak to their consistory if financial support is required.

Applicants should include a cover letter and a signed letter from the applicant's local consistory.

Completed applications be submitted to the Board Secretary (secretary@frcmissionpng.org) by 21st of August 2023.

Contact the Board secretary (Mr Rohan Plug) or the Board Chairman (Mr Frank Janssen) for more information.

REFORMED CHURCHES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Location of the Reformed Churches of Papua New Guinea and the
pastors who work amongst the people



REFORMATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Mission Philippines

Justin Bolhuis

God is at work in the Philippines and there is a reformation in progress. Meet some characters that will give you some insight into how the reformation is taking shape.

Meet Maria

Maria grew up as a Roman Catholic. That is not surprising as 80% of the people in the Philippines confess to be Catholic. From a young age, Maria has been going to church for Mass, prayer, and confession. She has always stood in awe of Cagayan de Oro's grand cathedral, with its high vaulted ceilings and magnificent stonework. But above all, she was in awe of the images. She would time and again visit Mary who stood by a crucified Jesus. She would linger, touch and kiss Mary before turning to the image of Jesus with blood marking



St Augustine's Cagayan de Oro

his body. She would often buy a candle to offer up as a prayer of thanksgiving. At other times, especially during Flores de Mayo, she would buy flowers from the market stalls outside the cathedral to offer to Mary. Yes, Maria felt a special connection to Mary, and she spent much time speaking to her in prayer. But recently she had met a young man. This man said he was a Reformed Christian. He attended a different church, not far from St Augustine's. That church was much smaller and from what she heard there were no candles to be bought or lit. They also had no images and no priest either. It sounded very foreign, but she had enjoyed the young man's company. He seemed a very kind and considerate person, but also someone who was convinced that her Roman Catholic beliefs were wrong. Maria decided she should find out more about that. This friendly young man was Juan.

Meet Juan

Juan also grew up in the Roman Catholic church. However, at the age of 18 he became disillusioned with his church, finding that many of the traditions and practices left him feeling empty. He longed for a more vibrant and active form of worship and found this in a nearby Pentecostal church. In this church there was a strong emphasis on worship through singing and dancing. Juan loved it as he felt moved by the Spirit in worship. He even had times when he too broke out in utterance of prophesy in a different tongue. Not that he understood what he was saying, but it felt like being



Cebu—church leaders seeking to establish Reformed Churches

raised to another level of spirituality. Some years ago, Juan had a dream. In his dream he was given the name of someone and was told that he needed to listen to what this person had to say. But when he awoke, he could not remember the name. Sometime later, Juan was searching up some Bible material on the Internet. He had been feeling depressed lately and was not being encouraged by the preaching anymore. It seemed so uplifting at first but in the end, it left him feeling down. He was looking for something more. It was while he was searching that he came across a name that he thought he recognised. He then remembered his dream. This was the name of the person he had to listen to. The name was R.C. Sproul. Following some links Juan hooked into some very different teachings. He found writings and sermons that brought a message of grace. He started to read about election and God's sovereignty. The more he read the more he wanted to learn. He then realised that he needed to find a church that taught this sort of thing. Searching up 'Reformed Church Mindanao' he came across a



Reformed and reforming Pastors at Bible Camp

webpage with a church not far from where he lived. He decided to visit that church the next Sunday and he has not looked back since. In fact, he is now working through the Heidelberg Catechism with Pastor Mark, as he wants to become a member of this church.

Meet Pastor Mark

Mark's father also was a pastor. He was the pastor of a liberal Evangelical church. It had always been the expectation that Mark would follow in the footsteps of his father. Thus, Mark had done some study and received a Diploma in Christian Ministry. Mark had begun working in a neighbouring Evangelical church. However, as he spent time preparing for sermons and while searching on the Internet, he came across some strange 'new' teachings. He was curious to find out more and so he dug into various Reformed websites. As he studied and compared his findings to what he read in his Bible, he became more and more convinced that this Reformed explanation of the Gospel was right. As a result, his preaching also began to change. For the first time he preached the Gospel message of grace. However, many people in Mark's church began to question him on his preaching. Some became openly hostile and threatened Mark to conform to the church's beliefs or be thrown out. Mark hoped that he would be able to convince his congregation to become Reformed, but the resistance only increased. Finally, Mark was deposed as pastor and informed that he was no longer welcome in that church. In fact, he was told that his teachings were from the devil and that he should repent. Because of this strong opposition, Mark found it difficult to

remain in town, but there were some who agreed with the 'new' teachings. They decided to start a new church - a Reformed church. Mark worked hard to pastor his new, small congregation while at the same time studying Reformed materials to improve his understanding. But he also had many questions. Was he a legitimate Reformed pastor? Was he adequately equipped to preach? Where could he do more studies in Reformed theology? Was it okay for him to administer the sacraments? How could he pastor this small church with so few resources? And what about elders and deacons?



Some of the children from the Butuan Reformed Church

Mark realised that he needed help! It was for that reason that he got in touch with another Reformed church in the Philippines. He went to a conference organised by this church, and it was there that he came to hear about the support given to some new young Reformed churches in the Southern Philippines by a Reformed church far away – in a place called Baldivis, Western Australia. Mark hoped that church far away would also be able to give him some advice and help that he desperately needed.

Meet Grace

Grace is a mother. She has four children. She is very happy to belong to a Reformed Church. She appreciates Pastor Mark’s preaching and is also encouraged by his wife. Her husband is a sailor and is often away for months on end. As she places her hands on her bulging belly and thinks of the small life growing inside, she reflects on the wonder of God’s gift of children. But she also recognises the challenges that come with raising a family. She distinctly remembers the promise that she made at the baptism of her children; to have them instructed in the fear of the LORD to the utmost of her power. And she is firmly resolved to do that. Her oldest

son, Ferdinand, is school age. But having done her homework, Grace had soon concluded that a public school was no place for a child of God. She also knew that a Catholic school was not an option. That meant she would have to home-school her children. She had done some research and found a suitable program from the United States. But it was very expensive. It meant that they would have to save hard to make it a reality. Recently, some people from Australia had visited her church. They had shared with the congregation how reformed schools had been established in Australia. It seemed like a dream, and she prayed that it would also become a reality in the Philippines sometime soon.

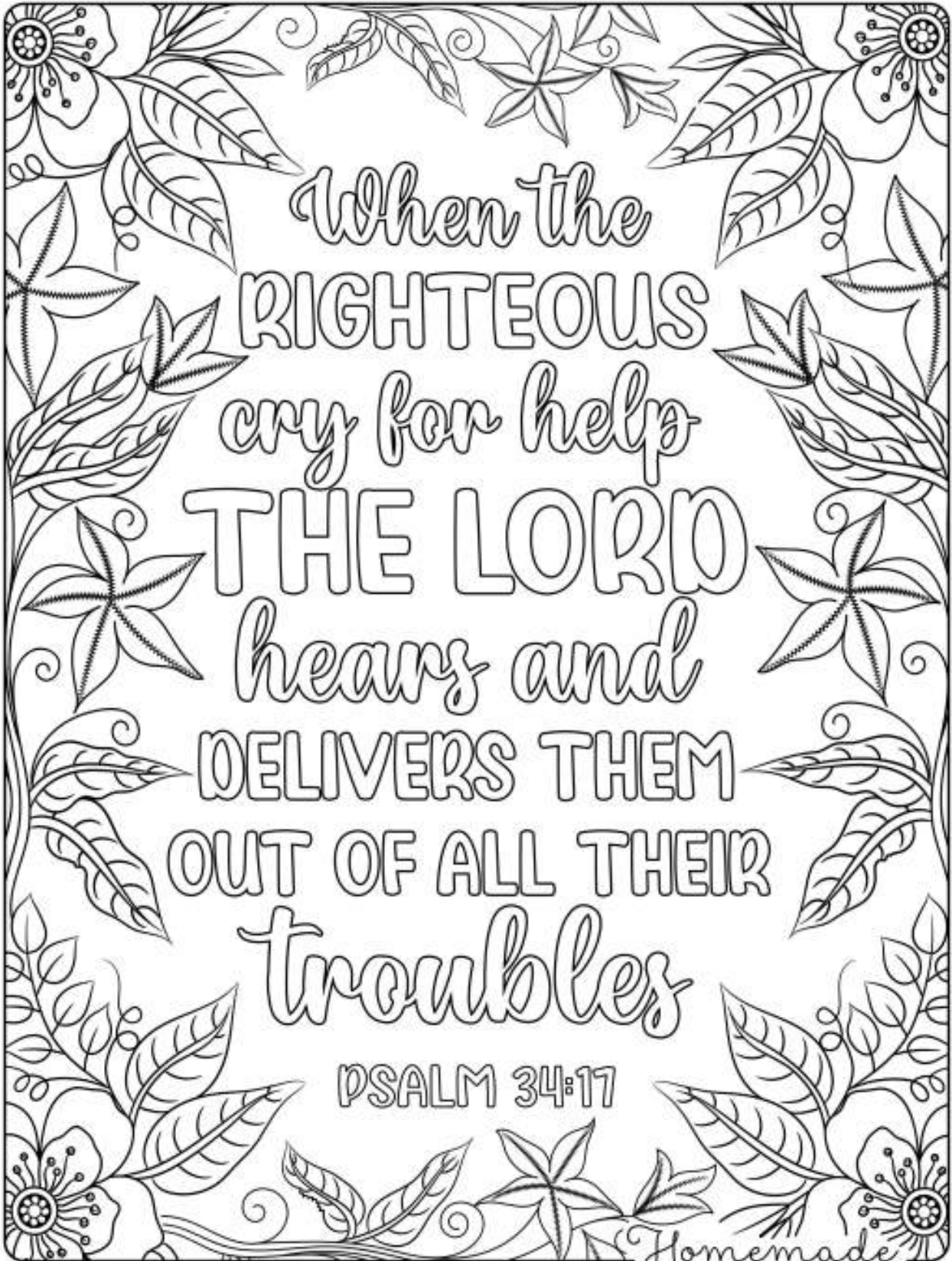
Although the names of the characters are fictitious, many of the events (including the dream) are based on actual events. The challenges in the Philippines are enormous as the reformation spreads. Please pray for the small churches and their leaders, the pastors who are reforming, the efforts made to bring up children to know the LORD, and the work done by Baldivis to support God’s kingdom building work in the Southern Philippines.



Children from the Grace Reformed Church in CDO

When I was in the Philippines last April, I made a video to share with the students at Kelmscott John Calvin School. I have uploaded it and you can watch it using the following link <https://youtu.be/UXn2xsJe2NE> or using the QR code. Enjoy – and you might make some connections to stories above.





When the
RIGHTEOUS
cry for help
THE LORD
hears and
DELIVERS THEM
OUT OF ALL THEIR
troubles

PSALM 34:17

Homemade
GIFTS MADE EASY

KIDS MISSION CORNER

Hi Kids,

The children in Sumba do not have that many toys and games as you might have. They often come up with games themselves. One of their games is called KELERENG. Maybe you like to play it as well at school with your friends. It is good fun.

Kelereng

How to play: Players draw a small circle with a stick in the dirt to form the playing ground for Kelereng. They take turns placing a marble within the circle, then dropping a marble outside of the circle. The player who dropped his marble the furthest outside the circle is the first person to take a turn. Players take turns attempting to use the outside marbles to strike the marbles inside the circle, forcing them outside of the drawn boundary. If the striker's outer marble also ends up outside of the circle that player can claim all of the marbles that she/he has knocked outside of the circle.



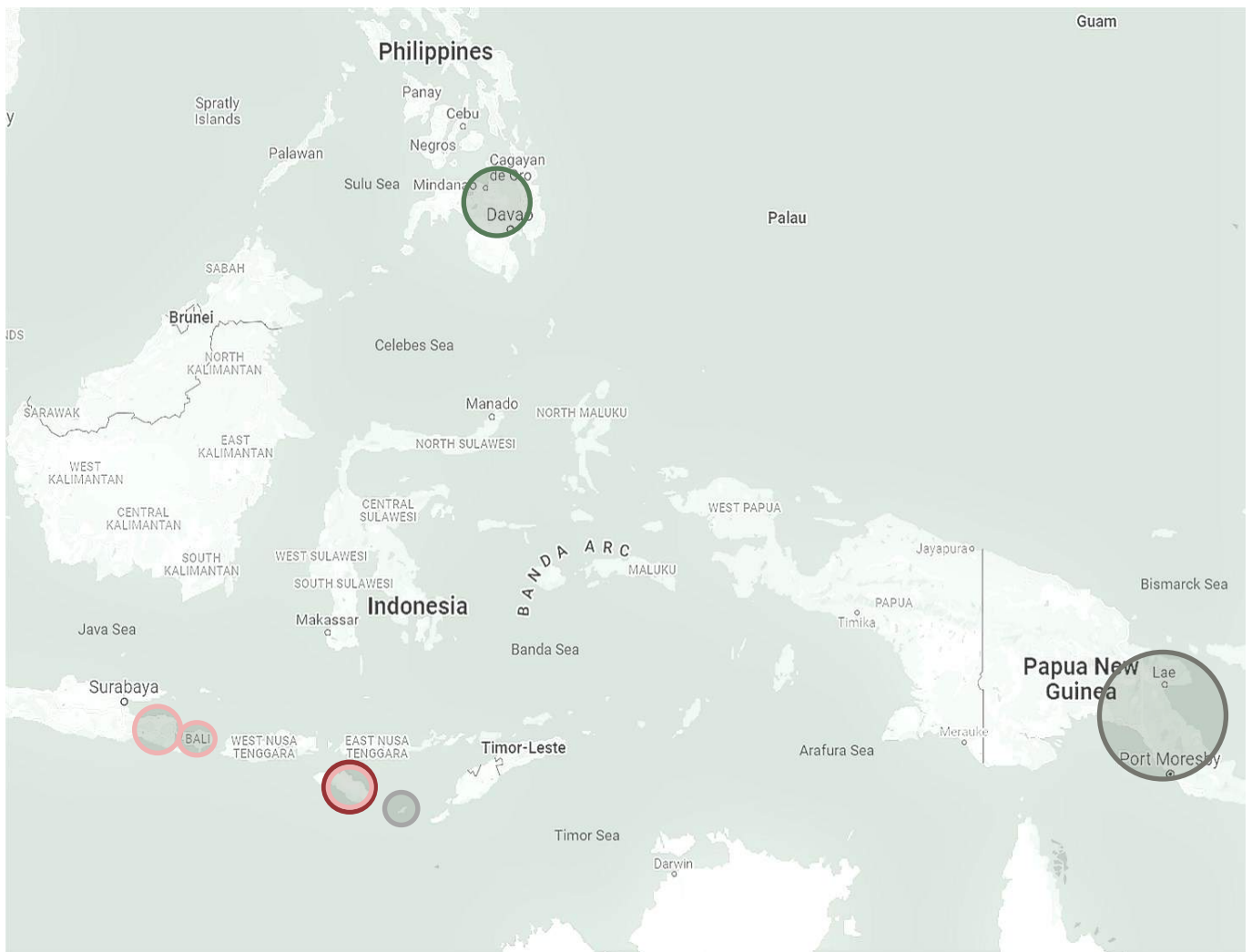
If you can find all the underlined words (from How to Play Kelereng) you will find three words left over. These words make up the name of a well known organisation who helps the children in Sumba. Some letters are used more than once.

M	G	N	I	T	P	M	E	T	T	A
A	C	E	H	T	H	Y	A	L	P	P
R	I	K	E	D	I	S	N	I	E	L
B	L	C	E	D	A	L	S	O	D	A
L	M	I	A	L	C	S	R	E	I	Y
E	N	R	E	N	E	R	N	O	S	E
U	W	C	H	F	T	R	O	R	T	R
S	A	L	S	R	L	I	E	F	U	S
E	R	E	I	S	D	N	E	N	O	T
G	D	D	L	L	A	M	S	H	G	T



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Indonesia • Papua New Guinea • Philippines • Sabu • Sumba



Mission North East Papua New Guinea

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Pastors:

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Reverend Djara Wadu

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Reverend Yohanis Here Pa

Evangelists:

Brother Thomas Dida

Brother Lay Djama Riwu

Mission Philippines

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