



# MISSION NEWS

Mission Activities of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia

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# GABRIEL'S MESSAGE AS THE MISSION PRINCIPLE FOR 2023

Guest Editorial

Rev. A. Hagg

The Lord has allowed us to start a new year and His Spirit will also equip us for mission labour this year. Yet, not so long ago, we were still in “Christmas mode”. We heard advent sermons and sang Christmas songs. We celebrated God’s great gift in the incarnation of His Son in Bethlehem. But when we entered 2023, the connection between Advent/Christmas and mission work might not have been the first thing that came to our minds. Yet, when we recall the angel Gabriel’s message to Mary and her response in Luke 1, we notice a clear connection. Gabriel shared the secret of Mary’s firstborn Son in his message - for this child is *the Son of the Most High* himself. Gabriel’s words are not only of significance to Mary, for he added - He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. His reign will be unlimited in time and space. Mary picks up on this in her response when she sings: *And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.*

We too may repeatedly sing her song of praise. For it is important for us HOW all nations shall know and acknowledge her Son. We see how the content of this message echoes three decades later in Jesus’ own question to his disciples at Caesarea Philippi: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” (Matthew 16: 13). All

kinds of answers try to identify the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Some say: John the Baptist; others: Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then Christ also asks his disciples this question: “But who do you say that I am?” Peter then confessed Him, together with the other disciples: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” No one among Israel has acknowledged and confessed Jesus as the Son of the living God yet. Peter and the others accepted in faith the messianic secret of the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Christ also says that this insight has been revealed to Peter by His Father, who is in heaven. It’s the heavenly secret.

The conversation did not end here. Christ also taught Peter the essence of the messianic secret - through suffering unto glory, through death unto life, through satisfaction unto atonement. But Peter refused to accept this. He did not yet understand this messianic secret in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures. Yet, no one can say anything meaningful about the WORK of Jesus Christ unless he first knows and confesses the secret of His Person. His work can only be accepted in faith when one confesses Him as the Son of the living God.

The answer to the question that must be repeated and asked over the centuries, must be in accordance with Gabriel’s message: Jesus is the Son of the Highest. Who

then will confess Him as the Son of God, the Son of the Most High? *All generations*, Mary sang in her hymn.

The apostle Paul later echoed Gabriel message and Peter's confession about Jesus: He, Jesus Christ, is God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3: 16); that is the secret of His divinity. The apostles never contradicted Gabriel in their gospels and epistles. Paul's gospel about Christ's birth, death and resurrection is perfectly in line with what Gabriel has already said in Advent tidings. The Pentecost message continued from the Advent tidings. It was first announced by him who stands in service before God and was sent forth to serve us. It was later preached by an apostle of this Child of Mary. Ever since, the preaching of the gospel is primarily concerned with the Person (and work) of Jesus Christ.

Thus, it is to be proclaimed among the Gentiles and so He is to be praised in the world. When this Name is confessed, we also know that He did what was needed to fulfill the other Name - His name is Jesus - to save his people from their sins (Matthew 1: 21). This Advent message by the angel Gabriel remains of great power in the light of Christ's second coming, His second coming to judge the living and the dead. Eternal decisions on destinations will be made based on how men regarded the Person and work of Jesus, Son of the Highest. Without the proper confession, there is no salvation. Without the proper confession, the Gospel is no longer Gospel and all our mission labours for 2023 will be in vain.

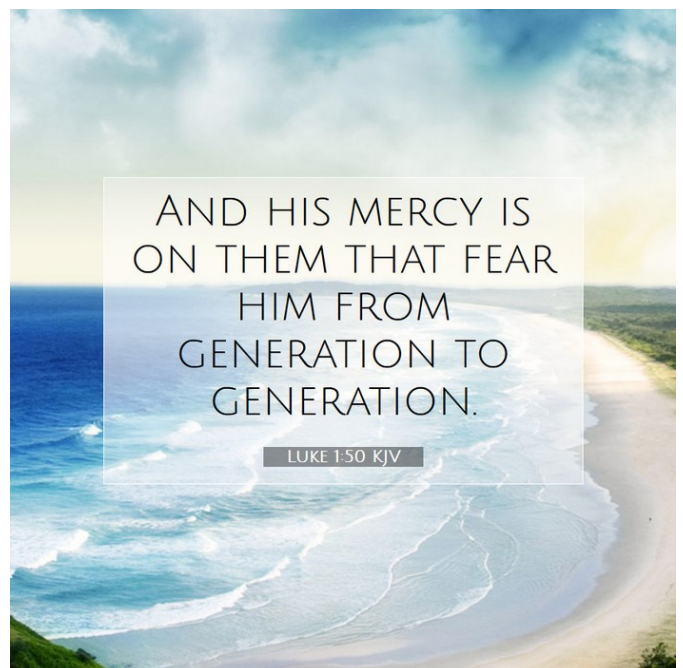
If one does not recognize and confess Jesus Christ as the Son of the Highest, as the Son of the living God, as the only begotten of the Father, one has fallen into the heresy of Arius. Denying the divine nature of Jesus as the Christ is to deprive the doctrine of the atonement of its foundations and pillars. If Christ was only man, even as noble as He was, He could not bear the burden of the sins of the whole human race. Then He is no longer the Mediator between God and sinners.

Gabriel's message has dominated the preaching of the gospel locally and in the Mission churches throughout

the ages, among all the families and generations of the earth. We too must personally and wholeheartedly believe this message of angels and apostles; that Jesus is the Son of the Highest. That is of utmost significance when we pray and financially support the extensive Mission projects of the FRCA and its international partners.

Unfortunately, this message is rejected by many critical preachers of the gospel. But only those among the nations and generations who accept this message in faith, can be called "children of the Most High". (Luke 6: 35.) They are the saints of the Most High who are gathered through this preaching from all peoples and nations. (Daniel 7:18, 22, 25, 27). Those who profess this Name will experience persecution because of this Name. But the Father of Christ, through the Son of man, will avenge the saints of the Most High.

May the faithful angel Gabriel witness many faithful confessors of the Son of the Most High brought in from the tribes and nations. Eternal kingship is given only to those who *faithfully* confess the Person and work of Christ. Blessed are those sending and mission churches who are found to be faithful to the glorious Name of Him who was and is to come.



# NORTH EAST PNG MISSION

## Chairman's Musings

Frank Janssen

If I am allowed to reflect on the highlights of being involved in Mission work (from a far distance supporting the field), it is when we get to read reports of joy when we see the Spirit's work either in the lives of a few or in the lives of many. When a student from RCBC is ordained as a minister, or when a church becomes instituted or when you read about professions of faith and baptisms, these all are Awesome events that the Lord allows in his Kingdom work in PNG.

So based on the above, we have indeed experienced a highlight in the past couple of months. December 18 was indeed a beautiful day for the Reformed Churches of PNG. The church plant at Hila had its very first baptisms and professions of faith. There was 7 Professions of Faith, 9 adult baptisms and 13 baptisms of children, for a total of 29. Pastor Aisi, who is Pastor of 9-mile in Port Moresby, led the service. This too was special as this is actually Pastor Aisi home town.

Just before this event in Hila, the teams from Ukarumpa and Port Moresby got together in Cairns to discuss the work as a collective. They were able to reflect on the work and encourage each other in all their different tasks that they are called to do by the three different overseas boards. It is such a blessing that three church federations from three different countries can work so well together for the furtherance of the Gospel in PNG. This is a blessing indeed.

Then this year, on the 19th of January, 2023, the family Pol was blessed with a baby son. What a blessing that God provides to His covenantal children to raise children to the honour and glory of His name. It was also a blessing for them that they could have little Liam born in country in a town called Kudjip (about 45min drive from Mount Hagan). For context this is about another five hour drive from Ukarumpa into the highest of the highlands. Interestingly Kudjip is only one hour drive from Koge, which is another town that has been on our radar. I think Pastor David would have been showing lots of self-constraint not to go preaching, but thankfully he stayed by Sr. Erika's side. By the time you are reading this, they should be back in Ukarumpa.

It's not that they didn't do any work though. Br. Ben and Sr. Merinda also come along for a period of time (it was a condition of staying at Kudjip that someone had to



David and Erica with little Liam

look after Pastor David and Sr. Erika’s children). They used this time to start, what they thought was translating and tidying up the speeches held at the Mamas Bung in September, but turned into developing five outlines, each based on one speech. We hope and pray that this will be a good follow up.

Back here in Western Australia, the board says farewell to Brother Dennis teWierik. Br. Dennis joined the board back in 2015 when Southern River joined as Co-Operating Church. Br. Dennis has a big heart for the work, so he will be sorely missed.

The Board is still searching for a missionary to take up the role in Port Moresby. Whilst there has been much contact and much discussion between the board, candidates and the workers on the field, we have not yet seen it clear to be able to recommend someone for the task as Missionary in Port Moresby. We continue to covet your prayers. It is also hard when we know that other Mission Boards are also looking for Foreign missionaries, so there is indeed not only the issue of finding the right man (and family) for the role, but also the fact that others are also looking for that right man. It again highlights that the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are so few.

So, you might ask, what’s the plan for 2023? The plan is to continue to do God’s task. To build up and strengthen the church plants in Wantun and Hila; to continue to support the leaders and congregations to



Pastor Aisa preaching in Hila

grow, so that when the Lord’s time is right, they might too become instituted and, like Lae, not only serve their own area and congregation but also commence outreach to the surrounding villages.

Whole RM team in Cairns



## PRAYER POINTS

For Pastor David and Sr. Erika as they raise up little Liam (and the rest of their children) to the honour and glory of God’s name.

Pray that the young, new Christians in Hila would stand firm in the faith in the face of temptations which are all around.

Also, pray that the leaders in the young congregation of Hila would be faithful and diligent in their work, bringing praise and glory to God.

That we all keep Mission work alive in our families and church so that we can continue to support the spreading of God’s word.

That God will guide the work so that a call can be made for a missionary in Port Moresby and the harvest there can be attended to.

# WHOM DO YOU OVERLOOK?

North East PNG Mission Board

David Pol, North East PNG Mission

Probably one of the last things you'd expect at a missionary training institution would be two girls and a guy show up dressed for a rave. How do you dress for a rave? Don't ask. There's less clothing rather than more. Quite netted. One young lady was wearing devil horns. We'll leave it at that.

For those unfamiliar with the word "rave", there's music, drugs, alcohol, highly questionable morality and more. About what you'd expect for the way they were dressed.

So how do such people show up at MTI (Mission Training International) in Colorado?

When we first looked out the window, we thought they were there for a prank. Trying quietly to distract our three year old after we realized what we saw, we figured they came with bad intentions and a poor sense of humour. After all, what better college prank than to show up dressed like that for a training centre full of missionaries?

But it turns out, it wasn't a group of college students' senses of humour. Rather, it was God's.

This young man and these two young ladies were indeed headed to a rave. But two tires blew out. They pulled into a parking lot to wait for a ride and a tow truck. And in God's providence they ended up at here at the missionary training centre.

So what do we do? A few of us (slightly confused) talk about it inside. We pray. And then bring them a few

drinks. Water, pop... whatever they need to refresh them a bit. And we have a chat.

"So... what happened?" The story pours out with a whole lot of sheepish faces. "Do you guys know where you are?" Oh yes, they do (\*sheepishness increases). "Are you guys Christians?" Yes, yes we are (\*their sheepishness decreases... I think they thought having that in common made things more relaxed somehow). A discussion follows on wise choices. They assured us the worst choice of the night was already made – the driver had been under the influence. I chatted with the driver who was picking them up and made sure she was sober. I also tried to quietly and somewhat indirectly suggest to them that no... no that was probably not the worst choice of the night. They were grateful and deeply appreciative of what we helped them with, though not exactly swayed. On further reflection, we could have pushed harder. I probably could have challenged them a little more. Yet the car would remain at MTI overnight and the driver promised to drop in on us the next day to express appreciation. My thoughts at the time? *Hopefully*



Mission Training International

“Often our brothers and sisters fresh out of the world, newly minted citizens in the kingdom of heaven, put us to shame with how they receive the kind of people that Jesus spent time with.”

*that will lead somewhere. I'd like to reconnect. Who knows where God might direct?*

I want to be straight up with you as I write this article: it is not my normal response to walk up to such people in North America and have those kind of discussions. Yet it probably should become our habit more than it currently is.

Paul writes the following in: 1 Cor 1:26-28 *“For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written,, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.””*

How are we to reach those kind of people with the gospel if they are precisely the kind of people we avoid?

It also led me to reflect. How many times have I turned aside from such people because I was made deeply uncomfortable by them and despised their lifestyle?

By God's grace, when you head out into the mission field you are forced into that kind of a situation on a frequent basis and what was well outside your comfort zone becomes a somewhat easier new normal.

In our church plant in Hila we have former drug addicts. We have second wives. We have former adulterers. We have former alcoholics. We have former lapsed Christians. As guests we have at least one *current* adulteress, we have a drug dealer occasionally come, we have one man that has two wives and we will

occasionally have a girl that is known as a thief. They will not be received into membership without repentance. Even so, they yearn for the preaching of the gospel and soak in much of it every Sunday with deep gratitude. God is still at work in their hearts though much remains outstanding in their lives. More than that: they are warmly welcomed by the body of Christ and they are a reminder of the ways that they themselves formerly walked. They are gently encouraged to leave their ways of sin. While they are receptive, there is hope that they, too: brothers, sisters, and daughter will be transformed and be received into the kingdom of heaven.

Often our brothers and sisters fresh out of the world, newly minted citizens in the kingdom of heaven, put us to shame with *how they receive the kind of people that Jesus spent time with.*

However, as they sit under the gospel, a remarkable change comes over them. They are washed. They are sanctified. They are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and many are saved.

It won't always be a success. Only one of the young people that showed up to MTI ready for a rave actually came back. He shared contact information with another missionary there. The others dropped off the face of the earth and unless God works in their lives, they will be on the broad road to compassion.



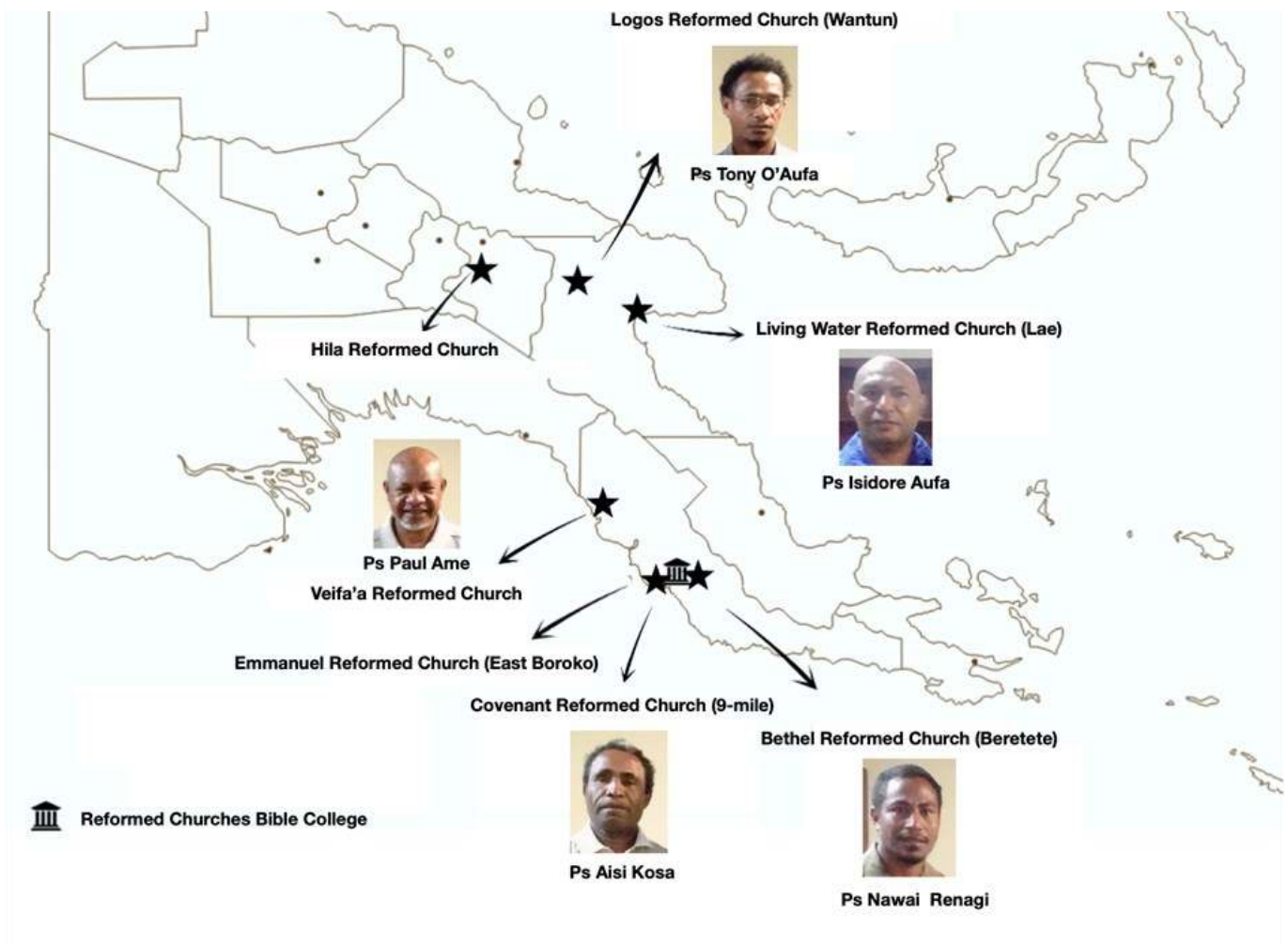
It will also expose things in your own heart. My first, visceral reaction was of backpedalling and shock. Of covering the eyes of my toddler and condemnation. Of immediately assuming hostility instead of seeing need and distress. That is humbling and lays your soul out naked before the eyes of God.

All the same, let's not be discouraged. Let's rather show compassion and love, while speaking the truth in love, and who knows where the Lord might lead things? In the mean time, let us remain faithful in our work, always remembering the compassion of the Lord in the words of 1 Corinthians, "God chose what is low and despised in the world." And let us ask the question: "Whom do I overlook?" asking for the strength and the favour of God that we might have boldness, compassion and love to speak to such as we once were or might be apart from the grace of God.

# REFORMED CHURCHES

## OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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





# COLLEGE CORNER

Reformed Bible College, PNG

Mark Mulder

It took just 10 days, and in that time 2 Campus Worker houses ‘popped’ up and were completed; it certainly made the eyes of the locals ‘pop’ to see something come up so fast. So, what have we been doing, here at the bible college?

As part of our infrastructure plan, we were keen to construct 2 houses for our 2 campus workers, who have been employed by the college to take care of the daily maintenance of the campus. (This is all part of our grand plan of eventually handing over the college to our national brothers and sisters.) Our normal go-to person was not available, and as we needed these houses to be completed before the beginning of the 2023 academic year, we asked for overseas volunteers from our churches in Australia and NZ.

In his providential love, God moved the hearts of 5 people in NZ and 5 in Australia, such that we ended up with just the right ‘mix’ of skill sets for the task at hand. Don Voschezang, a builder with years of experience, came, along with his son Peter. Don van Dorp, also with years of building experience, came with his wife Georgina, who cooked all the meals and did all the washing, for the Kiwis. Daniel Verbokkem, a qualified electrician, rounded out the Kiwi team. Eric van den Dolder has been on the mission field before, and couldn’t wait to get back, so he, along with Jantine volunteered their services. Eric also has years of experience in the building industry, and Jantine was a

valuable support; cooking and washing etc. Shimone Bolhuis did the same for her husband, David, who has acquired plenty of building skills, particularly as it relates to framing. Rounding out the Aussie team was Frank Boersema, who also has plenty of experience in the building game.

Each team had a group of nationals who provided excellent assistance, and who were keen to learn from these ‘whiteskins’. It truly was beautiful to see nationals pairing up with expats, trying to learn as much as possible. Kudos to the westerners for taking the time, and having the patience, to teach the PNGers some valuable skills. The language barrier wasn’t so bad that everyone dispersed in frustration as at the tower of Babel.



The houses which we built are bigger than the student cabins, seeing as our 2 campus workers will, hopefully, be living at the college for many years, yet at the same time they are very simple structures; three rooms, a veranda, and an outdoor cooking area. Having consulted with our national leaders, this was the preferred design. It would be no good to create something which could potentially lead to much jealousy later on.

We made sure that our overseas visitors were well taken care of. They got to experience local cooking, when we all gathered together for a bungkai (common meal) prepared by the mamas at the college. We took them out to a nice restaurant, we enjoyed time at a pool, we had BBQ's at our place, and best of all, we (Richard, Liz and myself) enjoyed their fellowship. Our brs and srs 'enjoyed' the visitors as well, storying with them and also teaching them a few PNG cultural things. It was wonderful to see the three ladies being taught how to 'sew' a bilum.

We thank our Father for providing us with these volunteers, for protecting them, and blessing them with good health and energy to do the work. We thank him for giving us just the right personnel, and for allowing great harmony to exist. We have an awesome God. We thank our volunteers for donating their time, energy, and expertise; they were a blessing for us.

So now we have another 2 houses on the campus, resulting in the campus now having 12 student cabins, 2 student bunkhouses, 2 ablution blocks, 2 classrooms and a library / admin centre. Certainly, much to be thankful for.



The workers responsible for erecting the 2 houses, gathered in front of house 2.

# LIVING WATERS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Jennifer Sampson

*Mama Jen (Jennifer Sampson), the head teacher at Living Waters Christian School, has provided us with a wonderful overview of the 2022 school year. We can give thanks to the Lord, as it is clearly evident LWCS has a successful year of both graces and growth.*

Greetings to you in Jesus name.

I have a short report to share with you on the operation here at LWCS this year, 2022. We have 6 classes at our school. A Prep class, a Grade 1 class, a Grade 2 class, and class made of Grade 3, 4 & 6 students. There are a total of 102 students altogether. Grade 3, 4 & 6 are the primary students who are the covenant kids. 21 covenant students were enrolled this year. 6 younger ones enrolled with the Prep class, 4 are with the Grade 1 class and 2 with the Grade 2 class. 9 of them are in the primary level. 4 left school due to health reasons.

The Prep class has 31 students, Grade 1 a total of 34 students, and Grade 2, 28 students.



Bible lessons are taught every morning from 8:00-8:50am from Monday to Thursdays, but on Fridays we have a combined class devotion from 11:45 am – 12:00 midday. During Bible lessons, teachers or support staff choose a volunteer who leads the prayer. The teacher prays and then reads and shares the story for the next day, followed by reciting of termly scriptures & song. A termly scripture & song are taught and memorised by all the students. At the end of the first and second semesters, all classes present their scriptures as items.

Students come in as early as 7:00am. The first lesson begins at 8:00am. The duty teacher receives the students and sends them to their classrooms for morning bells work or unfinished work and wait for their teachers.

Lessons and subject planning depend on each teacher. It can be a 20-35 minutes per lesson. Recess break is at 10-10:30am. A bell goes off and students return to class. 2 more subjects are taught and the students tidy up at 11:50am, take role checks, announcements, and then pray together and gather at the church building waiting to be picked up by their parents or a guardian. This routine continues from Monday to Friday.

My Fathers World Curriculum was introduced in the beginning of this year. Covenant children were enrolled, assessed with the diagnostic tests and put into classes

according to the results scored. An assistant youth and myself were given some directions from Mr & Mrs van de Kamp. We began on a slow pace until Miss Tamara Alberts came and visited us and gave a workshop which we were very thankful for and felt that it was a big help in our planning, teaching and assessing. We still need to have more workshops on this curriculum from an assigned tutor, because it is something new. I am appealing to you, my authority, for a yearly program on this in the near future.

The staff members worked very hard and well in the first semester. At the end of term 3 and the beginning of Term 4 has been very tough due to a shortage of 2 teachers. Our need is 2 more full time teachers and also a permanent covenant class teacher. This will help make teaching and learning easier.

As the head teacher, I try my best to manage and divide equal time for my work as a single parent for 2 secondary school students. I wake up at 5 a.m. every morning to start the day. I have an early dawn devotion, sort myself out and do classroom check-ups. By 7:30 a.m. I stand at the gate to receive students. As the duty teacher arrives and takes over, I go into the office to do some other things. As I'm living on the church premises, I found out that I have been doing extra work too, by covering up for staff absence and I felt overworked sometimes. Each day, I follow my routine for my 2 classes, helped out by my support staff, which ends at midday. The students are dismissed and I take a 30-minute break before I continue with marking and do lesson plans for the next day, organise materials for a math lesson, some admin work and leave at 3:30pm. I like what I am doing for the school at this moment. Yes, I sometimes find my work being challenging, but I know that I am not alone, trusting the Lord and depending on his directions in leading me always gives me peace.

To conclude, I would like to take this time to say a very big thankyou for your continuous support through cash or kind, one way or the other for the wellbeing and running of this school in the past years, and also in the future. The Lords blessings this festive season and a prosperous New Year 2023.



# MISSION INDONESIA

Eric de Haan

Hi readers, and welcome back to the concluding part of our most recent mission trip to Sumba & Bali. I left you while in an exhausted sleep at the mission post of Lai-Hobu where we experienced the hospitality of Evangelist Yan Laki Ngella. We needed to rise early the next morning to continue our way to Padiratana in the south, as we were expected at 10am. You may remember that we were required to trek 3 Kilometres by foot, as the road had been washed away due to recent rains. The return trip was no easier and after quite a few rests to catch our breath, we eventually spotted our motorbikes where we had left them previously.



Mission Post LaiHobu

Thankfully the weather was fine for our 2hr journey to Padiratana, and we were pleasantly surprised with the

condition of the roads. Normally the descent down from the mountains to the coastal plain is 15km of loose shale, clay and loose gravel, which is treacherous in dry conditions and almost impassable when wet. The government had obviously decided that it was important for the road to be improved sufficiently enough to allow for vehicles and trucks to use this road for more than 6 months of the year! When we finally reached our destination which was the GGRI church in Padiratana, we didn't recognise it, and rode straight past it, and the bemused locals who were waiting for us. We did realize after a few kilometres, and slowly and sheepishly made our way back to where we were expected. Things had certainly changed in 3 years! (Either that or 2 x 60yr olds simultaneously suffered a senior moment 😊)

Now normally on arriving we would be offered coffee and refreshments and expected to rest before anything official took place. This time however, we were told not to get too comfortable as we were heading out to a new mission post of Kapehu some 15 minutes away. We had visited this post some 5 years previously when the minister of Padiratana, Rev Ferdi, just started reaching out with the Gospel in this rather remote village close to the ocean. Since then, under the blessing of God, the post had grown significantly and now boasts 8 confessing members, 2 Male and 6 Female, with a further 3 members due to publicly profess their faith within a

few months. 22 people are regularly attending worship held at the home of one of the congregation members.



Members of Mission Post Kapehu

The church of Padiratana had originally called Evangelist Yan Domu Marahongu as full-time evangelist, but he has recently accepted a call so serve as full time lecturer at the theological college in Waimarung. The consistory quickly put a call to Evangelist Domingus Nuku Lapu from the church at Lumbuwinu, and he has accepted this call. He is married and has 2 children and at the time of reading this, he should already be established and working there. We attended a Consistory meeting at this location where we were advised of their hopes to build a new church building, and a suitable manse for Fam Lapu. A parcel of land has been donated by a congregation member for this purpose. We were greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm of this group of believers, and their “can do” attitude, and can thankfully report that Mission Aid has agreed to their request for funds and building of the church should commence shortly. Another item on the agenda was the positive situation at the mission post of Wata Bara. Evangelist Melkianus hopes to be ordained as minister at this post in May 2023 D.V. His wife Yustina was due in late December with their first child. The plans for the church building are well underway and all necessary materials have been arranged, ready for a start to building as soon as rainy season is over. Currently worship services are being held at the recently completed manse.

As is normal at these meetings, official proceedings were interrupted by a delicious lunch where we were able to engage in relationship building with the locals (always the best part of any trip 😊) When the official meeting had concluded, the plan was to continue directly to the mission Post of LaAu, some 3.5 hours away via the coastal route. These plans were held up for more than an hour due to torrential rain, and in the end, we had no option but to venture out into the storm. We were assured that the road to LaAu had been significantly improved and would cause no issues. This would have been reassuring if we had actually taken the coastal route, but our hosts/guides in their wisdom, decided that we should travel up towards the mountains to inspect a church building at WatuPatah, which is another mission post of GGRI Padiratana, & which had been severely damaged by Cyclone Seroja. We travelled with Rev Ferdi from Padiratana and Rev Arison from the mission post of LaAu. Just to set the tone, neither of these men are shrinking violets when it comes to placing themselves (or us) in danger. We had been told that there were a few creeks to cross but that these should not pose a problem. The first one we encountered was indeed a creek, approximately 10 meters across, but no bridge in sight. Due to the torrential rain this creek was in full flood and approx. 1meter deep. After a brief moments’ hesitation, Rev Arison gamely rode his bike into the torrent and safely made it to the other side. Next my turn, and I had almost made it when I hit a submerged rock and stalled



Rev. Ferdy at foundations for church at WatuBara

the engine. Not a good thing when the exhaust is actually under water! Thankfully the bike started again, and I was through. We all made the crossing safely and arrived at the mission post of WatuPatah. We spent some time inspecting this church building, and quickly concluded that it certainly wasn't fit for purpose. In fact the 50mm wide cracks in the wall, and the dilapidated state of the structure, meant that it would be very unsafe for congregation members to be seated inside whilst a strong wind was blowing. In one section the wall had bowed out so much it didn't support the roof timbers, and nothing more than a few nails was preventing the roof from collapsing. We promised immediate relief from the funds collected from the FRC churches in Australia for the cyclone appeal.



WatuPatah church cyclone damage

We gamely continued through the rain, on the wed & muddy track until we came to the second crossing. This was indeed a river, and although not especially deep, the current was sufficiently strong that the planned crossing was started some 60meters upstream allowing us to make 1 meter gain for every 2 meters we were pushed downstream. Those with maths skills will have worked out that this river was approx. 30 meters wide. It was decided that riding across this was simply too risky and so after stuffing leaves and any available vegetation into the exhaust pipe to prevent water from entering into the engine compartment, the bikes were manhandled across, much to the amusement of the locals who were gathered there to wait for the floodwaters to recede, before

attempting their own crossing. Now fully expecting the worst was behind us, we pushed on. It was now getting close to 4pm and we were starting to get concerned at the amount of daylight left. After 20 minutes or so we came to our final river crossing and my heart sank. I think I felt like the Israelites may have done upon encountering the Red Sea in their path. Stretched out before us was a river at least 50 meters wide, with a raging torrent of muddy brown water which carried large tree branches and all manner of rubbish washed out of smaller creeks and streams. We waded out into it to see just how strong the current was and how deep it was. The depth was manageable (up to our thighs) but the current so strong that we could barely keep our feet. The debris, including decent sized tree limbs and even rocks and river stones were carried by the current and pelted our legs incessantly. We went back to consider our options, which were not many! Going back the way we came was fraught with risk as the continuing rain had probably made the earlier crossings impassable. Even if they were manageable, it would mean adding at least 5 hours travel, much of it in darkness and would mean that visiting LaAu would not be viable this time. Waiting for the water to recede might take another few hours, and there was no guarantee that further rain would not make the current situation even worse. What to do? We decided to press on, and again stuffing the exhaust with leaves, 3 people were required to push each motorbike across. This meant that a local was press-ganged into helping us as Brian was still recovering from a back strain, and I had just now bashed my 2nd & 3rd toes on my right foot into a large, submerged rock (subsequently found to have broken 2nd toe), and could barely walk, let alone be any help, so I was assigned cameraman duties to preserve this foolishness for posterity.

We eventually got all the bikes across, including a couple for the locals who had helped us, and by the time we reached the coastal road, our short detour expected to take an hour had turned into a 4-hour saga! The remainder of our journey was completed without incident, although the last hour was in complete darkness. Not much fun when you are traversing



Crossing river on way to LaAu

mountains with sheer drops and hairpin bends on gravel & mud roads, but God extended to us His travelling mercies and we arrived safely at LaAu at around 8pm. The moral of the story is “when locals tell you that it will take 2-3 hours, expect that to be closer to 7 hours!”

We were understandably “wiped out” and after dinner we soon found ourselves tucked up for the night. The next morning, we had a local “consistory” meeting with the leadership group and rev Ferdi from the sending church. The Mission post at LaAu which started in Late 2016, now has 47 total members with 17 of these having done profession of their faith. Rev Arison reported that he preaches from the Heidelberg Catechism every 2nd Sunday and holds regular Catechism instruction for the youth, as well as family bible study in the homes of the believers. Some construction work is planned in the near future as the Manse is set to be relocated to the other side of the road, because there is not enough room for the congregation to gather after church. A new toilet block will also be built, and not before time! The current hole in the ground covered with bamboo sections with a hole cut out to aim at, is not what you would call a dignified call to nature, especially for the ladies of the congregation.

Rev Arison is also currently spending 50% of his time working at another village – Ana Kalu which is located 7 Kilometres away. 6 members from one extended family from this village attend the worship services at LaAu, however as they have no means of transport, it means a long walk every Sunday. Their elderly parents are no longer able to walk that far, and it is planned to hold worship services for 10 family members who have already responded to the Gospel preaching in this location in the near future. Praise God that a new opportunity for the spread of His Gospel is available in this village! After enjoying coffee, Brian and I headed back towards Waingapu with Rev Ferdi. I won't bore you with the details of this 3-hr journey, other than to say it absolutely poured for much of the trip. Our last day in Sumba was spent visiting the Theological college in Waimarung where we met with the faculty, students and Ian Swarts from the Sumba Seminary Support Committee.

Bali – Although I promised to give some exciting news regarding this post, I am fast running out of room. At this stage I will simply inform you that the mission post has changed address (to next door). Their current location could only accommodate 20 members at a single worship service, and providentially, the building next door became available for rent. We inspected this building together with Rev Yan Praliaminya and an elder and at a subsequent mission meeting, agreed to their request to lease to this property for a 3yr period. The new location comfortably caters for more than 40 members, which will address their immediate needs. They do however need to have a long-term solution, given that substantial growth in number is expected once the covid situation stabilizes in Bali. I hope to have more news about this in the next issue as I will be travelling to visit the mission posts in Bali, Malang, Dampit, Blitar and Solo together with Rev Balla in Feb-March 2023



We are thankful to God for his providential care over us as delegates, and over the evangelists who accompanied us. We continue to marvel that what we find an extraordinarily difficult adventure, is just a part of their weekly routine in the pursuit of spreading the Gospel. (Respect!) Please continue to keep the work of mission in Indonesia (and elsewhere) in your prayers, as this work can only achieve desired results with God's blessing.

Till next time.



Some of the congregation at LaAu

Please continue to keep the work of mission in Indonesia in your prayers, as this work can only achieve desired results with God's blessing.

## BIRTHDAY CALENDAR

February - May



James deJonge	13.02.2021
Calvin vanderWal	18.04.2013
Rev. Ryan DeJonge	10.05.
Silas Pol	21.05.2020
Mrs. Ruth deJonge	24.05.

# NEW HOPE UPDATE

## New Hope

Femmy Dethan-Bouwman

*He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower 'Be a mighty downpour.' So that everyone he has made may know his work.*

*Job 37:6-7a*

Christmas was marked with the start of mighty downpours which lasted for weeks. So much so, that there has been major flooding, damaging homes, roads and bridges. Many people have been forced to evacuate their homes, for fear of more flooding. The Fatuleu area again has especially been hit hard. Especially, the people living near the riverbank. With all that rain coming down and the ocean tide extremely high for the time of the year, the water went outside its banks. Thankfully this happened early in the evening when most people were still awake and able to flee to higher grounds. Sadly, not everyone made it, the bodies of a young couple were found washed ashore miles away from their hometown. Apparently, the husband had helped several family

members cross the river safely, but when he carried his wife, he lost his footing and both drowned and were dragged away by the current. Besides homes lost, the rice fields and gardens suffered huge damage as well, it is amazing how powerful water is, whole tree trunks and massive stones were brought up. A huge clean up task again before any crop can be re-planted. Besides the extreme weather, the whole Island was shook up by a powerful 7.5 magnitude earthquake on January the 10th. Houses and roads collapsed, making it difficult for help to arrive for those in need. Please pray for all that have been affected, that they may put their trust in our Heavenly Father.

Christmas and New Year is usually a quiet time around the New Hope dormitory as some of the children go home to visit family. All school and church activities are brought to a halt, except of course the preparations for the Church Christmas program put together by the young people. Typically, the young people would go around 'jalan selamat' (visiting family, friends and neighbors a Merry Christmas) but the weather certainly did not permit this. A highlight during the week long holiday was a Christmas dinner put together by Andy's\* family in the village of 'Batu putih' (white rock) for the New Hope house parents, councilors and staff. They did this out of thankfulness for all that New Hope has done for Andy. You see, Andy was born and lived the first 5



Welcome



Welcome



New Hope Staff

years in Noelbaki where his parents attended the Yerusalem Reformed Church. Sadly, Andy's mother went through an emotional breakdown after her 3rd baby died very shortly after his birth. Instead of seeking help, she left her husband and two children for another man. Andy's father struggled enormously with the task of having to provide for his two young children on his own, after a few months he decided it best to go back to his hometown, Batu Putih leaving his daughter in the care of neighbors to whom she had grown very close. Andy moved along with his dad, finding it difficult to adjust to new surroundings and eventually a new mother. He finished Junior High school, which meant the end of his education, for there is no Senior High school near his home town. His sister however had different thoughts; she wanted her younger brother to do better than herself. She had fallen pregnant at age 15 and though happily married now, struggled very much during the early years of her marriage. She convinced her dad and Andy that New Hope could help out in providing accommodation and education for Andy. And so it was that 3 years ago, Andy came to live at New Hope and enrolled in the Elpida Senior High School.

He is so very thankful that the Lord guided him this way, in a recent conversation he said:

*I come from a broken home, I don't wish anybody to have to go through that, and will do all I can to do better myself. I am so thankful that the Lord has brought me to live at New Hope, I would have turned out very different had I stayed in the village. Many of my friends do not have work, all they do is drink, smoke and have fun. Coming to New Hope changed my life, although born into a Christian family, I never attended church in the village, it wasn't a cool thing to do, and my father left it up to me, so I stayed home. At New Hope we are all expected to attend the Sunday morning and afternoon services, we attend catechism class and are involved in Young peoples. Initially I went for the social part of it, I now understand that it is God's calling, His demand that we seek Him first. I read my Bible every day, and this gives me strength and guidance throughout the day. I want to be like my Bapak (Father) Ed, he is such an example to me, I love his enthusiasm about God and His word. This is my last year at the*

“

He says to the snow,  
'Fall on the earth,'  
and to the rain shower  
'Be a mighty downpour.'  
So that everyone he has  
made may know  
his work.

”

*Elpida High school, I choose the Restaurant and service trade, and absolutely love working at the 'Deka Elpida Café' it is my dream to become a full-time worker there and be a witness of God's love.'*

For so long High school meant a very formal way of education focused on getting students into university. Trades were completely overlooked and somewhat looked down upon as lesser jobs. This is a true challenge for students from especially the more remote areas, who often do not have a solid elementary education, also students more hands on inclined are seen as not capable as opposed to having talents in other areas. Recognizing this stigma, the Elpida schools provide a several hands-on trade focused High School courses. Students spend more time in the lab and field, putting theory into practice. It is wonderful to see young men and women bloom and developing their God given talents. The Elpida school board is planning to add another skill to the trade school, focusing on agricultural training. The hope is to teach young people modern agricultural skills in order to produce better crops. Please pray for these plans that they may come to fruition and give opportunity for the next generation to become more productive farmers.

We appreciate your prayers also for the New Hope family and all involved to continue this ministry of bringing Hope in the lives of orphaned and abandoned children.

That everyone He has made may know His work.

# MISSION WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES

Hendrik De Jonge

Dear Readers,

With thankfulness to the Lord, we were able to travel to the Philippines to visit the Churches in Manila, Butuan and Cagayan de Oro again from the 31st of October 2022 till 15th of November 2022.

There is so much to tell so I guess the best place to start would be at the beginning.

On the 31st of October Rev Carl Vermeulen, his wife Sharon and their son Daniel travelled to the Philippines where they spent a couple of days in Manila. Rev Vermeulen presented at 'The Glorious Bride of Christ' seminar which was hosted by the Zion Covenant Reformed Church in Cavite, Imus on the 1st of November. This seminar focused on the Belgic Confession Articles 27-32 and Rev Vermeulen spoke on articles 30-32 as well as the history of the Federation of Free Reformed Churches of Australia. However, due to flight delays he missed the morning speeches but made it in time for his own speech (yes, flight delays are a common occurrence in the Philippines).

Rev Vermeulen was able to discuss with many of the office-bearers what church life within the Free Reformed Churches of Australia is like. He was also able to have a conversation with the office-bearers and pastors in Cainta and Malolos about what it would take to become a federation of Reformed Churches in the Philippines. One of the key problems they are facing is what they can compromise in regards to their church order and how they are to go about this.

On the 3rd of November Rev Vermeulen, his wife and son flew to Butuan and I myself and Marius de Vos joined in with the trip. We were able to spend five days with the congregation

here. We conducted various activities regarding church and reformed education. Rev C. Vermeulen conducted a Reformed Education Seminar, as they like the idea of setting up a satellite John Calvin School. He strongly encouraged them in setting up their own reformed education and emphasised that this desire really had to come from them.

On Sunday we were able to attend church along with the 27 other people present, this is such a vast difference than what we are used too. We were able to celebrate the two sacraments and at the request of the consistory Rev Vermeulen administered baptism in the morning service and Lord's Supper in the afternoon. How beautiful it is to be able to travel to a different country and worship the same God.

Unfortunately, due to the termination of their lease, they have had to secure another place for worship. They have secured a



two-room building which will be able to hold between 40 and 50 people and have also purchased a block of land to build their own future church building as well as a parsonage. We were able to go visit the new block and what a rich blessing this was to see God's provision to this growing church community and to see them openly thanking God for His provision in this way.

Ernell is the current pastor of this church community, I was able to discuss with him about his desire to become a minister of the Word and he still has a strong desire to go through with this. We discussed with the office bearers about his role, and we were encouraged with what we heard however, we did encourage them to give him more holidays throughout the year as his role is big and can be quite hard, especially in such a small church community. Rev C. Vermeulen was able to run through some of the things he has been studying in the Heidelberg Theological Seminary and compared it to the curriculum at our theological college in Hamilton. He reviewed some of his Greek and he has strongly grown in his understanding which was encouraging for him and also for us. Although this was a very upbuilding and encouraging visit our time had to come to a close and we moved on to Cagayan de Oro (CDO).

On the 9th of November we travelled by van to CDO and Rev C. Vermeulen was able to conduct a TableTalk regarding the sermon making process, there were also a number of pastors from other churches that were there in attendance. Those who participated really engaged with the process and were able to learn that there is much more that can be dug out of the Bible when you use good exegetical tools, when you work with the original languages and consider all the contexts and so on.

On the 10th of November we were able to have a meeting with the office bearers of the Grace Reformed Church of CDO. We conducted something along the lines to a church visitation, they currently have 28 communicant members and 25 children with 6 people who are ready to begin



instruction. COVID led the congregation to struggle as they became content with online streaming so the consistory have had to strongly encourage people to start having fellowship again with each other.

We then were given the opportunity to join them from the 11th to 12th at Coconut Bay camp. There were approximately 50 people in attendance. Rev Vermeulen was requested to spend most sessions on scripture teaching, so he worked his way through the book of Nehemiah. On one of the evenings, I was able to spend with the men discussing leadership and serving in the church and Sharon was then also able to speak to the ladies about what scripture says about the role of a woman. This camp strongly encouraged all those in attendance which was a real joy to see.

On the 12th I began heading home with Daniel and Rev Vermeulen and his wife headed back on the 15th.

Over the next couple of days Rev Vermeulen was able to give a speech about how churches work together in a federation, how to know when to accept a new congregation in and the struggles that they will face. He also visited with the office bearers and pastors and strongly encouraged them in various aspects of their church life.

Although this was a short trip for me it was a very encouraging visit to be on, to see that church growth has continued to occur and that the individual members are continuing to grow in their desire to know more about God. The biggest take away for me was that in the next part of our relationship with the churches in the Philippines we will have to look more into teaching them on how to develop as local churches together as this seemed to be what they focused on for a majority of their time. This gives me great joy and thankfulness to see and all thanks and praise to God for His providential care.



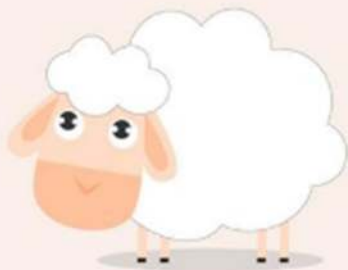
# KIDS MISSION CORNER

A missionary is sent out by a church to preach God's word to people that do not know God. They tell about the work of Jesus and that they can be saved from their sin and made children of God. They tell the Bible stories we know so well because they tell of God and His work.

Here are some activities that focus on David. They remind us that Jesus can be seen as a shepherd too. He keeps us safe and cares for us.



The LORD is  
my shepherd,  
I lack nothing



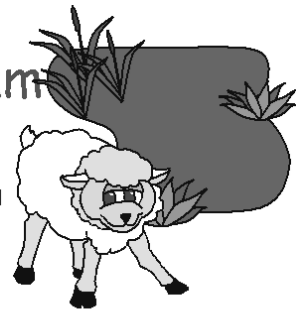
Psalm 23:1

Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

## Psalm 23 Anagram

Word List:

anoint, banquet, forever, goodness, guide,  
house, overflows, protect, psalm, shepherd



abenqtu \_\_\_\_\_

efloorsvw \_\_\_\_\_

ainnot \_\_\_\_\_

degnnooss \_\_\_\_\_

deehhprs \_\_\_\_\_

ehosu \_\_\_\_\_

almps \_\_\_\_\_

degiu \_\_\_\_\_

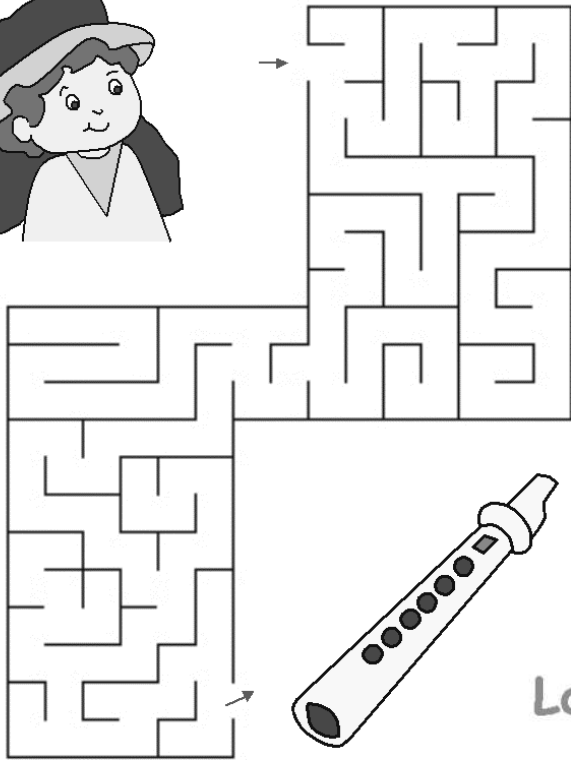
eeforryv \_\_\_\_\_

ceoprtt \_\_\_\_\_



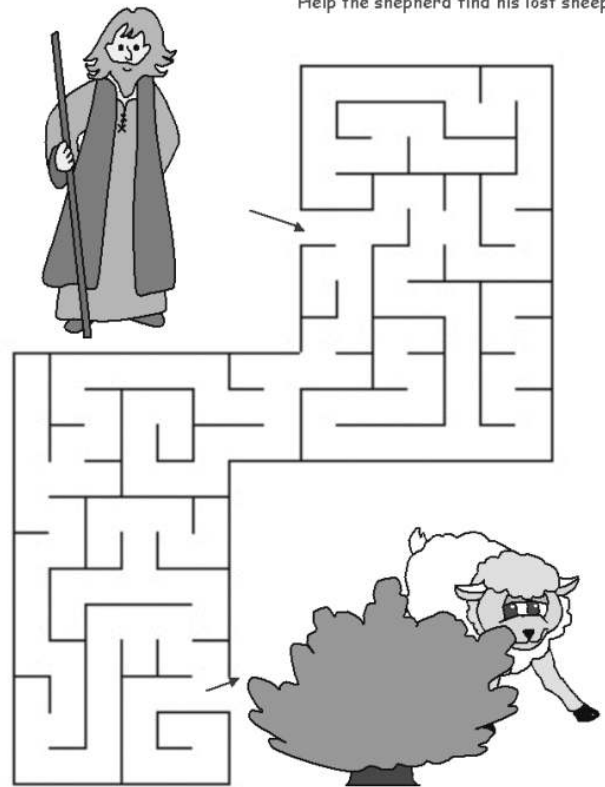
# Child of God Maze

Help David find his instrument so he can sing and praise God.



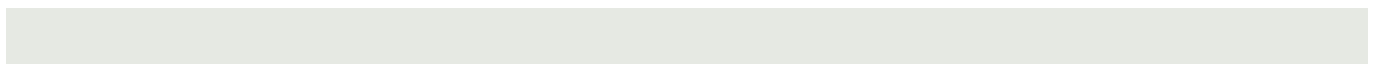
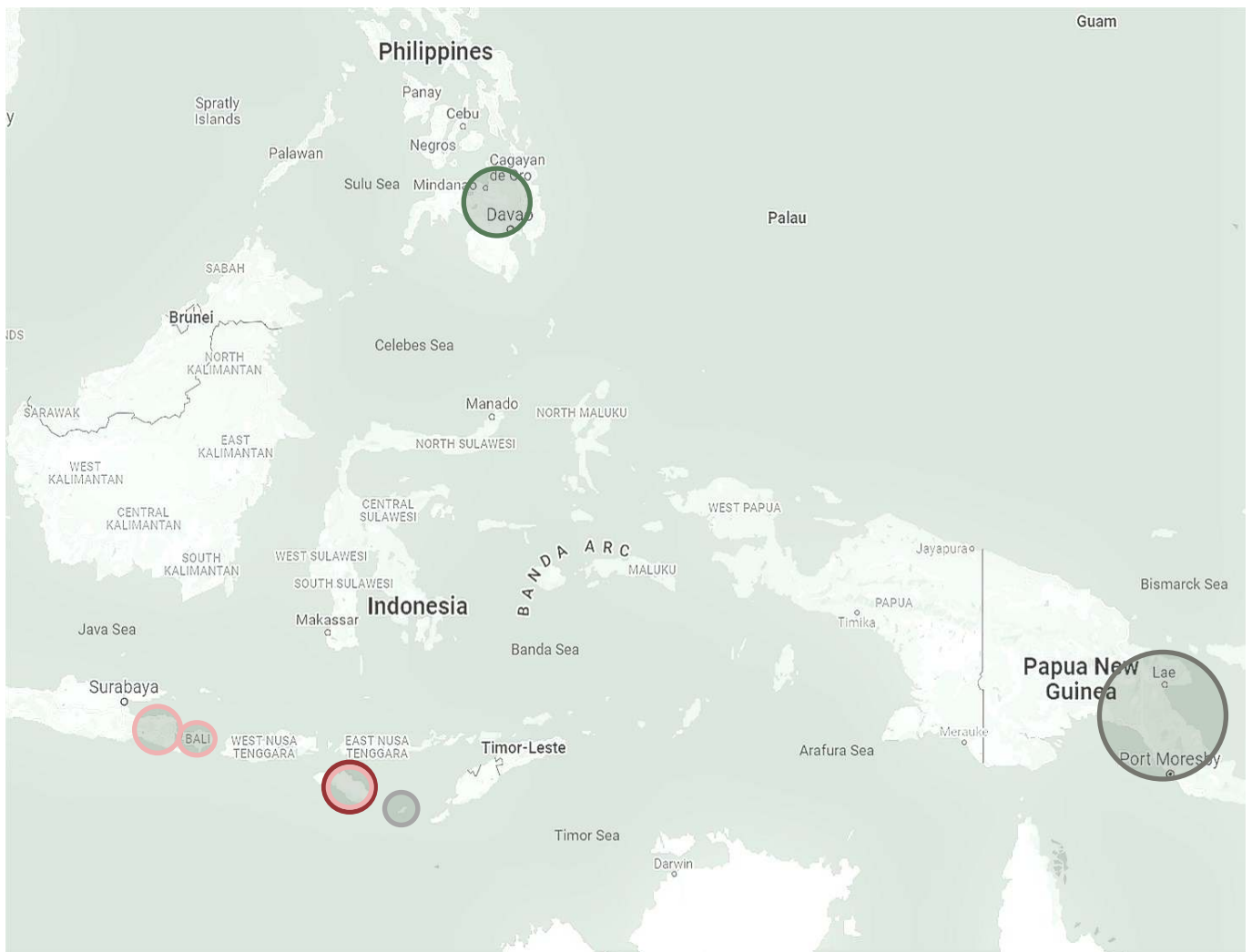
# Lost Sheep Maze

Help the shepherd find his lost sheep.



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Indonesia • Papua New Guinea • Philippines • Sabu • Sumba



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