

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 4

Rev. D. Pol

Over the last three editorials we have been looking at Jonah. His flight, his fear, his being found, and his preaching in Nineveh. Then comes the well-known story of God preparing a plant. It grows over Jonah, Jonah finds relief, and God sends a worm to destroy the plant.

Added to this, there's a cloudless sky and the sun beats down on Jonah. Jonah feels overcome. It gets so bad for him that he says again: "It is better for me to die than to live."

He's reached his breaking point. There's nothing left for him here. And it's finally when he reaches this point that the Lord speaks into his life once again. The Lord says: "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

Funny how that happens, isn't it? The Lord so often speaks into our lives when we're at our lowest. And it's often at these times which we're most ready to hear. We may not want to hear, but we're ready to hear. It's one of those moments that God prepares us for, when the words that are brought to us will strike us with particular force.

Jonah knows exactly what God is asking him. You can tell that he knows where this lesson is going from his heated response. He says: "It is right to be angry, angry enough to die!" Knowing exactly why God is asking him this question, he's doing what so many of us will do when someone's trying to teach us something. He's

stubborn and speaks rashly – yet God shows patience.

You see, God is trying to teach him something by that plant and the worm. And he brings that out in the next verses:

"Jonah," he says, "Are not so many of my creatures worth pity? This plant is mine, I raised it and let it grow and then it died. And yet you had pity for this plant. Certainly, it was for selfish reasons. It gained you something when you did nothing to earn it. But think: these people were brought into existence by me. They and their creatures owe their daily breath to me. Each heart-beat, each moment. They're calling on me for mercy. If such a plant deserves my mercy, should I not have mercy on this great people? One hundred and



twenty thousand who know so little, yet cry out for my help. Should I not pity them?”

And the book ends here.

A comforting conclusion

The silence that we find at the end of Jonah screams for an answer. We hear a very gentle rebuke from God and then... nothing. That's the end. But it's ending on that note that speaks so loudly for us today.

Because this one quiet moment in the book drives home the point that we've been slowly coming to realize for the entire narrative of this part of Jonah's life. It's not about Jonah. It never was about Jonah. It's all about God.

Consider what we find here. It's a window into the life of Jonah, and not a particularly flattering one. It ends on his bitterness. And yet we still find it in Scripture. How did we find it there? How did it come to be there?

The answer is that it was written down by Jonah himself. This was no dreamer who had simply had visions of something happening to someone. This was no story-teller. This was a man who wrote in his flight, who wrote in his bitterness, who shouted aloud to the world his wickedness, rebellion and sin.

This was a man who by all rights ought to have had as his legacy in Israel his prophecy in 2 Kings 14:25 that Israel would enter into another, brief golden age and be restored some of the land that was taken from them.

And yet he chose to have this as his memorial on his gravestone. He chose to have this book of Jonah as his legacy through the ages. And what does this say? “Here lies Jonah, a bitter man. He fled from God. He despised the mercy of the Lord. And yet... God cared. God loved him, God pursued him and God found him.” Yes, God found him and gave him the grace to become one of the authors of Holy Scripture, filled by his Holy Spirit.

It's a deep reminder to ourselves:

“I am a sinner. I deserve nothing. Now let me point you to a God who gives everything. If you forget everything else about me, remember this. I have a God who cares. I have a God who saves. I have a God who redeems.”

So let's examine ourselves again in light of God's rich mercy. And together, let each one of us remember and confess that: “I have a God who redeems.” I have a God who redeems nations who seem too far away from him to be saved. I have a God who redeems prophets who have gone too far astray. I have a God who can redeem even those whom I feel are too far gone to be redeemed. And I have a God who redeems me.

Yes, even me.

NORTH EAST PNG MISSION

Chairman's Musings

Frank Janssen

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Candidate Tim Slaa accepted the call by FRC Southern River, set aside for the work of Missionary in Papua New Guinea. No longer will the work of Australia be limited to NE-PNG (formally Lae), but once Candidate Tim Slaa arrives in Port Moresby dv, Australia will be assisting in all the RCPNG church planting in Papua New Guinea. For those who are long time readers, you would have followed all the developments from when the Co-Operating Churches of Australia agreed to look after this, after a call from Toronto for assistance. 5 years later, and after many discussions, meetings and agreements, it is such a blessing to see it all come to pass. Whilst timing means that by the time you read this some of this is old news, Candidate Tim will go to Classis North on the 20th of October (in Kelmscott), and if the Lord wills and he passes, he will be installed on the 29th of October in the Free Reformed Church of Southern River. All Praise be to God.

Currently as I write this, I am with Br Ed Eikelboom (Byford) and his wife Bernice and Br Bradley Dykstra (Armadale) and his wife Stephanie in PNG. We are here for the on-field conference of Reformed Ministries (the missionaries and support workers based in PNG), and the boards from Australia, Canada and New Zealand. It

had been scheduled to be held last year, but travel was still quite expensive and there was some uncertainty, due to COVID, and it was doubtful that some would not be able to go.

What's the conference all about? I thought I would copy the Aim straight out of the agenda:

AIM OF THE CONFERENCE:

1. To clarify, develop and strengthen relationships between all parties involved in planting and developing the Reformed Churches of PNG and
2. To process and clarify our plans and policies which will guide the work we are doing together in PNG.

ACHIEVING THIS AIM:

- A. To inform the Boards on the current work being done in the Reformed Churches of Papua New Guinea (RCPNG).
- B. To share Reformed Ministries' Strategic Plan and present proposals relating to carrying this out.
- C. To share the Strategic Plan of the Reformed Churches Bible College (RCBC) and present proposals relating to carrying this out.



- D. To discuss and clarify the work of Reformed Ministries (RM) and present proposals relating to their functioning and work.
- E. to provide time for the three boards to meet and share on their goals and future aim for the work of mission in PNG.

We are looking forward to seeing all the workers on the field, and representatives of the other boards. As there will be a lot of change of personal in Port Moresby over the next year or two, it is good to have all the plans, procedures and aims well documented and supported. Communication is extremely important, and this is especially the case in foreign mission, so it's very good to see each face to face and discuss these things. It is also good to reflect on the past 4 years since our last conference. The Reformed Churches Bible College (RCBC) and Reformed Ministries (RM) have a 2030 strategic plan, and it will be good to see what work is needed to work towards achieving that vision. After the conference we can then go back to the churches in Australia and inform them of these plans. Whilst the formal conference is for 3 days, we are here for 2 weeks to also visit the church plants, to meet with all the National Pastors and their wives, to meet one on one with various workers both socially and as Board Representatives. By the time you read this the conference will be over and we pray that the conference was upbuilding for Reformed Churches of PNG, the missionaries, and the supporting boards.

Straight after the conference, Pastor David and Erika Pol and family come to Australia for their furlough. While it

is a little earlier than originally thought, this timing works best for the other families on the field and the work on the field. This will also allow the Pol family to meet with the Southern River consistory and the Mission Board, because when they accepted the call and moved to PNG, COVID prevented them to come to Australia. It will be a blessing to hear from Pastor David in his presentation on his work in PNG and the work that still needs to be done. I hope you all able to attend one of the presentations so that you get informed of the work of Holy Spirit's in PNG. He is indeed working mightily, and after seeing a sneak peak of the presentation last night, it looks to be a great evening of information and praise. There will also a youth presentation regarding the Tulait Magazine.

Our Mission Support workers, Ben and Merinda van de Kamp and family have returned from Canada for their holidays. They are very thankful for the break they had, and reconnection to Ben's family. As expected, they



have jumped straight back into their work 😊. I am very sure our missionaries are very relieved to have them back to sort out the backlog of work.

Pastor Ryan is in his couple of months doing his course. When Pastor Ryan was called, the plan was that Pastor Ryan would do complete his D.Min course work in PNG. There have been many roadblocks, frustrations and disappointments, but also many joys during this time. It seemed many times that the course would not be completed due to cost, time, family circumstances and COVID. However, the Lord blessed in such a way the Pastor Ryan is due to complete the course soon. We thank Him for this development and hope and pray that the learning is being put to good use in the field and hopefully one day we get to read his writings.

Recently the Mission Board sent a letter to all members of the FRCA for fundraising for the Port Moresby Expansion Project. In this edition of Mission News there is a summary of the letter that was sent. I hope this explains this fundraising effort and pray for your support for this.

Well, the Missionaries and Support Workers have come for our 10am catchup, so I best finish it here. I hope to report extensively next edition.



SHEPHERDING IN THE LIGHT

THE POL'S ON FURLOUGH

North East PNG Mission

Rev D. Pol

As a pastor, there's not a lot that I know about sheep. Cows is one thing. As a teenager I spent a summer working with cows and learned a lot, but I never worked with sheep. Certainly, you can get a lot of information from studying books. You do a lot of research when you are touching down on the "Shepherd" passages of the Bible, whether relating to the LORD as shepherd in Psalm 23, Jesus Christ as the shepherd and overseer of our souls and elders as under shepherds. But, of course, reading about something is very different from doing something with your hands, experiencing working with sheep on a daily basis, cleaning pens, them looking to you for their very survival and the smell getting into your clothes until you don't even notice it anymore. When something becomes integrated into your very life, you have a very different perspective.

That being said, while my knowledge about sheep is limited, there is one thing that I do know about people. By God's grace, as people mature and grow in knowledge and skill, there is less and less direct oversight needed. We see this in the world of parenting. Parents equip and teach their children, and eventually the children get more and more freedom to make their own decisions, make their own mistakes and to grow in independence. We see

this in the world of business. Owners teach and train their employees, and as their employees grow, they are given more and more responsibility according to their skills. And the same is true, I assume, for under shepherds. Men who are appointed to look after sheep grow in skill and knowledge, and are eventually given more trust, until the owner of the sheep can fully release the sheep into their hands.

But what does this have to do with the mission field?

The same pattern that applies to under shepherds of sheep is also true for under shepherds of souls. And by God's grace, we have begun to see that very same pattern starting to take place here in Papua New Guinea as well.





It seems that we, as missionaries, are shifting into a new phase of Kingdom work here in PNG. There is less and less direct involvement in established churches on our part. More and more, God has given wisdom and grace to the leaders to take charge, which in turn, opens us missionaries up to new roles in those churches and to new fields in the surrounding areas. Our God has been exceedingly kind. And it is this kindness of God, as we move from the work of shepherding into the light as our primary role to the work of shepherding in the light as our primary role, that I hope to talk about in our upcoming furlough, 2023/24.

Shepherding *into* the Light

So what is the difference between shepherding into the light and shepherding in the light? The apostle Peter describes the work of shepherding into the light beautifully in 1 Peter 2:9-10 where he writes, *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."*

Those who were outside God's light, trapped in utter darkness and hopelessness, and separated from the mercy of God, have now been called into his mercy and light. This is a beautiful and exciting part of our work. On preaching tours, we have had the privilege of standing up in the marketplaces and on the street corners and calling people to the wonderful light of Christ. In Kainantu, we can go to open air areas and we've been

able to go to the police station cell block and bear witness to his mercy. People who have never heard the gospel before, or at least not clearly, have been able to hear and by God's grace respond.

We heard of one man who had not gone to church for ten years, being steeped in sin and addictions, who came to us nine months later and spoke about how God used us to call him out of darkness. As of that time he had been going to church for nine months and had been free of addictions. Another man spoke about how our magazines made it into his cell block and he and his fellow inmates were convicted of their sins and repented. They had been praying every day and worshipping together every night in song since then. A third man spoke of how many of his friends were impacted, in part by us. Once, we drove down the street that they frequented, and you could see young people gambling and playing cards up and down the street. Now you don't see any, because they have agreed to stop, and many of them have gone into local churches, with some of the young women coming to the Reformed Church.

It is tremendous to hear the stories about delivery from sexual sins, misery, addiction, pride, fits of rage, and many kinds of other stories. It is a great joy because we are front row witnesses to the mercies of God who calls people out of the darkness and into his wonderful light. Yes, in many ways and at many times we have had the privilege of being used as instruments to shepherd people *into* the light.

Shepherding *in* the Light

But now a shift has happened. And with this shift, we have the joy of seeing a new stage of the work begin to open up like a beautiful flower unfolding to face the sun before our very eyes. The next generation of believers, growing in maturity and wisdom, have themselves started to take more and more responsibility every day.

In Hila, the church leaders are doing home visits. They are calling each other to account and encouraging each other's walk with God. The blessing on their efforts is evident, as the congregation keeps growing under their faithful work. Where the leaders step up to the work, we

are able to step back, and the congregation is flourishing independent of our immediate day to day involvement. Our main task here is to equip the men doing the front-line work instead of doing the front-line work ourselves.

In Wantun, now that the church has been built, there is a shift towards talking about institution. Men have been ordained as elders and deacon and have taken up their task very capably. Where in Hila congregation members often come to us, in Wantun they go to and are visited by the elders and pastor. We have equipped them for front line work, and now they are starting to look for help on the next stage: doing it all completely independent of us so that we can come alongside of them as co-workers first and foremost instead of those training first and foremost.

Lae has instituted, and now the pastor of Lae is training another young pastor for the work. Independent of us, they are now running all their programs and doing significant outreach in the community. They organized most of the places to preach at for the last leadership tour. More than that, we are reporting to them as the mother church of the two church plants and have come to a point where we can listen to their guidance and encouragement on various challenges that we run into. While we will still assist in ways that only RM can assist, in many ways they are completely independent. Wantun congregation members will go to Wantun consistory. Wantun consistory will go to Lae consistory as their “mother” church. Then, if necessary, Lae consistory will come to us. In such a situation, there are many layers, there is much wisdom, and there is much shepherding that happens between us and the original issue.

Each of these churches is a picture of a new phase of development in the churches. It brings us great joy to provide training, and then watch as God uses our efforts to shepherd them into further growth *in the light*. Yes, they are not going from a radical place of darkness into the light. Yet, all the same, God is keeping them in the light and they are growing. And this, in turn, frees us up to new fields with national support behind our backs and national hands working alongside. May God, who has begun a good work in and among us, continue to bless this work richly and bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.



ENLARGE THE PLACE OF YOUR TENT,

DO NOT HOLD BACK

Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary

Dr. Arjan de Visser, Emeritus-professor of Ministry & Mission

The following article is the transcript of Dr de Visser's address from the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary Convocation 2023. The plan was for Dr de Visser to visit Australia and to present a similar speech adapted to the Australian situation. Dr de Visser does not assume that the examples and suggestions in this transcript relate directly to the Free Reformed Church in Australia.

The year was 1792, the occasion was a meeting of Baptist ministers in England, the venue was the Baptist chapel in Nottingham, the speaker was William Carey. Six months earlier, Carey had published a pamphlet entitled “An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens.” It was a missionary manifesto, culminating in a call to action. Specifically, Carey had called for the establishment of a missionary society that would send out missionaries to other parts of the world.

Half a year had passed, and nothing happened. But now William Carey was invited to deliver a sermon at the ministerial conference, and he used the opportunity to preach a missionary sermon. His text was an unusual one: Isaiah 54:2-3: “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left.”

Based on this text, Carey preached a powerful message, summarized in the famous exhortation: Expect great things from God! Attempt great things for God! Once again, Carey exhorted his colleagues to do something and

establish a missionary society. The brothers were impressed. The prospect of starting a missionary society seemed daunting, but Carey's sermon and leadership led to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society. Not long after, Carey himself was sent out as a missionary to India where he spent the rest of his life spreading the gospel, translating the Bible, planting churches, and indeed, attempting great things for God.

The manuscript of Carey's sermon has been lost. It would have been interesting to see how he explained Isaiah 54. Be that as it may, we do have the words of Isaiah. Let's explore these words and see if indeed it has something to say about mission work today.

Isaiah 54

Let's listen to the text again: “Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.”

Enlarging the tent: it is an image that we can relate to. Many of us go camping, and we know that a tent can

become too small. As a young couple, you can manage with a small tent. But as the family grows, you need more space. So you upgrade from a 2-person to a 6-person tent. And perhaps, after some more years and more blessings, you need a large family tent. There are 12-person and even 20-person tents on the market.

Our text contains a call and a promise. The call: enlarge the place of your tent, do not hold back. The promise: you will spread abroad to the right and to the left. What did it mean back then and what does it mean today? Let me point out three things.

First, this is a message of forgiveness and reconciliation for God's people, the people of Israel. It is important to keep in mind that this message comes right after Isaiah 53, the well-known prophecy about the Servant of the LORD. God's people had been punished by God because of their unfaithfulness. But God remains faithful to his covenant. He still loves his people, and He promises to have compassion on them. Verse 8: "In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer." This compassion will

work itself out in such a way what the Lord will settle his people in the promised land. They will prosper and flourish there. Their towns and villages will be full of people, so much so, that they will have to build new extensions. You will need to enlarge your tent, the LORD tells his people.

Second, this prophecy does not just relate to the people of Israel. It also says something about the nations: Verse 3: "Your offspring will possess the nations." Now this might sound as a promise that they will drive out the nations and take possession of their towns and their lands. That is indeed part of it, but there is more to be said. Consider what it says in the next chapter, Isaiah 55: "Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you" (Is. 55:5). In other words, when Isaiah is telling God's people that they should enlarge their tents because there will be more and more people that need a place to live, he is not just thinking about the people of Israel, but he is also thinking about the Gentiles who will come from the east and from the west to join themselves to God's people.

Third, this interpretation is confirmed in the New Testament. In Galatians 4 the apostle Paul quotes from Isaiah 54 and claims the prophecy has been fulfilled in the reality that both Jews and Gentiles are included among God's people. In that chapter he speaks about two Jerusalems: one on earth and one in heaven. The Jerusalem on earth is for Jews only, and Paul says she is in slavery with her children. The Jerusalem above, however, is free. She is for Jews and Gentiles, all those who believe in Jesus Christ.

We can draw conclusions now. Is Isaiah 54:2,3 is indeed a prophecy that can be used for a missionary sermon. Considering the context in Isaiah and in light of all the Scriptures, we understand that the Servant of the Lord (our Lord Jesus Christ) was going to be a Saviour not just for the Jewish people but for the Gentiles as well. The tent needed to be enlarged because the nations were going to be included among God's people.

For the New Testament church this meant that they

“In overflowing anger
for a moment I hid my
face from you, but
with everlasting love I
will have compassion
on you, says the
LORD, your Redeemer.

Isaiah 54:8

needed to make room for the inclusion of believers from the Gentiles. Think of the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading Isaiah 53, came to faith, and was baptized by the evangelist Philip. Think of the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem, meeting to discuss the question whether believers from the Gentiles needed to be circumcised or not (Acts 15). Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they decided that no such burden should be laid on believers from the Gentiles. And so, the tent was enlarged. The church of Christ spread abroad to the right and to the left, thus fulfilling the promises given to the patriarchs and the prophecies spoken by the prophets. If we consider the history of mission work, how the church spread around the globe, and how the church is still spreading east and west, north and south, we understand that Isaiah's prophecy has been fulfilled and is still being fulfilled in ways that the original hearers could not have imagined.

William Carey got it right: Isaiah 54:2,3 can indeed profitably be used for a missionary sermon. But now we need to move on and ask the question: Does this prophecy still have implications for us today? Is there still a sense in which the tent should be enlarged, even today? William Carey made the application that a missionary society needed to be established in order that missionaries could be sent out to the nations. What kind of application should we make today? Is there still for us a call to "enlarge the tent" or is the tent big enough?

In the remainder of my speech, I am going to focus on the Canadian Reformed Churches, since these are the churches that I have come to know and to love during the 19 years that I have served here in Canada. I'm going to argue that there is indeed a need to enlarge the tent. I have three practical suggestions.

Suggestions

My first suggestion has to do with foreign mission. I suggest that we should expand our organizational model for doing foreign mission. Let me explain. Our churches are working with a model that is very decentralized. While most other denominations have a layered structure with a federational mission board as well as local boards,

the foreign mission projects of the Canadian Reformed Churches are managed by a handful of individual churches (Toronto, Hamilton, Aldergrove, etc.). We can be thankful for the efforts of these churches and their mission boards, and we recognize that the Lord has blessed the work in places like Brazil, PNG and China. However, I would suggest that there are two main problems with our current model. First, it makes it hard to build up expertise. Our mission boards are made up of volunteers and it is hard to develop expertise in coaching missionaries in the field. Second, our system makes it hard to start new initiatives or respond to current needs and opportunities around the globe. Our foreign mission efforts have become stagnant. We have been doing the same thing for the last thirty years. There has been very little movement or new initiative. I would argue that the time has come that we should enlarge the tent. A good way to do that would be for general synod to appoint a standing committee for foreign mission work, and let this committee be given the mandate to employ someone – perhaps part-time – as a foreign mission consultant. This is a model that is used by the URCNA and the OPC and others, and it has been a blessing for their mission projects. More could be said, but I will do that in articles that I plan to submit for publication in *Clarion*.

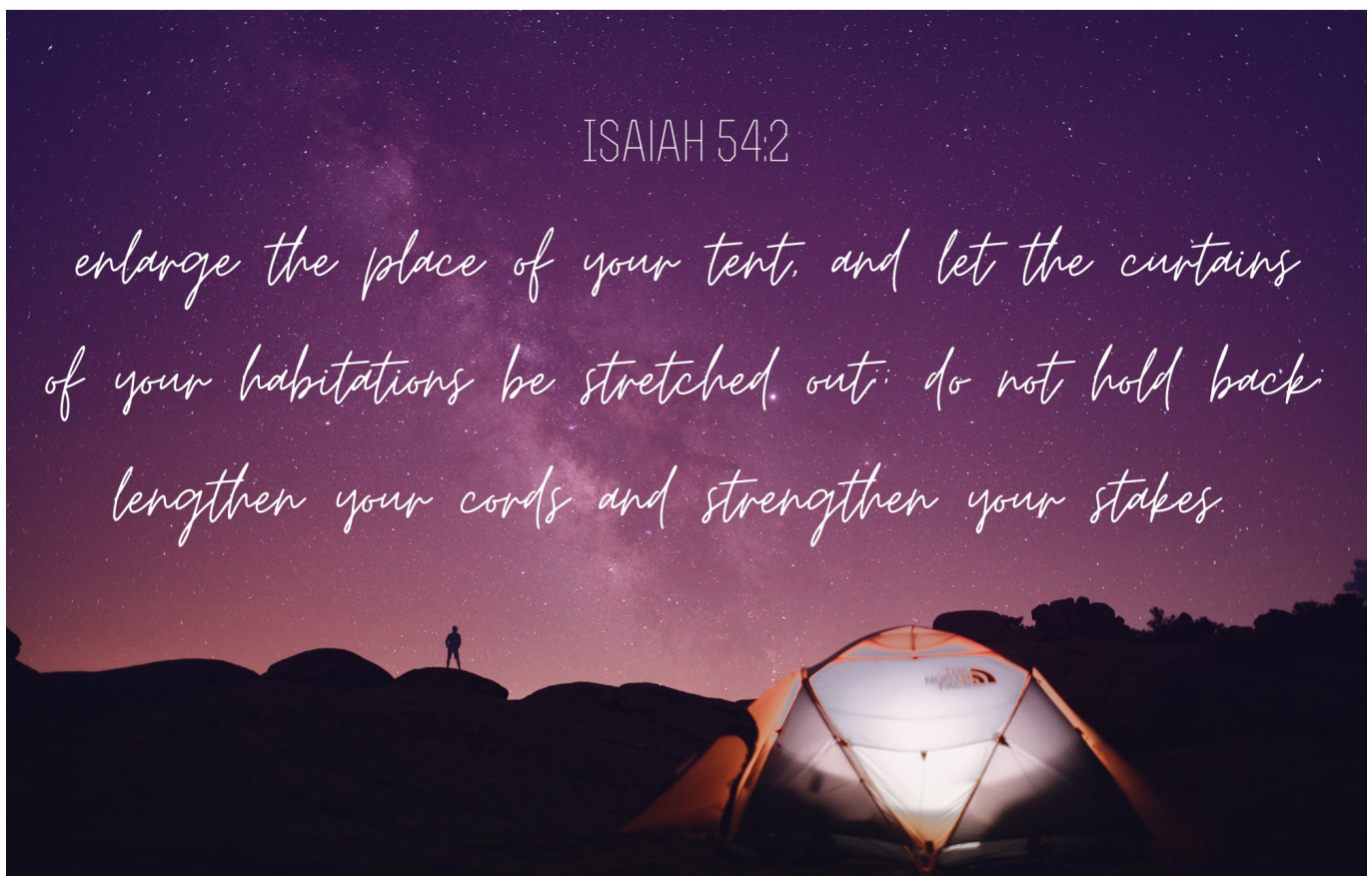
My second suggestion is that we should consider using the position of exhorter in mission situations, both on the foreign mission field and here at home. What is an exhorter? It is a brother who is licensed to preach and lead worship even though he did not come through the M.Div. program at seminary. The position of exhorter is not mentioned in the Church Order but it is well-known from the history of Reformed Churches (the Dutch name was *oefenaar*). Some Reformed federations still have the position today, for example the Free Reformed Churches in North America. It seems to me that we are already using this position for the work in Mexico where br. Scott Bredenhof has received permission to preach and lead worship. I think we can also consider using the position here in Canada for brothers from other countries who have gifts to edify their own immigrant communities here in Canada, but for whom it is not

possible to come to the seminary here in Hamilton and do a full-fledged M.Div. program. In other words, let's consider using the position of exhorter as a way to enlarge the tent and create room for the spreading of the gospel.

My third suggestion has to do with the reality that Canada has become a country that receives immigrants and refugees from other parts of the world: people from the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa, etc. According to Statistics Canada, we received more than 430,000 new people in 2022. In addition to this, the number of international students has tripled during the last decade and is expected to reach 900,000 this year. If you have been following the news, you know that this influx of new people puts quite a strain on the housing market. Politicians are looking for solutions. Premier Doug Ford, to mention just one example, is looking to 'enlarge the tent' by using parts of the greenbelt.

Our churches are affected by this influx of new people as well. I'm seeing it in my own church, Cornerstone here in Hamilton. I'm hearing the same thing from other congregations in urban areas across the country. Everywhere there are stories of people from Africa, the Middle East, India, Pakistan, South East Asia, showing up in our worship services, eager to hear the gospel. The Lord is sending these people to us. We need to welcome them and develop strategies that, by God's grace, they can find a home among us.

To summarize, then, I have three suggestions for enlarging the tent: 1) Let Synod appoint a standing committee for foreign missions, 2) let's make use of the position of exhorter in mission situations, 3) let's make room for immigrants, refugees, and students coming in from other countries. May the Lord grant us the wisdom and the love that is needed to make this happen, and may He bless our efforts.



COLLEGE CORNER

Reformed Bible College, PNG

Mark Mulder

Though time advances at exactly the same rate (60 min / hour) since the beginning of time, the mental comprehension of time doesn't compute that way; it goes much quicker, I reckon. Here we are in September already, finishing Block 5 and preparing for Block 6, and in between, busy organising a graduation ceremony and enrolments for 2024. Somehow Blocks 1 – 4 are history and most of the academic year is done.

It has been quite a challenging year actually. Three students were told they needed to leave the college due to conduct which was not in keeping with rules of the college. These are hard discussions to have as they highlight how much work needs to be done to change cultural traditions such that they line up with Christian culture. Our struggle as leaders at the college is to know at which point grace and mercy gives way to expulsion. Discipline needs to be exercised in love, but if continual exhortation is ignored, and the wayward behaviour is impacting other students, then, unfortunately, we have to ask the student to leave. Oh, for the wisdom of Solomon.

Another challenge relates to staffing. As much as we have enjoyed stability staffing wise over the last number of years, we recognise that all good things come to an

end. At the end of this year the Kleyn family and Richard 't Hart, our Campus Manager will leave the field. We have also been informed that the Vaatstra family will leave in the middle of next year, meaning that just Liz and myself will be left as 'whiteskins' at the college, until the arrival of Tim and Alanah Slaa.

The Kleyns will be moving to Comet Bay after having spent 12 years at the RCBC. With a growing and developing family, this move is entirely understandable. When your eldest son turns 15 and his only social contact is with PNGers who have a vastly different background, then it came as no surprise when Cor informed us that they needed to leave the field, albeit reluctantly. Their knowledge, wisdom, work ethic will be sorely missed (along with their friendship, of course). The LORD has blessed us with their presence, and we know that the LORD will continue to use Cor and Greta for the continued growth of his church, albeit in a different setting. Thank you, Cor, Greta and family, and may he bless you richly.

Not only do the Kleyns leave, our Campus Manager, Richard 't Hart is also leaving us. After 7 years of service at the RCBC, the Overseas Mission Board of the RCNZ has recognised that Richard has fulfilled his mandate and

as such, it's time to hand over the reins to the nationals. I'm sure that a timeline of the Campus Manager reports will show how much the RCBC has changed over the 7 years. It is now a facility which will be able to handle 30 students every year (part of our 20/30/30 vision). It's one thing to plan and build buildings, it's probably more difficult to train nationals and hand over control to them. Richard has trained Apa and James really well, and I feel confident moving forward with them. Thank you, Richard, and it is our prayer that our Father will provide for you in your next phase of life.

The weather is also proving to be challenging. We haven't received significant rainfall for the last 4 months meaning our water tanks are pretty much empty. It's as well we have a bore from which we can obtain drinking water. Though it doesn't taste as good as the rainwater, it does suffice. In the meantime, we continue to pray that God will bless this land with much needed rain, turning brown into green, filling water tanks, replenishing ground water supplies.

Challenges, of course, are opportunities to grow in faith and so we thank God for his goodness. Some students had to leave. The result? A stronger student body. Some staff will leave. The result? Opportunities for some of our national brothers to shine. The hot, dry weather is taxing and worrying. The result? A greater dependence on him. God's love for his church means he will not leave us alone. That gives great comfort and joy.

In Christ alone,

Mark Mulder



MISSION INDONESIA

Eric de Haan

Dear readers: looking back over the last report from Mission Indonesia, I noted that it has been quite a while, and much has happened since our last article.

The Past:

I will start with the promised update from the mission posts in Java. I travelled there earlier this year together with Rev Balla from Sumba who has the responsibility of visiting mission posts on behalf of GGRI Kataka and submits reports of the work to his consistory. He was accompanied by his wife on this trip, as she was keen to visit with members of her family in Solo Java. At this



Rice fields near Dampit

time some covid restrictions on travel were still in place within Indonesia, and many flights that had been operational pre-Covid were no longer available. This included the direct from Bali to Malang, and so we had to travel via Surabaya which is the 2nd largest city in Indonesia. Surabaya really is a sprawling metropolis with a population of close to 10 million people, many of whom we met on our drive out of the city. The traffic situation is chaotic with a mixture of polluting trucks & buses, untold numbers of motorbikes and a strange mix of old-style Dutch cycles and horse or donkey driven carts all clogging the streets and thoroughfares. It took the best part of an hour just to reach the city limits from the airport, after which the toll road was simply superb, and our taxi made the most of the 4-lane freeway travelling at speeds around 140Kmh!

We arrived at Malang some 3 hours later and were met by Rev Yanto Muriwali and family who had a delicious evening meal waiting for us. The evening was spent discussing the work done at this post which was still being hampered by local govt regulations regarding the number of persons allowed to gather in a home setting (8 at time of visit). There is still a core group of around 12 members at this post who meet regularly for worship and study. As he is the only ordained minister of the GGRI



Enjoying the train trip to Solo

in Java, Rev Yanto has focused on his online activities and YouTube discussions while keeping tabs on the work done in the mission posts at Dampit and Solo. The next morning Rev Yanto had arranged for a car and driver to take us to the mission post at Dampit some 2.5 Hours away.

He had obtained the services of a local from Dampit who knew all the short cuts, which was convenient as there were many Moslem festivals underway, and the roads were clogged. I guess we became concerned after around 3.5 hours of travelling that we appeared to still be quite some way from our intended destination. Worse, the road on which we had been heading had slowly deteriorated into a stony track, until finally it petered out into a small palm plantation, where a bemused farmer wondered why he was receiving unexpected visitors, including an international tourist. The mission post at Dampit is located on the slopes of mt Bromo and according to my google maps, we were on the correct mountain, but unfortunately on the wrong side, and there were no roads connecting through to our destination. A further 2.5 hours was required to back-track to the main

road, and a very sheepish driver finally got us to the mission post at 5.30 in the afternoon. We had left Malang at 10.30 that morning!

Rev Yanto had recently recovered from triple bypass surgery to his heart and had been unable to visit this post for some months. This meant that an impromptu church service was held, and Lord's Supper was celebrated with the Sukram family and evangelist Firman Hadi Istanto, who is the latest evangelist to be sent to this area, after the 2 previous evangelists did not continue their work for varying reasons. A follow up meeting will be held with Kataka Consistory as to the viability of continuing work in this district. A meal followed, and by the time we left and returned to Malang it was 11.30 pm. The next morning, we were scheduled to travel to Solo by train, a trip I had been looking forward to. Our first task was to ensure we were at the station on time which we had appeared to accomplish without any problem. The tickets which had been purchased online however were not accepted by the validating machine, and we were starting to get concerned as the train was only a few minutes away. A helpful station attendant then informed us that the tickets we had purchased were in fact for departure from the next station in line with the same name but with the acronym CTY added. Apparently, there are 2 stations in Malang and one of these has the letters CTY added, a small detail which had not been picked up by our host. By this time the train had pulled into the station, so it was a mad dash to find a taxi and to try to beat the train to the next station, no small feat in heavy mid-morning



Bible study evening in Solo

traffic, but our taxi driver was up to the challenge. With lights flashing and horn blaring he cleared a path, and we made it to the next station with a minute to spare. I had envisaged a rattly old train with locals bearing goods for market, and with various animals accompanying them, much as you see in the movies. Imagine my surprise when a supremely modern train showed up, with coaches which were resplendent with luxurious reclining leather seats, together with a fold away tray table and footrests which would eclipse the most luxurious train available in Australia. Surely the best way to enjoy the 6-hour trip to Solo, a trip through beautiful countryside of rice paddies and forests, with mountains and volcanoes on the horizon in every direction. A fully catered dining car and frequent in-car food and drink service completed the experience. All for the princely sum of \$45 Aud 😊

We arrived in Solo at around 5pm and were reunited with Evangelist Endrow who is serving this congregation. It was a pleasant surprise to see another familiar face in Novianus, who had been his partner in serving the mission post in Bali, soon after it had been established. They were living in a single large room which will serve as the future consistory room at the rear of the new church building. This church group, many of whom had previously come from a more charismatic background, are a close knit and very committed group of around 55 believers.

I am reminded of how the early Christian church is



Bali church block

described in Acts and can see the same selfless attitude and love for each other here. The next day being Friday, was the time when the congregation got together for evening bible study, and I was asked to give a short introduction. No problem, but what do you mean by short, and what do you want me to speak on? “Only about 15 minutes, on any biblical theme or text you like” was their response. No Pressure! Thankfully I have a fairly good memory and was able to dust the cobwebs off an address I had given many years ago on the theme of Christian Hope. Endrow was able to translate for me and I was very impressed by his grasp of the English language. After bible study, which was attended by approx. 80% of the congregation, we enjoyed a delicious meal of local cuisines provided by some very talented cooks in the congregation. While this post is not an officially supported mission project of Mission Indonesia, we have provided some minor support for the evangelist, and through mission aid, contributed some financial support for the church building. I was very impressed with what they have achieved thus far, and plans are in place to erect a 2nd storey with meeting rooms and living quarters for a future minister.

After a short visit of 2 days, I flew back to Bali on Saturday evening, leaving Rev Balla to complete his work in Solo. I was keen to spend the Sunday in Bali, and they were also keen to have a mission representative present to inspect a property they were seeking to purchase for their planned new church building.

They had also recently moved into the house next door which doubled their capacity for worship, and good use was made of this space with around 30 members present on the Sunday. Rev Yan is aware of my limitations with the Indonesian language and very kindly gave me a summary of the sermon printed out in English. If any Australians are travelling to Bali and wish to attend church there, Rev Yan is happy to provide this service to tourists, provided Bali Church block he has some notice beforehand.

After the service, and the normal coffee and chat session (which can last well over an hour) I was invited to have a look at the proposed property for the new church and



Evangelist Endrow—Solo

manse. The location in a new residential subdivision and is closer to the main road than their current location. The price of land is comparable to Australian prices per square meter, and this meant that a plot of land around 9 meters wide and 17 meters deep was the maximum size that could be considered. While we would think that is not nearly enough, the resourceful group in Bali have made plans for a 2-storey building that will serve as a church and manse, and that would be able to accommodate around 100 worshippers. The consistory and congregation of Rockingham has generously agreed to support this proposal and at time of writing the foundation works for the new church are well underway. (More about this in the next issue)

The Present:

Brian B & I recently visited Sumba in August 2023 on a scheduled mission visit, which coordinated nicely with the ordination of one of our evangelists, Melkianus Tara Amah from the mission post at Watu Bara, in the south of Sumba. We left Perth on a Friday morning and

overnighted in Bali before flying to Sumba the next day. Unfortunately, there is now only 1 flight per day to Sumba instead of the 5 pre-Covid, and we didn't arrive until late in the afternoon. As is usual in Sumba, pre-arranged transport of Rhonda to the airport, involved waiting for well over an hour, and giving the custodian of her a lift back to his place when she finally did arrive. We stayed with Rev Balla at his home in Kawangu which is only 10 minutes from the airport. This house also serves as the mission post and church services are held in his home every Sunday Morning. Approx 20 worshippers were present for the service and afterwards some theological students who were well known to us arrived with guitars, and a couple of hours were spent singing hymns and spiritual songs. We had opportunity to visit the Litindo Bookshop where Obed kindly sacrificed some of his Sunday family time to show us around, and where we arranged for around 350 reprinted Sunday School books written by Mrs Pol to be distributed to the mission posts. We also visited our old friends at Kanjongalitang and were proudly shown the building progress on the new home of Rev Kambombu. His old timber house had suffered severe damage during Cyclone Seroja and Mission Aid had gladly supported their request to rebuild.

Monday morning, we travelled southwards along the East coast to the township of Lumbuwinu with the hope of visiting the mission posts of Laingadda and Katundul which are located in the mountains further



Partially completed manse at Kanjongalitana



Evangelist Yan from Lai Hobu

away from the coast. The weather however was against us, and we endured a few heavy showers on the way down. I am not sure exactly what's causing this, but we had never experienced so much rain and cold weather at this time of the year. August is normally very hot, windy and dry with temperatures in the low thirties, yet we were experiencing low 20's and nights in the low teens. Not being prepared for this made for some very uncomfortable nights. Upon our arrival in Lumbuwinu, we enjoyed some time with Rev Etty & family but had to inform the villagers at the mission posts who were awaiting our arrival that due to the heavy rain in the mountains, and the time constraints we were under, we would not be able to visit them on this occasion. According to reports received for these posts, the gospel is being preached weekly in each post and there is still a positive response from the hearers of the Word. New members are still being added on a regular basis which is a testament to the power of the gospel and the work of

the Holy Spirit. After some hours it was back on our bikes as we had around 4.5 hours travel to the mission post of Lai Hobu which was our overnight stay before heading further south to Padiratana. The roads had become extremely slippery due to the rain and wasn't helped by a 15 Kilometre section of new road which was being prepared for sealing. The base layer for this would normally be gravel in Australia but in Sumba they use clay, and as you can imagine it was literally SNOT. (Slippery, no ordinary traction) I must confess to dropping my beloved Rhonda on a couple of occasions on the way to Lai Hobu which resulted in a fractured eye socket for Rhonda (broken headlight) and for me, dented pride and a nice exhaust burn on my leg. Thankfully due to the cold weather, it was the first time ever that I had worn long trousers whilst riding, and this afforded some protection on what would have otherwise been a serious medical issue. We arrived at Lai Hobu just as darkness was setting in and were quickly surrounded by many congregation members who invaded the home of



Bali worship group

Evangelist Yan. With typical Sumbanese hospitality, everyone present received coffee and a hot meal. We spent the remainder of the night talking, playing chess, and a very loud and animated local card game which caused a lot of mirth and laughter.

I continue to be astounded by how content these locals are, as they live without what we would consider many of the basic necessities of life. Their home consists of 2 rooms, 1 bedroom for the whole family, a living room which is mainly reserved for the women, and a covered veranda where visitors are entertained, and meals are taken sitting on the hard wooden floor. There is no furniture, electricity, running water or phone reception. Cooking is done over an open fire in a separate hut. Maybe they have learned the secret of the apostle Paul who had also learned to be content in all situations of life. This group continues to increase in faith and number with 2 adult baptisms of converts just prior to our visit.

The Future:

Some might say that the future has not yet been written, however that is not the case with this mission report. I think that I am fast approaching the limit of what one can digest in one sitting, so I will hit the auto save, and I will continue this report in the next issue where you can look forward to our visit to the new mission post of Kapehu, ordination of 2 ministers, a visit to Tanambanas and a progress report of the Bali church building work. As always, we marvel at the clear evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in the hearts and lives of those who hear the true Gospel of Salvation. Please continue to pray for the work done.

Till next Time, on behalf of Mission Indonesia.



Sunrise in Central Java

MISSION PNG EXPANSION PROJECT

North East PNG Mission

The Mission Board of the FRC Southern River

You may have heard the exciting news that on the 6th of August **Brother Tim Slaa**, a recent graduate of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, accepted **the call for mission work** in Papua New Guinea. Now that the call has been accepted work has commenced to prepare Tim for his work in PNG by providing further missiology education, cross-cultural training, examination by Classis North and, the Lord willing, ordination.

The cooperating churches have agreed to increase their contribution to cover the increased cost of an additional missionary family. This works out to be an average of

around \$23,800 extra for each cooperating church per annum. These churches, along with some supporting churches have also agreed to fund some of the costs to move and establish this family in PNG. The mission board estimated this cost to be around \$290,000, which includes moving costs, a robust 4WD car (some of the roads in PNG would challenge even the most ardent 4WDers in our midst) and a house.

To date the churches have pledged a total of \$117,544 towards the setup costs. We are therefore seeking to raise \$172,456. The \$290,000 is an estimate of costs, and it could be that the actual costs may be more or less than that figure. Where the moneys raised is more than the amount required, the mission board will allocate the remainder to either a special project identified by the board or allocate to the general funds which will reduce the future financial needs required from the churches.

Why are we asking you for support?

The churches agreed that the mission board may, if required, approach all church members to individually support this project, if the required funds are not pledged by the churches.

We are all believers in Christ, eagerly awaiting the return



of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (Phil 3:20). We know that Christ will not return until the full number of the elect have been gathered. In obedience to God's command of Matthew 28, we also support the spreading of the Gospel to the people of PNG. What is more glorious than spreading the name of God throughout the world?

If you have been materially blessed by God, we ask that you support this important project. Christ encouraged us in His Sermon on the Mount not to "lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matt 6:19-21).

Your donations will be gratefully accepted in the following bank account:

Acc Name: FRC Southern River Mission Board

BSB: 036-032

Acc No.: 711477


(Please include the description "Mission Expansion" with your payment)





BIRTHDAY CALENDAR

Cheree VanderWal	20.10.1986
Timothy DeJonge	20.10.2012
Samuel DeJonge	31.10.2010
Greta Kleyn	02.11.1983
David VanderWal	19.11.1985
Erika Pol	01.12.1996
Zachary DeJonge	05.12.2018
Makenna VanderWal	09.12.2017
Merinda van der Kamp	17.12.1991
Benjamin Kleyn	19.12.2009



Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you.

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Pray for Candidate Tim Slaa as he and Alana come for Classis and Installation.

Pray for Pastor David and Erika Pol as they come for the next 3 months, visiting all the churches in Australia to update the members on the work being done, to recharge their batteries, and finally meet the Mission Boards.

That the youth hear the call of Isaiah 6:8 (being discussed at Baldivis Congress) "Here I am, send me" and that young men have the heart to pursue the calling of Minister/ Missionary in our churches and mission fields.

Thankfulness for a special opportunity for the RCPNG pastors, Reformed Ministries personnel and the Mission Boards to be in one place and meet together to discuss the work in PNG.

That the work done and the discussions at the Conference may be a blessing to the RCPNG.

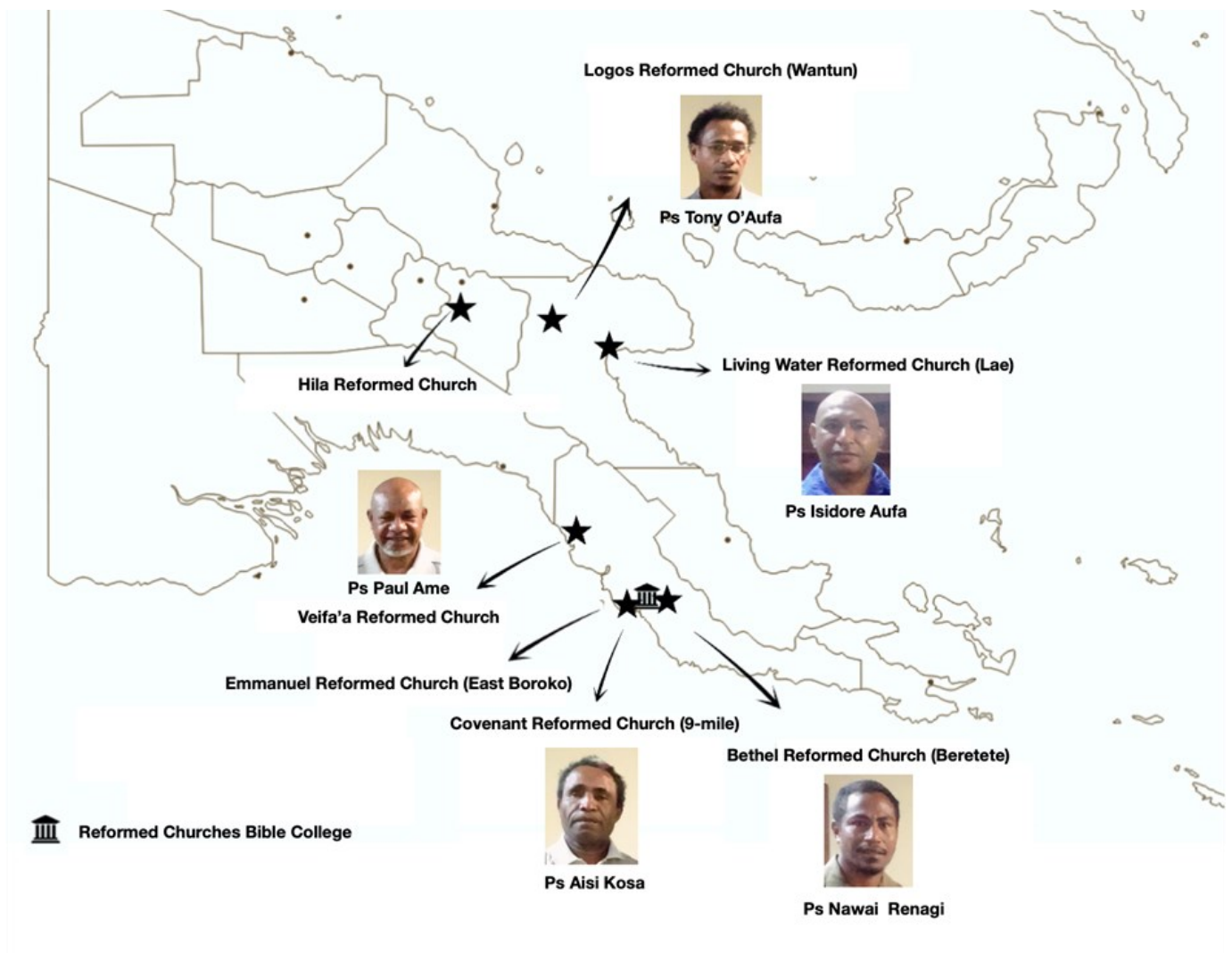
That there would be enthusiastic support from the churches in Australia as they are able to be a part of God's Kingdom building work in PNG.

That the Kleyn's, Richard and Leo may have peace in their time of farewells.

That the Toronto Mission Board may find a replacement for Pastor Cor Kleyn.

REFORMED CHURCHES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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



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).

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

Youth Presentation 31st October

@ Southern River Church



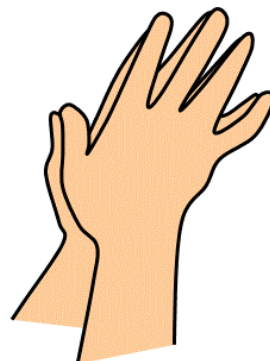
KIDS MISSION CORNER

Lord's Prayer Word Search

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

ANYTIME
ANYWHERE
ASK
BELIEVE
COMMUNICATE
DAILY
EXAMPLE
EYES
FORGIVENESS
HANDS

HEARS
HEAVEN
LISTENS
POWER
PRAISE
PRAY
SIMPLE
TALK
TEMPTATIONS



BUT YOU ARE A CHOSEN RACE



ROYAL HOLY PEOPLE
PRIESTHOOD NATION FOR HIS OWN POSSESSION

THAT YOU MAY PROCLAIM
THE EXCELLENCIES OUT OF DARKNESS
OF HIM WHO INTO HIS MARVELOUS
CALLED YOU LIGHT



ONCE
YOU WERE NOT A PEOPLE
BUT NOW GOD'S PEOPLE
YOU ARE

ONCE YOU HAD NOT RECEIVED MERCY BUT NOW

YOU HAVE RECEIVED

MERCY

1 PETER 2:9-10

Scripture
TYPE

www.scripturetype.com

MISSION COMMITTEES

Indonesia • Papua New Guinea • Philippines • Sabu • Sumba



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Supporting Churches: Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Launceston, Legana, Melville

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Web: www.frcmissionpng.org ; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/271603523844307>

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Web: <http://missionaid.frcarmadale.com/>

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Rev Yan Pariamalinga - Bali

Rev Balla Rihi - Maubukul

Br Jhems Umbu Ngabi - Lae Wunga

Rev Arison Pekambani - LaAu

Br Yan Laki Ngella - Lai Hobu

Br Melkianus Kalambar Tara Amah - Watu Bara

Ev Jekson Kambaru Windi - Dampit (Java)

Ev Novianus Benyamin - LKaingada & Katundul

Web: <http://mission.frcrockingham.org>

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Reverend Windi Kurung

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Evangelists:

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Brother Lay Djama Riwu

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