



# Mission News

*Mission Activities of the Canadian Reformed Churches*

**Volume 10 – February 13, 2015**

## **Toronto – Papua New Guinea**

### **Reformed Churches of Papua New Guinea - October 2014**

#### **Church Groups of Beregoro and Beretete (Rev. Versteeg)**

With respect to the churches, once again I will report on Beregoro and Beretete (previously known as Ekoro) while Rev. Kleyn will report on Nine Mile. Rev. Douma supervises the church work in Veifa'a and East Boroko.

The situation in Beregoro is sad. The past leader has not yet reconciled with the congregation and has actually moved into Port Moresby even though he goes up to his sweet potato gardens in the mountains of Beregoro regularly. We attempt to keep the pulpit filled every Sunday but we do find we have a shortage of preachers presently. There is a young married man, Wapo Make, who is diligent and a prospective church leader. However, he is illiterate, which is a handicap, especially for leading church services. The candidate minister (CM) Nawai Renagi from Beretete is doing a literacy program with him. He is doing very well.

When the weather and road permit, we hold our sub-consistory meeting in Beregoro every Friday during the day. It has proven to be very encouraging to Br. Wapo and the members of Beregoro. Sadly, it is not always easy to get up to Beregoro. We have also not been able to get up to Beregoro for the last few Sundays due to the road conditions, despite having a very good four wheel drive Land Cruiser. We have had to make a rule for ourselves that when the drivers of public trucks which transport people no longer go up and down the mountain roads, then for our own safety and so as not to cause unnecessary damage to our vehicle, we do not go up either. We have held a combined service with the Beregoro people walking three hours down to Beretete. It was wonderful to worship together. However, even the mud can get so bad that it is no joy walking that distance, especially when it is also so cold (+/- 25 degrees) and raining.

As mentioned earlier, Br. Joel Sine received permission to speak an edifying word in the churches. Br. Joel and Sr. Gami Sine have a particular interest and heart for the Beregoro people. That developed while Joel was doing his practicum in Beregoro during his last year in the Diploma program. Joel has expressed interest in serving this area as an elder-evangelist under the supervision of the Beregoro-Beretete sub-consistory. Whether the Lord will open this door to him needs yet to be seen as it will come with some difficulties to their family as they have a teenage daughter who will need to board elsewhere to attend school. Thus, if they are able to serve in Beregoro, it certainly will not be long. Perhaps it will be sufficient to help the Beregoro leadership, namely Br. Wapo Make, and perhaps also to get on his/their feet in order to again have a structured church life.

*Church building and newly rebuilt manse of Beretete*







*Graduate student Joel Sine will be serving as elder-evangelist in Beregoro, working together with church leader Wapo Make*

The Beretete church group remains stable. We continue to lose members to the East Boroko congregation in Port Moresby as more members are moving into town due to finding work in Port Moresby. However, that is really not so noticeable in the church attendance. Two lady teachers, who teach at the Itikinumu School where CM Renagi also teaches religious studies, have been attending our services. They have been following special studies with the candidate minister and hope eventually to profess their faith and join the Reformed Church of Beretete. Further, a number of young men, sons of present members of the congregation, are showing up more frequently and CM Renagi has also begun a youth group program with them. We are thankful for this fruit of CM Renagi's labour as the congregation presently has few men and thus few potential future leaders/elders. CM Nawai Renagi and elder Boboro Maikew work very well together and are good at shepherding the congregation.

You may recall that the candidate minister had difficulty moving forward with his candidacy program preparing him to eventually become a full minister of the Word, D.V. Much of his difficulty was due to the fact that he really did not have his own study for as long as the manse was not built. We are very thankful that the manse has now been built this past July with volunteer help of four carpenters from the New Zealand Reformed Churches. The Renagi family now has their own home and CM Renagi now has his own study. Presently, they are still trying to settle down. There are some things that need to be completed and put into order. Hopefully, that will all be done soon and CM Renagi can give his full attention to the candidacy program again. They and the congregation are very thankful for the financial support of the churches in Canada that made this possible. Since the Renagi family has moved out of the guest room, we

will be able to spend more time in Beretete and from there also in Beregoro (weather permitting). The congregation has repeatedly asked us to give a course on marriage and family life, child rearing, sects and cults, etc. My wife and I look forward to spending more time with the brs/srs of this congregation.

### **Church groups of Nine Mile and East Boroko (Rev. Kleyn)**

I continue to be particularly involved in the work at Nine Mile and the Candidate Ministry program of Aisi Kosa in this church group. Nevertheless, because Nine Mile shares a sub-consistory with East Boroko, I have also been quite active in this church group while Pastor Alan was away.

Nine Mile remains a small church group with irregular attendance. We are thankful that there is a small core group in the congregation that has really picked up some of the work in the congregation. This is particularly noticeable when we look at the work of the Committee of Management. This committee has started to fund raise and dreams of erecting a new church building in the near future. Currently the church building is tucked away behind the church manse and is not easily visible from the road. For a long time it has been in the works to place a new church building at the front of the church property. We also believe that this will help people see the church building more easily and make it easier to come inside and worship together.

In addition to an active Committee of Management, Nine Mile Church has been blessed this past year with the appointment of a new church leader, Mattes Inney. He is not an office bearer at this point because we don't believe he is ready for that yet, but he is helping out with the collections, attends meetings with us and is getting involved in the weekly programs of the church.



*Nine Mile Women's Fellowship group at Women's Conference 2014. Port Moresby area, PNG*

*Practising singing Psalms and Songs at Leadership Conference at Reformed Churches Bible College, PNG*



We also continue to thank the Lord for the work of Candidate Minister Aisi Kosa. He has improved considerably in his sermon writing and presentation. He has also been active in teaching catechism, religious instruction at a school and doing home visits together with myself. In early October Aisi Kosa presented himself to classis to be able to become a minister of the Word and no longer a candidate minister. Sadly, he did not sustain his exam. And yet we believe this is best for him and the congregation. We hope and pray that he may continue to develop well under supervision and we will focus particularly on his weak areas and encourage him in these areas.

The church has also been blessed this past half year with the profession of faith of two new members, one receiving the sign and seal of adult baptism, as well as the baptism of three of their six children! We have also been blessed with a few new regular attendants. In particular the sister of one of the Bible College students has shown great interest and regularly attends a catechism class.

As far as outreach, Nine Mile has a Wednesday night fellowship that goes to all sorts of different locations where church members live. These church members then invite their neighbours to come as well. This has been a beautiful way to witness and we hope to continue this practice. We also continued our market preaching for most of this past half year. A crowd of 100 to 200 people turns up each time and some show interest in coming to church. Still, we have found with each of these outreach programs that it takes a long time for people to actually commit even when they initially show interest. Building relationships is very important to bringing people in.

Nine Mile remains a small church group with few leaders and members, nevertheless we thank the Lord for

the signs of his grace and mercy. Sometimes the weak faith of the members upsets us – but we can only continue to encourage and strengthen them with the Word. Sometimes the fact that there are so few members gets us down – but we also know that God gives growth and withholds growth and that he does this in his time and his way.

The East Boroko church group has been growing a little with members from Beretete (in the past Ekoro) coming to join them. We are also thankful for the weekly youth catechism that is attended by five young girls (which I taught for quite a few sessions this year) and the church leader Ben who has shown a lot of faithful service in the congregation. We are thankful that the church group was able to organize a three-day National Women's Conference in September 2014 (women from all the above church groups, as well as Veifa'a and Lae attended) even though one of the most active women in the congregation passed away earlier this year.

But this congregation is also struggling still in many ways. There have been many church leaders in the congregation in the past – men who committed themselves to serve the church. Many of these men no longer turn up at church and live in sin. It seems that disciplinary action will need to be applied. The congregation also struggles a lot with sickness. One person died during the past half year and two members have been seriously ill. The community is a very unhealthy place to live and more health awareness needs to be done. The congregation also continues to struggle running all its programs such as Sunday School and weekly fellowships. They are still very dependent on the missionaries to provide guidance and support. We pray that God will show them his grace and that this church too may grow stronger in number and commitment.

In addition to the regular church work, we organized a youth conference in July with the topics being: finding a partner and sexual sin. About sixty youth attended, mostly youth from the various Reformed church groups, but also youth from outside this circle. It was a time of fun, solid teaching, and encouragement to walk in the ways of the Lord. In January we will organize another youth conference at the Bible College, while Lae will host one next year July DV.

We also organized a leadership conference early in October. This was attended by church leaders from Lae, Veifa'a, Beregoro, Beretete, and Nine Mile. It was a good time of fellowship and encouragement, a time to learn more about the principles for selecting songs in our songbook, practising some of the lesser known songs and a time to encourage the leaders in their difficult task of taking spiritual care of the flock. Those who attended were



greatly encouraged and this encourages us to organize an event like this again.

We thank the Lord our God for his continued care of his church. He provides strength in our task of helping build his Kingdom in this beautiful country. Please continue to pray for us. Please pray that Candidate Minister Aisi Kosa is able to continue on in the candidate ministry program and that brothers Mattes for Nine Mile and Ben for East Boroko may learn what it means to serve faithfully as church leaders. Please pray that the Bible College may continue to function well and raise up men and women for work in the churches. Please pray that we as missionaries may continue to be able to work well in this country with its many different demands. Please pray that God may be glorified in all that is done by us here in PNG!

### **United Reform Church (URC) – Papua New Guinea (Rev. Versteeg)**

You may recall that the United Reform Church here in PNG is a breakaway group (of about 2000 people) from the United Church of PNG. These members were opposed to the increasing hierarchy in the United Church and formed the URC-PNG. We have not had too much contact with them. In the meantime, they have established a sister church relationship with the Congregational Federation of Eastern Australia and New Zealand after one of the leaders from this federation came to visit them. They have asked us what it takes to come into a sister church relationship with us. I told them that our church polity is quite different and we would need to discuss this, not only with respect to who has governing authority but also the role of women in the church. I am not sure what will come from our discussions with them but we will continue to converse for as long as they are seeking advice and good counsel from us. Two brothers also attended the past classis, October 9, 2014. They continue to be amazed at how we instruct and examine our students and want that for themselves too. Therefore they will send at least one family to our college next year and perhaps also a single young man. Further, they have asked us to help them with in-service training. We have tentatively set February 2-5, 2015 for in-service training to take place in one of their churches, Tubuseria. For now they have asked us to teach on exegesis, sermon making and counselling. They have plans to modify our church order to fit their own church but have not yet done so.

### **West Papua, Indonesia (Rev. Versteeg)**

We will be visiting the Reformed Churches in West Papua, Indonesia, from December 24, 2014 to January 8, 2015. It will be our last visit to the interior, to Manggelum, as it is getting increasingly more difficult to visit the

interior. Thus, it will be a farewell visit after serving them and going back for a combined total of thirty-six years, since 1978. Even though we are dealing with a second and third generation of believers, it will nevertheless be a difficult farewell. We will only be able to do so in the knowledge that God will continue to preserve for himself his own despite difficult worldly circumstances as he has done up to the present. We will be making this farewell visit with our youngest and oldest children, Michael and Corrinne with her family, as well as the oldest daughter of the Vegters with her husband, Rob and Emily Duker.

Being our final visit to the interior, we hope to bring in some boxes of Psalm Books and Bibles which they find very difficult to get since they live so far from the coast. They constantly ask us to bring more with us when we come. Further the course book, Ajaran Alkitab – Katekismus Sederhana (Teachings of the Bible – The Simplified Catechism), has been revised and printed. We hope to present the congregation with these books as well. That will complete the set of two course books as we revised and gave them the Ceritera Alkitab - Sejarah Keselamatan (Story of the Bible – History of Salvation) two years ago. May the Lord continue to bless the congregations as they use these books to faithfully teach and explain God's story and his plan for salvation for those who turn to him! May the Lord bless the work we may continue to do together in his Kingdom service!

Once again we thank you for your prayerful support.

*Yours in Christ's service,  
Rev. H. Versteeg  
Rev. C. Kleyn*



*Rev Kleyn speaking at July Youth Conference held at the RCBC*