



Mission News

Mission Activities of the Canadian Reformed Churches

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Reformed Churches of Papua New Guinea

Reformed Churches Bible College

Half a year ago I was just settling into the work here in PNG. By now PNG has become our home and we thank our Father for the work we are able to do here. Although the work here seems to have a continuous stream of challenges, the blessings in the work are also tremendous. Since the last report I was able to continue teaching and helping out with other matters at the Reformed Churches Bible College (RCBC), as well as spend quite a lot of time helping out in the Nine Mile Church Group supporting Candidate Minister Aisi Kosa in this place. This report will expand particularly on these tasks I was privileged to be involved in during the past half year.

Bible College

In addition to teaching mainly in the Certificate Program at the Reformed Churches Bible College, my task is to take care of security and make sure the college gardens are running well. The students at the Bible College also do more than just study at this Bible College. They are expected to help in the daily running of the Bible College and to help run “sustainability projects.” These are projects that help the Bible College on the road towards

independence. With thankfulness to the Lord the Bible College Gardens, that were very run down at the beginning of the year, are now running well and beginning to be productive. But they are still a long way off from really helping in the daily running costs of the Bible College.

There is also a new self-sustainability project that just recently started up here at the Bible College – namely a meat chicken project. Little chicks are bought weekly and then raised to be sold as live chickens after several weeks. This is another project that will hopefully help with the daily running costs of the Bible College. These extra tasks at the Bible College keep us as missionaries quite busy at times. We believe this work is important, but hope that it will not take us away too much from our task as ordained missionaries to preach and teach.

Work in the Churches – Nine Mile (East Boroko and Veifa’a)

Since coming to the field, I have preached throughout the five church groups here in the Port Moresby area, but am particularly involved in the work of the Nine Mile Church Group. In this report I would like to therefore share with you some of the struggles we are facing in Nine Mile as well as some of the blessings.

Challenges

We lament the fact that:

- From the beginning of this year until about July, the membership of Nine Mile dropped considerably, partly due to West Papuan refugees being asked to vacate the property. Thankfully the membership has stabilized since then.
- Brother Francis Mirino, the only elder of this church group, passed away suddenly at the end of May this year. As a result the only official church leadership in Nine Mile is Candidate Pastor Aisi Kosa and myself as supervising missionary. Thankfully we do meet together with the East Boroko leaders to make decisions, so that not all the hard questions fall on our shoulders.



Rev. Kleyn doing market preaching at the Nine Mile Market

- Church attendance for many in Nine Mile is irregular. As soon as there are problems in the home or something that comes up in the family, people do not attend worship services. Thankfully there is now a core group that does attend quite regularly.
- There is a lack of understanding among those who attend as to what it means to be a member in a Reformed Church. For most churches membership simply means you attend there regularly – rather than a true commitment to the faith the church professes. But thankfully this understanding is growing and there are those that want to commit.
- The Nine Mile Church manse had some initial maintenance done, but a lot more is needed. Even though a committee was appointed to do this, the chairman of this committee has not come to church in months and the rest of the committee seems paralysed to do its work. Thankfully recently we could add some female members to this committee and we hope that this will stimulate the committee to finally do its task.

Blessings

Despite the challenges, there are many blessings that the Lord provides:

- As reported in April, the Nine Mile Church Group now has its own Candidate Minister in Aisi Kosa. Every Tuesday I continue to sit down with him to help him and guide him in his work of preaching and teaching and being there for the congregation. He has been a huge blessing to the church group and has brought more stability.
- Nine Mile's pulpit is filled every week with their own Candidate Minister (two to three times a month), me as supporting missionary (once or twice a month), other missionaries, or a student. The church group is blessed with good preaching as well as weekly catechism teaching right after the service, often followed with a good discussion.



Combined Women's Fellowship meeting with women from Egoro, Beregoro, Nine Mile, East Boroko and Veifa'a in Nine Mile church building



Candidate Minister Aisi Kosa reading Scripture text at the graveside of funeral of br. Francis Mirino

- Home visits are being done to the membership by Candidate Minister Aisi Kosa and myself. These really help to settle disputes and bind the congregation together.
- We still have retired Pastor Bas Fairio to fill in with church leadership and he has been very faithful in taking over the taking up of collections and in giving announcements after the services when the official leadership is "out of town." There is also another male member, brother Mattes Inney, who is showing some potential at church leadership. He faithfully attended a five week leadership training conference that we ran in August and September for Nine Mile and East Boroko.
- Some of the West Papuan refugees who were asked to leave the property are coming to church again. We hope and pray that they may again attend regularly and faithfully.
- We have regular Wednesday morning women's fellowship, Wednesday night fellowship for all to attend, and Saturday morning catechism classes. These regular church activities are at least helping to encourage the present membership to deepen their commitment to the Lord and his church.
- Recently we have had more contact with some of the previous members of the West Papuan refugee community who moved on to a Port Moresby settlement called Rainbow. Many of the people there consider themselves members of the Nine Mile Church. Although attending in Nine Mile each Sunday provides many challenges for them, some have shown some desire to come. We soon hope to start providing some night fellowships for them.
- The passing of Elder Francis Mirino gave an opportunity to witness to many people who came to mourn his loss. His own wife and one of his sons

are also now coming to church quite regularly and we hope and pray that they may continue to come.

- Most of the 14 Mile Bible College students attend church in Nine Mile and this fills the benches up on a weekly basis and encourages the membership in Nine Mile.
- At the end of August we started some weekly outreach work in the form of market preaching. The market in which we do this is very close to the Nine Mile church building and it can in fact be seen from the market. So far one man has come to church two times as a result of the market preaching. We hope and pray that the Lord will use this to bring more people into the fellowship of the Nine Mile Church Group.

And so, although the current membership of Nine Mile stands at a mere ten to fifteen members, we hope and pray that this number may grow, but even more important, that these members show an ever deeper love for the Lord and commitment to his church and that the Great Shepherd of the sheep may be glorified through our efforts.

East Boroko

In addition to the work in Nine Mile, every month we have council and consistory meetings where we discuss the various church groups in the Port Moresby area. In East Boroko, overseen by Rev. Alan Douma they are considering a way forward, particularly with regards to church leadership. This church group lives in a close knit settlement where people can easily fall into sins like gambling and drunkenness and everyone sees them

doing this. There is a huge challenge for this church group to move forward with church leadership because of this.

Veifa'a Church Group

In the Veifa'a Church Group, overseen by Rev. Alan Douma, the church is moving from a fellowship group led by a group of national Bible translators, to a real church with official church leaders. We thank the Lord that three men were recently elected to become candidate elders in this church group. Although they are small like all the other church groups, Veifa'a has a lot of potential as church with its great amount of male members and its deeper knowledge of the Scriptures with several Bible translators in church.

Conclusion

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 here as we labour in his vineyard. Please pray that Candidate Minister Aisi is able to complete his candidate ministry program in the coming year and be ready to be ordained. Please pray that the Bible College graduates this year are able to find placements in the building of God's Kingdom. 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!

*Respectfully Submitted,
Rev Cornelis Kleyn*

Prince George Mission

Choose Prince George!

You may recall that, in a previous article, I took the opportunity to encourage members of our churches to seriously and prayerfully consider relocating to Prince George. The fact is, the cities of Canada need us – not because of who we are in ourselves, but because we have been called to be God's servants in this world, for his glory. Prince George needs faithful Reformed believers, and the community to which I've been sent

as missionary provides an excellent opportunity for Canadian Reformed people to make a real and lasting impact as a salt and light. And this is what we all have been called to be.

But I know that there are real practical considerations when it comes to choosing a place to live, factors that impact our ability to take the difficult step of leaving an established church community behind, a step into the unknown. And central to those considerations is the

question of work. We can't live on good intentions; we need to be able to make a living in order to have the ability to do any further work for God's kingdom.

Work

Prince George is the economic hub of Northern B.C. Many people move to Prince George from other communities every year because of the amount of work that is available here. There is work, and plenty of it, for people who have the skills and the work ethic that we as Reformed Christians have been taught.

For professionals, there are careers available in the computing and information technology fields – network systems, data technology, and communications. One of our largest fields of employment in Prince George is the health care industry – the B.C. Cancer Agency, Northern Health, and other organizations are continually advertising for qualified employees, both on the front lines, dealing directly with patients, as well as in behind the scenes positions, in administration and technical support. There are many positions available in the insurance industry, in media and marketing, with non-profit and other community agencies, in professional services and banking, as well as in retail, utilities, and the hospitality and tourism industries.

Of course, the historical backbone of Prince George's economy has always been the industrial sector, based upon the abundant natural resources in our region. The chemical industry, construction companies, environmental services, engineering and design firms, heavy equipment operation and repair, the manufacturing sector, and the resource industry (including mining and forestry) have many openings for qualified individuals. And finally, there are abundant opportunities for employment in the trades.

For more information on the opportunities that are available in Prince George, check out the website www.initiativespg.com.

Housing

Of course, career opportunities and a booming job market are only one part of the bigger picture. Housing is also an important issue, especially for young families. The movement of many Christian families away from areas where it's impossible to raise a family, support the work of the church and Christian schools makes it clear that affordable real estate is also an important factor to consider. Well, here too Prince George comes out looking

very attractive. The average cost of a home in Prince George is just under \$260,000.00, and there are many fine homes on the market at much lower prices. As for apartment rental, the average monthly rental cost in our community is just over \$690.00. Compared to many places in our country, these are bargain rates. For young families starting out, Prince George has much to offer.

Appeal

So once again, I make the appeal: give serious, prayerful consideration to making Prince George your home! Our mission congregation has grown to fifty members. We are a diverse, active group, and in a fledgling congregation like ours, there are plenty of opportunities to be involved in a very big way – in outreach, in congregational life, in leadership, and in service – both within the church community, and within the community of Prince George. While a northern city like Prince George may not hold the “exotic” appeal of mission fields abroad, the opportunities here for the gospel, and for those who love the Lord and seek to serve him, are every bit as exciting and challenging. And while you may never have the opportunity to help out on the foreign mission field, places like Prince George provide a unique opportunity for us to make a difference.

No passport required

We are often overwhelmed by the generosity of the churches and individuals who support the work of outreach in Prince George financially. We give thanks for the strong and faithful support that we have received. But there are other very important ways in which you can contribute to the cause as well; becoming a part of the church's effort “on the ground.” You will need no passport, and no visa. No vaccinations are required. You don't need to learn another language. If you've always wanted to go on a mission trip, living in Prince George is the “mission trip” of a lifetime, literally. The opportunity to serve is here, in Canada, and available now!

If you would like further information on Prince George, and the opportunities that are available, our contact person is Travis Wierenga, a member of our mission congregation, at 250-962-2102.

May the Lord bless our efforts to the furtherance of his glory, and may we all work together, with all our heart, to accomplish the purposes he has set out for us!

Rev. Jim Witteveen