



"The great trumpet will be blown,
they will come,
who are about to perish"

The Trumpet

Isaiah 27:13 (NKJ).

Pioneer Church Planting in North America

To the church in Rome, the apostle Paul said that he made it his ambition to preach the gospel, "not where Christ was named" {Romans 15:20}. He often preached in places that had never heard the gospel before.

Commenting on this passage, Matthew Henry says, 'he broke up the fallow ground, laid the first stone in many places, and introduced Christianity where nothing had reigned for many ages but idolatry and witchcraftPaul broke the ice, and therefore [met] with more difficulties and discouragements in his work.'

In this case, the apostle Paul was not building upon another man's ministry, but as a "pioneer" he was breaking new ground. It may seem hard to believe, but the need is great for pioneer church planting here in North America. In the greater Toronto area alone, roughly 20-25% of the 4.5 million people are South Asian, most of whom are Muslim, Sikh and Hindu.

Intentional Ministry Among South Asians

Since 1996, our focus has been to bring the gospel with a view to planting a fellowship among the South Asians, particularly among the Sikhs but also Hindus.

But aren't we to preach the gospel indiscriminately among all the peoples? Indeed! So, why this intentional focus?

Primarily because such people often end up not being in the churches' radar. If the aim is to reach everyone in a geographical location, such people are

focus on them. It's cross-cultural ministry. They are 'hidden' in their own communities, deeply embedded in their own cultural-religious milieu. Therefore, 'pioneer' church planting is also time consuming, requiring sacrifice and perseverance. Years and years may be expended in tilling the soil, planting the seed, and then teaching the ABC's of the gospel.

Though the focus is intentional, it's not exclusive. Through a Sikh friend, a young man from Nigeria was introduced to our fellowship. He is now converted and has requested to receive Christian baptism at our fellowship, Sunday, July 28, 2013! He'll be joining others from Dutch, Indian, and Pakistani backgrounds.

I believe that making inroads among the South Asians, who constitute a large percentage of the make-up of the Greater Toronto area, also impacts other nations. I think of how the 'Christian-Muslim' forums have continued now for 13 years -- all beginning with one Muslim requesting for a copy of the Holy Bible which we advertised in a South Asian newspaper! Visit www.weeklypresspakistan.com for articles written from a Christian perspective as well as coverage of the forums.

A Long Term Plan

It's in this context that my colleague Peter Nathaniel, from New Delhi, joins me in bringing the gospel. We bring the gospel among those who have been in the grip of idolatry and witchcraft for generations. Many are hearing the Word of the Lord Jesus for the first time.

Endless opportunities come through developing relationships, often in 'crisis' situations. Hospitality is essential to the ministry. These relationships spread like a web in the community. The dreadful fruits of idolatry mentioned in Romans 1:18ff are only too real. At times the stories, the horrors,

surpass the limits of our imagination, and the demonic superstition and idolatry eerily disturb our spirits. We may give them a question to think about, offer to pray for them in the name of Jesus, or leave them with a copy of God's Word in their language, only to follow up with another visit, and another one, followed by another. Uncertainty, loneliness and fear are written all over their faces,. Yet wonder is also displayed on some faces; that someone actually cares, loves, guides, takes the time, and answers their questions.

Their priests don't visit them. They have no answers. One Hindu editor of a South Asian magazine said, "you keep on writing articles for us. I don't want our priests writing for me. All they look for is money. But you care."

No, this ministry is not a five year plan; it's a forty year plan. It doesn't begin with watering the seed but with sowing and planting the seed, and very often even preparing the soil. Like the early pioneers, it means removing stones, boulders, and roots. It's long term. It's a lot of 'field work.' There are many difficulties and discouragements, no doubt. But the joys outweigh them all – seeing the signs of hungering for more than the old burnt out ways of idolatry and hearing the questions that, in our thinking, a child would ask. Precious!



At the Home Base

We have no 'splashy' report to offer you. But if you come visit us, we can talk with you about names of individuals, families we have come to love so dearly. And, by God's grace [all praise to Him who gives the increase!] we see our fellowship growing little by little. Among those who attend for Sunday worship – some are from Protestant background; others are Roman Catholic; yet others come from non-Christian backgrounds, Sikh and Hindu. A number are now members and we have a few elders, two of whom are originally from India. As elders, we are

learning along the way. As we nurture the 'young plant', the work 'out there' in the field continues.

We are thankful that one our elders put a lot of work into translating the Reformed Confessions into the Punjabi and Urdu languages. If anyone is looking for copies, let us know: hopecentre@primus.ca. Peter Nathaniel, my colleague, has been very faithful in bringing many children together for children's Bible classes offered during spring break in March and one week each summer.



HOPE
CENTRE

Usually 100 children attend, the majority of whom are Sikh and Hindu. What a beacon of light to these families and lots of follow up work!

In June 2012, after many years, we moved from a 700 square foot unit to a 2000 square foot unit. We feel so blessed of the Lord to have more space for only a little more rent! Increased space also means more opportunities for fellowship events and dinners, particularly on Thanksgiving, Christmas, Good Friday and Easter. These festive days are great opportunities to invite our friends to experience Christian fellowship and share a meal together following the service.

A Christian Mission School

Our hopes and dreams are being fulfilled, Lord willing, for the opening of a Christian mission school this coming September.. It's an elementary school for children from different backgrounds and religions but taught from a sound Christian perspective. This school is an initiative undertaken by Providence URC in Strathroy, Ontario and is supervised by an independent board consisting of members from various Reformed churches. A principal has been hired and most likely a teacher, for the 12 children who are registered. For more information on Hope Academy, you may visit their website: www.hope-academy.ca

I could share more, but I think I'll stop here. I trust this gives you a 'feel' for one category of church planting, the pioneering kind. Do pray for us – for

wisdom, discernment and boldness to bring the gospel among those where Christ is not named. Perhaps the 'pioneer' approach may be considered in a city near you? If you desire to support this work financially, please send your funds to:

Covenant Christian Church Mission Outreach
[Hope Centre]
c/o Covenant Christian Church
Box 774, Wyoming, Ontario
NoN 1To CANADA

On behalf of the Hope Center and
Congregation, Rev. Tony Zekveld

Excerpt from CECCA biannual newsletter - June 2013

Welcome to the first edition of our biannual newsletter. The Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad (CECCA) has the privilege of representing the United Reformed Churches in North America outside of North America. The fact that the URCNA has a committee for this purpose is an indication that it considers ecumenical contact to be of utmost importance for the ongoing church gathering work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Lord's Day 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism we confess that the communion of saints means: "First, that believers one and all, as members of this community, share in Christ and in all his treasures and gifts. Second, that each member should consider it a duty to use these gifts readily and cheerfully for the service and enrichment of the other members." Because the URCNA has appointed a Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad, it believes that what we confess here about the communion of saints in local congregations also applies to the communion of saints between Reformed church federations throughout the world. Our biannual newsletter is meant to keep you informed of our activities. At the same time, it is meant to give you an opportunity to pray for our work in a focused manner.

CECCA is in contact with the following churches and a summary of activities:

The Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ) -
On behalf of CECCA, two of its members sent

documents in support of the Form for the Baptism of Infants in its present form.

The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKv) - CECCA has committed itself to carry on its own correspondence with the BBK (the CECCA of the GKv) and to evaluate the issues independent of that done by other federations that are expressing concerns about the direction of the GKv.

The Calvinist Reformed Church in Indonesia (GGRC-NTT) - CECCA decided it would be wise to delegate one of its members to join their Canadian Reformed brothers on their next visit to Indonesia.

The Free Church of Scotland Continuing (FCC) - While our churches have different confessional backgrounds (Westminster Standards), it is clear that we share the singular, like precious faith.

The United Reformed Churches in Congo (URCC) - It is our prayer that the Lord will bless our efforts to meet with this very needy federation of churches who so much long for our support in the very difficult and trying circumstances wherein they find themselves every day.

We covet your prayers as we undertake that task for and on behalf of the URCNA.



Mission Costa Rica! Rev. Bill & Aletha Green

Trip to the high country of Guatemala -
Quetzaltenango June, 2013 Quetzaltenango,

Guatemala Pastor Melvin Juarez (see foto below) invited me to represent CLIR at their recent church conference: "Renewing our faith". I spoke to 150 church leaders on Saturday morning, and preached 5 services during the three days I was there.

Rev. Juarez's church has a rich history as the second Presbyterian Church founded in Guatemala in 1904, and today has 700 members. Its stone building is an historic monument in the city of Quetzaltenango, two services are necessary Sunday mornings, and both are full!



CLIR enters the scene



Liberal influences in the Guatemalan church have impeded CLIR's literature until Pastor Melvin recently began importing our books. As in many older, Reformed denominations, there is a struggle between modernist elements and confessional ones. Pastor Juarez is solidly confessional, and wants to see his denomination return to its confessional roots. He is looking to CLIR for support in this task. And CLIR has what he wants!

CLIR has solid, Reformed books that can be used in the Guatemalan seminaries for textbooks, as well as in the fight for confessional orthodoxy. Pastors have been without these resources up until now.

Unmasking paganism's disguise

I believe that I was able to help the church leaders and the congregation see the importance of holding fast to the Biblical emphasis on God as the sovereign Creator, who organizes His world His way. Both liberalism and neo-pentecostal currents sacrifice God's unique place as King, and have joined the pagan agenda.

The fight is on in every quarter of Latin America! Your prayers are needed! Please pray with us ones. for success on our efforts. Your monetary gifts are also appreciated. They help us provide conferences like this one, and the literature that is so needed. God bless each one!

Ongoing URC Missions

Foreign Missions

Armenia	Costa Rica
Honduras	India
Mexico (Tepic)	Philippines
Trinidad	

Church Plants

Chicago Hghts, IL	Regina, SK
Colorado Spr., CO	Rifle, CO
Jersey City, NJ	Sandy, OR
Lihue, HI	Scarborough, ON
Missoula, MT	Sioux Falls, SD
Niagara, ON	Toronto, ON
Oceanside, CA	Washington D.C.
Ontario, CA	

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