

# THE TRUMPET

"The great trumpet will be blown, they will come, who are about to perish" (Isaiah 27:13, NKJ).



SUMMER 2007

## Practical Ways to Support Missions in Your Local Church

The old adage 'Out of sight, out of mind' could be a temptation for some of us regarding our participation in missions. We remember missions when a missionary shows up for "Mission Emphasis Week" or when the offering is for a mission cause. Other than that, we thank the Lord that *someone* is out there on the field, and we continue our weekly tasks pretty much 'Mission-free'.

It is clear from the testimony of Scripture that local churches are to be very active in the cause of global missions. This is because the Church is one, and our mission is one. We must learn to think of our mission in both local and foreign terms. I believe that our URC congregations are struggling to shake off a bad habit we inherited--that of dividing sharply 'foreign missions' and 'local ministry'. This division allowed us to think that church planting happened somewhere else, and local ministry happened mostly for our own congregation. Thankfully there are many indicators that this is changing, as new churches are being planted and more outreach ministry is happening. I think we have a long ways to go, however, and it will be a struggle for us.

I believe that one way to keep a local church healthy and 'on track' in its mission call is to have constant and personal exposure to other mission endeavors. If a local church is actually involved in

various forms of mission support, it will necessarily have an effect on the members of the church. I find various examples of this in some of Paul's letters to the churches. I wish to point out just a couple.

**1) Informed prayer** - Paul tells the Corinthians that he "does not want them to be ignorant" of their trials (2 Cor. 1:8), but rather he wants them to be well informed so that they might pray for two things. Firstly, that they might *cooperate* with Paul (vs. 11) in offering prayer - presumably so that Paul's life might continue to be spared, and he might preach the gospel. Secondly, Paul wants the Corinthians to be informed so that they might offer thanks to God on their behalf.

In order for the Corinthians to pray in an informed manner, and to offer up thanks for a specific matter, they needed to be well informed. Paul wanted them to be informed, and to pray in such a way. Paul ends his letter to the Ephesians in the same way, asking that they pray for him that he might have boldness in speaking the Gospel (Eph. 5:19).

God wants his people to lift up specific prayers for the cause of missions. This is one way in which the local church cooperates with Christ and his ambassadors - through means of specific prayers. How can we pray better in our local churches? Here are some ideas:

a) Make sure your missionaries' letters not only get circulated, but prayed for in public worship as

well as in Sunday School, men's and ladies' societies, etc. They should also be a matter of prayer at home in family devotions.

b) Designate a specific person in the congregation to contact your missionaries in order to obtain prayer requests on a regular basis. Missionaries try to send prayer requests home, but they are often busy on many fronts. The local church should take responsibility for praying in an informed manner, and this will include information gathering.

**2) Send short term helpers!** We have a touching testimony of Christian love shown in the sending of Epaphroditus by the Philippians to help Paul. Paul calls him "your messenger and the one who ministered to my need" (Philippians 2:25). We have a three-way testimony of Christian affection: The Philippian church, in their concern for Paul, sends Epaphroditus. Paul expresses his affection and esteem for Epaphroditus, calling him his 'brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier'. Paul also thanks the Philippians for having sent him and supplying his needs. And Epaphroditus worked alongside of Paul for a time, but also is concerned that his home church had become saddened over learning of his illness, and now wishes to return and comfort them. Actually, we have more than a three-way relationship, but I can't do the math! My point is, the local congregation at Philippi showed their love and concern for Paul and for the cause of Christ by sending their beloved brother, Epaphroditus.

From personal experience I can say that many blessings have come from local congregations sending short term volunteers to the mission field. Here are some of these blessings:

- a) Personal friendships with the missionary are established, enhancing moral integrity.
- b) Personal friendships with nationals are established, enhancing unity and mutual understanding.
- c) Interests are developed by young people, leading to further short term and even medium term work (volunteering at schools, etc).

- d) Better sharing of ideas occurs for enhancing various aspects of the mission work.
- e) Christian love is shown by nationals toward expatriates (times of eating together, etc), and vice versa - and this is good for everyone!

**Conclusion** - As local congregations take concrete steps to understand and involve themselves in missions, I believe that the interest in local ministry and evangelism will increase as well. The church in general will be strengthened. Local churches should take specific measures to keep in touch with their mission projects - I have suggested that the church seek a volunteer who would be willing to keep prayer requests and information before the congregation. May the Lord bless us as we seek to be faithful in our mission call!

by Rev. Bill Green



## HARVESTERS FOR CHRIST

In the last issue of the Trumpet there was an article in regards to the Classis Michigan Missions Committee organizing a Missions web-site. The article mentioned that a group of young adults in West Michigan had formed an organization to promote and engage in missions. Following is an update on them.

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The primary mission and purpose of Harvesters for Christ is to glorify God through both our words and actions. We promote evangelism and the joy of sharing one's faith in a Reformed manner. As God prepares us through Bibles study and prayer, we trust that He will grow us up in our Christian faith so that we will be useful in the work of His Kingdom. "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.'" (Isa. 6:8). Today God is asking you the same question he put to Isaiah: **Are you willing and prepared** to do all for the glory of God?

Bethel URC is recruiting Reformed Christians to proclaim the Gospel beginning right here in West Michigan, and extending into the far reaches of the world. If you've noticed that we seem either a little shy or a little lazy when it comes to evangelizing, then Bethel invites you to join the group: Harvesters for Christ. The group prepares you to live out your calling as a witness of the Gospel of Christ by helping you make your faith so natural that you cannot help but talk about it - everywhere! The method is two-fold:

1. **STUDY** books like...

- *Let the Nations Be Glad* by John Piper.
- *Every Thought Captive* by Richard Pratt.
- *Let's Study Acts* by Dennis Johnson.
- *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J.I. Packer.

The group practices using tracts such as *Evangelism Explosion* and *Ultimate Questions* which require Scripture memorization.

2. **ACT** in ways like...

- Lord's Storehouse Food Pantry--Harvesters leads a Bible study for the people who use the food pantry.
- Door-to-Door--by means of caroling or inviting kids to VBS, the group distributes tracts.
- Foreign Mission Projects--Harvesters serve as the training camp for short-term URC missions.

And so much more!

Getting Started:

- Meditate on Isaiah 6.
- Check out the web log for more information: [www.xanga.com/harvestersforChrist](http://www.xanga.com/harvestersforChrist).
- Join the group every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Bethany URC in Wyoming. People of all ages welcome.
- Share new ideas for displaying God's glory in our community.
- Lessons are led by Mark Warner of Bethany URC.
- Plans are reviewed and approved by the elders of Bethel URC.



## HISPANIC CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

A Ministry of Covenant Reformed Church of Toronto in Partnership with Faith URC of West Olive, Michigan

Dear Prayer Supporters:

As I write this note, I'm just coming inside from a bit of a "scare" here in San Salvador. About 10 minutes ago we felt a strong "tremor", lasting about a minute and increasing in strength throughout." Aside from rattling light shades and my clothes swinging (hanging on a makeshift clothes rod in my room) everything is back to normal. For several minutes on the street, people were remembering the last two earthquakes that hit San Salvador, the "Earthquake of 1986" (where hundreds died) and the "Earthquake of 2001" (where 1,000 were killed and there was major destruction). All of this is a reminder of our dependence on God in all circumstances.

Praise the Lord for His blessings during my visit in Guatemala last week. I met with a group of pastors in Guatemala City who are in the process of ministering to the needs of the many thousands in out-lying areas who have no opportunity for public education, let alone church leadership training. Plans are underway for MINTS to provide a support level for Biblical training for church leaders who are ministering to these groups. I also had the privilege of teaching the course of Philemon to a group of 18 students in Quetzaltenango, about 4-5 hours (depending on road conditions, construction and traffic) west of the capital.

Here in El Salvador, I have had the privilege of meeting with one church here in San Salvador. They are going through a crisis in their church leadership at this point. But they were encouraged to experience the "personal touch" of MINTS as I had an opportunity to listen to the story of their crisis, pray with them, and provide some advice and recommendation. They invited me to preach in their church on Sunday morning. When they have worked through some of their

leadership issues, they hope to develop a MINTS Centre in their church. Their commitment to do that was based on their appreciation of the ministry of MINTS regarding the particular circumstances in their current crisis situation.

During the last part of my visit in El Salvador, I am visiting another church about one hour out of San Salvador. I am spending three days with them establishing a Centre, teaching the course of Nehemiah, leading a mid-week church service, and providing consultation for their fledgling but visionary *Institute for Leadership Training*.

#### **Report on Visit to Guatemala and El Salvador.**

During my visit to this region, Guatemala and El Salvador were "shaken" with a considerable "tremor" that was centered in the Pacific Ocean off the west coast where Guatemala and El Salvador share a border. It had been some time since I had felt such a tremor (since the days our family lived in Costa Rica). Thankfully there were no serious damages reported, and no injuries or fatalities. But the incident served as another sober reminder that there is no such thing as "solid ground" in these countries. It provided an opportunity for me to reflect with my students on the importance of dependence on God in the face of both spiritual and physical challenges that they face.

**Guatemala Trip Report.** Rev. Moisés Colop, a respected leader in the indigenous community of Guatemala, has been serving as a leader in the Reformed and Presbyterian community in Quetzaltenango for over 20 years as pastor of the Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, as a leader in diaconal ministries in Guatemala, and since 2000 as director of the *Community of Reformed Studies* (CERE) with which MINTS has formed a Study Centre partnership. Rev. Colop has also served as a consultant to the government regarding issues related to indigenous, community and relief development issues. On this past trip I had the privilege of teaching 18 pastors and leaders the course of Philemon. In a meeting with the board of CERE, they reported having opened up two new Study Centres in the last six months

in two area "marginal" communities. They have invited me to meet with leaders of these two Centres during my next visit.

**"Elder" Luis Navas** is a lay leader in an evangelical church in Guatemala City. He is heading up a ministry (Ministerio Doulos) in which he is providing radio broadcast ministries to churches in Guatemala, and through which he is also training leaders to provide a primary and high school level education in the marginal communities of Guatemala. He is in the process of organizing the leaders of this ministry into a MINTS Study Centre so that they can be trained in gospel ministry while providing the necessary "secular" education.

**El Salvador Report.** Two church leaders from El Salvador discovered MINTS on the Internet and made contact with me through that. During February, one of my students from Toronto and his wife made a visit to their home country of El Salvador to make an initial contact on my behalf with these two brothers. The visit provided an important "international" connection for MINTS and led to the two brothers asking for a follow-up visit from me.

**Pastor Romeo Guevara** is pastoring a church (King of the Nations) that is going through a leadership crisis at this point. I spent some time providing consultation about their particular situation and also did a two-hour "impromptu" conference for some of the members of his church community on the subject of "Issues in Leadership". They plan to organize a Centre for MINTS after they have resolved some of their leadership issues.

**Pastoral Assistant Vladimir Vásquez** is part of a pastoral team at a relatively new Baptist church on the outskirts of San Salvador. He gathered together a group of 5 church leaders to whom I made a formal presentation of MINTS and taught an eight-hour conference to introduce the course of Nehemiah. They look forward to formalizing plans to start a Centre there as a result of the visit.

by Rev. Eric Pennings,

Associate Academic Dean for MINTS

MINTS Central America Regional Coordinator

## **MISSION TRINIDAD**

### **Teaching Classical Christianity with the Hopes of a New Reformation to Sweep the Caribbean**

"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest (Mt 38-39)." I have known and memorized this verse years ago, however, this verse has really been on my heart for the past year as I have seen our ministry grow. With growth in the school and churches comes more work and responsibility for the McGee's and the Hosein's. Presently we are looking at an enrollment of 30 full time students and more interested in enrolling for the fall semester. Pastor Hosein and myself are the only full time professors here, so we are praying that the Lord of His harvest will send us at least one full time professor to join Grace Bible College.

We are in desperate need of a full time ministry administrator with computer skills. We need to design and create a school catalogue, a ministry brochure and maintain a web page. We are praying that the Lord of His harvest would send us a full time administrator.

We are grateful to MTW's partnering with us in sending Rev. Jim Richwine, a professor who will come in July for three weeks to teach a course on Biblical Counseling. Rev. Richwine is a graduate of Westminster East and was a student of Dr. Jay Adams. We are also grateful to Bethel URC in sending us Pastor Vander Meulen and his wife, Debbie, to us in February to lead our conference on the family.

#### **West Indies Table Talk**

The Lord continues to bless West Indies Table Talk radio program. I am amazed at the amount of people I run into who tell me that they listen each week. I was preaching in Sande Grande this past Lord's Day and someone in the congregation came up to me after the service to tell me that they are a regular listener of the program. I was in an office supply store and the clerk at the check out counter looked at my bank card and asked me if I

have a program on 98.1 radio. I told her I do, and again, she told me that she listens. We have been teaching through the book of Romans since January and are now beginning Romans 9. Please continue to pray for God's blessings as we prepare and teach each week. You may listen via the internet each Wednesday afternoon from 3:15-4:00 pm.

#### **How I Became a Christian**

by Ishmael Hasanali

I believe I became a Christian because God had me in His Plan. I was a lost sheep dancing my way to hell; following the Muslim faith whose truth never found peace within my heart and my purpose was to enjoy life to its fullest. I came to know the Lord, though I did not believe or submit my life to Him, simply by the wave of a magic wand, but by trials. I had to learn that without Him I cannot be saved and that I was on a one way road to the bottomless pit.

Through the radio program, West Indies Table Talk, I heard about the church that meets in Orchard Gardens. I believe that it was all in God's miraculous plan, because on that same radio station were other "Christian" programs—none of which appealed to my senses and logic as West Indies Table Talk. The messages delivered by Pastor McGee and another Christian fellow (Rev. Hosein) seemed to penetrate my heart. I believe that was when the Holy Spirit began to convict my heart. I felt a change. Fear. Fear that I would be left behind. After experiencing such a remarkable thing I began questioning myself, "Ishmael, why do you entertain yourself with things that provide only short term satisfaction? Why are you following a religion you do not believe?" And so began my search for Christ.

When I came to the church in Orchard Gardens (Grace Evangelical Reformed) I was greeted by a family I never knew. They welcomed me with open arms and fed me the fruit of the Spirit. I was invited to their Christmas dinner where I was exposed to Christians who came to know the Lord. Christians who were just like me—saved by the grace of God. It has been four months now since I

have been visiting Grace Evangelical Reformed Church, attending Youth meetings and Bible study sessions with Pastor Gosyne on every other Tuesday. I requested membership and my prayer is that within the next few weeks the church members would have given careful thought and consideration of my request and that if it is in God's plan the church will approve of my membership. I can then be baptized and be a full member of Grace Evangelical Reformed Church with all the other Saints who worship there.

My Repentance Prayer: "Lord, now that I know you died for my sins, and that even though I am a sinner, you accepted me as one of your lost sheep that had gone astray. I pray that you will forgive me for all my past sins and sins to come. Dear Lord, we both know that I am a sinner by nature and I can never be perfect. My prayer is that you will teach me to walk this new life according to the Scriptures and that You will grant unto me guidance to the part of your Kingdom and that you will impart knowledge unto me the road in which you will have me travel. Dear Lord, come into my heart. Enlighten me on my calling in this world. Help me to be an example and to be a good Christian testimony to the people around me—my family, friends, co-workers and the latter world. Dear Lord, bless me, keep me on the right path that I may continue to grow spiritually in you. In Jesus name, Amen."

**Prayer Requests.** Again, we thank all of our financial and prayer supporters who have joined with us in "the fellowship of the Gospel". Please keep us before the throne of grace:

- ❖ Our appointment with Immigration for Residency July 23.
  - ❖ Continued health, strength and protection for our family; for Adanna, Hannah, Joshua and Geneva as they continue home schooling.
  - ❖ Students (and Professors) to finish the semester well.
  - ❖ Grace Bible Church, D'Abadie—baptized 11 people and brought in 15 new members, Pastor Hosein & Jennifer as they travel in the States the month of June.
  - ❖ Grace Evangelical Reformed Church, Charlieville—one new convert and several new families visiting. Pastor Gosyne, Denise & boys as they work, teach and attend school; The Sunday afternoon Bible Study at Carlsen Field (average attendance 30); Friday night Youth meetings (led by Rev. McGee).
  - ❖ An administrator for WICM.
  - ❖ At least one more full-time professor for Grace Bible College.
  - ❖ God's continued blessing of Pastor McGee's teaching, preaching and radio ministry.
- by Rev. Steve McGee

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