



# Mission News

*Mission Activities of the Canadian Reformed Churches*

**Volume 5 – November 5, 2010**

## **New Hope Orphanage – West Timor**

### **New Born**

We are thankful and happy to announce that the New Hope household has expanded with the arrival of baby Nona. Nona made her entrance into the Harapan Baru household two months ago and has been “smothered” ever since! Her birth mother, not yet fifteen years old, could not take on the responsibility of raising and caring for this precious baby girl. As happens so often here in Timor, the girl was “sweet talked” into having physical intimacy with her boyfriend, resulting into pregnancy. Her parents having six children themselves could not afford to take on the responsibility of caring for this baby, and so the baby was given up for adoption to the New Hope Foundation.

The arrival of Nona was a dream come true for Micah, our youngest. His cousin Daral, who is the same age as Micah, received a baby sister not that long ago, and this created some jealousy issues! Ever since, Micah has been begging us to “buy” a baby! Needless to say that Micah is overjoyed with Nona’s arrival, she is HIS sister, and he won’t allow anyone to come near her!

For those of you have/had babies, we all know that it is no easy job taking care of such a wee little one. A baby requires a twenty-four hour commitment and many a sleepless night! Realizing the intensity of such a task, the New Hope board has decided that in the case of adopting children under the age of two, we will look for Christian, loving, and capable foster parents from within the congregation, who are willing to commit themselves to raising this child in the fear of God’s name. The New Hope foundation is responsible and will provide all the necessities for the well being of the baby. Once the child is older he/she will be staying at New Hope.

### **Come and Go**

Besides having a new baby in the household, there have been several other changes at New Hope. By the grace of God, Desri, Meldi, Riny, Aren, Yanto, and Yefta all passed their senior high school exams this past month. Uniforms are shed, and talk about the future has become part of their daily conversations. Desri, who has been with us since 2005, decided to go back home to her parents in Bolok; she hopes to enroll in nursing school this year. There is a bit of history behind Desri’s stay at New hope. Years ago after Pastor Ed was done his Theological Training in Sumba, he agreed to do a practicum in Bolok for two years. During this practicum he stayed with the Holeng family, Desri’s parents, who took very good care of him. When now five years ago Desri’s father came with the request for Desri to stay at New Hope so that she would be able to attend the Reformed high school here in Tarus, we were more than glad to be able to return a favour! We had a farewell party arranged for Desri, who has become very dear to all of us. As usual at a departing, memories were brought up, one of them went back to the time when Pastor Ed stayed with the Holengs. Desri, at kindergarten age at that time, remembered Pak Ed going to “Noelbaki” to visit family. Because Pak Ed would be gone several days at a time, Desri imagined Noelbaki to be overseas! We all had a good laugh about that one. How amazing though are the ways of the Lord, that so many years later Desri could stay with us, graduate, and will now be able to continue her education at nursing school with the hope that one day she will be able to care for the sick and dying. Please pray for Desri that all her endeavors may be for the glorification of God’s holy name, that she may receive all she needs to continue preparing herself for the future.



It is New Hope's vision to fully support orphaned and abandoned children by providing a shelter, food, health, education, and most important spiritual guidance until they are independent. The New Hope board has had several meetings to discuss the procedure once children graduate from high school. With four graduates who will be staying at New Hope, we currently do not have enough funds to support college or university education. It is our hope that by next year the four of them will be able to enroll in college. In the meantime the board has discussed several possibilities as "time fillers" for the year off.

Although we did not plan to have them stay home for a year, it turns out to be a blessing in valuable time they can use to focus and shape themselves for the future. Decided was that Riny will be helping out at the kindergarten run in the Dalam Tuak church, Meldi will spend the mornings announcing at the Reformed Sahabat Radio station, Yanto and Yeffa will help out in the Reformed Theological college library. They all receive payment for these jobs, and from that money they will have to set apart money for the Lord, buy their own necessities, and save up for future transportation expenses going to college. Besides the morning jobs, they all will be taking several auditory courses at the Reformed Theological College beginning in



September. In preparation for this, they will have to read the Pentateuch and write and summarize it in an essay.

All in all we hope this to be a year of preparation in which they will get an experience in the work force, learn how to manage money, and most important grow closer to the Lord, and let him direct their future path as to where and what to study eventually. When the New Hope board called them for a meeting, where these things were explained and discussed with them, they were all very enthusiastic. They started the day after the meeting, and so far things are running really well, so well indeed that the board has decided to make this standard procedure for high school graduates before entering college or university.

Please pray for Yanto, Yeffa, Meldi and Riny that the Lord will grant them patience and continuous enthusiasm to make the most out of this year of preparation.

Please pray also for the other New Hope children who will continue their education in both junior and senior high school this year, that they may receive wisdom and perseverance to use their time wisely.

*"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength" Isaiah 40:31b*

In Christ, Femmy Dethan-nee Bouwman

## Prince George – Smithers

*"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand." Proverbs 19:21*

I'm sure all of us have, at one time or another, experienced the wisdom of this proverb in our own lives. We make our plans. We come up with careful evaluations of our decisions, using the wisdom God has given us, looking for his direction to guide us. And having made these plans, we go forward to work them out in practice. But how often doesn't it happen that the plans we so carefully make don't seem to achieve the desired effect? We may make plans in our education, thinking about preparing for a certain career, when God puts something else in our path, something that we never expected. We may make plans about where to live, when God sends us to a place we had never even thought about, much less planned for.

In the time that I've been in Prince George, working as the home missionary sent by the church in Smithers, this

verse has become particularly meaningful, both for me and for everyone involved in the mission. We have made our plans. We have drawn up a proposed schedule that details what will happen and when, as all mission boards do. In all of this we have, of course, taken into account that the Lord's timetable and schedule may prove to be different than ours, so we remain flexible. But even when we remain flexible and open to change at the Lord's direction, he still continues to surprise us!

After two and a half years in Prince George, our mission congregation now has thirty-seven members, and a number of regular visitors. They come, in the words of Revelation 14:6, from a wide variety of nations and tribes and languages and peoples – French-Canadians, people of German, French, and Danish background, Lebanese, people with some Cree and Metis in their history, and yes, even a few of Dutch descent. We have a small multitude, but it is a mixed one! Does this accord with "the plans in

the mind of man"? No, it doesn't line up with our original plans at all; my outreach was to be dedicated toward the Native people in Prince George, and while we do have a smattering of First Nations genetics in our congregation, we certainly don't have a "Native church." But while our plans have certainly been altered, we know, and we rejoice in the fact, that "it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand."

That's the application of Proverbs 19:21 for the Prince George mission on the foundational level of our mission. But we also see this proverb in action on an individual level regularly. Doctors have patients, lawyers have clients, store-owners have customers, but we missionaries have people that we call "contacts." We develop these contacts in many ways, but however we meet them, they are the people that we are working to reach with the gospel. In my time here, I have made a number of contacts, people that God has placed in my path, people with whom I've developed relationships, people who I have grown to know well, who I have invited to church and to bible studies and to other activities. Here's one story of a "contact."

I met George (not his real name) at a drop-in centre downtown. George is a Native man, middle-aged and single, intelligent and well-spoken, a nominal Christian who has had struggles throughout his life with his faith, and has moved from church to church. His understanding of the Christian faith is very limited. He is sincere, but in many areas he has been seriously misled by false teachings. I began by meeting with George about once a week. We would go out for coffee, I would visit him at his apartment, we would meet at the local Alano Club (the Alcoholics Anonymous centre). We invited George over for dinner a couple of times, I helped him move to a new place and set up there, and last year, finally, he attended our Christmas Eve worship service and a couple of our Sunday evening Bible study sessions.

I would lose contact with him for a week or two at a time, but for nearly a year we would meet once a week, and talk on the phone more often. Then George disappeared. He stopped returning my calls. He stopped phoning. I saw him at the mall recently and he said he would phone me, but he hasn't. Last week I heard from someone else that George has moved in with a non-Christian lady, and that he's planning to get married. Now I know why he hasn't called. It seems, judging by the visible fruit and outcome so far, that this long-term contact hasn't borne much fruit despite the amount of time I spent with George. I saw George, with his outgoing personality, his relatively stable life, and the zeal that he had, as someone

who could be part of the foundation of a Native outreach. Many were the plans in my mind, but the purpose of the Lord has stood!

I could tell three or four more similar stories, but the story of George serves as a good example, when contrasted with the stories of the families and individuals who have now become members of the church. One family saw an advertisement for a Bible study that I had placed in a local newspaper. They were looking for a "Calvinistic" church, and our newspaper advertisement led them to our website, which led them to contact me, which led them to attend the Sunday evening Bible study. They began attending our Sunday morning worship services, which led them to become members and have their children baptized! Not only that, but they told another family about our mission congregation, and they too became members along with their children. And not only that, but they told another couple, and they have been attending worship services and Bible studies for the past year! It was the Lord's purpose to bring us all together; his purpose stands, and we rejoice.

In all of this we see God's sovereign, guiding hand. I cannot imagine what it would be like to be a missionary who does not believe that God is completely sovereign

in all things, including the salvation of his people, from beginning to end, including the work of bringing people into the fellowship of his church. If all of this were to depend on me and my best-laid plans, and when my best-laid plans appear to have so little impact (as in the case of George), my work could become very depressing indeed. But I know that God is in control. In my own personal failures, he leads me to understand his sovereignty

and his wisdom. When people are drawn to the church and are led to become members, even when I have never sought them out or contacted them first, he leads me to understand his mercy and his power. In all of these things, the work of outreach in Prince George has taught me that God is in control, not me, and that his *will* be done.

Please continue to pray for the work of mission in the largest urban centre in Northern British Columbia. Pray that many more will be brought to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that my "contacts" bear fruit, that the seeds that missionaries water will sprout, and will become like trees planted by streams of water, trees that yield their fruit in their season, whose leaves do not wither (Psalm 1). And give thanks, for the purpose of the LORD continues to stand!

*Jim Witteveen*



*Our newest members:  
Teresa Grounds and her children*

## Streetlight Ministries

*“Those parts that seem to be weaker are indispensable.” (1 Corinthians 12:22)*

This title was the topic for the Office Bearers Conference held in March 2010 at Burlington - Ebenezer. Rev. D. Agema shared with us his insights with regard to how we as churches can involve the church members who have disabilities. According to the UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, *“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”* How do we deal with these members? How do we deal with the parents? And how do they function within the congregation?

In 1 Corinthians 12 the Apostle Paul speaks about the body of Christ and its members and how these members ought to accept one another as members of the body of Christ. It is in this context that Paul speaks about the weaker members of the body, they are indispensable. In other words: *“Everybody Belongs. Everybody Serves.”* (Handbook for Disability Advocates-CRC).

### Streetlight Christian Church

At Streetlight Christian Church many members have a disability. Some are in wheelchairs, others are mentally challenged, and still others have a psychological disorder. It seems straightforward to say then that the weaker members are indispensable, otherwise we cannot be a church. We would say they certainly belong, because they attend the Worship services, Bible studies, Catechism class and other social events. A Streetlight favourite is the song *“Just as I am.”* It mentions many of the disabilities that are present in our fellowship. But in Christ there is healing and He will *“welcome, pardon, cleanse relieve; Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!”*

### Worship

So, how do these members serve or function within the body? To illustrate this I'll take you along for an evening worship service. Many members are picked up by the Streetlight bus so, come on board! As we enter the bus we are greeted warmly by man in a wheelchair who insists on shaking our hand to introduce himself. As we drive along the bus gets pretty full and are greeted by *“Grandma”* – that's how everybody knows her and that's quite simply who she is to everyone. We arrive early at the church building and go inside, except for a mentally challenged man, he stays outside till just before the

service starts, to direct traffic and to wave other church goers into the parking lot.

Inside it's a full house, many people came out to be convicted and encouraged by the Word of God. There are quite a few visitors from surrounding churches. We are asked by the worship leader to find our seat and we are welcomed. After the call to worship we sing *“Jesus Loves Me”* and right after it is announced a mentally challenged woman speaks up and says, *“I do!”* Then in prayer we ask for a blessing over the worship service.

*“Children song selection!”* is announced and made use of by many kids, one adult woman also tries – she is one of the older children and will therefore have to wait till after the sermon to pick a song.

The collection is taken and a man in a wheelchair is helping out. After the collection we read from the Bible and then the children and their leaders are dismissed. Pastor Paul is invited to come forward to present his message, but we first sing another song. After the sermon there is time for a question period. You can always count on one of the ladies in a wheelchair to come up with a question or two. This is the time when it becomes clear if the message hit home, and if the people have understood.

In response to the gospel we profess our faith and sing Hymn 1A. Pastor Paul then leads us in a prayer of thanks for grace.

*“Adult song selection”* is announced and made use of by many – also by the woman who tried during the children song selection. It seems we could keep on singing all night, but it is time to enter into a time of prayer of intercession. People have brought forward their prayer requests, and there are many concerns. We also have a rotating prayer list with general concerns to encourage the members to pray in private for things like; the government, leadership of the church and evangelism / outreach.

Our closing song is Hymn 6, *“Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”* And we are sent on our way with a closing text.

No, don't leave yet! We have to clean up the chairs and books. Then there is coffee, juice, cookies and buns. It's a time of socializing and getting to know the people.

Where would Streetlight be without the weaker members? The weaker members enrich our worship and encourage us. They help us understand what it means to have a child-like faith. Through them we gain perspective and see that we are really not that different. Together we serve and confess our dependency upon our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*Rob Bonefaas*