



# Missions Newsletter

Published by the Missions Committee of the  
International Conference of Reformed Churches

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*

*(Matthew 28:19)*

## Greetings!

Since the end of last year we have had some activity to report on. This is mainly about the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference and the Missions Committee meeting in London. Other snippets of news are mentioned as well. We are grateful for the pictures which were forwarded to us.

**John Goris, convener**

## The Asia-Pacific regional.

Over two dozen representatives mostly from South-East Asia gathered for a profitable conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in January, 2008. This was the third one of its kind in this region. We had representatives from Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and The Netherlands.

The convener of the Missions Committee of the ICRC opened the conference, stressing that missions and ministry were ultimately *service* to the Lord of the Church and the Church of the Lord (Mark 10:45). Under the heading **“Aspects of Ministry in Asia”** we had three papers highlighting the aspect of (1) Equipping for ministry, (2) Exercising ministry, and (3) Extending our ministry.

Dr Mohan Chacko presented the first paper, and began by typifying the Asian context in which the church is serving. The religious and cultural background is significant, and so is the fact of huge populations, as well as diversity in population groups, rich and poor, various minorities, authoritarian approaches, pockets of growing fundamentalism in religious groups. Dr Chacko also stressed the nature of ministry, though their office is dignified, pastors must be prepared to get their hands “dirty”. Ministry and mission is the task of the whole church. He warned against professionalism. Finally, he also pointed out that theological education must be subservient to the Church; it must be “missional”; it must underscore justice and righteousness as the heart of the gospel, which proclaims the grace of God to sinners.

There was a valuable time of *discussion*, e.g. you don't need a whole lot of infrastructure, you don't need a huge library, you must be wise in the face of persecution and the powers of darkness, westerners need to repent of their desire to control, and national churches of their desire to be ready when they are not yet ready.

The second paper was presented by a brother who spoke on *“Appropriate creative access to ‘closed’ places.”* Initially it may appear that practically all doors may be shut. These kinds of places should have our **priority** in mission thinking. But we may need to do some re-thinking about methods, and come up with methods which are biblically appropriate. When normal legal means of preaching the gospel are not available, legal means for other activities must be sought, e.g. relief work, educational endeavours, agricultural assistance, business expertise and funds, but carried out by those whose lives bear witness to Christ, and who can discreetly give a reason for the hope within them. The gospel must never be totally left out, but communicated with care lest the bringer of the good news and/or the recipient of the good news face imprisonment or death.

The third paper was presented by Dr Poh Boon-Sing who addressed the topic of *“Extending ministry further into Asia”*. He drew our attention to four major areas. (a) The servants involved in church planting: They are to be biblically qualified and faithful to God, sent out to pastor, not to gain degrees, to establish churches, not just to make converts. (b) The locale: Mission begins in the heart! Once of sufficient size, a church should establish daughter-churches, rather than bigger local churches. We move gradually from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and **then** to the uttermost parts of the world! The call to repentance must be sounded frequently, for nominalism can creep in. (c) The method: Romans 10:17... preachers must be sent! Disciples must be made of all creatures. Building of fellowship must be cemented by strong bonding in Christ. (d) The support: Our goal is to nurture the new work on the 3-self model. The amount of support should be re-assessed after three years, and gradually diminished. Do not overload the church budget by seminaries, orphanages etc.



All general discussion times proved very profitable. The Korean brothers introduced the Nevius method, also known as the 3-self plan.

All the delegates spoke about the work they represented, and encouraged others in theirs. There were several occasions for intercessory prayer for one another at the end of the evening sessions. The Lord blessed our gathering, and we also expressed our deep appreciation to the members of the Damansara church who provided for our practical needs as hosts of this conference.

**JG**

**Acknowledgement:** We are most grateful for the pictures in the last issue of the Newsletter, permission for which was granted by the Editor of "Lux Mundi".



## Missions Committee meets in London

In late April 2008 the ICRC Missions Committee met in the United Kingdom. Committee member, the Rev David D. Miller of the Free Church (Cobham Presbyterian Church) was in charge of the organising on local level, and he did a fine job with the help of a wonderful team from his congregation.

Two members of the Missions Committee (MC) were absent, one from Europe and one from Africa. This was the first time the MC met since the 2005 plenary conference in Pretoria, South Africa.

The key issues on the agenda were the regional conferences, relief work in disaster situations and practical help for persecuted Christians. There was also the matter of mandate items, and preparations for our share in the forthcoming plenary conference in New Zealand in 2009, DV.

The first European regional conference held in The Netherlands in March 2007 was a great success, and brought much encouragement to the smaller churches in Europe. A fuller report was published in the previous Newsletter. The enthusiasm about this conference made the conferees decide to plan another gathering in the near future.

The third Asia-Pacific regional conference was held in Kuala Lumpur last January, and the report of it is found in this Newsletter. It was a most encouraging gathering.

The African conference had to be postponed till September 2008, and was initially planned to be held in Kenya. Conferences on the American continent have not been held of late, but the matter is going to be looked at. A regional gathering in the Middle East was also considered.

At the request of the 2005 plenary conference in Pretoria the matter of relief work was looked into and two protocols for this were drawn up to be presented to the 2009 conference. One protocol was concerned with regulating assistance to persecuted Christians and the other concerned ICRC response to major disasters. Mr Mark Bube was the designated MC representative for this purpose.

At the 2005 Pretoria conference the point was raised about whether the member churches had read and taken note of the Missions Committee's report (to be found in the Proceedings of 2005 on page 116ff). Were they also responding in terms of Mandate recorded on page 42, sub-point (ii)? It is important for the MC to have the necessary information about the member churches' approach to missions. Co-operation from the member churches in this regard would be most useful. The MC is not a mega-mission board but seeks to co-ordinate the work of missions in the various global locations.

We expressed our gratitude to Mr Mark Bube for his efforts on the Mission Survey booklet, and hope that the churches will be forthcoming with updated material for the revised edition.

The question about Mission to the Jews was also discussed and its specific mention in the mandate was reconsidered.

**Missions Committee convener J.Goris**

## Congratulations, NAAST/!

In the beginning of 2007 "De Verre Naasten", the outreach arm of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated), renamed its monthly magazine of their Word and deed ministry overseas, "Naast".

The brothers and sisters in The Netherlands are to be commended on this very readable magazine, which is user-friendly, even for children! In a short and crisp way the new name is a reminder of the fact that we are placed right "*next*" (=naast) to others in this world, and others are placed next to us.

It is a pity that those who cannot read Dutch cannot benefit from it, but your editor can at least pass on important snippets. In an interview in one of the earliest issues this comment was made, "Many Christians these days are no longer *fishers of men*, but *guardians of an aquarium*". Makes you think! This statement came from Indonesia to The Netherlands.

## Thank you, DOORGEVEN!

We also want to express our appreciation for the mission magazine of the Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands. This magazine is called "*Doorgeven*" (i.e. Pass it on!). It covers activities of the Word and deed ministry of this church. A recent issue dealt with *urban missions*, and your editor plans to write about this vital aspect of missions in our next Newsletter, DV. Thank you, CGKN, for sharing news about your outreach with us!

The 2008 European Regional Conference is due to be held from 4<sup>th</sup> till 7<sup>th</sup> November, DV. The venue is the same as previously, viz in Soest, The Netherlands. Details may be obtained from the BBK of the Reformed Churches (liberated) in The Netherlands.

## A new book on missions:

Our MC secretary has written another new book, viz. "*Geloof in de Nieuwe Wereld*" (Faith in the new world). It is about the church reaching out to Africans and Indians (i.e. American Indians). The book is a survey of the mission of the church on these two continents in the period from 1600 to 1700. We hope to give a longer review in the near future, but meanwhile we thank our brother Dr Leendert Jooisse for this achievement. Ed.

Please note the new email address of the editor:

***If you prefer to receive this newsletter by email, please contact the editor.***

Editor: Rev John Goris  
9 Tralee Place  
Johnsonville, Wellington, 6037  
NEW ZEALAND  
Email:allegorises@windowslive.com

Co-Editor: Rev Raymond Sikkema  
4169 23rd Street  
Vineland Station ON  
CANADA L0R 2E0  
Email :rayandchris @hotmail.com

Missions Committee secretary: Dr L.J.Jooisse (email: ljj.jokrab@kpnplanet.nl)