

THE AUSSIE OUTPOST

WIDER CHURCH PRAYER LETTER

January 4, 2004

With the beginning of another year it is useful to reflect on what the New Year may bring - yet for many of us this reflection will only confirm a continuing process we know as the status quo. Good Reformed Baptist churches and similar ministries continue to struggle amidst the great difficulties in which they find themselves placed by the providence of God. You won't find these believers bewailing their lot, but simply trusting an Omnipotent Master. They seek to bring the gospel to men, women and children, many of whom are among the most destitute and needy of the world's masses. These are ministries working in Africa, Asia and South America especially. I am not saying that other ministries are not struggling, simply that given the financial situation of these regions that the struggle to maintain a faithful ministry is all the more difficult. In this New Year please consider giving of your prosperity to those brethren who have nothing like what we have in the more prosperous west. We take for granted what these brothers and sisters don't even know exist!

A site worth visiting:

<http://www.gracechurchplanting.com/>

REFORMATION IRELAND

Do remember the important work of Reformation Ireland. Recently Richard Bennett visited Ireland and ministered around Ireland and meetings were well attended, including a good number of Roman Catholics.

Visit: <http://www.reformationireland.com/>

Visit: <http://www.spring-ni.com/>

UKRAINE

The Ukraine is one of the former Soviet republics of Eastern Europe. The population is about 48 million, with some 1 million Christians. One of the Reformed Baptist churches in the Ukraine is in Zhytomyr. Vitaly Balin pastors the Grace Baptist Church.

Visit: <http://reformerkev.esmartweb.com/Grace/index.html>

REFORMED BAPTIST BIBLE CHURCH - PHILIPPINES

You may remember the Reformed Baptist Bible Church of Santa Rosa, Laguna, in the Philippines from earlier days of the wider church prayer letter. Marlon Dalin pastors the church. You may also remember the church building project. Well it is a joy to report that the building is up and though not completed as of yet, the church can now use it.

The church is continuing to grow and seeing visitors come from time to time. Some have been staying and joining the church. Quite a number of Bible Studies have been established. Pastor Dalin has his share of struggles with eye problems and the Moonwalk Community Bible Church has been able to assist the church in Santa Rosa.

GHANA

Noah Quarshie pastors the Bible Baptist Church. There are about 70 people that attend the church each week. On Sunday January 4, 2004, four people were baptised by pastor Quarshie.

The church has a kids club that has about 50 kids attending and also a weekly radio programme that reaches out to 2 million people in the region. Please remember the work in northern Ghana (Padjai) as posted in the individual email a few weeks ago.

Pastor Quarshie's wife is Adelaide and they have two children, Deborah 20 (currently studying in the USA) and Enoch 18.

For more information please see the website.

Visit: <http://www.reformerkev.esmartweb.com/wider/ghana.html>

HARBAUGHS' - RANCAGUA - CHILE

Each month those on the Wider Church Prayer Letter mailing list get a copy of prayer points regarding the work in Chile. There is a web site where some photos of the work can be viewed (see below). Ray tells me that a family site may be coming in the future, so look out for that if you are actively praying for Ray and Carol and the work in Chile.

Visit: <http://www.prowebmanagement.com/pictures/index.html>

NEW ZEALAND

There are several Reformed Baptist churches in New Zealand and these share a common website with information on each congregation and a monthly PDF newsletter with news and prayer points. For all the information on the work in New Zealand visit the link below.

Visit: <http://www.rbc.org.nz/>

GRACE REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH - OREGON - USA

Please remember the Grace Baptist Church of Vernonia, Oregon in the United States. The small church has seen a number of families leave over this last year, yet the church remains committed to the Doctrines of Grace and the 1689 Confession of Faith. Please remember Pastor 'DJ' Dickey as he ministers at Grace.

INDIA

In news from India opposition continues to mount against Christians with believers being beaten for seeking to reach out to India's Hindus'. Even Bibles have been burnt in large numbers.

KARNATAKA - INDIA - BIBLICAL BAPTIST CHURCH

It is great to report that some funds have been provided for the Biblical Baptist Church in India which has allowed work to be done on both windows and doors in the new meeting place. More funds are needed to complete the work. Please consider assisting the church.

Further good news is the progress of the gospel in the area, with several meetings held that have been well attended and a number of professions of faith made. Pastor Billa Nelson has been spending some time preaching in the Karnataka region. Ministries throughout the states of Karnataka, Goa and Andhra Pradesh are struggling financially and funds are needed to allow the important work of evangelism and church planting to continue. Please consider supporting the work in India.

TURKEY

Please pray for believers in Turkey, a country that seems to be on the frontline as far as terrorist attacks are concerned. With militant Islam on the rise in Turkey Christians are

facing increasing persecution from Muslims. Christianity is seen as an enemy of Islam by a militant Islam.

CANADA

As difficult as it may seem to believe Canada is actually contemplating bringing Sharia Law into place for that country's Islamic population. How this can work and what it will mean for Christians is yet to be seen.

IRAQ

What is the future for a Saddam free Iraq? Even with the capture of Saddam Hussein the future for Iraq still appears dangerous and there seems a real threat that a militant Islam may replace the dictatorship of Saddam and fill the power vacuum. Christians are being threatened by Muslim extremists.

EGYPT

Christians are facing a particularly tough time in Egypt. A number of Christians have been arrested and beaten by the police. This is because they have 'apostatized' from Islam by converting to Christianity. There is actually no law outlawing such conversions in Egypt, yet police often arrest such believers in an attempt to force them back to Islam. Believers are being tortured and even dying as a result of injuries sustained.

Muslims have also attacked Christians in Egypt as militant Islam grows in popularity in Egypt. Believers have been beaten, homes burned and church buildings demolished. Muslims in the army have been taking part in the attacks.

UGANDA

The African country of Uganda has a population of some 21 million people. The country enjoys freedom of religion, yet sadly a large percentage of the population is Roman Catholic and those that are Evangelical are largely nominal. Clearly there is a need for growth in true Christianity and spirituality in Uganda. There is also a need for Bibles and Bible translation work among the various tribal groups.

After the terrible years of dictatorship in the seventies the country had hoped to see a complete end of such troubles. The country still faces an unknown future with a terrible civil war now raging in the country.

INDONESIA

Though the majority of attacks on Christians by militant Muslims have ceased, occasional attacks are continuing. Some Christians have been killed by Islamic mobs in recent times.

ERITREA

Believers are continuing to suffer persecution in Eritrea, with believers being arrested for taking part in Christian meetings. There are currently over 200 Evangelicals being held in Eritrea for not renouncing their Christian faith.

Most of the youths that were being held in the shipping container for refusing to recant Christianity have now been released. A small number are still being held for not signing papers rejecting Christianity. It is unclear as to whether the released people actually signed the papers.

SURINAM

Surinam is a small country in South America that is in great need of the gospel and Bible translation work. A lot of people speaking a variety of different dialects can't read either. Please pray about the needs of this country.

TUVALU

Tuvalu is an island nation of 11 000 people northeast of Australia. Christianity is largely of a nominal form in Tuvalu, with a small number of Evangelicals. Christianity is the official religion of the country.

TURKMENISTAN

The Central Asian republic of Turkmenistan is seeking to bring down new harsh laws against Christians. One of the new laws is that all people in the country must co-ordinate contact with foreigners through the government. Christian meetings have been forcibly broken up and church buildings demolished.

Islam and the Russian Orthodox Church dominate Turkmenistan. 90% of the 5 million people are Muslims. Missionary activity is not allowed in the country, even though officially there is freedom of religion.

VIETNAM

Persecution continues in Vietnam as that country's government seeks to destroy Christianity. Severe persecution has included one believer being crucified (with rope) and beaten. Other believers have been beaten and church meetings disbanded.

MEXICO

Terrible persecution has affected the life and ministry of Pastor Severiano Flores who works among the Triqui people in Mexico. These people are considered the most dangerous and violent of the Mexican tribes. Pastor Flores has planted a number of churches in this region. In doing so the Flores' family has suffered great persecution. Recently Pastor Flores' wife was killed in a particularly violent attack, having had her throat cut. She died in front of her children. There are six children in the family. Please pray for Pastor Flores and his children as they come to terms with the loss of their wife and mother.

Also in Mexico, in Hidalgo State, believers have been prevented from meeting in the town of Cuatecometl. Believers have been forbidden to worship in Cuatecometl or to go to neighbouring churches by the local authorities, acting under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Some men have been jailed for short periods and believers have been threatened with the seizure of their homes and land.

In Chiapas State some seven pastors have been murdered and many more believers arrested.

In the region of Chamula some 30 000 believers have been forced out of the area by Roman Catholic adherents. Over 100 believers have been killed in the violence in and around the area of Chamula, including a pastor in late October. The Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses are also very active in Mexico.

More Information: <http://www.wrfnet.org/news/news.asp?id=873>

Another pastor was gunned down recently on his way to a prayer meeting. There seems little actual interest in bringing those responsible for persecution against Christians to justice.

There is a Reformed Baptist church in Mexico City, the Iglesia Bautista de la Gracia Verdad. The church is seeking to reach out to those in the area and the pastor also is reaching out to Cuba.

VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS - ISRAEL

Please remember our brother Antony Simon who is currently serving with the Israeli army in the troublesome area of Ramallah. Our brother asks for prayer regarding his safety and for opportunities to witness.

Voice in the Wilderness Ministries is continuing to reach out to people via their tours of historic sites in both Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The ministry is thinking of a Summer Outreach campaign in August 2004 and asking if there are any brethren who would be interested in assisting them. For more info contact Antony at antony@inter.net.il.

An outreach ministry at Tel Aviv may, Lord-willing, develop into a new church in the future. Please pray for this work and for Alex who leads the work there.

If you would like information on how to support the work in Israel financially please contact me (Kevin) and I'll pass on details, or you could contact Antony at the email address already given.

Visit: <http://www.voice-wilderness.com>

MOONWALK COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH - PHILIPPINES

Moonwalk continues to enjoy the blessings of the Lord with more people joining the church throughout the year and more still to come. Pastor Steven Hofmaier is currently preaching through Romans 12 and Pastor Rolly teaching through Acts at the Sunday School and teaching on Growing in Grace on Sunday afternoons.

Moonwalk currently holds some 9 Bible Studies in the community and will soon have another 5 going also. Praise the Lord for His many blessings! Moonwalk also assists other churches nearby and also help the Santa Rosa Church pastored by our brother Pastor Marlon Dalin (you may remember the church and our brother from earlier wider church prayer letters). Pastor Dalin is continuing to have troubles with his eyes.

HEILBRONN REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH - GERMANY

The German services have a regular attendance of about 50-60 people, with a number being interested in becoming members. With the growth in the church there continues to be a need for a larger building. Please pray concerning this. The church currently rents.

The church is also seeking to begin a new work in a nearby town, with the hope of a new church being planted.

KENYA - UNDERHILLS'

Please pray for the various churches in Kenya as they face a variety of problems, many of which are quite serious and threaten their Christian testimony.

Pray for the young church pastored by Daniel Masesi in Machakos. This group begun a few years ago with people who have been saved through open air preaching. The group has now become a constituted church. Another place for a church plant is Korr.

BRAZIL - RICH DENHAM

In good news from Brazil a new Reformed Baptist Fellowship over the Internet has begun bringing together Reformed Baptists from all over Brazil and also from other Portuguese speaking countries.

There are some 300 pastors on the waiting list for the adopt-a-pastor programme. The idea is to send a good Reformed book each month to the adopted pastor. For more details please contact me and I can pass on information regarding the project.

VISIT US ONLINE

Please visit The Aussie Reformed Baptist Outpost online at:
<http://reformerkev.esmartweb.com>

The Outpost Wider Church Awareness Site can be found at:
<http://reformerkev.esmartweb.com/widerindex.html>

The Outpost BookAid ministry can be found at:
<http://reformerkev.esmartweb.com/bookaid.html>

For email contact and further information regarding aid to the various ministries mentioned in the prayer letter, Kevin can be contacted at:
nrbcpastorkev@yahoo.com.au

If you are of Reformed Baptist persuasion and would like to add news of your church or work, or add requests for prayer to this prayer letter, please contact Kevin on the above Email address.

For ' snail mail,' write to ' The Aussie Reformed Baptist Outpost 27 Middle Street, Cardiff South, NSW, Australia, 2285.

We thank all sources of information that have made this prayer letter possible and ask the

church at large to commit to praying for one another. Brethren, please pray for us.