

Reformed Vision

Autumn 2012

A vision to be caught - a vision to be shared

Edinburgh RP Fellowship *One Year On!*

Sunday 9th September 2012 was our first birthday! One year ago (on 11th September 2011, to be exact) Rev. Andrew Quigley preached at the first service of Edinburgh Reformed Presbyterian Fellowship, in Christopher and Jenny Somerville's home. We're so thankful for everything the Lord has been doing over the past year.

9th September ended up being a very special and memorable day for other reasons too! We had our highest attendance ever at a weekly worship service. Along with visitors from the Airdrie and Glasgow congregations and from Ireland, we were joined by a group of 44 Brazilians!

They were visiting as part of a tour holiday and had already been to Dublin, Belfast, Fort William and Inverness before they reached Edinburgh. They contacted us in advance to ask if they could come to our church and we were delighted to have them with us.

The group was led by Pastor Paschoal Piragine Junior, senior pastor and president of First Baptist Church in Curitiba, Parana, Brazil. Many of the group were from his congregation, as well as other local churches and friends who travelled together.

After the service, we enjoyed tea and coffee together. Pastor Paschoal interviewed Peter Loughridge and then Christopher and Jenny Somerville about how and why the church plant had started. He then brought all the members of the fellowship forward and led everyone in prayer for us.

Our new Brazilian friends were so grateful for joining us in worship and for the hospitality provided. They were also very excited about the church planting work and were promising to pray for us in their home congregations. Some of them come from a congregation of 6000, so we gained a lot of prayer partners that day!

As a fellowship we were hugely encouraged by their interest and Christian love. Many of them took time to chat to us and assure us of their support and prayers. It was a day of great blessing from God for all of us. We were reminded of the worldwide church of Christ that we're part of, sharing a small taste of heaven together – where there will be: “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” (Rev. 7:9, 10)

Inside RV

Japanese Church



Nantes Update



Looking to India



Reformed Vision

God has been giving us many encouragements over the summer. As well as these Christians from other parts of Scotland and the world, God has been bringing in 5 or 6 men and women from Pilton and Muirhouse – the communities around the school we meet in.

Some have been coming regularly, some have only been occasionally. Some are people we've got to know through the Basics Bank (a simple supply of food for people in need) run by Edinburgh City Mission in Pilton. Others have come after receiving our leaflet through their door. Members of the church have been signing up for evening classes run in the school in the Autumn to get to know more people in these communities, so please pray for opportunities as that starts. We're excited to see God working in people's lives. Please keep praying for us: for God to save those He is bringing in, and to build His Church by bringing in many more.

Rev. Peter Loughridge



The day the Brazilians came to worship!

**Reaching the Lost,
strengthening the found.**
For Christ's Crown and Covenant

RP Global's short-term missions trips operate under the oversight of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), and we seek to carry out missions from a consistently Reformed and Biblical perspective. We always work with established congregations and/or missionaries, instead of travelling to areas where no one can do follow-up work after we leave.

Our motto is "Serve, Proclaim, Disciple," and everything we do on these trips is based on our desire to serve Christ and His Church and to proclaim the gospel. Our goal is to aid and implement the programs of the host congregations, instead of taking our own agendas or programs to mission sites.

Our goals are:

- To help God's people develop a servant's heart and to seek actively to serve God in their congregations, communities,

schools, homes, and workplaces.

- To introduce people to Christian missions and service, opening up opportunities for them to use the gifts and talents God has given them to serve in the church, and to encourage them to consider serving in the mission field in the future.

- To expose men and women to the vast number of opportunities to share the gospel in everyday settings, to dispel fears of presenting the gospel, and to challenge them to provide their family, friends, and community with a consistent Christian witness.

- To develop leadership skills in God's people, and to encourage them to use these skills in Christ's Kingdom.

- To build new relationships, to encourage one another spiritually, and to keep each other accountable to God's Word.



Matt Filbert has been the director of RP Missions for 15 years. He has enjoyed seeing many young people grow in their love for Christ and His Bride through participating in short-term mission teams.

www.rpmissions.org



In the past few years here in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Japan, we have experienced the blessing of seeing the Lord increase the number of men who have felt the call to serve the Lord and who have submitted themselves under the care of Presbytery. This has been a huge encouragement to the church as we see the Lord answering the prayer request taught to us in Matthew 9:38: "Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest..."

In this article we would like to introduce one of the new workers in the field. Licentiate Kihei Takiura will share some of his thoughts as he stands ready to be called to a pastorate or to some other ministry for the church in Japan. Then, in the next issue of Reformed Vision his wife Amelia will share some of her experiences as a new wife and mother and as an American Christian whom the Lord has called to live in Japan through her marriage to Kihei. We hope that these articles will enable you to pray for the work of the Lord in Japan through the Reformed Presbyterian Church with thanks and praise for what He is doing and with greater understanding of some of the needs before us.

Background to RPC in Japan

As I share with you some of the things I'm doing and seeing as a pastoral candidate, I will begin with some background of the RPC in Japan. Japan is a country with one of the lowest Christian populations. Even

though Japanese people have religious freedom, only 0.7% are considered "Christian", including liberals, cults, and Roman Catholics. Most Japanese people claim three different religions: Shintoism, Buddhism, and atheism.

Japan is a community-centred culture, just like other Asian countries. But after World War II they received influence from Western culture, including individualism. It brought glory and darkness into Japan. The glory is economic prosperity, and the darkness is spiritual hunger. In history, what they depended on was community, people, and family. But individualism took community from Japanese people, so they lost their comfort, principles, and purpose for their life. Now Japanese people are full of loneliness, emptiness, doubt, and political confusion. As a result, Japan became famous for having one of the highest suicide rates in the world, and also, recently cults doubled their membership. These things show people's spiritual hunger. But that also means that, though this has been a hard mission field, right now people's hearts may be open to hear the gospel.

The RP Church in Japan is centred mainly in Kobe. It was begun in 1950 by missionaries to China who were forced out, so we have existed about 60 years. There are four congregations and one mission station, and we have four pastors. A presbytery was established in 1996 as well as Kobe Theological Hall (KTH). Total, we have about 120 people attending worship.

Some discouraging things

I was asked to tell you the encouraging things about the Japan mission, but I have to start with some discouraging things. The Japanese churches are under attack these past five years. There are more struggles than before in the churches, and the faithful first generation members are beginning to pass away. And also there is constant pressure from the unbelieving world in daily life - every part of the culture has been shaped by a pagan worldview throughout history. We feel like all of society around us is saying, "There is no God."

Because of these attacks, the membership is decreasing. The past 50 years, attendance gradually increased, but last year it dropped by 10. Presbytery conferences over the years seem to grow smaller.

A very positive thing

There is a positive thing about these last five years. God has given us three men who are seeking to become pastors. The names of the three men are Kunio Hase, Yusuke Hirata, and Kihei Takiura. All four pastors are teaching at KTH in addition to their pastoral responsibilities, and God has blessed their efforts there. Four pastors for 120 attendees should be plenty, but God has been giving us more men. I believe that means God is pushing the Japanese church to grow in new ways or to spread out.

My work

Now I will talk a little about my present work. I just returned to Japan two years ago after going through seminary in the U.S. I'm not a pastor yet, but I am preaching two or three times a month, teaching at youth meetings or at my church, and doing outreach with kids' programmes at church and with neighbours, co-workers, and friends. I am also working for the Covenanter Book Room, planning monthly Sabbath evening worship services in foreign languages, helping



Kihei, Amelia, and Kanta Takiura

to republish theological books, selling books at nearby seminaries, and seeking other opportunities to help and support the churches. Also, I am spending time with my family and working at a clothing store to provide for them.

Future Desires

Lastly I will share some of the things I want to see in the future. As a candidate, I can see many things that need to be worked on. One big thing I want to see in the Japanese church is discipleship and the spiritual growth of each member, since they are surrounded by pagan people and culture and have to fight alone most of each week. Another thing that I want to see is Christ-based fellowship strengthened. The identity battle has been big among Christians in Japan. There is a famous theologian, Kanzo Uchimura, who I think truly believed in Christ, but he said, "I love two 'J's, which are Jesus and Japan. And I do not know which I love more." Japanese people have a strong national identity, and that identity brings another lord even into the church. But we are Christ's, and saved sinners serving the same King. Eventually, God willing, I want to see new church plants being started as a result of this spiritual development of the churches. Please pray for these things and especially for the pastors who are leading in this growth.

Kihei Takiura

Update from Nantes

by Andrew Lytle



Fiona Steward

One of our desires in our work in Nantes is not only that the church here would know God's blessing but that He would be pleased to work throughout the whole of France. There is no doubt that the Evangelical church here has been growing over recent years and we rejoice in that. We have had the privilege of meeting missionaries and church workers from various backgrounds who are involved in different areas of outreach and evangelism. Meeting and talking with such people is both stimulating and encouraging and we have learned much from those with whom we have shared. One such friend is Fiona Steward who has been working amongst students in Bordeaux for 7 years. Fiona works alongside Alan Davey who is a UFM worker and part-time pastor of the church. Her work comes under the authority of this church of which she is a member. Fiona recently spent a wonderful weekend with us in Nantes and we didn't let her escape before answering some questions for Reformed Vision.

Describe the nature of your work in Bordeaux.

I'm involved in a two-fold student ministry. We focus on discipleship and evangelism, helping Christian students to grow in their relationship with Christ and in their desire to worship and serve him and this naturally spills over into evangelism, reaching out into the student community in Bordeaux and seeking to make known the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So what form do your activities take?

We meet once a week on campus for Bible study amongst the Christian students. Last year we focused on "The Glory of God" and looked at how we can appreciate it more and what difference it should make in our daily living. We also encourage the Christian students to meet together in smaller groups to read, share and pray together. These times are particularly precious. In terms of our outreach we go onto campus and make contacts with people through questionnaires. We also run English classes once a week after which we go to a café for a more relaxed chat. It is in these more informal times after class that we have some of our best spiritual conversations. Once a fortnight we organise what we call our "Café Philo" where we meet in a local café and discuss different "philosophical" questions around themes such as "Freedom", "Truth", "Happiness" and "Identity". The French love to discuss so these times of chatting over a cup of tea or coffee are an excellent way of introducing Biblical ideas, most of which would be foreign to the average French student. Once a fortnight we also run a Bible study for non-Christian students, most of whom would be contacts through our Café Philo or English classes. In these studies we explore the basics of the Christian faith with students who have largely no prior knowledge or understanding of the Bible or of the Saviour Jesus Christ. I don't think I can convey how incredible it is to see these studies take place in France, with French non-Christians! I stand back in awe of what God is doing. We also organise one-off events throughout the year which give us the opportunity to build relationships and share our faith.

What is the greatest need in the work at the moment?

I am the only full-time worker in the student ministry and the work is often overwhelming, so the urgent need is for more helpers. I am looking for young(ish), godly helpers, with a good level of French and a heart for French students. For those studying French at university it is possible to use all or part of your year abroad as a work placement in the student ministry. It's been a great help to have short-termers, but the real need in France is for long-term help.

LOOKING TO *india*

All the families of the nations shall worship you Ps 22:27b

Bangalore, India and Indianapolis, USA are 9000 miles apart, and journeying between the two cities takes close to thirty hours! So how did Second Reformed Presbyterian Church, located in Indianapolis, ever get involved in ministry on the other side of the world? The connection actually began in 2005 when the Rao family of Second RP visited their hometown of Bangalore after a long thirty year absence from their mother country. Both Ram and Asha Rao were born in southern India and had been raised in Hindu families whose roots are in the Bangalore area. Having immigrated to the US in their youth, they had each come to faith in Christ during their college years and had later met each other at a missions conference in 1979. In God's providence, they started their married life together worshipping in the Reformed Presbyterian Church and have continued ever since. And although missions had been a strong interest ever since their single days, it wasn't until the year of their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary that the Lord enabled them to actually set foot on the soil of their native country of India. As they took their four children to experience the land of their heritage, the Lord unexpectedly opened up a whole new dimension to both their own family life and the life of their church family at Second RP.

During their providential visit to Bangalore in 2005, the Rao family happened to worship at Covenant Bible Presbyterian Church which was a small start-up Reformed mission that had been planted by a Bible Presbyterian church in Singapore. The BP church had strategic reasons for starting a church in this city. Bangalore is a rapidly growing city in southern India which saw its population increase almost ten-fold in the past three decades! This growth has been spurred by a large influx of business, primarily in the information technology industry, but also in various medical sciences. Bangalore has attracted many

Bangalore, is the capital of the Indian state of Karnataka. Located on the Deccan Plateau in the south-eastern part of Karnataka, Bangalore is India's third most populous city and fifth-most populous urban agglomeration. Bangalore is well known as a hub for India's information technology sector. It is among the top 10 preferred entrepreneurial locations in the world.



companies because of its year-round pleasant climate, the high quality of its educational institutions, and the relatively large number of English speakers. People from all parts of India, as well as Europe and the Americas, have flocked to the city because of the plentiful employment opportunities. The great potential for ministry among the city's newcomers is what motivated the planting of the mission church, which is perhaps the only Reformed ministry in the booming southern and eastern suburbs of the city.



The US Mission team with the young adults at a retreat.

The warm friendships formed with Pastor George and others during that 2005 visit, together with the opportunities to encourage this fledgling work, led Ram to think of how his home church in Indianapolis could be involved in serving alongside this budding Indian congregation. As plans began to form for sending a team from the Second RP to Bangalore, the Session formed a committee to guide and assist this effort. In May 2008, a team of ten (including the Rao family of six) was sent with great anticipation to serve for a month in India. The primary ministry of the team was teaching a Vacation Bible School which was attended by as many as fifty children, many from Hindu homes and speaking various languages. The response of the children was phenomenal! They eagerly took their crafts home, proudly displaying them and telling their families and friends the Bible stories associated with the crafts. The missions team also organised an evangelistic outreach event for families of the VBS children. The gospel was presented through the singing of psalms, performing skits, and preaching of the Word, thus allowing team members to connect with many of the family members that the children invited. In fact, the vision and prayer of the local church is that the Lord would use them to reach the children - and through them, their families.

The mutual encouragement of the initial mission trip in 2008 led to Second RP being invited back by the host church in Bangalore in the following three years. These mission trips have helped to build stronger ties with Covenant BP. Vacation Bible School was always the major ministry of these trips, with up to eighty children participating some years. At the request of the host church, each year Ram also taught seminars for adults on subjects ranging from doctrine to Christian discipleship. In 2011, one of the highlights was participating in a retreat for young adults connected with the congregation. Through the times of teaching, panel discussions, and fellowship, team members bonded well with the dozen or so young adults who attended. It was a blessing to meet many young men who are serious in their walks with the Lord and who demonstrate a keen hunger to learn God's ways. In particular, it was astonishing to learn that many of these godly men have been led to Reformed conclusions through their own personal study of God's Word! During the retreat, the team introduced these dear Indian believers to the joyful experience of singing Psalms using psalters brought from the US. The team was amazed at how eagerly these were received by their new friends and marvelled at their pleas to "teach us one more!" Since then, singing psalms has become a regular part of their weekly Bible studies, and more recently, a young couple has even started teaching a class on psalm-singing in Bangalore!

“It was astonishing to learn that many of these godly men have been led to Reformed conclusions through their own personal study of God's Word!”

In the last two years, we at Second RP have seen God opening new doors in India. Among the young men we have met, there are a couple who sense God calling them into pastoral ministry. The focus of Second RP has now shifted to getting to know these young men better and mentoring them as they seek to serve the Lord. Through frequent overseas conversations, we have been encouraging them to learn from God's Word principles regarding worship practices. In the process, close friendships are forming. Some of these young men have been introduced to our session, and earlier this year Ram escorted Pastor Richard Johnston to Bangalore to introduce him to the ministry there and to personally meet the young men being called to ministry.



Excitement of singing Psalms for the first time!

Our desire as a session, and as a congregation, is to assist and guide them in pastoral training, so they could be used by the Lord in planting new Reformed works in India one day - perhaps even an RP work. We also pray that the Lord would use these young men along with other Reformed pastors in Bangalore to assist Pastor George in starting a theological hall, so that many more labourers for the harvest could be raised up and trained for ministry. Please join us in praying that God would glorify Himself in India by expanding his Kingdom in the years ahead. And may the Lord also be pleased to use the RP church to accomplish His Kingdom purposes for the country of India.

*Dr. Ram Rao
Ruling Elder, Second RPCNA
Indiana, USA*

Joint Mission Committee **Irish Section**

UPDATE
meetings

Tuesday 9th October
Drimbolg
8.00pm

Thursday 11th October
Clare
8.00pm

Friday 12th October
Faughan
7.30pm

Wednesday 17th October
Shaftesbury Square
7.30pm

Thursday 18th October
Stornoway
7.30pm

Friday 19th October
Glasgow
7.00pm

*Come and hear the latest news
about what is happening in the
Republic of Ireland.*