

What's New Regional Synod at the

Powell River, B.C.

Powell River Reformed church has joined an outreach program for youth titled "Frontline Acoustic Café" by using the premises of a local music store. Calling the venture the Frontline Acoustic Café, the group uses a back-

door campaign approach to provides a friendly and relaxed environment every Friday and Saturday evening between the hours of 7 and 10pm, where people can enjoy an impromptu evening of music, friendly chatter and sharing of life and community, while at the same time enjoying a cup of coffee.

People are asked to bring a friend or just spend some time on their own. They are encourage to keep it simple with no heavy emphasis on conversion. The belief is that if done right God will bless this effort and will provide opportunities for the right connections to be made so that relationships may grow and the gospel may be shared.

Classis Ontario Youth: Seventy-one youths and adults from several RCA churches across Ontario spent Spring Break 2007 working in the elements and loving every minute of it. This was the second Classis Ontario wide youth mission trip to Neon, KY to work with H.O.M.E.S, Inc. whose mission is to provide affordable housing to lower income families. While not all the crew members were skilled labourers, the group still did a great deal of work, and managed to bring one house from the foundation slab and raise it to the roof. The group also experienced a different culture and was challenged to accept different perspectives and priorities, as well as accepting God's call to do justice for the poor. (*see our website for the full story*)

St. Catharine's, ON: Twelve members First Reformed Church of St. Catharine's, ON also traveled to Mobile, AL in February and joined many other volunteers from other churches to join the hurricane relief effort by building homes there. One team member stated: "Every day we started with prayer asking God for safety and fellowship. It was hard work, but it was great to serve the Lord in this way." The group was hosted by Christ Church in Mobile while there and they were very grateful and amazed at their wonderful hospitality.

Montreal QU: Light for the Nations, a new church start in Montreal (Ontario Classis) has also been on the receiving end of mission work. Members of Igreja Evangelica Vida Nova and First Reformed Church of St. Catharine's accomplished some much needed repairs on the building including two new bathrooms. Pastor Carlos Rosa was ecstatic about the repairs. "Our building looks like a church. Praise God!!"

AGM continued ...

12. We also supported the Foundation Canada's plans to begin a new campaign based on Our Call.

13. The 2007-08 budget was approved with an increase of \$2.00 per member in assessment. This is the first increase in assessment in many years.

Minutes of the AGM will be finalized and approved in the near future and will be published on the website so that all the decisions can be read. In the words of our Executive Secretary, "Our focus must be missional - in that the church does not exist for itself, but rather to bring God's truth into the world"

summarized by: Bill Zwiep

Northern Lights

Regional Synod of Canada Inc., RCA

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MOBILIZING FOR MISSION

"Mobilizing for Mission" is the new mission statement for the Regional Synod of Canada. We are called by God to mobilize the classes, churches, pastoral leadership and laity into mission.

Our shared task is to prepare God's people for mission. The focus is not on changing on how we 'do' change, but to change our individual hearts and collective ethos about what it means to be the people of God.

Our shared task is also to provision God's people for mission. The focus is on hearing God's call as we cast vision, discern how we will do mission, discovering opportunities for mission, and resourcing God's people for mission.

The Biblical basis of our Mission Statement is Ephesians 4:11-13, 16: 11 *"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and be-come mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ..... 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament (joints of provision), grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."*

In order to carry out our mission, we need your help. We are initiating a fund drive for our Canadian Church Growth Fund.

Our mission begins with people and so the initial phase of this drive is focused on

Leadership and Discipleship. Unless we have the heart of Jesus and His concern for our spiritual growth and for reaching the lost and hurting, our efforts will be fruitless.

During my recent trip out west, I saw many churches seeking to follow God's call for mission. I met with consistories and pastors who are either seeking to discern God's will for their church or beginning to implement mission. I also saw church leaders and pastors that were tired.

We build a healthy, growing future for our ministries when we identify, equip, and deploy people with gifts for leadership. We need to prepare our members for mission by deepening their understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus and how God has prepared them to serve.

To encourage churches to provide small group settings for growth, we will offer to resource churches up to the amounts of \$500 each. We will also fund each classis up to \$1,000 to hold workshops to promote small groups.

We also will develop and promote a Synod Resource Center, consisting of printed materials, study resources and other materials to either be given or lent to churches. The cost of this Resource Center is estimated at \$5,000.

We also plan to develop Coached Revitalizing Networks for laity affinity groups, based on a shared interests - ministries such as youth ministry leadership, or other affinities. The focus on these groups is on transformational learning, character development



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and personal spiritual growth. Our goal is to have one such network in each classis and the total amount of money needed for funding is \$12,000.

We are also initiating a new lay leader development process - Servants for the Harvest. We are reviewing excellent material from Vantagepoint3. We have seen and heard of churches where this has transformed lay leadership. The estimated cost over three years for a church is \$10,000. We hope to raise \$49,000 which will enable us to subsidize 7 churches.

A number of our pastors need some time out to reflect upon their call, to be refreshed in that call and to be understand how God wants to use them. We plan to build a fund with monies which can be given to pastors who are seeking an opportunity to take a sabbatical of 3-4 months, the purpose of which will be for personal ministry development. The total amount we hope to raise its \$50,000.

As you can see, this vision takes money and we need you to help us to Mobilize God's People for Mission. We will be con-tacting churches and individuals within a few months to ask you to help us make this vision a reality.

While this initial phase totals \$126,000,

we hope to exceed this amount to help revitalization efforts in existing churches and to plant new churches

I believe God has big plans for us as a church in Canada. During my trip, I met with a Korean pastor and he and his church are starting the process to join the RCA. Athabasca is proposing a ministry among Crees nearby and considering calling a Canadian Cree RCA pastor for this mission. It was good to see two Canadian delegates at General Synod as the first delegates born in Brazil and ministering in RCA churches. We soon could have 8 different languages spoken in the church services of our Regional Synod.

Just imagine what more He will do if we align our hearts to His will and have the desire to deepen our knowledge and faith in Him.

I am excited to be part of what God is doing! Join in that excitement. We will be in touch. If you want to give already, please send your cheques to the Regional Synod office. One person has already pledged \$1,000.

Help us "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

written by: Rev. John Kapteyn,
Executive Secretary



Annual General Meeting (AGM) Report

Although most people in the various congregations are busy and involved with their own congregations, we do believe that everyone should be aware of what transpires at meetings beyond their own church walls and beyond the borders of their Classes. For those of us who are not able or did not tune into the RSC website, Pastor John Kapteyn had an excellent report on the proceedings and decisions made at the AGM from which the following highlights were taken.

1. We elected Rev. Case Koolhaas to be our new president. Case, who stepped in the breach of the vacant vice president's chair when Rev. John Kapteyn was selected as our Exec Sec, is currently pastor at Woodstock.
2. Bill Zwiép, who is a member of the Elmwood Church in Winnipeg and was a member of the regional CP&D commission, was elected to be our new vice president. We thank God for the gifts that each of these men will bring to their positions.
3. Considerable time was spent determining how we can fulfill the mission of the denomination which is based on the Our Call of the RCA, in Canada. Rev. Kapteyn will be presenting a new mission statement which will reflect our call to mobilize the church in Canada toward this mission. He stated that our initial focus will be on **leadership development and discipleship**. John is a firm believer that change must occur within the people.
4. As a regional synod we hope to initiate a fund drive later in the year which will enable us to carry out our plans. More information on this will soon be sent to churches and classes.
5. A Major conference called "One Thing" with Reggie McNeal as quest speaker, will be held next January in San Antonio, Texas. It was decided to provide \$500 scholarships

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to the members of the Synod and classes CP&D Executive committees. The CP&D will provide up to 40 grants and some may be made available to non-committee members.

6. A decision was also made to restructure the regional CP&D committee into 3 working teams- Leadership Development and Discipleship, Multiplication and Mission and Revitalization. This restructuring process will be presented to each of the classes as it will require their participation within each team.

7. Monies available for new church development grants from the Canadian

Church Growth Fund were increased, and the term of the grants were extended by up to two optional years.

8. The RSC continues to endorse the Commissioned Pastors program, Natural Church Development, Coaching, and Coached Facilitators Networking. It was noted that churches should be

reminded that grants are available for visioning and strategic planning.

9. It was recommended that a resource Library (online and in our office) for church planting be established.

10. It was further recommended to improve our communication by increasing the size of Northern Lights. However, to do so, cooperation from the churches will be required to have each one make copies at their locations, and distribute the newsletter to their members to keep costs down. To begin this process, we are asking for churches to advise us of potential point persons in each church to not only to help with the flow of communication, but to notify us of anything new or interesting happening within their church or classis.

11. The executive will also study the closing of the office at the present Camp location, and determine where our office should be moved to. This will be done by the end of this year.

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