



# Mission News

*Mission Activities of the Canadian Reformed Churches*

**Volume 9 – February 14, 2014**

## Mission Aid Brazil – Cloverdale

### Update – Church Building Fund – Brazil

This past spring Chris Boersema performed a whirlwind tour of the Western Canada churches and schools, bringing updates of the work Mission Aid is blessed to do under the guidance of our gracious Lord! During this tour Mission Aid helped launch the “Brazil Church Building Fund,” a joint project created to help our brothers and sisters in the IRB to have access to and borrow funds raised so they can build / purchase their own property.

Most congregations in the IRB are currently renting rooms and buildings, often in remote areas that are difficult to access and in poor condition. On top of that rent can be high, even higher than what it would be to borrow the money at interest. However, securing a loan from a Brazilian financial institution for these congregations is almost impossible and the interest rates are exorbitant.

Over the course of the tour, your generous donations enabled Mission Aid to start a fund with enough money to begin taking applications from the churches! Under the guidance of Chris Boersema, a committee of Brazilian members of the IRB will be assembled to oversee the

fund, review applications from the churches, and set policy. The intention then is to loan the money at nominal interest so the fund continues to grow. In a nut shell, Mission Aid will administer the funds and offer guidance, while the churches in Brazil run the program.

Our brothers and sisters in Brazil are excited about this project, and love that this is not just a “hand out from up north.” They can continue responsibly paying for their meeting place while at the same time rebuilding the fund in order to bless another congregation with the same opportunity. What a blessing this can be done!

Once this committee has been formed it’s expected that early in 2014 the first “applicants” will be coming forward. We’ll keep you informed!

*M. VanderWel*

### A Gift From God

On November 26, Raphael Lins Boersema was entrusted into the care of excited and thankful parents Chris and Thecia Boersema, plus siblings Miguel, Martin, and Brianna! In their own words “Estamos bem, graças ao nosso bom Deus” (“All is well, thanks to our good God.”)

## Twenty-First Concílio of the IRB

### Concílio

On November 4, 2013, the twenty-first concílio (synod) of the Igrejas Reformadas do Brasil began in Cabo Frio, RJ (each time these abbreviations stand for state’s name in Brazil). The concílios generally last a full week, but this was a shorter one. Not only were there less items on the agenda than usual, but also no items leading

to lengthy discussion. What was also quite noticeable is the growing experience, especially of some in particular, in making things move along in an orderly manner. This could be seen mainly in the secretarial role of a couple more seasoned men. So our sister federation is indeed growing, even if slowly, in all positive aspects and areas. The concílio officially ended just after noon on Thursday the seventh with the singing of Psalm 133.

Some of the decisions at this concílio were the following:

- Approved: Maragogi's call to Pastor Adriano to serve as minister in the congregation in Colombo, PR, which still remains under the oversight of the church in Maragogi.
- Approved: Request from the church in Esperança, PB, for supplemental financial support over a period of six years in order to have their minister, Pr. Laylton, serve the church full time and not have to work anymore for the city health department, which he has been doing for years.
- A committee of church members and office bearers was created to evaluate the Theological Education Project (currently the John Calvin Institute) over the next year and a half, and present their final report at the 2015 concílio.
- Approved: Request from the church in Esperança to have brother Elton received as a seminarian of the federation to the John Calvin Institute. He will resume his studies in January, 2014. He had left the seminary last year for an indefinite amount of time due to some personal struggles.

All these, and other decisions, are real blessings to the IRB and were reached with prayerful considerations guided by our faithful Lord.

The church in Cabo Frio spared no sweat and love in preparation for the week of concílio. This was also clearly visible during our stay. Each delegate and others present were warmly received in the homes of the few brothers and sisters who were able to host, but everyone in the congregation contributed as they could. Every meal, and late night meal, was delicious and abundant.

## Changes

This church has not had an easy time in the last few years if ever! They have been without a minister since May, 2013, when Pr. Elienai and his family moved to the Recife area after receiving a call to serve as missionary pastor in downtown Recife. On October 16 the church in Cabo Frio extended a call to pastor Elissandro who currently serves as minister to the church in Maragogi. On November 20, pastor Elissandro officially accepted the call to Cabo Frio and will begin his service there in the second semester of 2014. This is a great answer to prayer and will be a huge blessing to this church down South. This also means Maragogi now needs to begin the process of calling another pastor to their church. This is also the situation of the larger church in Recife whose pastor Adriano accepted a call elsewhere in October. He will begin his work in Colombo in January 2014! So there is a lot of change going on within the federation right now. By the end of 2014 there may be three newly graduated seminarians ready for internship in various churches as well.

## Taxi

I traveled to and back from Cabo Frio with elder Ademir and his wife, and Pr. Adriano. It is always a great opportunity for chatting about all different topics and getting to know my dear brothers better! On our way home, on Saturday at 4:30 in the afternoon, we were pressed for time as we arrived at the central bus terminal in Rio de Janeiro. Our flight back to Recife was in an hour and a half. Although the airport was only twenty kilometres away (nineteen minutes) we had no idea how long we would have to wait for the right bus, nor how long it might take in traffic. So we decided to look into a taxi service. As we all crossed the busy street to where the taxis were lined up, two different taxi drivers immediately approached us. Each one of them aggressively offering their services and trying to make the sale. This story is much longer than I will write about here.

As the four of us sit in this taxi on our way to the airport the driver says, "That other guy isn't even a licensed taxi driver. He's an ex-cop and is not part of our association. We all hate him and hired a hitman to take care of him. You know. . . to have him killed!" We all look at each other and continue to listen without much participation in "discussion" as he freely shares information with us. As he goes on explaining what has gone wrong so far with their plan, but how much power their taxi association of 350 members has, his phone rings.

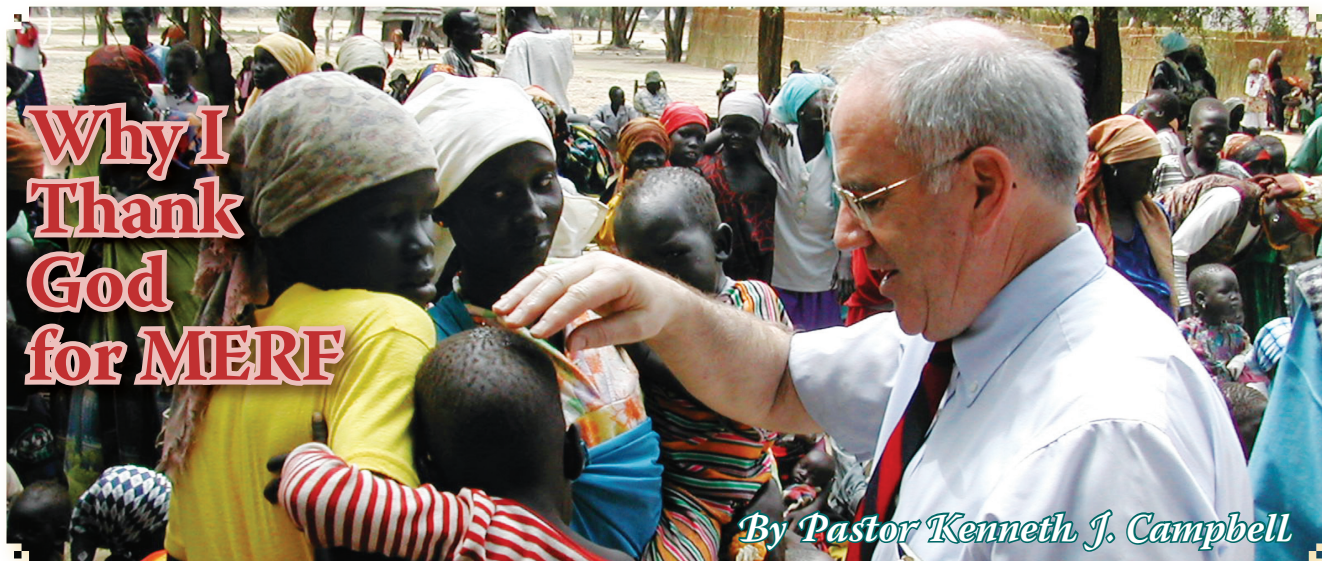
"Hello? Yes, my dear? . . . Tonight? . . . A great praise evening at church? . . . I don't know. . . Who is it that will be singing? OH!!! NO. They are terrible. That group isn't famous at all. I've heard them sing and they break up in the middle of the songs, and sometimes forget the words." They go back and forth on this discussion of whether they will go to this praise night at church. Then when he finally gets off the phone, he resumes the conversation. "As I was saying, we're still going to have him killed. It's only a matter of time. There are guys like that out there trying to interfere with our business. You can't trust just anyone who approaches you as a taxi driver. You always look for the ones that you can trust, who are a part of the association!"

So that experience, along with much more that happened in the twenty minute taxi ride, gave us plenty to talk about and reflect on as we arrived "safely" at the airport. Shaun Raap picked me up at the Recife airport around 10:30pm, and I was home "safely" by midnight.

It WAS a great week! I love the brothers and sisters here throughout our small federation. The state of the "evangelical" churches here in Brazil is critical. We need more solid men serving Christ's true church here in Brazil. Let us thank our Lord for the work being done within the IRB and how he has blessed the church with faithful men. Let us also pray that a true Reformation spreads through this land filled with false gospel of man-centred doctrine.

*Chris Boersema*





**Why I  
Thank  
God  
for MERF**

*By Pastor Kenneth J. Campbell*

A few years ago, Pastor Peter Makuac, a godly, prominent South Sudanese Church leader wrote: *"I thank God for what He has done for us though MERF. It is not just the material support given to our poor and needy people. More importantly it is the spiritual gifts—training spiritual leaders to build our people up in Christ."*

On my part, having been involved in the work of MERF for many years, I am also constrained to give thanks for MERF. I have asked myself the following questions:

### ***Why has it pleased the Lord to raise MERF up?***

God's Spirit moved three young people in 1970 to seek to interest Lebanese churches in the biblical world and life view within the Islamic context. Expanded and consolidated in 1984, this very small start has been richly blessed over the years with a vision for faithful and effective missions in Arab and Muslim lands.

For about thirty years now, MERF has served on behalf of churches and believers as a missions agency in Arab Muslim lands, committed

to proclaiming "the whole counsel of God."

+ Training centers in Asia, East Africa, and the Middle East equip and prepare men for cost-effective ministry as pastors, elders, deacons, and evangelists in their own cultural context.

+ Indigenous churches are enabled to better serve their own people and plant new congregations.

+ Millions are being reached with the true Gospel of God's saving grace through modern media—airwaves, the Internet, SMS text messages, Skype, Facebook, and sound literature.

+ Guided by clear biblical principles, diaconal aid is provided to the needy in places like Indonesia, Pakistan, Sudan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

+ Support Councils commit-

ted to MERF's vision promote prayer and support for all these ministries

### ***Why is God pleased to bless MERF and its ministries?***

Because He does all things to glorify Himself. The Lord is glorifying Himself through MERF in the Muslim world! When we look at the God-centered fruitfulness of MERF's ministries, we can, in humility and praise, say God is glorifying Himself.

### ***How is God glorifying Himself in Arab and Muslim lands?***

By faithfully lifting up the Savior of the World among Muslim and other peoples. Islam is a formidable system of beliefs, a complex world and life view. Like other religions, philosophies, and ideologies, it is the product of man's fallen mind. These all share one end—to distract and confuse men from knowing and obeying the One True Living Triune



**Top:** Kenneth Campbell in a pastoral visit to South Sudan; **Bottom:** MERF diaconal aid to needy people in North and South Sudan is provided through local churches.





God of the Scriptures, fully revealed in Christ.

Z.M.M. of Khartoum, Sudan says: "...As a Muslim I had many questions and doubts about Issa el-Masih (Jesus the Christ) and the Holy Injeel (Holy Gospel)... I am truly grateful for the loving spirit of you people who guide me and others to the true Way..."

In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul speaks of the impact of man's depravity which "suppresses the truth in unrighteousness (1:18). All people have a knowledge of the Creator, outwardly by observing God's handiwork (1:20) and inwardly as creatures made in His image (1:19). Sin causes man to suppress this knowledge of God (1:21). Exchanging the truth of God for lies, they give them-

selves over to the worship and service of the creature rather than of the Creator (1:25) and erect their own false world and life views in opposition to the true one revealed by God (1:23).

**God has been pleased to bless MERF's commitment to lift up Christ among Muslim peoples.**

The Light of the World is brightly rebuking the darkness and hopelessness of Islam's world and life view, which growingly manifests its true nature in violence, death, and self-destruction. Young people in the Muslim world today are increasingly disenchanted with their religion. Many are

seeking freedom from its oppression. The Truth is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It alone liberates them from the lie and brings them into an everlasting relationship with the God of salvation. The "Truth alone shall make one free" (John 8:32).

A.Kh. of Iran says: "...It does not matter to me anymore what my family, friends or government say...I believe that Issa (Jesus) truly died for me..."

MERF and its partners in ministry have been raised up to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to God's people who are still in Islam's fold, to call Muslim people to cease from suppressing the truth and, instead, entrust themselves into the merciful hands of the only Savior of the world. This is the remedy to unbelief that God Himself has graciously provided. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world to suffer death and rise from the grave as the atonement for the sin of His people. The atoning death of Jesus satisfied the justice of God. God's righteous judgment was executed on Jesus, and only those who embrace

## MERF-Canada

Thank you from the heart for your faithful support. Please make cheques payable to MERF-Canada and send them to the address at the bottom of the page.

Yours in Christ's service,  
Rev. J. DeGelder, chairman;  
Joanne VanDam,  
secretary; Aafke Spithoff,  
treasurer

Him in saving faith are God's children and heirs of eternal life—heirs even with Christ of the New Heavens and the New Earth! This is the Gospel that Islam denies and which Muslims desperately need.

God has raised up MERF, for His own glory, to assist many true churches of Jesus Christ to carry out the great commission in Arab, Muslim, and other lands. That is why I thank God for MERF.

**Top:** Teaching Indonesian children how Jesus is the Light of the World; **Bottom:** Arab youth leaders and teachers trained at John Calvin Center in Cyprus.



*"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."  
—John 1:14*