



Connections

WESTERN CANADA REGION

Report to Classis Alberta North

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Following Christ. In Mission Together



Christian Reformed
**Home
Missions**

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Report to Classis Alberta North

The Regional Ministry Team (RMT) for Western Canada continues to develop traction in helping serve the churches in our region of BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan in a variety of ways. This report to Classis shares some of those activities and also may serve as a catalyst to the local church leadership to alert you to resources that are available to you through Christian Reformed Home Missions, using the gifts, training and special expertise of RMT members.

CHURCH PLANTING

Edmonton, Alberta: We welcome **Victor and EunAe Ko** who have accepted our call to start a new church plant in this rapidly expanding city, growing at a rate of 46,000 per year. Classis Alberta North approved the concept of a new church plant after receiving a detailed feasibility study, outlining the need and three possible target areas in the city. The Ko's visited Edmonton in June and were interviewed by the Classical Home Missions Committee and several members of the leadership team at the River. Victor is currently pastor of Outreach and Congregation Life in Third CRC of Kalamazoo, MI. He has demonstrated gifts particularly in the area of evangelism and outreach, and has been responsible for bringing and enfolding many new members in his current church. He has also trained a number of people in this work. **The River** will be the parent church, (upon becoming organized as a congregation at the Fall session of Classis). Ebenezer CRC in Leduc acted as the calling church. The Ko's with their two grade school aged children, Johanna and Joshua hope to arrive toward the end of August and will be serving in a residency at The River for 6-12 months while at the same time deciding on the best location for a new congregation, based on the feasibility study, affinity for a specific area, and missional opportunity. We thank God for this new opportunity to join him in an all out effort to seek the lost, and by his grace enfolded them into his Kingdom.



The River continues to see many new people join worship and the ministry programs. In a recent development, the River will provide a parish nurse to help facilitate programs in healthy living, stress management and acting as a liaison between the medical community and the Riverbend-Terwiliger area. This volunteer is a nurse who found hope and a sense of community as the River reached out to her, and this is her way of giving back to God, the church and the community.

Wolf Creek Community Church in Lacombe, has taken possession of their new facilities on July 1. This former RV Sales and service Center, needs to undergo some renovations, but will provide the church with much need worship, meeting and educational space.

Other Church Planting news from the region . . .



Conversations have been begun with **Maranatha CRC in Lethbridge** who wish to explore parenting a new church in the Lethbridge community. **The Tapestry in Richmond, BC** has purchased the facilities of First CRC in Richmond, which closed its doors after 50 years. The Tapestry is looking to turn this fine facility into a worship center/community center by offering programs to meet the needs of the community during the week. The Tapestry is currently has about 220 people attending each week. In the heart of Vancouver, *downtown friends* is the name of a new church plant in **Yaletown**. It seeks to reach out to the thousands of condo dwellers in this densely populated, but under-churched area of Vancouver. Mary-Lee Bouma is the planter and is currently meeting with groups of people over dinners where conversations are designed to explore questions about God and faith. **The Well in Kelowna** is a new church plant that has gathered a launch team of about 35-40 people. It uses a community development model to serve the community in very specific ways, seeking to be the presence of Christ *in* the community as well as inviting them *to* worship services. **Cariboo Community in Williams Lake, BC** regularly sees 225 people in worship, 1/3 of whom are members of First Nations. The church has found an excellent facility in the heart of town that it is in the process of purchasing as a ministry center, which can house a number of community service agencies. Paul Lomavatu, the pastor is also exploring the feasibility of a providing a part time campus ministry at the local satellite campus of Thompson Rivers University, through utilizing a professor from Trinity Western University who lives in the community, and works as a linguist, translating the Bible in the language of the Chilcotin Tribe. Innovative and effective ministry continues to take place in **Calgary** among **The Lantern, The Annex, and Hillside**, all church plants in Calgary and surrounding areas.



MISSION FOCUSED CHURCHES *(used to be called Established Churches)*

The Regional Ministry Team is looking to develop a pilot project in the region aimed at **pastors of local churches in a specific area, along with their leadership teams**. The goal is to assist churches through coaching as it seeks ways to further develop its ministry to the community, its discipleship efforts. The pilot project is still being developed and currently we are looking at equipping coaches who can then walk alongside a congregation for up to a year, as it goes through transitions, new ministry initiatives and change processes.

Recent and planned consultations with individual congregations range in scope and need. We provide facilitation for council retreats, visioning processes, transitioning matters as congregations experience either growth or decline. Home Missions has also provided some partnership grants to assist with new outreach ministry initiatives. **Smaller churches** (with memberships of 150 or less) can also apply for funding to a new denominational program called **Sustaining Congregational Excellence**, designed to assist congregations with partnership funding to develop new ministry programs, technology grants for equipment or small staffing grants.

CAMPUS MINISTRIES

We welcome **Rick Van Mannen** as he begins his work at the **University of Alberta in Edmonton**. Rick takes up the work begun by Tom Oosterhuis who served as campus pastor for over 30 years. We wish Tom and Alyce God's richest blessings in their retirement and thank him for the many years of faithful service. He leaves behind a campus ministry that has earned the respect of many in the administration at the university as well as among staff and students. The two other campus ministries in our region, **Paul Verhoef at University of Calgary** and **Neil and Virginia Lettinga of University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George**, along with Tom O hosted the annual Campus Ministry Association Conference of the CRC. The site this past





May was in Kananaskis, and saw 80 campus ministers, along with some spouses from around North America, joined by church planters from Western Canada, wrestle together concerning many issues facing our culture and how to engage those issues in a missional way that incarnates Christ to a world that generally doesn't look to the church for answers.

Home Missions is pleased to sponsor leadership development through small grants for several emerging student leaders who assist the campus pastors at U of A and U of C in connecting with students and facilitating student led discussions.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT NETWORKS (LDN)

The **BCLDN** met this past year in **Surrey, BC** with 15 participants. Wilma Vanderleek, a Regent College graduate, former Christian High School teacher and trained spiritual director has given excellent leadership to our monthly sessions. The LDN has drawn on a wide variety of speakers, including pastors, Regent professors, and others with expertise, who have opened up different areas of our curriculum. You can view this 3 year curriculum on our website at www.bcldn.ca. Seven students have completed their course of training and graduated from the program after 3 years. Some have positions on staff in local churches, others will continue their involvement in their work, business, as well as leadership in the local church. Because the area from which we draw participants is so large (Vancouver Island to the interior of BC), which creates difficulties in travel, particularly during the winter months, we are considering the possibility of starting an satellite LDN program in Kamloops, pending the enrollment of at least 10 students.

Chinook Mentoring Ministries (CMM) is a similar leadership development program in **Calgary** and drawing participants from around southern Alberta. CMM is in its second year of operation and also enlists local pastors and other resources in the area to give leadership to this venue that seeks to equip people for more effective service in the local church.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT



Many congregations have some form of small group development as a way to further disciple members and enfold new members. **Karen Wilk** is our region's small group ministry developer, and has expertise in many facets of this ministry. She is also **Associate Pastor of Community Life and Discipleship** at The River in Edmonton, and so knows first hand the challenges of training leaders, forming groups and enfolding new members into a congregation. You are invited to contact her if you wish further assistance in this area of ministry or seek practical wisdom as to how to use small group principles to cultivate greater pastoral care in your church, as well as expertise in outreach. Karen can be reached at kwministry@shaw.ca or at 780-483-8064.

The Regional Ministry Team is here to serve your congregation. If we can help in anyway, please contact me at martincontant@telus.net or at 604-574-0669. You are also encouraged to contact any of the team members listed. Thanks for your continued support of Home Missions as we seek to partner with you for more fruitful, effective kingdom service.

Blessings,
Martin Contant
Regional Leader
Christian Reformed Home Missions

