



Missions Newsletter

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Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:18-20

Greetings!

The latest issue of the ICRC Newsletter is "off the press". Hearty thanks to the two men – both members of the Missions Committee – who wrote excellent, thought-provoking articles for your reflection and action. The Rev David D. Miller has provided an interesting report on the most recent European Regional Conference informing us not only of the speakers and the subjects they presented, but also providing some analysis of the challenges faced by the Christians in Europe. The Rev Dr Paul G H Bae has written a stimulating and informative article on the Nevius Plan, an approach to the work of missions developed by John L Nevius.... specifically for mission work in China, and later adapted for missions in Korea. This too is an eminently worthwhile read.

Thankfully we present this issue of the Newsletter to you, our readers. May the Lord use the presentations for the advance of His Kingdom.

Rev. John Goris and Rev Raymond J. Sikkema, co-editors.

European Regional Conference

Edinburgh, Scotland – 16-18 March 2010

The third European Regional Conference of the ICRC met in Edinburgh, Scotland from 16th to 18th March 2010, hosted by the Free Church of Scotland. The date and venue had been chosen to mark the centenary of the major 1910 World Missionary Conference. This one was much smaller, and especially focussed on Europe rather than the whole world, but in the same realisation that the task before the churches is still great. The leading emphasis of this conference was given to evangelism and church planting, being the character of mission by European churches in Europe.

There were similar numbers attending – around 70-80 – as at the first two conferences in the Netherlands; with quite a few familiar faces, but also a good proportion of new-comers. The eight churches who are full members of the ICRC were represented, along with a spread of associated bodies: churches, seminaries, and other groups.

There was a substantial programme of plenary sessions, presentations, and debate, but most delegates also gained benefit from being able to enter into closer conversations and discussions over meals and coffee, with old and new friends.

Lead sessions – Richard Pratt, David Meredith, David Robertson & Stephan Paas

The lead speaker for the conference was Dr Richard Pratt, of Third Millennium Ministries, USA. He had a wide subject to cover in two addresses, but provoked a great deal of thought in the areas of Reformed Evangelism and Theological Education. In his first lecture he outlined the present situation; reflected on Paul's approach for our guidance; and then considered some implications for leaders of the church today. In the light of the difficulties experienced now, and Paul's devotion to his task, Dr Pratt asked: "Who among us is willing to be inconvenienced for the gospel?" and thus proposed that "Europe will not be won for Christ without lots of us dying." We must go out with the attitude of a servant, an appropriate message, and an unwavering vision.

On the second day he then considered the subject of our churches' approach to theological education against that background of Reformed evangelism. The prevailing situation and Paul's guidance were surveyed again for this area, providing the framework for probing questioning. The churches were challenged to look at a very different way of training their leaders. Our present methods entail high costs, and too rarely respond to ethnic needs. With technological advances, far more could be done and much more efficiently: training should be "multimedia, multilingual, multi ethnic, scalable, and inexpensive."

A third main address was given by Rev David Meredith of the Free Church of Scotland, titled "Can Conservative Churches Grow?" What is meant by 'conservative' is complex,

as is 'growth'. Some may wish to conserve social aspects of church at the expense of the gospel that should be expected to bring in people in very different conditions.

"The gospel is living and brings life, raises the dead ... incendiary material, the most radical force in the entire universe, the greatest change agent mankind has ever known."

He based his message on Acts 11ff, where the church in Antioch began to take the lead from Jerusalem, on account of being willing to go to previously untouched people groups – while Jerusalem attended mainly to their own. The lessons to be learnt from Antioch, when we seek to grow are that they had:

- (i) *grass-roots evangelism* – it must reach people where they are, and it must therefore be done by the people of the church;
- (ii) *leaders who lead* – leaders do influence, let us be sure they are open to all people, and encourage evangelism;
- (iii) *teaching with quality* – that the work, leadership and encounter with the world continue; &
- (iv) *unity & partnership.*

The other major session took the form of a plenary panel discussion between Rev David Robertson & Dr Stephan Paas on the missionary implications of Reformed theology. While needing to ensure the church is faithful to God, and the Bible as his self-revelation, we must also be more attuned to the mind of the world around us, to respond to their questions. That may require us to ask questions before we can answer – to know what occupies the people around us. It is clear that Europe today is very complex, an "open marketplace for ideas", and far from rational – while Reformed theology tends to seek to "explain everything".

Presentations

Several presentations were given on specific aspects of reaching out to Europe:

- 1 Co-operation in evangelism (Rev David Miller) – data had been gathered on church planting works by the member churches in Europe. More is needed to complete the picture of what is being done, if there is to be a coherent plan for further planting work to be done.
- 2 Consultation on Reformed theological education (Dr Walter Rose) – a conference of educators was planned for a year forward (March 2011), to coordinate information on resources, teachers, and institutions; and for mutual help on accreditation.
- 3 Cross-cultural & multi-ethnic church planting (Rev ten Brinke) – outline of four years work in Amsterdam North among non-Dutch, heavily Muslim population. An innovative solution was found by a declining and aging church, sponsoring a new fellowship in their own church. They use several languages, and respond to needs and position of people they meet, ensuring that knowing Jesus is the clear and primary goal.
- 4 Diaconal Approach to evangelism (Rev Michael Mulder) – the importance of spoken and practical service as the full gospel.
- 5 Eastern & Southern Europe (Rev Jos Colijn / Dr Clay Quarterman / Rev Manuel Franco / Mr Eric Kayayan) – stressing the supporting role of member churches in younger churches in these areas (Ukraine, Spain, France), in theological education, literature and seminaries; facing the smallness of Reformed works, but also the openness of many to finding the truth.

Introductions

A number of churches were also given opportunity to introduce themselves, although fewer than previously, as the groups in the network was getting more familiar with each other:

- 1 Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central & Eastern Europe (Hungary)
- 2 Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ukraine



- 3 Reformed Church in Slovakia
- 4 Reformed Church of Russia
- 5 India Reformed Christian Mission (yes, there was an Indian visitor too)

Going beyond

The conference also learned with great pleasure that a Confessional Reformed Church was soon to begin services in Heidelberg, Germany, in April, this being the site of the formulation of one of the foundational confessional documents of many of the brethren present, The Heidelberg Catechism.

The conference closed with a sermon delivered by Dr Iain D Campbell of the Free Church of Scotland, from 2 Corinthians 4:7, with an eye on Jeremiah 32. He pointed to Paul's discoveries of the Providence, Purpose, Plan and Power of God. Whatever the restraints providence seems to put on us, there should be a certainty over God's great purpose which is always redemptive: "the law of resurrection is the law of the harvest". This purpose is implemented with a remarkable plan – the "jars of clay" providing the guarantees of the future completion, by God's own power.

For the future, it was agreed to continue work on gathering information on theological education, and church planting, to make cooperative efforts possible; and to meet again in 2012, the churches in Ukraine being invited to host it. Efforts will also be made to find web-space, whether independently or embedded in the main ICRC site, so that information can be more easily available.

The forthcoming Asia-Pacific Regional Conference will be held during the last week of October, 2011, DV, in India. Member-churches in the region will be advised.

Dr. Paul Bae, The Nevius Plan

Introduction

The Nevius Plan is an important Mission Policy Plan that profoundly influenced the direction and method of mission work in Korea. It was a Native Mission Plan that was activated in Oriental and Confucian Korea.

The early missionaries from Western countries to Korea were mostly young men in their twenties. They possessed a diligent and burning faith, but a shortage on mission experience and systematic discipline. Moreover, they represented a diverse faith /doctrinal background and were commissioned by different mission committees; consequently, it was often difficult to make agreements and work harmoniously with each other. As a result, the missionaries faced conflicts, and resignation of missionaries followed because of different mission methods and immaturity of mission experience.

At some point in this situation, they decided to invite Dr. John Livingstone Nevius (1829-1893) who had been working as a missionary in China for 30 years. They agreed to set aside two weeks and listen to Dr. Nevius explain his mission methods to them.

John Livingstone Nevius was a Protestant missionary in China and Korea, appointed by the American Presbyterian Mission. Dr. and Mrs. Nevius came from Chefoo, China, in June 1890, and spent two weeks in Seoul with the seven members of the Korean Mission. After careful and prayerful consideration, they were led, in the main, to adopt what became known as "the Nevius Method".

Outline of the Nevius Plan

After questioning the methods of Western missionaries of his time, Nevius took up the Venn-Anderson principles of "self-propagation, self-government, and self-supporting" in a series of articles in the "Chinese Recorder" journal in 1885, which was later published as a book in 1886,

The Nevius Plan outlined the following:

1. Christians should continue to live in their neighborhoods and pursue their occupations, being self-supporting and witnessing to their co-workers and neighbors.
2. A Mission ministry should only develop programs and institutions that the national church desired and could support.
3. The national churches should call and support their own pastors.
4. Churches should be built in the native style with money and materials given by the church members.
5. Intensive biblical and doctrinal instruction should be provided for church leaders every year.

The Nevius Plan, as reiterated by a Korean Presbyterian missionary (C.A.Clark), may be summarized briefly as including:

1. Missionaries must personally engage in the work of evangelism throughout Korea.
2. A policy of native self-support must be activated, which should include the following stipulations:
 - * The native Christians must provide their own schools with only small mission subsidies to be expected in the early stages of the program.
 - * The believers must themselves own the churches that they have built.
 - * The churches must pay the salary of the itinerant preacher from the beginning of the church. A church will not receive the salary money for its pastor from foreign funds.
3. A policy of self-propagation was adopted. This included the following stipulations:
 - * Every believer is to be both a learner (from someone who knows more than he does) and a teacher (of someone who knows less than he does).
 - * Lay preachers and other church leaders must support themselves and teach until the native church can assume the burden of their support.
4. A policy of self-government was also put in place. This included the following:

- * Every church must be under its own self-chosen unpaid leaders.
 - * A pastor should be chosen only when the church is able to support him.
 - * A circuit parish should be controlled by the paid evangelist who will be its pastor.
 - * In patrol assembly, (that is, the missionary's regular round among vacant churches) a missionary should disciple some church members in training them to become future leaders of home-cells, of districts and (eventually) of the nation.
5. The Bible should be the main principle and guide for all the ministries of the church. Every believer should engage in systematic Bible study under the leaders (called youngsu) and the evangelist.
 6. According to the teaching of the Bible, the church must promote a strict life and discipline of its members.
 7. In the event of a division of a district and/or program, the church will absolutely not interfere in any resulting legal case.
 8. In monetary and other matters, the churches promise to cooperate with each other.

The missionaries in Korea, impressed by Dr. Nevius, studied to apply these principles on their mission field. The Council of Missions holding the Presbyterian Form of Church Government – comprised of the South and North Presbyterian Mission of America and the Australian Presbyterian Mission – adopted ten concrete mission policy statements and started their mission work accordingly. The ten points are as follows:

1. It is better to focus the mission outreach on the working class than on the upper classes.
2. In evangelizing woman, the missionary should focus his attention on the education of Christian girls.
3. It is more effective to focus Christian education on the primary school level in the country.
4. Korean ministers should receive their training in their own country.
5. Since it is the word of the Lord that leads people to repentance, it is imperative that the missionaries do their best to translate the Bible into Korean correctly and to publish it as soon as possible.
6. Both in the documents and in the Minutes of the church's meetings/decisions, the Korean language should be used.
7. The developing church should strive to be self-supporting. To that end, the developing church must try to reduce the number of those who receive support from missionaries and increase the number of those who donate monies in support of the church.
8. It is important that Korean people lead their fellow country-men to Christ. To that end, the missionaries should train the members of the local church to engage in the work of evangelism, rather than do the evangelizing work themselves.
9. To get better results, the medical missionaries should treat their patients in their homes and/or sick rooms; they must, moreover, be a model for their patients – so as to give them a lasting impression. Providing medicine alone is not sufficient medical care.
10. It is important that the evangelist visits with and cares for those who were discharged from a regional hospital.

Clearly, the mission policy of the Presbyterian Mission in Korea had leaned on and borrowed from the Nevius Plan. Later, the basic concept of the Nevius Plan became known as self-propagation, self-support, self-government.

Evaluation of the Nevius Plan, Positive Points:

Though the Nevius Plan did not gain popularity in China, its methods were embraced by the Korean mission and enjoyed great success there. The following points are noted:

1. The Nevius Plan's emphasis on intensive biblical and doctrinal instruction built up the foundation of the Korean church, thus leading and enabling it to become a Bible-centered church.
2. The Nevius Plan activated the laymen of the congregation to become involved in and committed to the work of evangelism.
3. The Nevius Plan cultivated the mind of self-support of the native church, and made the rise of leadership of the native church possible.
4. The Nevius Plan protected the native church from being westernized while developing as a faithful church.

Evaluation of the Nevius Plan, Negative Points:

It should also be noted that there were some negative matters relating to the Nevius Plan. The following points are noted:

1. The policy of self-supporting was not effective in the southern area which was undeveloped in its economy.
2. The Nevius Plan promoted the class system in the native church.
3. The native church misunderstood the diverse position of the church as a social institution in view point of Confucianism. So when a wrong leader was set up, he couldn't solve difficult problems in a church.
4. The Missionaries emphasized the problem of the economy too much in implementing the Nevius Plan.
5. There were problems relating to the lack of education of the native leaders and leadership.
6. The missionaries tried to control the church in spirit after the native church had become self-supporting.
7. The missionaries transferred the leadership to the native leaders too late.
8. The missionaries turned away from evangelizing the upper class, and tried to drop the quality of education for the native ministries.

But these negative issues were embossed exceedingly in one side.

Generally the Nevius Plan is summarized as: Self-Propagating, Self-Governing and Self-Supporting.

Particularly the early Presbyterian Church in Korea accepted the Nevius Plan. It made a profound impact, not only on the mission policy of the Korean Church and contributed to the growth of the church, but also established a self-supporting economy and the character of the native Korean Church more quickly.

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