

Newsletter



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Brief History of the Beginnings

A number of years ago, the three PR churches in the Sioux Falls area, (Edgerton, MN, Doon and Hull, Iowa) began Bible Study Classes in Sioux Falls under the auspices of the Reformed Witness Committee. This committee is the joint-effort for evangelism by these churches. About a year ago this Bible Study sent a letter to the three sponsoring churches to request that the work in Sioux Falls be expanded into a denominational mission work. With their approval they approached the Denominational Mission Committee for their involvement. They requested that a missionary be sent to assist them in their outreach efforts.

The DMC prepared for Synod 2007 proposals regarding the establishment of SF as a denominational mission work. This included three big issues, appointing a calling church to over-see the work, the calling of a missionary for SF, and the possible purchase of a house for that missionary.

Setting up the Mission

While awaiting the meeting of Synod, the DMC decided that since they had in their budget money to develop new fields, they could consider helping SF immediately.

A committee was sent from the DMC to SF to gain information as to what their needs were and how they could best help. This committee heartedly recommended that the request to begin Sunday services be granted, that Candidate Spronk be requested to meet this need, that a house be rented for the Spronks, and that mission outreach begin.

The DMC adopted the recommendations of this committee on three grounds (1) We have a request to do this; (2) The makeup and size of the group is suited to the beginning of a mission in Sioux Falls; and (3) The group is ready and eager, not only to begin services, but also to be active in mission outreach.

As follow-up of these decisions, eventually the PRC of Edgerton, MN was asked to serve as a calling church, subject to the approval of Synod 2007. Candidate Spronk was asked to move to SF to assist this group in their initial phase. He and his family moved to SF in early January 2007 and a house was rented for them at that time.

By the time the Spronks arrived, the mission had adopted the name, Heritage Protestant Reformed Fellowship. The worship services began upon their arrival, January 28, 2007. Since this was a mission field pro-tem, outreach was a prime consideration. Committees for evangelism were appointed and the Fellowship became focused on others whom the Lord might bring into their midst.

From the very beginning, and continuing to the present, the constituency of the group consists of five families and ten individuals, almost all members of Doon or Hull PRC. Among them also are young people who have marriage plans. This makes for a unique mission, seeing that the core group is from the very beginning mature in their understanding and commitment to the Reformed faith as believed and practiced in our churches.

The labors of the Spronks were deeply appreciated by the Fellowship. He helped them through the first months of adjustment He capably guided them in carrying out the decisions to establish SF as a mission field. His preaching was a blessing and encouragement. His willing work in the Steering Committee helped to get things done.

Synod's Approval and Subsequent Events

With thanksgiving to God, the Synod of the PRCA approved all the requests submitted to it from Edgerton and the DMC.

The first to be implemented was the extending of a call from Edgerton for a man to serve as Home Missionary in SF. The first call was extended to Candidate Spronk. This was their vote of confidence in the work of this young man. Nevertheless, God led him to another field of labor so that the next call was given to Pastor Rodney Kleyn. He felt in his heart to continue his labors in Trinity PRC of Hudsonville, MI. Presently, Rev.

Allen Brummel of South Holland, IL is considering the call.

The purchase of a house for a missionary was hastened by the request of the owners of the rented house that we break contract with favorable financial returns. Since Edgerton was already in the process of calling a missionary, it was decided that efforts to purchase a missionary house commence immediately. The missionary house was ready for occupancy, Sept. 28, 2007.

During this time of vacancy, Edgerton and the DMC asked my wife and me if we could help out in SF for a longer period of time, should no missionary accept the call. We decided that we could come for up to four months should the field remain without a missionary. We arrived in SF on August 22 and have been enjoying the people and the work for about six weeks. As we said to the people of the Fellowship, we have a house, now we have to pray to the Lord who gave us this house, that He give us a missionary to occupy it.

Efforts for Outreach

From the very beginning, the DMC emphasized that work in Sioux Falls must not simply be the formation of a small daughter congregation by members of the PRC of Edgerton, Doon and Hull. It is wonderful and unique that the core group is so mature for a mission field. Yet the emphasis must continue to be on missions, that is outreach to others.

The usual efforts were put forth to contact others in the SF area whom God might be pleased to add to the number. This included placing sign-boards in the Holiday Inn where our services are held, a table with literature just outside the room, listing of the Fellowship in the Yellow Pages of the phone book, constructing a web page on the internet, placing ads in the local newspaper and on the radio.

What I appreciated the most was the foresight of the Fellowship and Edgerton to focus on personal evangelism as an important ingredient. They committed themselves to accept responsibility to invite others personally and be ready to talk to others about their faith.

To motivate them and help them accomplish this goal, a conference on **Evangelism** was sponsored by the Fellowship in Sioux Falls last Saturday. The theme was, "Ready to Bear Witness of Christ". I spoke on "The Role of Individual

Believers"; Rev. R Van Overloop spoke on "Evangelism: How and How Not". Rev. Steve Key addressed us on "Preparing Ourselves as Witnesses of Christ"; and the last speaker was Rev. David Overway who spoke on "Excited to Testify of the Reformed Faith". It ended with a question and answer period. It was attended by about 140 people including members of our Fellowship, others from Sioux Falls area, from Pierre SD, Minneapolis, MN, Michiganders, and our faithful fellow church members in Hull, Doon, and Edgerton. The Fellowship was pleased with the messages, the support shown by the attendees, and encouraged to take up their responsibility to reach out to others in our community. The messages were recorded and will be available on CD for those interested.

Attending the Conference were members of the DMC, Rev. R. Van Overloop and Mr. Don Doezema. Rev. Van Overloop spoke for the conference and also preached twice on the Lord's Day for the Fellowship. Both brothers met with the Consistories of Doon and Edgerton and also with the Fellowship. This was a great blessing as it encouraged good working relationships and helped direct the next phase of the mission.

While we are laboring among them, we offered to have a Bible Study on the subject of Personal Evangelism. The purpose of this is to encourage all of us to actually speak to strangers and friends alike about the gospel and to invite them to worship with us on the Lord's Day. We will be engaging in this learning experience twice a month. The interest and eagerness of the members is most encouraging as we are convinced this is the key to mission work.

Now the Fellowship is working with the Reformed Witness Committee to plan a Reformation Day Lecture here in SF. Prof. Decker is lined up to be the speaker and soon the members will gird up their loins again to promote this opportunity of outreach. This lecture is scheduled for October 26 at the First CRC in SF.

Do pray for God's blessing on the labors of the Fellowship. Come and visit us some time.

Pastor J. Kortering