

Timeline of Mission Developments in Western Canada from 1964 - 1972
Assembled by Rev. B. J. Berends

1964

Church News (**Abbotsford, Cloverdale and New Westminster**) bound by Rev. W. W. J. vanOene

March 15 - Letters from Abb and Clov cautioning NW not to proceed as Mission Church in the West without consultation with the Mission Church of Toronto.

March 29 - Letters from Abb and Clov expressing support to NW to be Mission Ch.

Letter from NW sent to all the churches concerning its willingness to be a Mission Church.

June 21 - Letters from Carman and Smithers ready to support NW as Mission Ch.

1965

Jan. 31 - Mention of a combined Mission meeting held in New Westminster.

Mission Committee (MC) requests space in Mission News to keep members informed on its activities.

Mar14 - NW busy finding out as to which churches in the West will support her.

June 6 - Mission-Day was held on May 24 (Victoria Day), attended by members of the Three Fraser Valley churches. The two speakers stressed the importance of

"our calling and manner thereof toward our own Mission work."

Aug.15- Meeting with Revs. Knigge and Kouwenhoven. Toronto suggests that NW start on its own and to ask the Churches in the West ("incl. Winnipeg") for support.

They give explanations and particulars about mission work and mission field.

Oct.10 - NW decides to send a draft letter to sister-churches in Western Canada re Mission.

Nov. 7 - Lengthy report by MC (L. Terpstra):

-Toronto released churches in the West from the agreement to support her as sending church of all the churches which belong to the CanRC

- A letter was sent by NW to all the churches in the West (see Oct.10)

-There is as yet no definite plan as to where a missionary will be sent

- Letters have been sent by MC to Brazil, South Africa, Australia, etc.

This report ends with: "Mission work is in the first place: that we bring the gospel to people who have never heard it. . . . It may even prove impossible to find a region where complete heathens are living."

Dec.19 - Letters received from Barrhead, Carman, Cloverdale and Coaldale re Mission

1966

Mar.16 - A Mission Newsletter to be published four times a year for the supporting Churches

The MC is to organize another Mission Day for the three churches in the Fraser Valley.

Oct. 9 - Letter from MC - It hopes to come with a definite proposal on a mission field in the near future.

1967

Nov. 5 - On October 26 the Consistory discussed the proposal of the MC to choose an area in Brazil to be the Mission field for NW.

"We saw colour slides made by two brethren who made an inspection tour on our behalf . . ." It was decided to continue the discussion on Nov. 2.

Nov.19 - **The final decision:** "To direct the preaching of the Gospel to **Indians** in Brazil, if possible in the State of Mato Grosso."

"to request the Mission committee to find (and to propose - BJB) a minister or candidate of theology willing to be sent out as our missionary."

It was stressed at this meeting that a call can only be extended by a Consistory.

1968

Jan. 14 - The MC nominated and the Consistory appointed A. Huisman and H. Van Delden as members of the MC

Mar. 10 - Br. T.J. Harlaar is appointed as a member of the MC

Mar. 24 - A special Mission evening is arranged for Monday, March 25, to acquaint the congregation fully with the material and information which brought about the decision to choose a mission-field in Brazil.

"This involves colour-slides, reports about the trip into the state of Mato Grosso by the brethren Nap and Sikkema of Monte Allegre, information about other countries of the world, and a general picture as to the situation to find a missionary for this field as it stands now."

July 14 - An extraordinary meeting was held, with the Revs. Stel and Van Popta, and with members of the MC, to discuss the findings by br. J.vanderLinde on his trip to the Netherlands, and the approach to Mission by the Church of Assen.

- Consistory decides to request the Consistories of Abbotsford and Cloverdale to appoint two members to our MC, to be involved in the advice to the course to be followed by NW, and the actions to be taken and to request the MC to come with definite proposals in the line as reported by J.vdL: to start the work in Brazil in the cities (but not necessarily like Assen to search out and train young men among the academia (those attending universities in those cities) for Mission work, and then as Native Brazilian Missionaries to be sent there out into the interior - BJB)

Sept.8 - The MC informs the Consistory of the names of the brethren appointed by Abbotsford and Cloverdale as members of the present MC. Under Mission Rev. WWJ vanOene suggests that NW "could easily take upon herself the cost of one missionary;" while the churches that support us would then take care of a second missionary. "We could (then) send out a team, which is not only advisable but even necessary."

Oct. 6 - Candidate Reitsema (from the Netherlands) informs Consistory that he has accepted a call and therefore declines the invitation to discuss the possibility of becoming a missionary in Brazil.

Dec. 29 - It is decided to extend the term of the MC's secretary (br. L.Terpstra?), and to appoint in the vacancy of VanderLinde br. B.J. Berends as a member.

1969

Feb. 9 - Consistory's response to a letter from the MC:

1. To direct the preaching of the Gospel to the Southern part of the state of Mato grosso in Brazil, and to choose the city of Campo Grande in which to establish a mission post of the church of NW, after the Missionary has completed his studies.

2. To instruct the MC to continue its search for a willing Minister or Candidate of Theology in the Reformed Churches who will consider being sent out to that city.

3. To instruct the Committee further to present to the Consistory in due time a worked-out and detailed plan as to what monies, equipment, literature, cost of radio broadcasts, etc are needed in order to support the Missionary to a good start.

4. If a Missionary comes to the conclusion that the field chosen is not suitable and that another field is to be preferred, the Consistory will consider the Missionary's proposal in that direction.

1969

June 1 - Candidate D. Grutter declined his call to become a Missionary in Brazil. He instead accepted a call received from the Church at Rijnsburg to become a Missionary on Curacao to fill the sudden vacancy left by Rev. K. Deddens, who had to return to the Netherlands.

Nov. 2 - The Consistory re-affirmed its position: we start out in the city as the logical basis of operation for expanding into the interior.

The Consistory requests the MC to investigate whether it is feasible to look for a place closer to where the missionaries of the Church of Assen are working.

1970

Jan.13 - Consistory meets with Rev. C. VanSpronsen - to discuss a number of questions

Feb. 22 - Rev. VanS calls to learn its outcome, i.e. the decisions that were (to be) made

With capital letters: REV. C VANSPRONSEN - D.V. OUR MISSIONARY.

A special word of thanks is extended to the MC "A lot of work has been done, searching for information, where to start, how to start, and to find a missionary. A lot of work lies ahead."

Apr. 19- A lengthy Church News article by the Committee's secretary, br. L. Terpstra

The MC is discharged and instead a Mission Board is established consisting of five persons, which are to be members of the Church of New Westminster

"This brings to an end a most friendly and brotherly cooperation with members of the churches of Cloverdale and Abbotsford who have served in the former MC over the years. It is not too much to say that this cooperation has been very valuable in the finding of a Missionary.

That the work itself has not ended but just begun can be quite clear to all. The newly appointed board has met several times already, for there are many details which require immediate attention, since our Missionary is moving to NW in the month of May.

Preparation for his departure has to be worked out in detail, which may require some time. Financial arrangements have to be made.

All the work, however, will be done with gladness . . . we, in all these efforts, are co-workers of the living God and His Christ, who has great haste to come to HIS ultimate glory. And who are we that MAY do this?"

1971

Jan. 31 - In February VanS will undertake orientation trips in Brazil in the company of br K. Nap (who was given permission by Assen to accompany him)

Apr.11- Report of a meeting held on March 25 by the Consistory with the Deacons (and with counselor Rev. H. Mulder as guest) discussed the content of an elaborate report by VanS on his orientation trips taken in February of this year:

- to the town of Chavantina

- to Mato Grosso ("the state we were planning to conduct a mission.")

- to Recife, a 3000 km trip to the N. by plane from the capital Sao Paulo
June 6 - Consistory with the Deacons, with br L. Terpstra (on behalf of the MC), continue to discuss the content of the above report, and took note of another trip of VanS, to West Santa Catarina. He reported about several towns, mainly about the city Chapeco, an important centre of this area. There was more news on Pernambuco (visited on his third trip). No decision could be reached. Three brothers were appointed to draft a letter to VanS in the line of the discussions. Even though VanS' study at the school at Campinas was nearly finished, "this should not influence us to make a hasty decision as to a mission field."

Aug. 8 - Report on meeting of Consistory with the Deacons held on July 20, 1971
Letter from MC informing the consistory of the resignation of br. B.J.Berends "on account of other church work and studies." br. J. DeHaas is appointed in his place.
Aug. 22 - The Committee charged with drafting a letter to VanS reports that it was unable to finish this task. "Several questions as to why Pernambuco or why Chapeco is favoured and has to be answered. In a discussion which follows the brethren receive answers as to their questions. **It is noted that seven brethren favour Pernambuco and seven Chapecó.**"

"It is also decided that the difficult task of choosing a mission field will be especially remembered in the worship service on August 8."

On August 12, the consistory with the deacons adopted the Committee's letter.

Sept 5 - "After long discussions a proposal was made to send our missionary to Chapeco in the state of Santa Catarina. **After voting twice (first to find the majority) this proposal was unanimously accepted.**"

"Also discussed was the need of an assistant for Rev. VanSpronsen. It was decided to ask the Mission-aid of the church at Cloverdale to take up this matter with our missionary."

Sept. 19- Details regarding the mission work were discussed on Sept 2 and 7, the first of which was attended by VanS.

Nov. 14- The consistory with the deacons met on Nov. 2 to discuss a draft letter in answer to reports from VanS. It is decided to consult the counselor, Rev. Mulde on this draft before it will be mailed to the missionary.

Dec. 26 - Under the heading, REGIONAL SYNOD CONTINUED, we read, "This Synod will be continued not in Winnipeg, but in Cloverdale's church building. This is done on request of the consistory of New Westminster's church, which has invited all the churches which support the mission work in Brazil . . ."

The reason why this meeting is 'combined' with the Regional Synod is to keep the traveling expenses down **and** "to give the whole consistory of New Westm. the opportunity to attend the Mission meeting." New Westminster felt the need "to discuss several aspects of their mission work in Brazil with the supporting churches." **(It was to consult them whether to leave or to stay in Brazil, and the advice was [with only one vote against] to continue the Mission in Brazil. That's how the consistory with the deacons decided to stay in Brazil - BJB)**

1972

Jan. 23 - Meeting of the consistory with the deacons on Jan.13. "Our counselor, Rev. J. Mulder is present also, and on request takes the chair . . . Letter from the Church of Edmonton requesting to postpone execution of a decision of the consistory with regards to a proposal of the missionary Rev. VanSpronsen. It is decided that the ground for this request does not warrant such postponement."

April 2 - The consistory met with the deacons on March 23.

Rev. J. Mulder once again chaired the meeting. Letter from br. J. Kuik of Carman (the future Mission-aid worker and assistant to VanS - BJB) informs the council of New Westminster of his opinions pertaining to the Mission.

There is a letter from the missionary in which he reports on a second trip to Pernambuco. After ample discussion it is decided to approve the proposal of **the missionary to move to Pernambuco (San Jose!)**, on the grounds of previous and additional information contained in this report.