

# **PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**

## **MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA COMMITTEE REPORT MAY 12, 2015**

### **INFORMATION:**

#### **1. Committee Roster**

The MNA committee is looking for both TEs and REs to fill out its committee roster.

#### **2. SWFL church planting projects (see reports below)**

#### **3. Potential church planting projects**

Trinity Presbyterian Lakeland has hired Jason Knecht as a Church Planting Apprentice in hopes of planting a church in North Lakeland beginning in late 2016/ early 2017.

### **REPORTS FROM CHURCH PLANTERS:**

#### **Steve Light (Sojourner- Tampa)**

I am encouraged by the progress of Sojourner. We continue to average about fifty people a week and we regularly have visitors in our midst, mainly due to our people being "bringers." We publicly received our first membership class this past Sunday, which was followed by a picnic. We continue to rely on outside financial support, although the giving of the congregation has been growing as well. We look forward to having an energetic group of Campus Outreach Students in Tampa this summer, working with us on neighborhood evangelism. Please pray for the Lord to draw in the lost through these efforts, and for the church to mature in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

#### **Ben Turner (Strong Tower- Lakeland)**

We made it to a year! This past Easter was a special Sunday for many reasons. Obviously, celebrating the resurrection of our Lord is the greatest event to celebrate. It was also our church's one year anniversary—complete with our highest attendance of 134! We were excited to see so many new faces and even old faces from years ago. God is so good to us.

Prayer Requests:

1. My wife and I are having twins at the end of this summer. Pray for healthy babies and a cold summer.
2. We are still looking to hire a new worship leader. Pray for God's leading and wisdom.
3. Our church is going through a difficult discipline case that will likely end in excommunication. Please pray for him and us.
4. We are hoping to do officer nominations at the end of this year and begin training in 2016. Pray for God to raise up the right men.

#### **Geoff Henderson (Harbor-West Bradenton)**

Harbor just celebrated its one year anniversary service and had a lunch to follow at the park where we hosted our first preview service. Everything went very well, and had a great turnout for worship as well as for the lunch. We've been averaging about 75-80, though we had 95 or so for Easter and for the anniversary service. I'm in the process of following up with those who have filled out applications for membership class (we had about 40). We are actually running one more membership training Friday May 8th because we had several leaders who couldn't make it. There should be some new faces though at that class. We have 3 good communi-

ty groups going, and are alternating a men's/women's bible study to reach others who aren't plugged in. I'm praying for the Lord to send us more younger families as we have been getting a number of visitors who are singles and empty nesters. A play group may be forming this summer to reach that demographic. I'm astounded of the variety of people who are coming. Many have no clue about the gospel but clearly think God and morality are important.

Prayer Requests:

Pray that the Lord would open their eyes that we would see many who have come from the couch to church would make that next step to resting in Christ.

### **Jeff Skipper (SW Winter Haven)**

Currently, the Redeemer Southwest core group is meeting twice each month in our target area. We eat together, pray, plan, laugh, and talk about where we're going. We've talked about our vision, target area demographics, the biblical purposes of the church, and more. This time has been extremely beneficial and unifying for our group. Our hearts are really being knit together and burdened for the city through extended times of corporate prayer. Pray for fruit to come out of our outreach efforts, relationship building, and gathering events. Pray for our core group as we grow closer to the Lord, one another; for clarity and direction in decision-making, and in zeal for this work He has graciously given us.

### **Justin Woodall (St Pete)**

My family and I have moved down to St. Petersburg and are settling in well to the North Kenwood neighborhood on the northwest corner of downtown. Conner (my oldest son) has transferred into kindergarten at Woodlawn elementary. Angie has met a few local moms and we are praying that some of those relationships bear fruit. I have been volunteering at Conner's school, teaching the chess club and helping out in some other ways. I am also in the process of becoming one of the three chaplains of the St. Petersburg Police Department. I am currently in the process of scheduling my polygraph so that I can be credentialed in the department. I will be the only chaplain under the age of 60; more than half of the police force is under 45. In the mean time I have continued to travel to Tampa a few days a week to help out at Westtown.

April 12th we had our first informal meeting. We met with the various folks from around town that I have been connecting with together. We had 8 folks in our living room praying for the city of St. Petersburg, one another, and the new church. We also discussed what we were going to call this new church. We are close to settling on City Church of St. Petersburg. We are going to continue meeting for prayer once a month through the summer.

Prayer requests:

Pray for more contacts for me in the city.

Pray for our monthly prayer gatherings. I would love to see us close to 20 people at the end of the summer.

Pray for our relationship with Westtown as we transition off of staff over the summer.

Pray for evangelism in the city.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE- M/S/P:**

- 1. The MNA committee recommends that the SWFL presbytery overture the 2015 General Assembly to erect a provisional presbytery for the country of Nicaragua (see attached).**

Respectfully submitted,



Barry A. "Drew" Bennett, Chairman

**OVERTURE** from Presbytery of Southwest Florida (to MNA)

“Erect a Provisional Presbytery for the country of Nicaragua”

**Whereas** the Presbyterian Church in America has no official presence in Nicaragua and

**Whereas** there is currently no National Presbyterian Church in Nicaragua; and

**Whereas** TE Lyle Caswell is a member of Southwest Florida Presbytery; and

**Whereas** members of the fledgling Presbyterian Church of Nicaragua (PCN) is requesting oversight and fellowship of this denomination; and

**Whereas** there is an official MTW Nicaraguan Partnership formulated by Christ Community Presbyterian Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church and Church of the Redeemer and individual members of Southwest Florida Presbytery have had a long-standing relationship with Nicaragua; and

**Whereas** the Nicaraguan Partnership is desirous to see the establishment of a National Presbyterian Church in Nicaragua; and

**Whereas** the Nicaraguan Partnership is desirous of the planting of many new churches; and

**Whereas** the Nicaraguan Partnership has been active in church planting, as well as, developing and training men for potential Teaching Elders for three active church plants; and

**Whereas** it is the desire of Southwest Florida Presbytery MNA committee to assist in the church planting effort by establishing a functioning Presbytery in Nicaragua;

**Therefore be it resolved** that the Southwest Florida Presbytery, according to **BCO 15-06**, commit to a commission the task of forming a provisional Presbytery in Nicaragua with the goal of establishing an indigenous Presbyterian and Reformed Church. Said commission shall have authority to act as the Presbytery in all matters pertaining to the establishment and ordering of a national Church and shall report annually to the Southwest Florida Presbytery and or General Assembly. The commission shall be dissolved when there are at least three national Teaching Elders and three organized churches under its care, and these shall then constitute a separate national Church. To support said commission, we ask that the Southwest Florida Presbytery appoint the following men to be members of the commission by merit of their long-standing relationship with the work in Nicaragua and or their fluency in the Spanish language; TE Lyle Caswell, TE Andrew Lamb, TE Dax Gibson, TE Stan McMahan, and TE Jonathon Winfree.

### **Rationale for a Provisional Presbytery for Presbyterian Mission Work in Nicaragua**

The Nicaraguan Partnership has been avidly involved with the country of Nicaragua for over 7 years. Our hope from the beginning was to see many reformed churches planted throughout the country. Our vision would be to see 5 churches planted in the five largest cities throughout Nicaragua. With that said, we have been networking throughout the country to find national men that might be interested in helping us toward this goal. Over the years we have come to find a few men that are willing to be trained and sent out to plant said churches. Therefore, we need a mechanism to formally train and ordain these men. The Provisional Presbytery would give us the mechanism and authority necessary to move forward in training and examining of these men, and Lord willing many more. There is not only provision made in the BCO for kind of work but precedent in neighboring countries. We have been working in conjunction with MTW in other countries to gain helpful insight as to the way ahead. We are excited to see what the Lord will do over many years in Nicaragua.