
MINUS40 REPORT

Missionaries to the indigenous people of the Far North

February 2020

Dear praying friends,

February is one of the hardest newsletters to write every year. The dark days, the bitter cold, the wind, snow, and overall stress of an arctic winter is not conducive to an enthralling report. I have tried to be transparent and brutally honest in my letters to be sure you have a proper understanding of missionary life. That being said, there is a fine line between the truth and complaining. Missionary life is wonderful, fulfilling and most veteran missionaries wouldn't trade it for anything. But it is a hard life. I say that with full understanding that some may think I've crossed the line of truth into the territory of complaining. Reality and honesty will only help you, as a prayer warrior and engaged supporter, obtain victory in intercessory prayer.

*Holiday loneliness. I remember years ago enjoying holiday church fellowships and being struck with a bolt of loneliness for family.

*The difficulty of winter. Bundling up for the cold, Frozen water, sewer, and vehicle problems. Especially the ultra high cost of heating a home in the winter.

*Unreasonable food prices. Crazy prices for fresh fruit and vegetables that are poor, poor quality.

*Darkness 24 hours a day.

*An increase in wickedness and demonic oppression. It is hard to describe, but scripture says, "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Gambling, sexual deviance, substance abuse, and rejection of spiritual truth.

*Domestic and foreign political season. The ungodly march of humanism churns turmoil every political season at local through international levels.

*Absence from every family birthday, anniversary, sickness, party and get together. Elderly family member's health fails as the years pass. Family guilt is awful.

*Missing your home church services, preacher and fellowship. This diminishes and all but disappears in time. But it is quite strong until a few trips home proves the church has moved on without you.

*A new phenomenon; Friends, family, and acquaintances publicly embarrassing themselves, ruining their testimony and advancing inappropriate humour on social media.

*The never-ending demand to report spiritual victory to satisfy supporters and therefore earn and keep our support. Online publication of our newsletters demands a milky, non-specific, yet positive report. In real life, you win some and you lose some. Sometimes you get the bear and sometimes the bear gets you. Unrealistic demands are grievous, and the pressure is quite burdensome.

Lest you think I am complaining, I'll stop. But ask you to read between the lines to see what your missionaries are saying that they are not allowed to say.

The Back Page...

The “Back Page” is dedicated to the journey Lois and I are traveling that eventually will lead us to “life after Tuk”. This is the 3rd entry of this journey.

A requirement for the implementation of “life after Tuk” is Canadian permanent residence for the Stelzig family and thus a reasonable assumption that uninterrupted leadership of the Tuk Baptist Church will continue. Legal immigration and permanent residence is an expensive and exhaustive process. We come into foreign missionary work understanding that and financially prepare for it, but that does not diminish the size of this deal breaking obstacle. Brother Stelzig needs bulldogged tenacity to see victory in this area. I ask you to pray for him as he tackles the immigration monster.

Pastors from several Canadian Provinces have contacted me and reminded me of the need to bring the gospel to the First Nations People in their area. They are right. There is a need. Every pastor who reminded me of the need in their home area, is being 100% truthful. I can personally only go to one place, but my future MUST include the raising of awareness of the need for indigenous ministry and (in a sense), recruit faithful men to advance the cause of Christ far beyond anything I can do alone.

In all honesty, life after Tuk scares me to death. Arctic ministry is what I know. It is our life. It is where we feel comfortable. We are experienced in managing life here and do not do well in other scenarios. But it would be selfish of me to endanger the long term health of the northern ministries I have been associated with by sticking around, simply because it is my comfort zone. At 59 I better be willing to step outside my comfort zone and respond to my heavenly Father with a convincing “Yes sir”, with as much conviction as I did at 28.

Pray for us as we seek the centre of God’s will and finish strong!

Thank you!

Steve & Lois