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# MINUS40 REPORT

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Missionaries to the indigenous people of the Far North

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## August 2020

Dear praying friends,

Greetings from Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Lois and I arrived June 15 and began to self quarantine and emerged 14 days later excited to jump into our new life as Yukoners! The very first Sunday after quarantine we had our first church meeting on the grounds of the SS Klondike where 7 people met with the hopes of planting a church focusing on Inuit, First Nations and Métis. Since that meeting we've grown to 17 souls and are calling ourselves **Northern Light Baptist Church**. Our mission is to "Point Northern Souls to The True Light in the land of Northern Lights". Currently we meet in a local hotel meeting room but are looking for an affordable space to utilize in the downtown core of Whitehorse. You can follow us and see regular updates via a new Facebook page called: *Iceroadpreacher and the Minus40 Report*. [www.facebook.com/groups/559296705007026](https://www.facebook.com/groups/559296705007026)

Our search for personal housing is ongoing while we live in our RV in a campground. We have a backup plan in place for housing once winter hits, but until then and as we search for a place to call home, we are quickly learning that a capital city's real estate market can be quite intimidating. We've missed a few, been too slow on the draw for a few, offered too low over asking price once... (I didn't even know that was a thing until coming to a city with a housing shortage)

Lois has been doing well, the humidity here is quite low and her pain level is less and quite manageable. The variety in stores still overwhelms us sometimes and we are always needing to curb the urge to buy in bulk for the trip north. High quality, fresh fruits and vegetables abound here and are ridiculously affordable compared to the high arctic. Our big six-oh birthdays are early this month and our 42nd wedding anniversary is September 1st. If we're not too tired we will celebrate. 😊

Ministry here is very much the same as the high arctic. Relationships are built slow and trust must be earned. We have the advantage of tossing around names from the arctic that we had built trust with, and the hurdles come down quicker when a prospect's uncle or auntie "went to your church." As well, news traveled fast within the former residents of the NWT that we were in town and a couple of folks had called me "Pastor" for years in Inuvik before they moved to Whitehorse for work or school. This week after service a first time visitor went home and immediately posted on social media, "I found my church!"

Thank you for your love and support through the years.

Steve and Lois Donley

### 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 5th and final entry of this journey.

On June 11, Lois and I left Tuktoyaktuk and stopped in Inuvik for two days to handle some business in preparation to leave the arctic. June 13 we left Inuvik and made it to Eagle Plains, Yukon. The manageable, bite size approach to travel placed us in Dawson City, Yukon the next day and into Whitehorse on the 15th and that’s when and where we self isolated for 14 days.

The memories flooded our hearts for miles and hours as we traveled, but there were no regrets, no tears or fears. We had finished the work the Lord called us to way back in 1989. There were difficult times, failures and heartaches, but thought it all we left the NWT and the arctic with the 3 delta churches in great shape. Inuvik was fully autonomous and healthy, Aklavik had been cared for by the Nolands for many years and Tuktoyaktuk had the Stelzigs in place set up with potential of many years ahead of them. The “coulda, shoulda, woulda” thoughts had already been wrestled with and given to the Lord which made way for an excitement to build for our new, Yukon chapter, fresh with with the blank pages of potential and hope.

In complete transparency for this “back page” journey, let me further explain how the timing played out in our minds and was confirmed through prayer and solid, scripturally based peace. The Covid lockdown reduced ministry opportunity to a very small proportion. In my opinion not enough to justify 2 missionary families in one small community. Facebook live services were our best online opportunity. Roy Stelzig was settled in and committed to being in Tuk long term, so we felt he could handle things as they were and more as it came along. As well, if there is a 2nd wave of Covid to hit this fall, (that would in essence be our winter) and we’d be locked down until who knows when? So the window of opportunity was open and with only a 14 day isolation to contend with, we pulled the trigger to move and the NWT ministries never missed a beat when we left. But now there’s a new beat in the Yukon. The heartbeat of an infant church with a heart that beats for Indigenous souls.