
MINUS40 REPORT

Missionaries to the indigenous people of the Far North

February 2021

Dear praying friends,

As a teenager I learned how to tie a bowline knot with one hand. It was said this was useful in case you ever had to hang onto a rope while dangling off cliff and tie a rope around your waist with the free hand. Having never found myself in such a situation, I forgot how to tie it. A few months ago I remembered the idea but had forgotten how to tie the knot and had to relearn it. As well, I had forgotten a few things about northern ministry since planting NLBC and had to relearn them too.

I forgot that a congregation's average age often mirrors the pastor's age. Healthy churches have every age group represented in the congregation. NLBC in the Yukon is general a slightly older congregation, because their pastor is not a spring chicken. Would you pray with us that the Lord will bring all ages to our church? I would love to have a young man in place learning beside me to replace me in the years to come.

I also had to relearn that it takes a long time to earn trust. I was settled into the NWT ministries in the Western Arctic for decades, and trust was a diminishing problem. I had known some young adults when they were kids, and they grew up trusting me as their pastor. But here in the Yukon I'm just another guy who transitioned in and people don't know me from Adam. I have to earn trust and that takes time, especially in the indigenous community. Would you pray that the Lord would part the Red Sea of distrust and fast track the trust issue? A truth about success in indigenous ministry is that folks usually must trust you and have a relationship with you before they will listen to your witness and trust your Jesus. I don't have decades left in ministry to build that trust. Remember Psalms 75:6-7? For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. 7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. Let's pray together for God's help based on this truth!

I forgot that I'm not 35 anymore. Like a child who's eyes are bigger than their stomach, I often find myself short on energy and gumption to be a vibrant church planter. As well, I catch myself asking Lois to carry a burden she can't hold up under. We are more plodders than buzz saw missionaries these days. Would you pray we would be blessed with health, energy and strength to finish strong in this final leg of our race here on earth?

I forgot in the ease of decades of non-persecution that a pastor must lead his church with strong, spiritual wisdom, as he protects the flock. Routine and ease brings shortsightedness. Would you pray that I might be a lionlike protector of the sheep in my charge in these days of persecution?

Thank you for your love and support through the years. We truly are partners in ministry.

Steve and Lois Donley

Please have a look at the continuing focus on the back page called, "The Man in the Pew."

The Man in the Pew...

The "Man in the Pew" is dedicated to the unsung heroes that facilitate the sending of missionaries, and faithfully perform the logistics of keeping missionaries on the field.

Recently while discussing the propriety of a missionary being active in missions giving, a statement was used that stopped me cold and has lit a fire in my heart to give honour where honour is due. A giant of arctic missions told me, "When it comes right down to it, all missionary work happens because of the man in the pew."

The "man in the pew" this time is dedicated to reminding us of the champions that our siblings (and or other family members) are in staying at home and caring for family issues while we serve far from home. Missionaries are sons and daughters. The responsibility to honour our parents is a permanent command. Honour includes care. Lois and I are blessed with great siblings who have taken the responsibility of caring for our parents. Lois has lost both her parents and in the times leading to their passing, her siblings handled things and our permanence on the mission field has been consistent. My parents are currently being cared for by my brother. He and his wife work tirelessly in honouring my parents and their sacrificial care of mom and pop is as important as anything ministry wise that I do. On this side of Glory, the sibling's role in worldwide evangelization will never be rewarded properly. Someday we will all stand before Christ and finally understand in full disclosure the equality mentioned in 2 Corinthians chapter 8. The rewards will fulfill the requirement to give honour to whom honour is due.

*2 Corinthians 8:11-15. 11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. 12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. 13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: 14 **But by an equality**, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: **that there may be equality**: 15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.*