

FOI ET VIE RÉFORMÉES



PUTTING CHRIST FIRST

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Dependence upon the missionary church should decrease gradually



Radio RTEDI in Kisangani (Northern DRC) started airing our programs twice per week in January

Dear friends

Celebrating the risen Christ every day of our life, perhaps with a stronger focus during Easter time, leads us to ask ourselves which place He really holds within Christian ministries.

What may seem a strange statement to you will become clearer if I ask the following question: who or what is really central in our church ministries: Jesus-Christ the risen Lord, or our ministries, their vision, policies, operating modes, challenges and successes, perhaps even our own persons? That is a tough question to ask, but a necessary one if we don't want to delude ourselves into thinking that we are serving the Lord and His Church, while we may actually be serving a self-centred agenda, without even noticing it. When brilliant results, glowing statistics or glorious achievements are expected by our supporting "constituencies," it is

likely that proclaiming the resurrection and ascension into heaven of people's ministries, rather than proclaiming Christ's resurrection and ascension, *followed* by His entire body, will ensue.

A subtle temptation for those involved in African missions consists in perpetuating a mission which focuses on the missionary and his sending church's own sense of worthiness and good standing through his continued involvement. It can happen by promoting dependence of young believers on the field upon him and his church rather than providing them with the tools they really need to increase their dependence solely upon the Lord Jesus-Christ, His Word and His Spirit, thus leading them to a mature faith. This temptation is subtle because the zeal manifested by missionaries often correlates with a need of dependence (especially of a material or

financial nature) displayed by pastors and communities in the mission field. And so both parties end up manipulating each other's need of dependence: the missionary or the ministry seeks to maintain status, recognition, and constant involvement (the unhealthy logic behind this being: *how will my ministry survive otherwise?*); the other party seeks some kind of material advantage, pretexting chronic weakness and making a shrewd appeal to Christian generosity from the more affluent "partner," while mixing it with a call for spiritual help.

On the contrary, dependence upon the missionary church should decrease gradually, making space for full fellowship under the same headship, that of Jesus-Christ, to the glory of the Father, through the powerful work of the Spirit. The words of John the Baptist to his disciples come to mind here (John 3:30): *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

ASSOCIATING AFRICAN PASTORS TO THE WORK OF FEVR

This is a real issue for the African ministry of *Foi et Vie Réformées*, during this time of delicate transition. While it is not at all an option to abandon the African field—for there are definitely needs which our ministry is called to fulfill—the best way to deal with the new situation created by the move to France must be carefully weighed. Last year, during its annual meeting, the supporting committee of *Foi et Vie Réformées* approved a proposal to associate a few Reformed African pastors to the writing of new radio messages destined to be recorded and broadcast on all the radio outlets where *FEVR* is on the air in Africa. Our project is still in its initial stages, but it comes down to enabling Africans to minister the Gospel faithfully to other Africans through the radio, therefore taking gradual responsibility for a solid radio and media ministry. As one of them—pastor A.T. from Kinshasa—recently put it to me: *Our continent suffers from a lack of men or women that would stand up like Nehemiah to straighten a seemingly desperate situation or rebuild a church which is gradually becoming unfaithful. A wait-and-see or a beggar-like attitude, a chronic lack of initiative and creativity are the marks of the Christian*

African person. However the Bible and the history of the Church present us with people like ourselves whom God mightily used to free nations subjected to a host of bondages. Please pray that together we may achieve healthy spiritual growth through mutually enriching collaboration, devoid of any false expectations, so that all the glory may come to our Triune God and no one else.

PROGRESS AT HOME

After eight months of administrative delays, the reorganizing works in our house that should enable me to operate properly from home have finally started. Another two months are needed to complete everything, and will require some extra patience. In the meantime, my wife Olga is developing our internet platforms, in particular the new website which in time will host our audio and video recordings, as well as other tools. In collaboration with a small team of editors, *FEVR* also aims at starting an internet journal of Christian thought on matters of culture, social and political issues etc... for more developed essays written by various authors.

Networking with fellow Reformed believers whenever the opportunity arises, is of course vital for the development of our ministry in France. Attending the annual Francophone Bible Conference in Lyon last week allowed me to pursue these contacts and understand better the general spiritual climate in France and surrounding countries (like Belgium and Switzerland). Stimulating lectures were offered and good fellowship prevailed. It is also very encouraging to see how many non-French young Christians have at heart to bring the Gospel to France. May the Lord use all his servants' efforts to raise a generation of solid French pastors and evangelists that *would stand up like Nehemiah to straighten a seemingly desperate situation or rebuild a church which has gradually become unfaithful!*

In His service,

Rev Eric Kayayan



Networking with fellow Reformed believers is vital for the development of our ministry in France.

Please send your donations to the following address:
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