



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Free Presbyterians open church building in Canada



Rev. Andy Foster (ninth from right) with visiting ministers and elders.

Few Free Presbyterian congregations have experienced such an answer to prayer regarding church premises, as Penticton congregation in British Columbia, Canada. On Saturday, October 12th, the North American Commission of the Free Presbyterian

Church opened Penticton Free Presbyterian Church building on Preston Avenue, Penticton, in the beautiful Okanagan Valley. Rev. Andy Foster, the minister of the congregation, led the opening services and Rev. Ian Goligher, the senior minister whose radio broadcast in the area gave rise to the first interest in a Free Presbyterian Church, preached the first sermon. Dr. Frank McClelland, the “father” of the Free Presbyterian Church in Canada, preached on Lord’s Day 13th at the formal opening service and then unveiled a plaque in the porch of the church marking the event. The plaque also registered the appreciation by the congregation of the generous spirit of the former owners, a Christian Brethren Assembly, in their willingness to sell the property at a token price in order to assure the continuance of the gospel witness in the building. Amongst the visitors were the Editor of “The Burning Bush”, Rev. Ivan Foster, his wife Ann and their son-in-law, Rev. Brian McClung, who had spent some time at the minister’s week of prayer in Calgary and their second son Richard, an elder in the Kilskeery congregation.

The following is a report by Rev. Andy Foster on recent events in this infant congregation.

This year has been one of tremendous advance for our little work here in Penticton. One year ago we were in rented accommodation that was becoming increasingly unsuitable for our use. Today we find ourselves in our new Church building and although the congregation is still small numerically, the Lord has added to our ranks and there are the evidences around us of God beginning to stir. We are looking for that which the Psalmist spoke of: Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep (Ps 78:65).

One of the climactic points of the year thus far has been the special services that were organized to mark the re-opening of our building. Although we took possession in June and have been using the building since then, formal re-opening services were arranged for October 12th and 13th. The reason for this was to coincide with the conclusion of the Fall week of prayer for ministers and elders. This was held in Calgary this year - an easy 9 hour drive to the east of Penticton!! Since this is close in relative terms for our works in North



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America, a number of the ministers and elders attending the week of prayer were able to make the trip over to Penticton and be present for our special services.

The ministers present were: Revs. Dave Mook, Frank McClelland, Larry Saunders, David McClelland, Stephen Hamilton, Reggie Kimbro, Dave Brame, Ian Goligher, Lee Sterritt, David DiCanio and Rhett Dodson. Several elders from our churches were also present: Messrs. George Robinson, Wilfred Brown, Howard Saunders, Bill Pehlert and John Mulholland. It was a real thrill for us to have these brethren present as well as Mrs. Goligher, Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Dodson. In each of the services we had a large contingent of visitors from nearby congregations. A significant number were present from the Cloverdale congregation. Mr. Aaron Dunlop, over on missionary training from Northern Ireland, was also amongst the Cloverdale contingent. Some folks were visiting from Prince George Free Presbyterian Church as well. The smallest attendance was 75 and the largest, 90. During these services special offerings were taken up for our Building Fund in which almost \$11,000 was raised. To God be the glory! This means that we will be able to make substantial repayments on the loans we had obtained to purchase the property.

On Saturday October 12th, we had a praise service in which each of the visiting ministers took part. It was a real blessing to join in praise with a congregation swelled by visitors and all rejoicing in the goodness of God. Rev. Ian Goligher brought a closing word speaking of the features that exhibit the glorious truth that Jesus is in the house (Mark 2:1). Our Sunday morning service was the formal re-opening of the building and a number of special items were included in the proceedings. Rev. Larry Saunders, Moderator of the North American Commission, brought words of greeting to the congregation. Rev. Ivan Foster spoke on the behalf of the Ulster Presbytery and read a message from the Moderator Dr. Ian R. K. Paisley. A message from Dr. John Douglas, Clerk of the Ulster Presbytery, was also read as were messages from other well-wishers. On behalf of the Penticton congregation Rev. Andy Foster presented Rev. Ian Goligher with a copy of the Scriptures in recognition of his faithful labours in the congregation. Dr. Frank McClelland then preached powerfully on the record of the disciples being on the lake of Galilee in the storm and the Saviour coming to them. His words were a wonderful encouragement to trust the Saviour even in dark times. At the conclusion of this service a special commemorative plaque was unveiled by Dr. McClelland. Following our morning service we all enjoyed a very happy meal together in the Church banquet room. In the evening service Rev. Ivan Foster was the preacher. His message was the first part of a series which he continued in each of the meetings he was present for, on the reformation that took place under Hezekiah. The ministry of the Lord's servant was used greatly to challenge all who heard to deal with sin and set about the work of seeing the cause of God revived and restored to its full glory. Please continue to pray for our witness here. We have seen the Devil attack and are very conscious that if we are to see the Lord's blessing upon us we can expect Satan's opposition. We have been encouraged to see a number of visitors begin to attend.

The Lord has given us tokens for good from our radio ministry and also our witness on Sermonaudio.com. We also recently have been notified of a possible opening for a regular service in a retirement facility in the city. In all these ventures we long to see souls saved and the Saviour magnified for all to see. Thank you to each one who has prayed for us and to all those who have sent gifts to our Building Fund.