

Church in the Hills

CRC of Sydney Begins New Preaching Post

It was not a new idea. Planting a church in the Cherrybrook/Hills District on the outskirts of Sydney has been an idea floating around the CRC of Sydney (CRCS) for a while. Previously the congregation believed it was not big enough for such a venture and the Cherrybrook folk were not ready to go it alone. But currently the official membership of CRC Sydney is double the capacity of their church building on Cox's Road, North Ryde.

Another major issue is the fact that CRCS is a regional congregation that needs to develop local ministries in the communities where the members live. Nearly a third of the families of CRCS live in the Hills District. A number of members are joining local churches, often driven by their children or young people wanting to go to church with their local friends. The CRCS also found it difficult to do any continuous serious evangelism asking everyone to keep driving to Ryde while ignoring the very communities they live in and the networks they have there. The bottom line was CRCS needed a vision for church planting and outreach. The church had become a safe haven for new migrants finding their place. It was essential that eventually as a church they would take up the task Christ gave: to make disciples.



On October 11th the second preaching post was started at the Castlehill Seventh Day Adventist Church, Cecil Avenue, Castlehill. These attractive and functional facilities provided an excellent venue from which to begin regular public worship services. Leo Douma, the lead pastor at CRCS, is the main preacher at both the North Ryde and Castlehill

locations. The CRC in the Hills meets at 8:30 am while the North Ryde congregation meets at 11:00 am. Corrie Nel, the associate pastor of CRCS, assists also in the preaching load of both locations.

The session of CRCS is cautiously optimistic that this venture is doable. Where there is a vision for outreach and a commitment to eventually establish a new church, then there are very good prospects. The congregation agreed overwhelmingly to support this church plant. After six months a review will take place to determine ongoing viability.



Corrie Nel, associate pastor of CRCS, shares a moment between services with Robby Moningka, pastor of the Indonesian Reformed Church which shares the facilities with the CRC in the Hills.

The Way Forward

The CRC in the Hills is committed to reaching out to the local community of the Hills District. This outreach is targeted to both South African migrants and local Australians. The main objectives are to grow a church and create a sense of community. This new congregation will remain under the auspices and direction of the CRCS session. While there will be challenges ahead, the leaders of CRCS are prayerfully convinced the establishment of a second preaching center is not a matter of convenience, but an opportunity to reach out to the families in the Hills District, growing the church for the sake of the Lord Jesus. The vision of CRCS is a growing reality: *to reach up, reach out, and reach in!*

The Vision of Sydney CRC

“Like Christ, in all of life”

Like Jesus – reach up, reach out, reach in.

Reach out = evangelism
“making disciples of all nations”

Reach in = pastoral care for each other

A Tale of Two Churches

The start of the CRC in the Hills created also a gospel opportunity for the Indonesian Reformed Church (IRC). For the past number of years this young congregation has been meeting in the Courtyard by Marriot Hotel, North Ryde. Sharing rental costs with the CRC in the Hills made it feasible for this small congregation to expand their outreach capacity. Their pastor Robby Moningka and his family also shifted to the Hills District where a good number of their families also live. On Sunday, December 13th, the IRC began holding worship services in these shared facilities of the Castlehill Seventh Day



The facilities of the Castlehill Seventh Day Adventist Church, Castlehill, NSW

Adventist church. Now two CRC churches are meeting in the Hills District. The Hills church meets at 8:30 with the IRC meeting at 10:00. There are discussions between both churches how they can cooperate together with certain ministries, such as youth education classes. The vision of Revelation 5:9 is being realised in the CRC. An example is what is happening in hills surrounding Sydney. People from every tribe and language and people and nation are gathering together – Indonesians, South Africans, Australians, Netherlanders – working together to reach people for Christ. Let us pray that this vision will be a growing reality throughout Australia.



Pastor Robby of the IRC on their grand opening Sunday