

PROTESTANT REFORMED FOREIGN MISSIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE PHILIPPINES

- ▶ **The Protestant Reformed Church in Bulacan** (Muzon, San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan) oversees the mission field in Albueria, Leyte. In the absence of a full-time missionary in Albueria, the consistory of PRCB has been sending monthly committees of a pastor, with an elder or deacon, to preach, teach, provide pastoral care, and administer benevolence to the needy with the Word of God and prayer. Rev. Smit provides pulpit supply to the BPRC or PRCB, depending on which pastor is involved in the monthly visit. The worship services of the PRCB are broadcast live via the internet to 4 locations in the Philippines and one location in the Middle East where the PRCB has Filipino contacts.
- ▶ **The Berean Protestant Reformed Church** (Antipolo, Rizal) has, in addition to its regular Sunday worship services and catechism schedule, an evangelism work at the Kerusso Community Church in the downtown Manila area (Tondo) at which Pastor Ibe preaches regularly and afterwards conducts an Essentials of Reformed Doctrine class. Once a month, Pastor Ibe and one consistory member lead a Bible study in Gabaldon (5 hour drive north of Manila). This Bible study is held in Sitio Karugang, which is a different location than Bagong Sikat where previous work was done.
- ▶ **The Berean Protestant Reformed Church** is sponsoring a conference on May 1, 2018, a national holiday. The theme is "The Power of the Gospel." The four speakers and their speeches are as follows:
 - ❖ Rev. L. Trinidad, "What is the Gospel?"
 - ❖ Rev. J. Flores, "The Gospel and the World"
 - ❖ Rev. D. Kleyn, "Regeneration and Calling"
 - ❖ Rev. V. Ibe, "The Gospel and Sanctification"
- ▶ **The Maranatha Protestant Reformed Church** (Valenzuela, Metro Manila) hosted the recent Classis of the PRCP on February 25. One of the significant decisions of the Classis was that Rev. Leovy Trinidad, pastor of Maranatha, was appointed to represent the PRCP at the upcoming Synod of the PRCA in June 2018, particularly in regards to the finalization of a sister-church relationship between the PRCP and the PRCA.
- ▶ **Seminary training** for the ministry of the Word in the PRCP remains a priority for the PRCP and us. Preparations are being made for the start of a seminary program in the future, as well as providing pre-seminary instruction in N.T. Greek, the Lord willing. More updates on this work will follow as plans develop and are approved. We see the need for the training of local ministers of the Gospel for the churches here, both in their own pulpits and their mission fields. We commit the desire and planning of a theological school for the PRCP to the Lord's blessing and guidance.

PRCA MISSIONS

- ▶ Our Reformed doctrine and Reformed church order classes continue once a month in **Sipalay, Southern Negros Occidental (SNO)**, with local pastors and leaders of various churches, mission groups, and other groups. The men come from an area that extends from Inayauan to Hinobaan, a distance which would take about 1 hour to travel by car or motorcycle. Rev. Kleyn has been giving lectures on the articles in the Church Order and is almost finished with this work, before moving on to another subject of benefit to the pastors for their continuing education. In February, I resumed instruction and review in the section of Reformed doctrine regarding Christology. The brethren in SNO

maintain faithful and lively attendance.

- ▶ **In the Provident Christian Church** (Marikina, Metro Manila) Rev. Holstege continues to serve full-time, preaching on Sundays, giving instruction in the Church Order between the 2 worship services, and providing catechism instruction in the Wednesday Night Bible Study (recently on the truth of Matthew 24-25). In addition to this, Rev. Holstege leads a Youth Fellowship Bible study on Sunday afternoons. Rev. Kleyn has continued to teach the Saturday morning Bible History catechism for the children of the PCC. Recently, under the guidance of Rev. Holstege with the help of Rev. Kleyn, the PCC is working towards the goal of becoming a part of the PRCP denomination.

VISITORS

- ▶ In the past several months, we hosted the PRCA Contact Committee delegation in late October so that they could be present at the November 1 meeting of the PRCP Classis in order to convey the greetings and decisions of the 2017 PRCA Synod about a sister-church relationship with the PRCP.
- ▶ Then, the Holstege family enjoyed parents, grandparents, and a sister and aunt visiting over US Thanksgiving and around the time of the Christmas holidays.
- ▶ Mr. Nathan Pastoor visited in December. Mr. Elliot Ensink and Miss Elizabeth Ensink visited around the beginning of 2018, enjoying even our annual New Years' Day picnic with all of us at Faith Academy's elementary school playground. Mr. Peter Kleyn and Mr. David Dijkstra visited in January. Mr. and Mrs. Colin Lim and their daughters, Cheryl and Bernice, from CERC in Singapore visited at the time of Chinese New Year (Feb. 16).
- ▶ The FMC/Doon Council delegation of Mr. Joel Van Egdom (with his wife, Michelle) and Rev. Cory Griess visited us in the second half of February and even joined the monthly visit to SNO. We have enjoyed the encouragement of our visitors.

A NEW MISSIONARY FAMILY



- ▶ After the usual long trip from North America, we arrived at our house on December 29. The clock in the above picture even reminds me that it was about 9:30 a.m. when we finally arrived at our new but old home.
- ▶ What exactly did I mean by "our new but old home"? The Kleyns and Holstesges searched for suitable housing for us in the current subdivision and surrounding areas in October. Then, in late October 2017, when I was here for a Contact Committee delegation, I and my wife (via

Skype) discussed what to do with the available options. After some discussion together about the feasible options, we mutually agreed on the option of a great missionary house exchange.

- ▶ What exactly was this great missionary house exchange of 2017? Our house is the former house of the Holsteges which was our former house (October 2010 to March 2015). So, in an unexpected way, we are living nicely in our old house again! In turn, the Holsteges have occupied, since December, the former house of the Kleyns. Then, to complete this amazing house exchange of 2017, the Kleyns have occupied, since November, their new house on a different street of our subdivision. Their house is very nice, too. And, our children noticed an interesting mathematical pattern about the address numbers of our 3 houses: #12 (Smits), #23 (Kleyns), #34 (Holsteges).
- ▶ A week after our arrival, our children joined Gabriel Holstege as returning students to Faith Academy on January 4. The Smit children have adjusted well to classes, teachers, and classmates at Faith Academy. Our school "March Break" is coming soon. We don't call our mid-semester break "Spring Break" because it's actually the hot summer time here. Our vacation starts on March 23 and continues through April 2. The children expect to return to class refreshed and well-tanned on April 3.

SUMMARY OF OUR DIVISION OF LABOURS

- ▶ With the addition of a third missionary and his family to the work, some thought and attention was given to sort out where the third missionary would fit into the current stream of work. Here is a summary of what we are doing.
- ▶ Labors of Rev. Holstege: Rev. Holstege works full-time in the Provident Christian Church with preaching, catechism, Bible Study, family visting, chairman of steering committee, and PCC's own evangelism work. He serves as an advisor to the PRCP in the area of missions, contact with other churches, and translation work.
- ▶ Labors of Rev. Kleyn: Rev. Kleyn works in the Maranatha PRC with preaching twice a month and attendance at their monthly consistory meetings. Rev. Kleyn serves as an advisor to the consistory of the PRCP at their request and to the 2 standing committees of the PRCP Classis which oversee all of the denominational work of the PRCP. Rev. Kleyn will continue to lecture at the monthly pastors classes in SNO, and, if possible, make longer visits to the area in order to help the churches in SNO in their development in the Reformed faith and church government.
- ▶ Labors of Rev. Smit: Rev. Smit will help the PRCP to develop a seminary program for its seminary students. For this goal, Rev. Smit serves as an advisor to Committee 1 of the PRCP Classis which oversees the work of the PRCP Seminary, as well as other denominational matters. Rev. Smit provides preaching in the PRCP congregations and the Provident Christian Church when the regular pastors or missionaries are scheduled to be absent from their pulpits. Rev. Smit plans to continue his lectures at the monthly SNO classes.
- ▶ Labors Together: Together, we are continuing our Tagalog education, providing lectures to the 7M classes, providing lectures at PRCP sponsored conferences and youth retreats, and helping the churches with their mission work in Albueria, Bulacan, Gabaldon, Tondo, Laguna, and other places. We continue to be involved in the congregational life of the churches, including such things as their annual church picnics. We plan to take turns again with the writing of our quarterly newsletters, and, as we have done in the past years, we are willing to provide live-interviews via Skype to our PR young people societies, high school classes, or Bible Study groups that are interested in a pre-arranged Q/A session with one of our missionaries.

- ▶ We understand that after reading this long list, you might find it difficult to visualize who is doing what and where and how even we ourselves can keep it all straight. Yet, you can surely appreciate that we are being kept busy. Pray for us that God give us the grace to be sustained in all of these harvest labors.

FURLOUGH PLANS FOR 2018

- ▶ There is a time for intense labor, but there is also a time and need for rest in order to rejuvenate ourselves for further work. The Holstege family plan to have their six-week furlough from June 11 to July 24. The six week furlough includes 3 weeks for vacation and 3 weeks for preaching, for attendance at Synod, and for mission field presentations in our churches.
- ▶ Their busy itinerary is as follows:
 - ❖ June 11-17 Grand Rapids
 - ❖ June 18-27 Randolph
 - ❖ June 27-July 1 Doon/Hull
 - ❖ July 2-15 Grand Rapids
 - ❖ July 16-23 Loveland

REFORMED BOOKSHELF

- ▶ The sale of RFPA books continues to go well. The number of books sold in 2017 was 1,780. This is slightly less than what was sold in 2016: 1,800.
- ▶ A Tagalog translation of *Come, Ye Children* is moving closer to typesetting, printing, and distribution. We are excited about this project because this book will make available to Tagalog-speaking believing parents a tool of instruction for their young, Taglog-speaking lambs in Bible history according to the Reformed faith, something sorely lacking here.
- ▶ We express our thanks to you for faithful and generous support of the Philippine Book Fund and the goal that it is serving now: distribution of soundly Reformed books in English, and soon also Tagalog, that instruct and sound forth the Word of God according to the Reformed faith for God's sheep and lambs in the Philippines.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- ▶ We covet your prayers for our labours in your behalf and for the propagation of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Philippines through our small work. Similar to what a Presbyterian missionary once wrote, we do it not because it is somehow more heroic than being a local pastor, for it is not. We do it not because it is of itself a more attractive endeavour, for it is not. We do it not because it supposedly makes us more pious than seeking God's kingdom first in Canada or the USA, for it does not. This also is harvest work: challenging, blood, sweat, and tears work. Hence, we learn more and more to be motivated with the same believing conviction and focus of Paul on Christ as inspired in 2 Timothy 2:10, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."
- ▶ Since in this work no man of himself is able to do it, pray for us that the Lord sustain our strength, conviction, and desire to serve Him and His church in this work: seeking to do this work in His way according to His Word and our confessions, trusting by faith in Him alone that it has His approval and indispensable support for the glory of His grace.

In His service,
Rev. Richard J Smit