



## PROTESTANT REFORMED FOREIGN MISSIONS - THE PHILIPPINES -

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- **DECEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER** -  
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### **Bookstore**

We begin our newsletter with a note about something that continues to impress us. We are impressed with the demand here for Reformed books, particularly the RFPA books, that we supply and distribute through our bookstore in the Kleyns' house. It seems that as fast as we get a new shipment of books stored in the large bookcase in the Kleyns' house, the shelves soon become empty again. The demand is high, and the books get distributed even beyond metro Manila to contacts on other islands. Just now, we are awaiting our next shipment, but we fear that by the time it gets to shore in Manila, the stock may be mostly sold. This is actually a nice problem to have.

Of course, this book distribution would not be possible without the faithful support of our churches in this venture. Offerings which are received for this cause subsidize the costs of the books to a price that is more proportionate to the financial ability of the people here. To date this book distribution venture seems to be working well. We express our thanks to the churches for your willing, steady, and generous support.

We thank also the RFPA staff and the Smit family in our Redlands, CA, congregation for their assistance with the logistics of the shipping of books here efficiently and safely.

When these books end up in the hands of eager readers here, how happy they are with the instruction!

We pray that the writings of the RFPA by our PRCA authors may be a rich blessing to the saints and churches here and be a tool to build up the saints and the churches here in the distinctively and historically Reformed faith and practice.

### **Preaching and Pulpit Supply Schedule Changes**

For the last few months now, Rev. Smit has also been assigned to provide pulpit supply one Sunday per month for the mission work of the Berean PRCP in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija. That meant that on Sunday, December 25, Rev. Smit and his family enjoyed worship and fellowship with the regular members and some visitors of the All of Grace Protestant Reformed Fellowship.

One more positive change in pulpit supply for the AGPRF is a recent decision of the Berean PRC consistory to

send one of its elders, Elder Sonny Umali, to lead the worship services of the AGPRF every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the coming months until more pulpit supply can be provided by the missionaries in the future. Elder Umali will also use approved reading sermons, translated into Tagalog, for the first service and the Heidelberg Catechism service. He is scheduled to lead the services on January 15, 2012.

Another change in the last few months in our Sunday preaching schedule is that Rev. Kleyn is no longer providing preaching to the Christian Faith Ministry group in Batasan Hills (Quezon City). The CFM has decreased in size because former members no longer wanted to be part of the Reformed direction and growth of the CFM. Additionally, Pastor Andres lately has needed to visit in his home province of Apayao for pressing family reasons. As a result, the CFM members have been advised to attend the Berean PRC services weekly and seek church membership in the BPRC.

The fact that the CFM is no longer on the monthly preaching schedule means that Rev. Kleyn has a Sunday to provide preaching and instruction in a congregation in Valenzuela. The minister of the church is Pastor Trinidad, and the church was formerly tied to the Foursquare Gospel church before their reformation and growth in the Reformed faith. We appreciate the interest of this congregation for growth in the Reformed faith and practice.

### **Work in Inayauan, Negros Occidental, Area**

From December 20 to December 22, both missionaries visited the Reformed Free Church in Inayauan to provide 2 speeches and to lead a question and answer forum with the pastors and officebearers of the Reformed Free Churches in that area as well as other officebearers and pastors from surrounding churches which were contacts of the RFC men. We gave interactive classes on the doctrines of saving faith and then on the counsel of God.

There was good attendance and lively participation in the classes and especially in the question and answer time after the noon meal. We initially had only wanted a small group of 8 pastors, elders, and deacons, whom we have known for some time. We wanted a smaller

group setting in order to help get to know our main contacts better. However, as the news of the classes spread by word of mouth through the area around Inayauan and Sipalay, others wanted to attend so that our attendance ballooned to over 30. Our main contacts would like us to make plans to return for another day of classes with a similar format that we had used on December 21. We are thankful for the opportunity to provide instruction in the Reformed faith and to further evaluate the possible direction of any future teaching assistance to our contacts in this region of the Philippines.

### 7M

Our Monday Reformed doctrine classes continue as scheduled every other Monday. We have 4 in regular attendance, and discussion time is usually lively.

We also plan to add a new topic to 7M. We plan to keep the presentations of Reformed Doctrine to 1 hour, and that will free up some time for some instruction in homiletics, which will treat both the principles and practice of faithful Reformed preaching. It is our desire that this instruction will assist the men in their exegesis and sermon preparation so that the churches are well fed with sound expositions of the Word of God.

### Visitors

Family and friends have, are, and will be visiting us here in Antipolo, the Lord willing. Prof. and Mrs. Hanko visited here in October and then again at the end of December. They returned to the U.S.A. just a couple of days ago on December 29. Family from the Smits and the Kleyns plan to visit in January and then in February. Although we understand how difficult it is to visit here because of the high cost of air travel and because of busy schedules, yet we are sure glad when in the Lord's providence visits from family are made possible.

One of the benefits for our visitors is that when they read or hear later on the names of distant places in the Philippines, the foreign names, and the descriptions of strange noises, the smoke-belcher cars and jeepneys, the congested traffic, and the different smells, and so on, these things will be a bit familiar to them.

A more important benefit is that they receive a better appreciation for our work and for the situation in which the churches and saints here live from day to day.

### School Break

Our children are in the middle of their holiday break. Their break from classes at Faith Academy began on December 19 and will continue through Monday, January 9. Classes resume on January 10.

With the big break, we planned to spend a few extra days in the Gabaldon area when we worship in the AGPRF on December 25. It is good for us to take a break from the hustle and bustle of Manila in the outlying province of Nueva Ecija and for the children to enjoy some rest and relaxation before the demands of the next semester at school begin.

### Some Miscellaneous Items

The Berean PRCP marked its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an instituted congregation on November 19, 2011. The Lord has been merciful and gracious to the congregation over the previous years and has preserved them in faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ and in a love for His Word.

The Berean PRC and the First Reformed Church continue to move forward towards the organization of a federation. Soon, the two churches will enter the third phase of this endeavour, and perhaps this will be the most intensive phase, involving frank discussion and resolutions regarding non-essential differences. May the Lord by His Spirit grant much wisdom and direction through that phase which we expect will occupy much of our thought, prayers, and energy in 2012.

The weather is different at the end of this year than the previous two years that we have experienced in the Philippines. This year has seen more rain during the months of November and December, including the tropical storm that has caused significant deaths and devastation in the Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, area. The news agencies say that this is the result of the warmer ocean currents around the Philippines, an effect called "La Nina." However, we believe that the cause of this extraordinary weather phenomenon is the Lord who directs the oceans and weather to serve His purpose and the good of His Church in the Philippines.

That truth is our abiding comfort as we conclude 2011. As we firmly believe that He has in 2011, so we firmly believe that He will again in 2012 direct all things for the glory of the Father and the glory of His Church catholic in the new creation. Unto that goal, we hear the footsteps of His coming becoming increasingly louder. Our prayer at the end of 2011 is: "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

### Thanks

In behalf of the missionary families, we extend a hearty thanks to all of you in our churches for your interest and continued support of the mission work and the missionary families here over the past year by many means, especially the impressive attendance at the mission work presentations in June and July 2011 that were conducted in some of our congregations in Alberta, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Washington, and Wisconsin.

May the Lord continue to strengthen us for faithful missionary service to Him and to His sheep here.

May the Lord bless you richly with His Word and preserving grace and mercy in His year, 2012.

In His Service,  
*Rev. Richard J Smit*  
31 December 2011