



# PROTESTANT REFORMED FOREIGN MISSIONS

- THE PHILIPPINES -



Rev. Richard J. Smit, Foreign Missionary

**SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER**

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## Transplantation

Our journey to the mission field in Manila began with the announcement on Sunday morning, January 18, 2009, that the Lord has led me to fulfil the call from our Doon PRC to serve as missionary in the Philippines, particularly with the Berean Protestant Reformed Church in the Philippines. The result is that my family and I are in the process of being uprooted from Lacombe and North America and being transplanted into metro Manila in the Philippines. At the moment, we are living



temporarily in Hull, Iowa.

The road to Manila continued with a difficult farewell from our church home in Lacombe. Sent off with the love and support of our fellow brothers and sisters in Lacombe, including my parents, we travelled from Lacombe to

Hull, Iowa, in mid February. Our household goods were brought to Hull by a professional moving company.

The purpose of our interim time before the actual arrival in Manila and in our new church home in the Berean PRC is to fulfil a program of preparation required by the Foreign Mission Committee before a move to the mission field, to be in close contact with the calling church and FMC, and to have our children complete as much of the second semester for 2008-2009 school year in our Doon school. Therefore, for the sake of the church and the mission work in the Philippines, we are living temporarily in Hull, Iowa, in a rental house, readily provided to us by Mrs. and Mrs. Art Bleyenbergh of our Calvary-Hull, Iowa, congregation.

## Missionary Installation in the Doon PRC

Part of my preparation for the work on the mission field, has included the essential installation worship service. On Thursday evening, March 19, the congregation of Doon, the members of the FMC, and many visitors from the area churches and mission fellowship in Sioux Falls attended the missionary installation service. Rev. David Overway led the worship service and preached an installation sermon on Luke 24:19 under the theme, "The Message of Missions." Rev. Steven Key, president of the FMC, conducted the actual installation by the reading of the installation form. Upon his asking the three questions in the form regarding the work as missionary, I responded affirmatively with the Lord's strength, "Yes, truly, with all my heart."

This worship service was truly a blessing to my family and me. The missionary not only needs the internal call from the Lord, but also needs that sealed by the external call through the sending of the church. The Apostle Paul needed not only that

internal call to be missionary to the Gentiles, but according to Acts 13:1-3, he also needed the church, under the direction of the Spirit of Christ, to send him into his mission labors throughout Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. Similarly, I needed to be assured that through the church and with the anointing of the Spirit of Christ, I am being sent by the Lord Himself to serve the saints in the Berean congregation in Manila and others in the Philippine mission work.

## Preparation Work

The FMC has established a "program of preparation", which is designed to prepare our foreign missionaries for long-term and effective service on the mission field. The four part program can be summarized as follows:

- ▶ Familiarization with the mission field;
- ▶ Language study (Tagalog);
- ▶ Extensive reading in missions; and,
- ▶ Attending missions related college/seminary classes.

I have been busy since arriving in Hull in mid February in this preparation program. I have taken up the study of Tagalog with the future goal of a good ability to speak the language, the Lord willing. I have been reading and studying missions related books. I have been attending two classes at Dordt College (History of Missions and Cross-Cultural Communications) which I find very helpful for my immersion into the issues and elements of overseas mission work. Regarding familiarity with the mission field, I have visited the mission field in August 2008 as part of a delegation sent to provide pulpit supply to the Berean church, to preach in Gabaldon, and to conduct a conference in Inayauan, Negros, with the Reformed Free Church and her officebearers. I had much familiarity with the mission field from its beginnings until the summer of 2004 when I began my pastorate in our Immanuel congregation in Lacombe. Nevertheless, having been away from the mission work for almost 5 years now, I was glad for the opportunity to visit the Berean congregation and other contacts again in August 2008. With that recent experience, I could give proper consideration to the call, which, in the Lord's providence, I received at the beginning of this year. While I am by no means completely familiar with the situation, yet the recent visit and continuing contact since then has helped greatly to anticipate continuing the work where Rev. Aud Spriensma, our former missionary to the field, laid it down.

## Future Plans

That leads to thinking about what the Lord has in store for us in the next few months. Once school is finished for the children, we plan to visit in the Hudsonville, MI, area in June in order to store part of my library and some personal and household items with our family and to have some time for rest

and relaxation. We are not planning to ship our household items to Manila since the cost of that is much greater than just buying new and mostly second hand household items. We have sold or will sell most of our furniture and our vehicle. About a quarter of my library and a few, small household appliances will be sent over by cardboard boxes, and whatever else that cannot be squeezed into our allotted luggage allowance on our plane trip in July.

This visit in the Grand Rapids area in June will give me an opportunity to attend the pre-synodical worship service, to visit Synod 2009 when matters concerning the Philippines are treated, and to have, as the newest missionary family, some valuable contact with our churches and fellow saints in the Grand Rapids area.

With the approval of the FMC and Council, we plan to move to the mission field on Tuesday, July 7. Having the date set and the plane tickets purchased, the future move is becoming more real, and our attention has shifted to the details of moving onward to Manila.

The process for immigration seems to be very straightforward, although, as one would expect, there is the normal paperwork that needs to be worked through. We expect that within due time after our arrival and the timely submission of our application, that we will be granted our necessary missionary 9(g) visa for our residency in the Philippines for our long-term service on the field, the Lord willing.



Rosalyn, Seth, Carl, Ryan, Rebekah, Irene, John, Jay

By moving to the mission field in early July, this should provide us some time to adjust a little bit to the unfamiliar setting before the children begin another school year in early August. The children plan to be enrolled in a local Christian school, primarily established for the education of the children of missionaries who are laboring in Manila, other places in the Philippines, and even other countries in Southeast Asia. This is the same school in which Jessica Spriensma, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Aud Spriensma, studied during their years of labors in Manila and other areas of the Philippines.

As regards housing, the Berean Consistory and congregation have been very active in a search for suitable rental housing in secure, guarded subdivisions. We are thankful for their ambitious and ready support of the missionary family in this way.

### July 2009 Conference

Finally, there is a highlight in July that we look forward to. Prof. and Mrs. Engelsma will be visiting the Berean congregation in mid July so that Prof. Engelsma can provide preaching on Sundays (July 19, 26, and August 2), and conduct a

sizeable conference (13 speeches) on July 22-24 on the theme: "Rekindling the Fire of the Reformed Traditions: The Five Points of Calvinism and the Covenant of Grace." We certainly pray that the Lord will use this conference to rekindle in our hearts love for our distinctively Reformed Faith, and that this will be used to bring others in the metro Manila area to the blessed knowledge of our distinctively Reformed heritage.

### Conclusion

Finally, here are some excerpts from a recent report to the Doon Council and FMC which brings this newsletter to a fitting conclusion:

"... We feel at this point like a tree, uprooted, sitting on a landscapers yard with roots wrapped up in burlap, and waiting to be planted in our future home.

While we wait like a tree with roots wrapped in burlap, we appreciate very much the watering and interim care we have received in many ways from our fellow saints from the tri-state area churches and Sioux Falls fellowship group. The communion is most uplifting as we face a more difficult move in July than we just experienced in February. We are confident that our faithful Father will provide our needs in the coming months, and especially on the field. We hope that while you may be concerned about us as we face the challenge of being transplanted into a strange environment in metro Manila and while you may imagine yourselves in our shoes and experience some shock and worries, be assured that God by His grace will sustain us in the future as He has most certainly done in the past to this point. Our God is faithful, and He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5)..."

"We are confident that as we commit ourselves and our way to the Lord and as we dedicate ourselves to our respective labors in the church and in the home in the coming months, that the God of all glory by His almighty grace and Spirit will see my family and me through this trial, too, and will remain our faithful guide in the months and years ahead."

Please remember us in your prayers.

"Finally, Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the LORD may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you." (II Thess 3:1)

Cordially in Christ and for my wife, Tricia, and children,

*Rev. Richard J. Smit*  
(Hull, Iowa)