

PROTESTANT REFORMED FOREIGN MISSIONS – THE PHILIPPINES

FEBRUARY, 2011 NEWSLETTER



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DELEGATION VISIT

The highlight of the past month was the visit of the delegation from our calling church (Doon PRC) and the Foreign Mission Committee. Mr. Alan De Boer came as a representative of Doon's Council, and Mr. Gerald Brummel of the FMC. After a lengthy trip of over 45 hours (due to a weather-related delay – something you could ask them about, if you have the opportunity), the men arrived at 2:00 am on Friday, January 14. They were here for 12 days.

On their first Sunday, they joined us (the Kleyns) for our bimonthly visit to the First Reformed Church of Bulacan. We were there for a worship service, a class on the Church Order, a visit with the Consistory, and the young peoples' society. Also, of course, for a group picture (above). That afternoon, the men were able to attend the second worship service of the Berean Protestant Reformed Church, to hear Rev. Smit preach, to observe catechism teaching, and to meet and visit with the members. It was a busy and full Sunday, but the men testified of having an enjoyable day of worship and fellowship with God's people here. Needless to say, they slept well that night – especially since they were still recovering from jetlag.



Lunch & Fellowship after 7M Meeting

On Monday morning, the delegates attended our 7M. (I

believe we mentioned 7M last time – “Metro Manila Monthly Monday Morning Ministers' Meeting”). The delegates were able to observe instruction given on the communicable attributes of God, and to meet and fellowship with the pastors and student who attend. (For your information, I have now completed the material for Theology. At our next meeting, Lord willing, Rev. Smit will begin Anthropology.)

During the week, the delegates were also able to attend the Berean PRC Bible study led by Rev. Smit, to conduct family visitation with the two missionary families, and to attend the Berean PRC's monthly consistory meeting.



BPRCP Consistory Meeting

On their second Sunday here, the delegates accompanied us on our monthly visit to the All of Grace Protestant Reformed Fellowship in Gabaldon. This gave them the opportunity to meet the saints there, as well as to observe the work we are doing in teaching the Reformed truth. As much as possible, this work is done in Tagalog. Elder Rod Bongat (BPRCP) translates the sermons and the *Heidelberg Catechism* messages into Tagalog so that the members of AGPRF can have copies in their own language. This is a great help in our work, as is also the fact that translations are now being made (by Pastor John Flores, of the First Reformed Church of Bulacan) of written “Reformed Witness Hour” messages. The latter provides us with material for the

AGPRF to use on the Sundays we are unable to be there.



Delegates visiting the AGPRF in Gabaldon

We appreciated very much the visit made by Alan and Gerald, as well as the input and many words of encouragement given concerning our work. They stayed with us in our homes: Alan with the Smits, and Gerald with us. This gave them a good taste, I would say, of our day to day lives. But more importantly, their visit gave them a good feel for our work. We express here our thanks to them for their willingness to come. We are also thankful to the churches as a whole for the care shown us through this visit. We had a most enjoyable and profitable time with them.

MISSION LABORS

Recently, while traveling to Gabaldon for Sunday worship, I was struck by the reality of the uniqueness of our work here. Perhaps the presence of the delegates made me think about this a little more. What I pondered over was how the work the Lord has given us as missionaries differs in so many ways from the work of being a pastor in one, established church. Perhaps I can mention some of these differences.

One obvious difference is travel – especially on the way to church on Sunday. Instead of a short walk, our trip to church usually involves a significant drive through significant traffic to reach the various places we go to. We need to make a good guess at how long it might take, and then add in some extra time in case of heavy traffic. Thankfully I can report that so far we haven't been late.

Another unique aspect of the work is communication. Most Filipinos we work with speak mostly in Tagalog. This explains why we are learning the language (a slow process, by the way, when you're 40+ years old). We are reminded frequently of the importance of doing so. The main benefit will be that it will greatly enhance our ability to teach the Reformed faith. But it also helps establish rapport with the people. Even if we're only able to use a few Tagalog words, the fact that we do so immediately creates a positive reaction. Especially in our work in Gabaldon, we face the opportunity to use the Tagalog we have learned thus far. Sermons are delivered, for the most part, in Tagalog (using the translation made by Elder Bongat). We are also challenged to use the language in conversation. We realize

we have a long way to go. But we've made a start. And we know it's appreciated. We certainly face many challenges in communication. But what a privilege we have, under God's blessing and guidance, to communicate with and bring the gospel to a people in their own language.

Another significant change in our lives is the fact that we live in a different country with people of a different culture. We are frequently exposed to and learning new things about the culture. One way is through our study of the language (it's obvious the two are intimately related). But we also confront these differences on a daily basis. This all shows us, in a very concrete way, that God saves His church from nations that can be very different: in language, culture, ways of thinking, etc. Not all of you have had the opportunity to experience this firsthand, as we do. We are constantly reminded of the truth, and are given to see the beauty of the catholicity of Christ's body and bride.

What is especially unique in this work is to preach and teach the Reformed faith to those who have not had it in their generations, have not known it for long, but now have a strong desire to learn and grow in it. It gives us joy in our work and life here to see the interest in the truth, as well as the desire and striving to conform to the ways of that truth. And through it all we have the blessing of being able to establish and build bonds of faith and friendships with like-minded believers in a foreign land – friendships that will last into eternity. It makes the words of Psalm 22 (Psalter 49) very real to us: ***"The ends of all the earth shall hear and turn unto the Lord in fear; All kindreds of the earth shall own and worship Him as God alone."***

We count it a privilege to be used of the Lord in His great work of gathering the church from all nations of the earth.

CONCLUSION

The weather in the past few months has been most enjoyable, with temperatures in the 80's during the day, and 70's during the night (great sleeping weather). In recent weeks, however, the summer temperatures have returned – as I write the thermometer stands at 34° C (93° F).

We all continue to experience good health and are keeping well. The Smits remain very busy with the schedule of having six of their eight children in school. They are also making preparations for their furlough, with plans to visit some of our churches and their family in North America for 6 weeks from June 7 through July 20. We will miss them during that time. We hope you are able to meet them and to receive some firsthand information concerning our work.

We appreciate your continued support and prayers. We also daily remember the churches in prayer.

On behalf of Rev. Smit and myself, and our families:

Rev. Daniel Kleyn