

PRCA FOREIGN MISSIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

JULY 2019 NEWSLETTER

Rev. D. Holstege (daniel.holstege@prca.org) – Rev. D. Kleyn (d.klevn@prca.org) – Rev. R. Smit (smit@prca.org)

PO Box 1173 ACPO, Antipolo City, Rizal 1870, Philippines



Greetings from the Philippines to the members of our Protestant Reformed Churches and Sister Churches.

At the time of my writing this newsletter, my wife Sharon and I have been back in the Philippines from our extended furlough (5 ½ months) for just under two weeks. We were warmly welcomed home, first of all by a good dose of tropical heat and humidity. It may take us a while to get used to it again. One thing in our favor, at least, is that the cooler rainy season has now started. But more importantly, we were also warmly welcomed back by the Smits and Holstesges as well as by the saints in the churches here. It has been good to see everyone again. And it is good to be home again. We are thankful to be here and grateful for the opportunity we continue to have to serve the Lord and His church in this part of His kingdom.

The furlough began in January. Most striking to us, at first, was the cold of winter. After a few days of constant shivering, we realized we needed to put on more layers. Many more layers. In spite of the cold, we did enjoy winter again and were able to appreciate the beauty of that season.

The longer furlough also gave us plenty time to be with our families. We both appreciated this very much. We had ample time to reconnect with them all, including many nephews and nieces whom we hardly knew. A special aspect was the amount of time we could have with our parents – time we will always treasure.

Other furlough activity included the following: preaching in many of our churches (15 of them), spending two Sundays in our calling church (Doon PRC), promoting the mission field through presentations in our Protestant Reformed schools, sorting through and shipping books we still had in storage, attending the annual Synod, etc. Through all these activities and more, we were impressed by the overwhelming show of

support for the work in the Philippines. It was also good to hear of the excitement for the start of a seminary in the Philippines. All of this support is heartwarming and a great encouragement to us all.

Going into the furlough, my plan was to begin working on an advanced degree (a Masters in Theology). This is something which the FMC and Doon have encouraged us as missionaries to pursue, if at all possible. I was able to make a good beginning, but soon needed to switch gears. The change came about when the Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines made some decisions in February, 2019 that allowed for theological training in the PRCP to begin already in 2019. This meant that I needed to work instead on preparing the courses that I would be teaching in the PRCP's seminary. That then became my focus during the remainder of the furlough. And the furlough was very helpful in that regard, not only because I was able to meet with and receive much helpful advice from our seminary professors, but also because I had more uninterrupted study time than I would on the mission field. I was also able to purchase the resources I will need for the classes I will be teaching as well as for the classes that the other missionaries plan to teach.

On behalf of my wife and myself, I take this opportunity to express our thanks to the churches for allowing us to take this furlough. We were able to accomplish many things during our time in the USA, and we were also rejuvenated for the work. Through the Lord's blessing, the furlough served us very well.

But now we are back in the Philippines. Time, therefore, to turn to some news from here.

While we were on furlough, Rev. Holstege and Rev. Smit were able to divide up the work in such a way that, for the most part, the work could continue as

normal. This included providing pulpit supply in the PRCP churches, serving as advisors to consistories, standing committees and the Classis, continuing with the monthly visits to and lectures for the pastors in Southern Negros Occidental, hosting the annual delegation (Rev. J. Engelsma and Rev. N. Decker who came in February), teaching catechism classes, leading Bible studies, preaching and teaching among some of the newer groups/contacts, etc. Their workload did increase while I was gone, but the presence of three missionaries certainly helps a lot with furloughs, ensuring that ordinarily there are at least two of us here at any given time. That's a good thing and very helpful as regards both the work and companionship.

I can also report concerning three significant developments in the churches here in the Philippines.

First of all, the PRCP now has a second sister church. As you know, a sister church relationship was established between the PRCP and PRCA in 2018. Now in 2019 a sister church relationship has been established between the PRCP and the CERCS (Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore). These denominations are close to each other geographically (a 3 ½ hour flight from Manila to Singapore), and even culturally (both are in southeast Asian countries). More significant, however, is their closeness to each other doctrinally. By means of correspondence and visits, both denominations became convinced of their unity in the truth and thus of the need to become sisters. We rejoice with them at this important development and hope and pray they may be of mutual help and encouragement to each other.



Secondly, the PRCP now has a new member church. That new member is Provident Protestant Reformed Church (PPRC) in Marikina (picture above). Provident is a congregation of some 12 families. In addition to the families who are members, PPRC also has many regular attendees. The consistory consists of two elders and two deacons. This church has been a part of our labors since November, 2012. Through the work of Rev. Kleyn and then Rev. Holstege, the congregation has, over the years, become well established in the Reformed faith. For a

good while, their desire had been to join the PRCP and this past February they eagerly applied for membership. The Contact Committee of the PRCP then met a number of times with the Consistory of PPRC, and as a fruit of these meetings, the CC recommended to Classis that PPRC be accepted into the churches. The Classis, at its June meeting, joyfully approved this recommendation. And so the churches have now grown from three to four. Those four are as follows: Berean PRC, PRC in Bulacan, Maranatha PRC, and Provident PRC. We thank the Lord for His blessing on the churches through the addition of this congregation. Christ does build His church. He continues to gather together the faithful remnant.

Thirdly, the PRCP plans soon to begin providing theological training for men who aspire to the gospel ministry. In fact, seminary instruction is set to begin on Tuesday, August 13. The Lord willing, we will have one student starting this year (2019), and perhaps three or more next year (2020). The students who hope to start next year are currently completing their pre-seminary requirements, which are very similar to the pre-seminary requirements in the PRCA.

As regards the instruction that will be given, the Classis of the PRCP has requested that we three PRCA missionaries provide that instruction for now. This does not mean, however, that we will be professors. For one thing, we have not been and will not be called and ordained as professors. But secondly, the seminary is being established by and belongs to the PRCP. As missionaries, we simply provide advice and assistance in this process. And the goal is that eventually the PRCP will be able to call its own men to be the professors. In the meantime, we missionaries will serve as the instructors.

The PRCP plans to provide instruction, for the most part, in the same subjects as are taught in the theological school of the PRCA. They also plan to incorporate a six-month internship in the training program. The total program will be 4 ½ years, mainly because Greek has been included as a seminary subject (not a pre-seminary subject). The courses we have each been asked to teach in the first year are as follows: Rev. Smit will teach Dogmatics and Greek Grammar, Rev. Kleyn will teach Church History/History of Dogma and Homiletics, and Rev. Holstege will teach Hermeneutics.

As we approach the start date, the work before us is daunting. But we are also excited about it and confident of the Lord's guidance and blessing. We are thankful that the churches here will be able to train men for the gospel ministry, for that is indeed the need of the hour. And we covet your prayers for this significant and crucially important aspect of our labors here. May God be pleased to bless and prosper this work.

In Christian love,
Rev. Daniel Kleyn