

# PROTESTANT REFORMED FOREIGN MISSIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

- JANUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER -

Rev. Daniel J. Holstege

Rev. Daniel Kleyn

Rev. Richard J. Smit

## ***Dear Congregations of the PRCA,***

With the Kleyns on furlough for a few months, the Holsteges have taken on mailbox duty. This involves a weekly trip into town through exciting traffic, and then finding a parking spot at the busy mall where the post office is located. Out of the very dusty room and seeming confusion of mailbags and boxes, somehow the clerks usually hand the Holsteges some mail. Recently, the Holsteges dropped off a bag of mail from *The Standard Bearer* and *Beacon Lights* for distribution in the area churches and mission contacts, and a bundle of personal mail from many families throughout the churches. Mr. and Mrs. Mark Van Voorthuysen visited last month and also brought a significant amount of encouraging letters and family photos from our Hope congregation in Redlands. The congregation of Peace PRC also collected and sent a package of letters to our missionary families. My wife and I and children have enjoyed reading through the mail and looking at all of the pictures of our fellow saints, some familiar and some new to us. We appreciate your thoughtfulness in this gesture, your expressions of encouragement in the many letters, and your continued prayers for our families here in Antipolo and the families and churches of the PRCP.

In return, here is some news from the last few months.

## ***Family Life***

My family had an enjoyable three-week break in December and into early January. This gave us time to visit with our oldest three children (John, Rebekah, and Jay) and Grandma Dykstra who visited from Hudsonville. We scheduled some outings together, including a historical tour of Corregidor Island in the mouth of Manila Bay. This is one of many WWII sites of historical interest that are scattered throughout the region. It's one of our favorites.

Our children returned back to school for their second semester on January 8, and the semester is scheduled to end on May 31. Irene, our senior, will be graduating from Faith Academy this year.

We attend church at the Berean PRC, Marantha PRC, PRC in Bulacan (Muzon), and Provident Christian Church (Reformed) usually depending on where I am scheduled to provide pulpit supply. From January to June, our schedule has us in Maranatha PRC twice a month, in Berean PRC once a month, and Provident CC (Reformed) once a month. We are thankful for the communion of the saints with the PRCP brethren of like precious faith, and the opportunity to worship Jehovah with them from Lord's Day to Lord's Day.

Our middle school boys, Seth and Carl, are looking forward to their "Outdoor Education" week at school. Their classes with chaperones, teachers, and support staff will be visiting the Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor Island from Monday to Friday, February 11 to 14. The main part of this trip is to learn some history (Filipino and World War II), geography (hiking), biology (releasing baby turtles), campfire cooking, hammock camping, some skill training in jungle survival, as well as interact with some Filipino schools in that area. We expect the boys to return

home thoroughly exhausted, but smiling.

The children are also planning for their March break which is scheduled for March 18-25. I plan to take some of the older ones with me when I travel to Sipalay, Negros Occidental, in March for the pastors' classes in Sipalay. By coming along, the children learn firsthand what I and Rev. Kleyn are doing down south, and they also get to meet the pastors and elders there. On average over the last several years, attendance at the pastors' classes continues at 12 men per month.

## ***PRCP Theological School***

On October 31, 2018, the Classis of the PRCP approved the recommendation of the PRCP-Theological School Committee (Rev. Ibe, Elder Lito Trias, and Bro. Sonny Umali) that seminary instruction begin in August 2019 if potential students have finished their entrance requirements. If none are ready by August 2019, then it is expected that instruction will begin in August 2020.

The missionaries were approved to function as a sub-committee that reports to Committee 1 of the PRCP Classis and assists the Committee 1 with advice and help in the planning and implementation of the program.

As regards planning, our professors and staff from our PRCA Theological School in Grandville, MI, have provided much encouragement, help, guidance, and even course material (i.e., syllabi, video lectures of interim and semester courses) that they have developed over the past 5 years in anticipation of its possible use here by our missionaries.

At the next meeting of the PRCP Classis on Feb. 25, the Classis will treat some recommendations concerning an official constitution for the School, a list of semester and interim courses for our seminary program, instructors for that coursework (the PRCA missionaries in the short-term), and a location for the school.

We can report that several prospective students are currently finishing their seminary entrance requirements. It is encouraging to know that there are several men who aspire to the ministry of the Word in the PRCP.

Pray for us that this work of the PRCP-Theological School may prosper with the Lord's indispensable blessing and guidance.

## ***PRCP Tagalog Translations***

Committee 2 of the PRCP (Missions, Contact with Other Churches, Translations) has been busy in the work of translation of the confessions, particularly the *Heidelberg Catechism*. After many months of labor, the Translations Committee has produced a proposed translation of the *HC* in Tagalog. Copies of the translation were distributed to the consistories of the PRCP in October so that the men have had several months to check the translation. This proposed draft has been submitted to the Classis for its consideration and approval at the February 25, 2019, meeting.

The Classis approved that once the *HC* translation is completed, that the Translations Committee move next to the translation work of the PRC Liturgical Forms (Baptism, Confession of Faith, Lord's Supper,

Ordination Forms, etc.). There are 13 forms in total that need to be translated yet. Once that work is completed, then the TC will return to the translation work of the *Belgic Confession* and the *Canons of Dordt*. As you can see, the TC has a large amount of work ahead. Working on this committee are Revs. L. Trinidad and J. Flores, and Elder E. Mescallado with Revs. Holstege and Kleyn as advisors.

#### ***PRCP Missions***

The Protestant Reformed Church in Bulacan continues to oversee the mission work in Albuera, Leyte. They continue to send monthly delegations to the Protestant Reformed Fellowship for preaching, instruction, various visits, and benevolence work. On occasion, Revs. Kleyn and Holstege have accompanied the delegations, which has been very beneficial for their understanding of this work.

The Classis of the PRCP decided at its meeting on October 31, 2018, that the consistory of Bulacan may ask for one of the pastors of the PRCP, pending approval of their consistory for such a release, to labor in Albuera for an extended period of about 3 months. In the absence of a full-time missionary, this is what the consistory would like to do in order to meet the needs of the PRFA. Of course, this situation is a concrete example of the need for more ordained ministers in the PRCP, and lends urgency to the work of the Theological School.

#### ***PRCP Contact with Other Churches***

Committee 2 has also been busy in official contact with the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore. Having completed the steps towards full fellowship with the PRCA as ecclesiastical sisters, the CC of the PRCP turned its attention to work with the CERCS on steps toward full sisterhood.

From December 14 to 18, a delegation from the CERCS visited with the PRCP. On Sunday, December 16, there was a public meeting in the afternoon at the Berean PRC's church building in which representatives of both churches gave introductions of their respective histories. The next day on December 17, the CERCS delegation then met privately with the CC-PRCP. We are thankful for the visit of Elder Leong Fai Chong and Elder Lee Meng Hsien. We are thankful for the willingness of CERCS to extend the right hand of fellowship to the PRCP in this way and to work together towards the expression of full ecclesiastical fellowship in our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### ***Synod of Dordt Lectures***

On December 28, we participated in a small, one-day conference in commemoration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Synod of Dortrecht (1618-1619). Revs. Ibe, Holstege, and I gave speeches about the Synod in regards to Dordt's convictions regarding preaching, grace, and proper Lord's Day observance. I was informed that there were 97 people in attendance, representing 9 different congregations, besides the PRCP (3) and the PCC (Reformed) congregations. There were several new visitors at this conference which was encouraging to see. There were over 300 books sold, and many free pamphlets were distributed, including the Tagalog translation of Prof. H. Hoeksema's pamphlet on John 3:16, "For God so Loved the World." (Tagalog: "Gayon Na Lamang Ang Pag-Ibig Ng Diyos sa Sanlibutan.")

The consistory and congregation of the Provident Christian Church functioned as the very capable hosts for

the conference, and we are grateful for their help, especially with the always important morning and afternoon meriendas and delicious lunch.

#### ***Provident Christian Church (Reformed)***

Rev. Holstege continues to work in PCC full-time, and we can report that the work has developed to the point where the PCC is now in harmony with our Three forms of Unity and the Church Order as regards doctrine, worship, practices, and the offices of the church. Recently, 2 elders and 2 deacons were installed into office according to the Form for Installation of Elders and Deacons, with Rev. Holstege leading the worship service. As a result, the congregation is now, as an institute, confessionally and institutionally Reformed, upholding the three marks of a true church faithfully by the grace of God.

The significant consequence of this development in the PCC (Reformed) is that they can focus on the next step of their ecclesiastical journey: membership in the federation of the PRCP. The consistory has submitted a letter of request to the Classis of the PRCP for its consideration at the February 25<sup>th</sup> Classis. The letter requests that the Classis work with the PCC (Reformed) to lead them into the membership of the PRCP. We may rejoice with the PCC (Reformed) for the Lord's blessings on them to this point in their history.

#### ***Reformed Bookshelf and Philippine Book Fund***

The outflow of RFPA books from the Bookshelf continues. The number of books purchased from October to December 2018 was about 500 books! My wife and daughters, who are filling-in for Mrs. Kleyn, just ordered some more books from the RFPA, and also unpacked a recent shipment for the shelves at the Kleyns' house. We are thankful to the Lord for the means of a sound witness for the truth in this substantial and effective way unto the ongoing interest.

#### ***February Delegation Visit***

A delegation of Revs. J. Engelsma and N. Decker are scheduled to visit us in February on behalf of the Doon Council, FMC, and Contact Committee for a yearly oversight visit. They plan to arrive on Friday evening, February 15, and will be with us to Tuesday morning, February 26. One of the highlights of their mandate is a visit to the PR Fellowship mission of the PRCP in Albuera, Leyte (Feb. 18-20). Other items on their mandate include preaching in the areas churches while here and attending the meeting of the PRCP Classis on February 25. We look forward to their visit.

#### ***Kleyns On Furlough***

Rev. and Mrs. Kleyn travelled to Grand Rapids on January 1, 2019, enjoying News Years' Day in three different countries throughout their long day. One month has now passed in their furlough. We trust that the Lord will bless them in their fellowship with the PRCA and family and in Rev. Kleyn's furlough work and studies.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, and shine upon you in His almighty grace.

In His service,  
*Rev. Richard J Smit*