

PROTESTANT REFORMED FOREIGN MISSIONS– THE PHILIPPINES



Rev. Daniel Kleyn
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Summary of Our Ongoing Labors

Rev. Smit continues his labors in the Berean PRC with regular preaching for the Lord's Day services, with two classes of catechism instruction for the youth (Bible History and Essentials of Reformed Doctrine), with weekly Bible Study, with assistance in Family visitation, and other pastoral work with our members of the congregation and our regular visitors.

Rev. Kleyn continues his labors in the congregation and in the groups in the metro Manila area.

On the first Sunday of the month, he labors in the First Reformed Church in Muzon, Bulacan.

On the second Sunday of the month, Rev. Kleyn labors normally in the All of Grace PR Fellowship in Gabaldon.

On the third Sunday of the month, Rev. Kleyn labors in the Christian Faith Ministry group in Batasan Hills (near Quezon City).

On the fourth Sunday of the month, Rev. Kleyn normally preaches one service in the Berean PRC, but has the opportunity to use the Sunday for preaching in another place. In the month of May, for example, he will be visiting and preaching in the Reformed Free Church in Inayauan, Negros Occidental (located south of Bacolod City on a different island than the one on which we live).

When there is a fifth Sunday in a month, Rev. Kleyn uses that to labor a second time in the All of Grace PR Fellowship in Gabaldon.

At this point in time, it seems that we have both settled somewhat into a regular routine with our labors.

The Week of "Holy Week"

Although there is no week of the year more "holy" than another, still the week before "Good Friday" is regarded here in the Philippines by Roman Catholics as more "holy" than the rest of the weeks of the year. For many, it is a week to do extraordinary good works, to purchase indulgences, and perform pilgrimages to Romish shrines in order to earn God's blessings and favour for another 12 months. In rejection of the rest of the finished work of Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, many lost in unbelief try to work for and earn salvation, forgiveness, and blessings by different activities. For earthly wealth, for academic success, for athletic success in the boxing ring,

for a safe journey for overseas workers, for more children and healthy ones, for better health, or for victory in the national elections, many do their good works or perform acts of self-denial, some of which are very gruesome, in the time of the "Holy Week." If they would not participate in the activities of "holy week," they would expect that they or their relatives would be cursed and receive bad luck in the coming months.

This widespread superstition was very evident during the "Holy Week." One example of this is the annual pilgrimage from Manila to the Antipolo City Roman Catholic Church along Ortigas Avenue. Thousands and thousands of people passed by our subdivision front entrance gate from Thursday afternoon through the evening into the morning of "Good Friday." Among the throngs of travellers, some decided to walk barefoot. Entire families, groups of young people, and elderly people walked to the Antipolo church and its shrine.

We also learned that the Saturday after "Good Friday" is called "Black Saturday" (sometimes known as "Holy" or "Silent Saturday"). According to Roman Catholics, the church remembers the death, burial, and descension of Christ into the actual place of hell on "Black Saturday." The Church waits with Mary for the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb. As a result, there is little religious activity among the Catholics, until the start of "Easter." As we were told, some will not leave their houses that day, lest they have "bad luck." There are no festivals, no masses. The quieter mood and reduced activity seem to reflect the popular idea that "Jesus is dead," not risen and exalted.

Over against the superstitions and traditionalism of Roman Catholicism, which rejects the complete redemption and liberty of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Berean congregation had the opportunity on Friday, April 2, and on the Lord's Day, April 4, to worship the living Lord Jesus Christ in the truth of His finished work on the cross and His blessed and victorious resurrection.

Although we often witness obvious denials of Christ, it is a good reminder to us that daily we must seek the Lord for His grace to preserve us from trusting in ourselves, even to the slightest degree, for our salvation in denial of His all-sufficiency, sovereignty, and almighty power to save us from our sin and unbelief.

April 29-30 Conference

A highlight of the labors in the past months was a conference, sponsored by the Berean PRC and held on the last Thursday and Friday of April. Attendance averaged about 60 people on both days, although some did not attend both days of the conference. Rev. Kleyn spoke on the topic of "Reformed Church Government" and Rev. Smit spoke on the topic of "The Particular Grace of God." Both gave 4 speeches on the topics assigned to them. It was enjoyable for us to provide the lectures and the answers during the question and answer sessions, but at the same time it was demanding work in addition to our regular weekly workload.

Response to the lectures was what we would call normal. Some did not agree with what was presented. Some we might not see again. However, there were those who expressed a keen interest for more of what they had heard. For that response, we are thankful to our heavenly Father.

May 10 National Elections

Perhaps, the most exciting event in the last months that has affected all of us here is the presidential and national elections. During the time leading up to the elections, we experienced the sights, when driving past, and noise, from our houses, of several campaign rallies at the nearby Antipolo City fair grounds. Our children liked the rallies only because very predictably the rallies would end with some brilliant fireworks, easily seen from our houses. Almost an innumerable number of political posters, streamers, and banners of many sizes, could be seen on just about every available tree trunk, light post, utility pole, electrical and telephone wires, sari-sari store front, and open wall space along the streets that we have travelled. In spite of efforts to rescue the palm trees in front of the Smits' house from being stapled with posters, they too have been pressed into the service of the campaigns of several national and local candidates.

In various polling stations throughout the country, there were some glitches with new computerized polling machines and long lineups and delays caused by the long ballot (60 cm/ 24 inches). Overall, the elections were relatively peaceful, compared to 2004 and previous years. By Tuesday, May 11, it was clear that the majority of votes were cast for the new president, Senator Noynoy Aquino, son of former president, Mrs. Corazon ("Cory") Aquino, who died last year. In all of this, the church rejoices to know that our ascended Lord Jesus Christ sits enthroned at the right hand of God, ruling over all things, including the national elections in the Philippines, and in Great Britain, for the good of His saints in this land and worldwide.

Seminarian Vernon Ibe

We are planning currently for the arrival of the Ibes in early June. With the recent recommendation of our Protestant Reformed Seminary faculty, the Berean PRC consistory approved the plan that Bro. Vernon Ibe spend 10 weeks in his homeland for some practical ministerial experience. Bro. Vernon Ibe will be busy making some sermons,

leading worship services, attending consistory meetings, and teaching Bible History catechism in the Berean congregation and in the All of Grace Protestant Reformed Fellowship in Gabaldon. This mini-internship work he will fulfill under the supervision of the Berean consistory and the missionaries, Rev. Kleyn and Rev. Smit. We look forward to the arrival of the Ibes on June 2, and we pray that this experience in his homeland will serve his preparation and development as a faithful Reformed preacher of the Word, the Lord willing.

Future Plans

For Friday, May 21, we have scheduled a conference in Bacolod City with some contacts there. We plan to provide 4 speeches to them, 2 each from the speeches given at the April 29-30 conference. In addition to that, while Rev. Smit will return to Manila on Saturday, May 22, Rev. and Mrs. Kleyn will travel onward to Inayauan (south of Bacolod) in order for Rev. Kleyn to meet the pastors of the Reformed Free Churches in that area and to preach on Sunday in the worship services of the Reformed Free Church in Inayauan, whose pastor is Pastor Ezequias Rosal.

With June and the beginning of the North American summer vacation quickly approaching, some might be wondering about which one of the missionaries will be having furlough this year. The answer is neither.

The Smit family's furlough has been scheduled for June to July 2011 with the Kleyns' furlough to follow some time in 2012, the Lord willing. Beyond 2012, the Smit and Kleyn furloughs will alternate on a yearly basis. This furlough plan, adopted by the FMC and Doon Council upon the recommendation of the missionaries, comes closer to the norm among missionaries in the Philippines who have lengthy furloughs of several months every 3 to 4 years. The furlough time permits the missionaries to spend up to 6 weeks of time off the field in our North American churches: 3 weeks for church work and field promotion and 3 weeks for family vacation. For the years that the missionaries do not have furloughs, they plan to enjoy their 3 weeks of vacation in or near the Philippines at their own expense.

In the month of June and with the approval of the FMC and Doon Council, Rev. and Mrs. Kleyn plan to visit Singapore. The Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church requested one of the missionaries to preach there on June 6 and 13 and also provide the speeches for the ERCS' annual Family Camp. Rev. Kleyn agreed to do this, and he will be kept extremely busy with the preaching and lectures during the brief visit. We are very happy for this contact between our churches in Manila and in Singapore, and we pray that this work may be a blessing to the Covenant ERC in Singapore.

Remember us in your prayers. Pray that the Lord will supply us the strength to be faithful in the preaching of Christ crucified and risen again in the particular places of labor He has graciously and providentially given us here.

In His service,

Rev. Daniel Kleyn and Rev. Richard J. Smit