

Action in the Philippines



A year ago I mentioned in the pastoral column of *Family Post* that Rev Glem Melo of the Philippines had come to Canada to seek support for his efforts to spread the Biblical faith in his native land. To help him with that work, many of you donated your old *Book of Praise* for shipment to the Philippines. Just before I left for my summer vacation, I received the following letter from Rev Melo:

July 1, 2013

CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF SMITHVILLE
P.O. Box 268, 330 Station Street
Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0

RE: GRATITUDE FOR BOOK DONATIONS

Our Dear CANRC Smithville Family,

May God our covenant Father fill you with His grace and peace in Jesus Christ, our Head and Redeemer.

It is with great joy and gratitude that we received the second set of books from you. Thank you very, very much for the books of Rev. Bouwman, the Books of Praise and other good books and teaching materials that you donated and sent to us. What a great blessing you all are to us!

The work of theological training, evangelism and missions continues to be advanced by our church...

We continue to need help in books and materials. We rejoice greatly and are grateful beyond words that you are helping us in this area; and we hope and pray that you will continue to do so. Please remember that Reformed books and materials are not available in our island (Mindanao). Mostly, we download free e-books and materials from the internet, but they are very much limited and generally do not reflect the rich heritage of the sixteenth-century reformation and the 1944 liberation. If you have old books and magazines that you do not need anymore, we implore you to please send them to us. They will surely be a great blessing and source of enlightenment, edification, instruction and direction to many.

We thank the Lord for you – that He has provided for us faithful covenant brothers and sisters across the seas to whom we can turn for help in such a difficult time as this.

May the Lord continue to bless and keep you all.

On behalf of our congregation,

REV. GLIMAR "GLEM" MELO Church Planter and Elder

I was scarcely back home when I received another letter from Rev Melo that I want to share with you. This one speaks of plans laid for the future of the work in the Philippines:

Dear Rev. Bouwman and our Smithville CANRC Family,

I want to share with you the following exciting news that the Lord is doing here in the Philippines, especially because from the very beginning Rev. Bouwman's online books and materials have been instrumental in teaching and pointing us to the right direction both theologically and ecclesiastically.

1. Last April, we submitted to the consistory of the Free Reformed Church of Baldivis (Australia) a formal letter of request for supervision. We heard news that their council will send Rev. Stephen 't Hart and Elder Hendrick De Jonge to visit and teach us sometime in January. We are just waiting for a written confirmation from them.



2. These is confirmed: In swift implementation of their newly established Theological Assistance for the Philippines (TAP) program, the council of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church is sending their minister, Dr. Wes Bredenhof, to teach Reformation Church History here on the 1st and 2nd week of February.

3. Rev. Carl Vermeulen of the Free Reformed Church of Darling Downs (Australia) plans to visit us sometime on the second half of 2014. Through Skype classes, he taught us Basic Biblical Greek in 2011, and since last year he has been teaching us the Belgic Confession.

4. Two (2) of the pastors that we have been teaching and mentoring here in Cagayan de Oro are planning to leave their denominations....

a. Two days ago, Ptr. ... told me that he decided to leave [his] denomination before 2013 ends. January 2014 will be the latest. After Rev. Vermeulen's skype class, we conducted an impromptu strategic meeting.



b. Ten days ago, Ptr. ... told me that he has decided to leave [his] denomination in 2 to 3 years. I am now spending more time to teach and guide him one-on-one.

5. Bro. Ernnel Tacandong continues to grow in his theological studies. As our mission worker (not a minister, but a full-time lay worker) to flood victims-survivors, he continues to conduct Bible studies

in 2 relocation sites here in Cagayan de Oro. I conduct weekly mission services in 1 site. In a year, we can witness the profession of faith of at least 2 faithful attendees, Lord willing and working.

6. If all goes well, especially when the Lord provides Reformed supervision and care for our local church (KRC), I believe that I will be free to pursue my seminary education there in Canada in 2015 (a year earlier than my initial forecast of 2016). I have been in consultation with Dr. Gerhard Visscher about this since 2010 and I am now taking Hebrew and Greek classes in a local Bible college to prepare.

Please continue to pray for us. We do have many problems and struggles as I shared with you before, but by God's grace alone we are not disobedient or unfaithful to our King and Head. We look to the Lord for mercy, grace and help, and are pursuing genuine reformation in faith, life and ministry by His word and Spirit. This is the reason why the past 5 years we have been asking CANRC and FRCA office-bearers for teaching, instruction and direction. As stated above, we have also requested the consistory of FRC Baldivis to supervise us. This is all for the sake of (1) our local congregation, Kagay-an Reformed Church, (2) our 2 church planting missions among flood victims-survivors, (3) the 2 reforming churches that we are instructing and guiding towards ecclesiastical, and (4) the still non-reformed pastors and churches in 7 cities-towns that we are introducing to the Reformed faith.

We pray that the Lord will open the way also for you to send Rev. Bouwman to visit, teach and minister to the brothers and sisters here someday.

Please feel free to be frank and truthful in commenting and even correcting me. We just want to continue in the way of faith and obedience to Christ and His word as we confess in the Three Forms of Unity.

We thank the Lord for you, rev. Bouwman and our CANRC family.

Glem

We know from Scripture that the Word of God is not for Smithville alone, or for Dutch migrants alone, or for the western world alone. The Father has given countless persons to the Son for salvation from any race and people under heaven, and that includes the people of the Philippines. That we may contribute in some small way to the Lord's church gathering work on the other side of the globe is surely a privilege! Let us abound in prayer for the Lord's blessings on the work happening in the Philippines. Further, if you have solidly reformed study books that could contribute to the work in the Philippines, feel free to drop them off at my place.

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I had drafted the above *Bit to Read* a couple of weeks ago. As I was about to finalize it for distribution this Sunday, I received another email from Rev Melo concerning his wife Aymi:

Dear Rev. Bouwman and our Smithville CANRC Family,

Please pray for Aymi. She has been in the hospital under pain medication since Tuesday evening. Ultrasound examination showed a swollen ovary with 2 "simple" cysts, but the Obstetrician-Gynecologist said that there is no reason to be alarmed about the results. The same examination also showed a clear kidney and urinalysis yielded normal results. However, she is still in pain and needs regular pain medication, both injectable and oral. Therefore, her other doctor (internal medicine)

decided to have her undergo a CT scan (abdominal) tomorrow morning.

Thank you in advance for praying for Aymi and our family. We will keep you updated.

Glem

C Bouwman
September 26, 2013