

The Philippines: A Layman's Perspective (2)

Nicholas Kleyn

Saturday October 9

We arose early and had breakfast in the hotel's restaurant. We had Topsilog, a cup of cooked rice with a fried egg on top, and a piece of meat on the side. It tasted good. Today's schedule called for four speeches on the covenant and started at 9:00 am. I had a little free time so took a two-mile walk on the main road leading out of Daet. I was able to see many interesting things. I then caught a tricycle to the church where the speeches were to be held.

Pastor M. Tanierla had picked up Revs. Miersma and Kleyn and was at the church already. The people started arriving slowly and again we had the opportunity to visit with these men and talk about things of God. The meeting was called to order and opened with prayer. We sang a few hymns and then Rev. Miersma gave his speech on the covenant. They then had a question and answer period and then lunch. Pastor M. Tanierla's wife and family had prepared a lunch for all the people attending the lectures. There were around twenty-five people present. The food was very interesting, but good: a real Filipino meal. We found all these people to be very easy to talk to and very friendly. I then went for a short walk to get some more bottled cold water to keep us cool, as the temperature and humidity were very high.

At the end of the street near the church there was a young person sitting in the dirt under a tree. I had seen him there the day before. Obviously he was homeless. It was very hot out and there he sat all day. As I was standing there watching the sights of the town go by, I saw a young girl, who must have been from the catholic school near there, stop and give him some food. It was very touching.

I returned to the church and Rev. Miersma gave the second speech on the covenant. Again we had a very lively question and answer period that had Revs. Miersma and Kleyn thinking. Rev. Kleyn then had the third speech and also another very lively question and answer period. They used Professor Hanko's book, *God's Everlasting Covenant of Grace*, as the basis for their speeches. There was supposed to be a fourth speech but they ran out of time due to the extended questions and answers.

We all then piled into a jeep owned by Pastor Alan Dolormente, with Pastor M. Tanierla and went and saw the ocean that was four miles away. We saw all the fishing boats and the market place where every day the fishermen come in and clean and sell their fish. The fishing boats were no more than a large canoe with a small motor and boards hanging out each side of the boat so that it would not tip over in the rough sea. I'm sure it is not a job for someone who is faint hearted. We visited for a short while with a couple from Pastor M. Tanierla's church who lived near the ocean and then went to a Chinese restaurant for supper in Daet.

Pastor Dolormente and Pastor M. Tanierla then took us to a town about 10 miles away called Labo. Pastor Dolormente is a Pastor of a congregation near Labo. He was telling us that he had built the vehicle that we were driving in. First he had just a motor and four wheels and a seat and a steering wheel. Then as he got more money he bought fenders, a top, doors, seats etc. It is amazing how these people make things with the little resources that they have.

In Labo we went to the house of one of the members of the church for a Bible study on the Perseverance of the Saints. Rev. Kleyn gave a short introduction and explained what the Bible teaches. There was then an open discussion time and questions. There were about 25 people present and it is amazing how interested they are in the truths. They have a good grasp of

the basic truths of the Reformed faith but want to learn so much more. These were people that were not at the lectures during the day. They really appreciated the teachings and had a real zeal and interest in it that we lack at times. Discussion concluded at 9:15pm and after a quick drink and cookie the ministers had to get back to the hotel to prepare for their sermons. The discussion could have gone on for a few more hours I suspect, but it had been a long day and the men were tired.

Sunday October 10

Up early at 6:00 am. The two ministers prepared for their sermons. Rev. Miersma was scheduled to preach at two different congregations and Rev. Kleyn also twice at two different places. It was early so I went for a walk down to the ocean again. It was 6:00am and the beach was already packed with people swimming and relaxing on the beach. So Sunday is just another day for most Filipinos, just like home. Everyone is very friendly and when they see a white man they say "Hi Joe." At first I didn't know why until it was explained that America always had a large military presence there after the war till the early 1990's. They called the soldiers Joe after GI Joe. Therefore they see us and assume we are American. While near the beach a man introduced himself to me and after talking for a bit he invited me for a cup of coffee to his house, so again I had the opportunity to see how these people live.

I walked back to the hotel for breakfast with the two ministers. Rev M. Tanierla came and took Rev. Miersma and we did not see him again until later that evening. Rev. Kleyn and I went to the Reformed in Christ Fellowship Church for morning worship. We were there at 9:00am. A Bible study was to be first and then the church service after that. We were able to visit with members of the congregation as they came. There were around twenty-five people there, young and old. Around 9:30 they started. The Bible study was opened with prayer and singing and then Rev. Kleyn spoke on "The Church—Its Calling and Duty." Then we had a discussion period with many good questions. People in the congregation asked questions that applied to their life in the church.

We sang a few more hymns and then Rev. Kleyn led us in worship service. He preached on the Parable of the Lost Sheep from Luke 15:1-10. After the worship service we were both given a very touching thank you from their Pastor and a certificate of appreciation for coming. Lunch was served by Pastor D. Tajares mother, smorgasbord style, and was delicious. We had a really nice time of fellowship with these people as the whole congregation stayed for lunch. But all too soon we had to leave again as Rev. Kleyn had to preach in another village at 3:00pm.

We took a tricycle to the bus depot and then took the bus for an hour and a half drive to a little village called Jose Pangeniban. The roads were terrible and the bus seats are made to seat small people, not us with our long legs. We arrived at around 2:30pm, stepped out of the bus, and went to the church called "The Body Of Christ." Dante and Pastor Mark del Pilar traveled with us to this town. Both these men were born and raised in this village. Church started at 3:00 so Dante took me for a quick walk around the village. He has two sisters who live there still and showed me their places. It is hard to describe what I saw. What an eye opener. These people live very simple lives.

The worship service was opened in prayer and singing. Most of the time they spoke in English, but at this church when they prayed and when they had their announcements they spoke in Filipino. It is a little easier for some of them to speak their native language. Rev. Kleyn was introduced and then started preaching on Matthew 11:28. "Jesus Call to the Weary." About half way through the sermon it started raining really, really hard, and then we lost power so the PA

system did not work. There was a tin roof on the church and it was raining so hard that we could not hear him anymore. Rev. Kleyn had to stop preaching for around fifteen minutes till it quit raining. But he picked up right where he had stopped and did a fine job. They said this happens quite often during the rainy season. After the service was done, we were able to visit with the people of the congregation for a short time, had a sandwich provided by them, and then rode back on the bus to Daet. By now it was dark. We arrived in Daet and went to Pastor M. Tanierla's place and met Rev. Miersma. He also had had a very busy Sabbath Day. We then took a taxi three hours to Naga as we had to fly back to Manila first thing Monday morning. That was the end of my trip. Rev. Miersma and Rev. Kleyn stayed for another week and visited other contacts and I traveled back home.

Observations:

I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to travel with two of our ministers to a foreign country like this and see them work. These men worked hard and put 100% into what they were doing and hardly had time to even relax.

I also feel very blessed that I have been able to meet many Christian men and women from the Philippines who have a deep love for the Scriptures and the Reformed faith. It is a love that is very sincere and evident in their lives. They are people that are content with the lot that the Lord has given them. This surely has been a lesson to me. They also want to learn more and more of the truths of Scripture. They have studied it hard and know the Bible very well, but need more teaching of the truths found in the Scriptures. They asked us when we were coming again and hoped that it was the next week. I see that the Protestant Reformed Churches can do some really good mission work in the Philippines, and I hope and pray that this may be the Lord's will. We as a denomination need to support this work whole-heartedly.

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