

THE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

In response to a request from the BRF, Pastor Remegio Lapiz of the Bible Study Fellowship, Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao, in the Philippines, has sent us the following article. In it he describes the nature of the work and witness of his congregation set against the background of the religious situation in the country of the Philippines as a whole.

Readers may recall that Pastor Lapiz first introduced himself to the BRF in a letter that appeared in Issue 4 of the British Reformed Journal (October - December 1993), where he intimated that his initial contact with the Reformed faith was through the Bible study correspondence ministry of the Rev. Bernard Woudenberg of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America. Since then Pastor Lapiz has sadly contracted Hepatitis-B and is unable to obtain the drugs necessary for its treatment. Nevertheless he cheerfully records: "I hope that you could uphold us in your prayers (that) the Lord will give me strength as I continue doing the task the Lord has given me - to preach and teach God's Word to the people."

Tony Horne, Secretary, British Reformed Fellowship.

THE PHILIPPINES CHURCH SITUATION AND THE BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP

by

Pastor Remegio Lapiz

According to the statistical records, the Philippines has 2 000 religious beliefs. The population of the country is 70 million, and 85% belongs to the Roman Catholic (denomination) and 15% belong to the different (other) religious groups.

The Philippines are predominantly Roman Catholic because (after) the Spaniards first came to the Philippines, the Roman Catholic teachings and practices (were) taught (thereon) for 300 years during the stay of the Spaniards. Thus the Roman

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Catholic teachings remained in the hearts of the Filipino people. Roman Catholic (Filipino) people are very devoted in their faith, practices, and traditions.

The Philippines has been known as the only Christian country in the Far East, but the fact is that this country is not really a Christian country, but rather a religious country. But people here have the freedom of religion.

“Where there is no vision the people perish”..... Proverbs 29 : 18.

The Bible Study Fellowship was formed as a small group in 1989. We are the only church here in our area that holds the Reformed Faith at this time. We are independent. Our aim, is to preach and teach the gospel to the people, and many of them have repented of their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Personal Saviour and Lord of their lives.

As of now, the Bible Study Fellowship has a small group, (which) gathers every Sunday for worship service. We are doing Home Bible Studies among the people in the poor areas of Cagayan de Oro City.

We find that there are many families in our area, who could not meet the basic needs of their children due to lack of employment. They are jobless. Many of the children here go to sleep hungry each night, and they become malnourished. There are girls at their early age involved in prostitution to support their own basic needs, and there are some children who have no privileges to go to school.

As we see the needs of the people our hearts have been moved with great compassion and have burdens to help them both spiritually and physically.

The Bible Study Fellowship is launching out a feeding programme among the children, once every week. We give them rice, vegetables, and meat. We start with 25 children in feeding. We also have opened a learning centre but due to lack of facilities, the learning centre has been temporarily closed.

We observed that these people here have talents and skills, and if they will be given help or assistance and encouragement to start work (and earn) a livelihood then they will have the chance to be out from the bondage of poverty.

The programme that we aim (at) is not an easy task, but we believe that if people of God would extend their helps in prayers and financial (aid) in this noble project, then this work will continue until our Lord Jesus Christ returns.

We, in the Bible Study Fellowship covet your prayers on behalf of the work the Lord Jesus Christ has placed in our hearts, that many souls will experience the joy of salvation and be released from poverty and become faithful to God and useful in the community here in the Philippines.

*In His Service
Pastor & Mrs. Remegio Lapiz.*

Further contact is to be made, (DV), by the BRF. See News Alert.