

PALSROKS' POSTINGS



February 2011

Glimpses of Asian Ministry

Since 1961, CRWM has been raising up a church in the Philippines. Today the Christian Reformed Church there has been established on the islands of Panay, Negros, Leyte, and Luzon. In January I informed them that we would be ending our ministry with them in July, a year earlier than anticipated. The CRCP graciously accepted this decision and invited us to join them in April at their denominational meetings for a celebration of what God has done. We will continue training leaders for all the denominations of the Philippines through Bob and Patti Harris at Asian Theological Seminary. We rejoice that in 50 years God has planted his church using Christian Reformed World Missions.

Next I went to Indonesia to evaluate our ministry there. Back to God Ministries International- the CRC radio ministry- has broadcasts throughout the islands. They have piloted listener groups in which they collect people in a geographic area into a community of listeners. They are up to 142 groups with 50-150 people in a group. CRWM has partnered with BTGMI to train the leaders of these listener groups. Now the people of these groups are assisting one another in discipleship and with other needs of life. One group traveled to a nearby village to help after a disaster. The Muslim community was shocked and impressed that these Christians would come and care for them. CRWM has also joined with BTGMI, CRWRC, and TLT in training pastors and elders of rural villages. And we are exploring how to bring even more partners together to work under the banner of Transformation for individuals, churches and communities.

Exciting things were also discussed in Cambodia. There too we explored bringing people together to work towards community transformation. One such meeting occurred with Theary Seng, author of Daughter of the Killing Fields. Theary was 4 when her parents were killed and she roamed the fields. Eventually she was taken by relatives to Grand Rapids, MI where a CRC congregation cared for her and assisted her into a Christian School. Later she moved to California where again the CRC cared for her. She went to Georgetown University and Michigan Law School. Now she leads an organization in Cambodia which advocates for peace and justice, especially supporting the International Tribunal as it places 4 of the Khmer leaders on trial. This month she will have Kerry Kennedy, daughter of Robert Kennedy and justice advocate, and other Hollywood folks in Cambodia to assist her efforts. We talked about how we could work together not only but also how we could minister to her as she leads such a stressful and somewhat dangerous ministry. I also explored with Joyce Suh, our missionary who also has a law degree as well as seminary degree, how we can more effectively minister with the oppressed women of Cambodian society.

In Thailand, I consulted with Rusty and Lynette Polinder who are working under the leadership of the Akha Christians and Church. They are the young couple who lost their prematurely born infant last year after months of medical agony. We talked together about how they might come under CRWM and serve with us as Partner Missionaries.

Stan and Bessie Kruis were waiting for me when I arrived in Beijing. They are now to serve in China. We did an orientation to China, team building with the Ten Harmsels and Lorraine Li, strategy discussions, and logistics. Although Bessie has breast cancer, she is valiantly fighting with courage; they hope to move to China this summer. We rejoiced as we dreamed about what God might do. It was then a special pleasure for Sherry and I to spend a few days with our son Ryan who now provides leadership for American Citizens Services in the American Embassy in Beijing.

After almost 5 weeks, we arrived home. We were exhausted and I again came down with a chest infection- seems like the travels are hard on me. Yet glimpsing what God was doing through CRWM in these Asian countries was rich. Thank you so much for your support. Could not do this ministry without you!