

PRCA FOREIGN MISSIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

OCTOBER 2018 NEWSLETTER

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Members of the Protestant Reformed Churches and our sister churches, greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

A New Reformed Church!

On the fifth of August, after our two worship services, I announced to Provident Christian Church, “You are now officially a Reformed church.” And their response? They clapped their hands, joyously and spontaneously, in thanksgiving to God! *“O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and nations under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved”* (Ps. 47:1-4).

Before we had lunch together that Sunday, in the fellowship hall downstairs, I briefly explained the following two passages of Holy Writ and applied them to the happy occasion: *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matt. 16:18). *“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle”* (II Thess. 2:15).

The ground of the announcement that Sunday was the official adoption of the Three Forms of Unity by the Steering Committee on July 29. From 2012 into 2018, we missionaries taught them the Reformed symbols: the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt. We also taught them the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches. One of us planted, another watered, but God gave the increase (I Cor. 3:6). Then, on July 29, the Steering Committee adopted the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order, together with the Psalter and the Forms in the back of the Psalter.

When I explained to the Steering Committee the implication of adopting the Three Forms of Unity, namely, that they are now officially Reformed, their faces beamed, and they exchanged hearty hand-

shakes. We praise our gracious covenant God for guiding PCC to become a Reformed church of Jesus Christ.



More Reformed Believers!

Throughout the months of August and September, the men of the Steering Committee and I visited those who expressed, in writing, a desire to join the now Reformed, Provident Christian Church. We asked them the three questions in the Form for Public Confession of Faith. I explained the questions as follows:

1. Do you believe the doctrines of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God; do you believe the doctrines of the Apostolic Creed; do you believe the doctrines of the Three Forms of Unity, as taught by us missionaries here in this church?
2. Is it your deep desire, by the grace of God, to hold firmly to this doctrine, to reject all false doctrines, and to strive to keep the commandments of God in a new and godly life?
3. Are you willing to submit to the government of Christ through the office bearers of this church and to the discipline of the elders, if you should become delinquent?

As of now, there are about twenty-five, previously-baptized, adult believers at PCC who “have made a confession of the Reformed religion, besides being reputed to be of a godly walk” (Church Order, Article 61). Besides these, there are about fifteen children and young people who will confess their faith, Lord willing, in time to come. We thank our heavenly Father for His work of grace in the lives of these believers.

More Reformed Office Bearers!

Having compiled a list of confessing members, we proceeded to nominate new office bearers at our monthly Steering Committee meeting on September 23. We missionaries advised the members of the Steering Committee, for the sake of a smooth transition, to nominate themselves as the elders and deacons of the congregation.

Brothers Bien Montoya and Alex Dela Rosa were nominated to be elders. Brothers Mitch Suarez and Jun Armas were nominated to be deacons. Those four names appeared in the bulletin on the Sundays of September 30 and October 7 for the silent approbation of the congregation. There were no objections.



The council of PCC, from the left: Bro. Alex Dela Rosa, Bro. Bien Montoya, [Rev. D. Holstege], Bro. Mitch Suarez, and Bro. Jun Armas.

On October 14, I had the privilege of leading the first Reformed installation service of Provident Christian Church. All four men answered “yes” to the three questions in the Form for Installation of Elders and Deacons. All four men then signed the Formula of Subscription in front of church, for all to see. I preached a sermon on Acts 6:1-6 entitled “The First Deacons.” After the service, the whole congregation was invited to stay for lunch and we enjoyed a great time of fellowship.

Recently at PCC, I decided to preach through the book of Titus. What Paul exhorted Titus to do in the churches of Crete struck me as very similar to our task at PCC: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee” (Titus 1:5). Things have now been set in order at PCC. Elders and deacons have been

ordained. Lord willing, we will begin administering the sacraments at PCC, for the first time since becoming a Reformed church, this November.



The next step for them is to request membership in the Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines (PRCP), which we plan to do at the February meeting of Classis, DV.

A Visiting Pastor and His Family

From October 15-19, Rev. Joe Holstege, his wife Lisa, and their son Jacob visited us here in the Philippines. He had been preaching for the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore, a sister church of the PRCA (and soon, Lord willing, also of the PRCP). They decided to hop over the sea to visit us. During their five days here, they were able to experience some Philippine culture and to meet some Filipino believers. On the Wednesday night that they were here, they were able to visit with Rev. Vernon Ibe and his family, to see the new church building of the Berean PRC, and to give a speech at PCC on personal evangelism. I was told that my brother is *mas gwapo* than me. I will let you figure out what that means and judge whether or not it is true 😊



Pray that Christ will continue to build His church at PCC, and throughout the Philippines, and that He will strengthen these newly Reformed believers to hold fast the traditions they have been taught.

In Christ, Rev. Dan Holstege