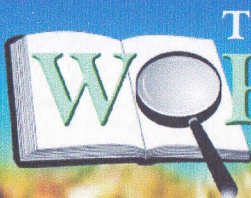


The BEREAN  
**WORD** Watch  
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Fellowship...  
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**BPRCP**

Feature Article:  
*Organization of the First PRC in the Philippines*

## Organization of the First PRC in the Philippines

**N**OVEMBER 19 (LORD'S DAY) 2006 is a momentous day in the history of the Berean Church of God (Reformed). It's a day that was unlike any of the Lord's Days that we had been keeping since we started, first, as a fellowship, then, as a government registered church organization. It was special not only because it was our sixth anniversary but most especially because it was the day of our church's official institution—the culmination of our every hope and expectation, a most joyous realization that we too belong in the body of Christ.

How we have come to where we are now is truly a wonder. How we have hurdled every obstacle, trial and threat of peril (from within and from without), how we have triumphed over every force and foe bent on destroying and stopping us from prospering in our search for the truth and for that one true body of Christ, is a miracle that can only be understood and explained, in no other way, but by God's sovereign mercy and preserving grace. The accounts of our struggles and battles bear witness to that sovereign mercy and preserving grace of God. Let me give you some facts from the records of our own church's history.

"The Berean Church of God (Reformed) was born amidst a crisis that was shaking to the very foundation the former church of BCGR's majority members. Brought about by massive doctrinal changes and introduced new practices—the crisis

caused repercussions, varied sentiments, unprecedented reactions, and far-reaching impact in the organization. To the majority of the membership, it was seen as a "breach" in the established and long-cherished ideology, culture and traditions of the church, a legacy handed down by its leader and founder.

The same crises caused worldwide feelings of doubt and uncertainty on the membership's faith and beliefs. Questions were asked: Why are we making these changes? Had we been really in error in our doctrinal views and positions? If we were, then, what is the truth?

Needing answers and reassurance, members in search for the truth were driven to study and to investigate. Some began to attend other church denominations. Others attended theology schools. Others still bonded themselves together and started a serious and objective study of the Word of God.

Such was the case of some of these members. In Quezon City, a group, originally named as Q. C. Berean Fellowship (now BCGR) began to meet on December 8, 1998 at 6:30 p.m. at the ground floor of Maya Bldg., Cubao. Regularly convening on Thursday, they averaged some two and one half hours each meeting discussing a broad range of doctrinal topics and issues, and examining and searching the Scriptures in the way and fashion that was characteristic of the New Testament "Berean." Hence, the word "Berean" has since been used as distinctive of the group.

These Berean meetings proved to be significantly rewarding in many ways. To the *truth-seeker*, it was gratifying to find and discover that the fundamental teachings of the Scripture are plainly and directly taught in the Word of God. No extra-biblical interpretation are necessary. As a rule, they must always be interpreted in the light of the whole counsel of God. To the *believer*, it was comforting beyond description to prove right from the Scriptures the assurance that God's people are secured and can never fall from His grace. To the *uninitiated*, it was an awesome feeling to learn that Jesus Christ will never deny anyone who would come to Him.

In the next two years, the Bereans grew remarkably in their grasp and understanding of the Holy Scriptures and proved that the doctrinal positions of the Worldwide Church of God (both old and new positions) were unscriptural. Because of this, the inevitable ensued. Not wanting to be

partakers of falsehood and heresies, the Bereans, with twenty signatories, after a series of meetings and dialogues with the leadership of the Worldwide Church of God, and seeing no doctrinal reconciliation insight, tendered their resignation on October 31, 2000..."

In tendering our resignation, we made sure that we were understood. There was no mincing of words. We stated our reasons for writing, and defined and spelled-out the grounds for our doctrinal positions. We defended our cause and crusade for purity in faith and doctrine in the way of an apologist. And reasoned straight from the pure Word of God. We were ready for war, we were prepared for the consequences.

In church history, we could identify with Martin Luther when he took a firm and unflinching stand in the Diet of Worms in 1521 when he said, "*Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.*" In secular history we could say with that Roman General who said, "*The die is cast.*" Which means, no retreat, no more turning back. Our only option now, by God's grace, is: "*To press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 3:4).

This is the Berean Church of God (Reformed) before its institution. From its inception (which, incidentally, falls on Reformation Day) to the events following, e.g., contact with the Protestant Reformed Churches in America; continuing exchange of communication and series of

delegation visitations from the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) and Doon PRC, and the eventual sending of a resident missionary to labor in the Philippines—have all been, undoubtedly, providential and a preparation of BCGR's institution.

This is where we had been; where we are going has been set before us in this day of our church organization.

The delegation from Doon PRC and Foreign Mission Committee, the trio of Rev. David Overway and Elders Alan VanBemmel and Allen Brummel, arrived in Manila on November 8. For some ten days prior to organization, they busied themselves visiting with BCGR members. On the 11th, they attended the board of trustees meeting and counseled with those who would be making public confessions of faith at the residence of a brother member. The



next day, Lord's Day, Rev. David Overway, delivered two preparatory sermons for the organization of the Berean fellowship—the first was entitled *Proper Behavior in the church* based on 1 Tim. 3:1-16; the second *The Mother Promise* based on Gen. 3:1-15. On the 18th, they took time to visit with

our fellow-saints in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija, a municipality about 150 kilometers north of Manila. Joining the delegation and Pastor Spriensma were brethren Rod Bongat and Sonny Umali.

Now came the big day, November 19, the sixth anniversary and organization day. The usual two afternoon worship services were conducted. In the first at 1:00 o'clock, the sermon, *By Grace, I Am What I Am*, based on 1 Cor. 15:1-11

was given by Pastor Audred Spriensma after which he conducted the public confessions of faith of fifteen persons and the baptisms of 5 adults and 5 children.

It was a moving experience for everyone of us witnessing the ceremony. One member of the delegation wrote sometime later, "It was with great joy that I could be with you during your organization. It was very emotional time for me. Especially the confessions of faith and the baptisms that we witnessed."

In the second worship service at 3:30, was the institution of the Berean Protestant Reformed Church in the Philippines (BPRCP). Membership papers were received, the declaration of institution was made, and letters from the Doon PRC Council Foreign Mission Committee, and from the Protestant

Reformed Churches in America were read. Then it was followed by prayer, congregational singing, reading of 1 Samuel 7:1-14 and sermon by Rev. Audred Spriensma entitled, "Eben-



ezer: *Thankful Remembrance and Joyful Hope.*" After the prayer the election office-bearers was conducted. Elected elders were Eric Mescallado and Rod Bongat and Edgardo Bansale as deacon. Then followed the installation of the newly elected office-bearers.

At the conclusion of the worship service, an atmosphere of joy and expressions of thankfulness from the general membership were simply overwhelming. And expectedly so. They had all the reasons to be. For the first PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES, the BPRCP, finally came to a reality. To God be the glory!



# Milestones

- 1998**
- 8 Dec First meeting of a Bible study group was held at Maya Bldg., Cubao, Quezon City. Met regularly on Thursday nights reading and positing truths from various Reformed persuasions. In no time organized themselves into a fellowship known as Cubao Berean Fellowship.
- 2000**
- 4 Nov Opening worship service of BCGR (as a registered religious organization) held at C.O.D. Bldg., Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City.
- 2001**
- 16 Feb Reverends Daniel Kleyn and Wilbur Bruinsma, delegates from PRCA, arrived in Manila to assess the prospect of doing mission in the Philippines.
- 19 Mar Letter sent to PRCA Foreign Missions Committee requesting for a missionary to work with BCGR.
- 18 June Synod approved the sending of missionary to the Philippines.
- 15 Oct Doon PRC extended call to Rev. Audred Spriensma to be missionary to the Philippines.
- 5 Nov First Anniversary of BCGR fellowship.
- 9 Dec Rev. Spriensma accepted the mission call.
- 2002**
- 16 Mar *Reformed Witness Hour* launched on DWBL AM Radio 1242 KHz, 8:30-9:00 p.m., Saturdays.
- 20 Apr Rev. Audred Spriensma and Elder Gene van Bemmelen arrived to make final preparations for the Spriensmas taking residence in the Philippines.
- 16 Jul The Spriensmas arrived in the Philippines.
- 27 The Church's Steering Committee held its first meeting with the missionary pastor at the latter's residence in Antipolo, Rizal.
- 28 The Steering Committee set up training classes: Catechism, Essentials of Reformed Doctrine, and Church Government for three church membership levels. The same classes were scheduled to start on Saturdays and Sundays the following month.
- 2 Nov 2nd Anniversary. Election of two members for the Steering Committee was held.
- 2002-2005**
- BCGR grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord under the preaching and supervision of Rev. Spriensma. Series of visitations from Doon PRC and FMC took place. BCGR readied for eventual organization.
- 2005**
- 13 Nov Request for church organization of BCGR was sent to PRC Foreign Mission Committee
- 2006**
- 18 June Synod approved BCGR's organization.
- 14 Oct Gabaldon fellowship was approved to be part of BCGR's outreach program.
- 19 Nov BCGR was officially instituted as a church. Took on a new name: Berean Protestant Reformed Church in the Philippines (BPRCP). Fifteen made their public confessions of faith; five adults and five children were baptized.
- 17 Dec First Lord's Supper was celebrated.
- 2007**
- 4 Feb Mrs. Susie Deasis made a public confession of faith and her son, Elsen, was baptized.
- 17 Construction of worship place in Gabaldon was completed and inaugurated.
- 25 A night of thanksgiving to God for His labors in our midst through PRC's missionary family. Last worship service of the Spriensma family with BPRCP.



*The Berean PRC Family*

## The Church Project in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija

Psalms 103:1, 17-18, "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

The mercy of the Lord, indeed, is from everlasting to everlasting and the works of His hands and His Word abideth forever. God is sovereign and ever faithful, ever loving and ever true. This we boldly confess on the basis of God's work through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ from whom the truth came to us by the grace of God. Justified we now stand before God as He sees us in Christ, Who does all things for the good of His people. To Him belong our praises forever and ever. Amen.

Our brethren in Gabaldon express this truth with gratitude in their hearts for God's manifold blessings, among them God's provision of a place of worship. The same place of worship (now completed) is scheduled for dedication on February 17, 2007.

On October 14, 2006, after several visits by PRC delegations and by the former BCGR Board of Trustees, this

*Vernon Ibe is a ministerial trainee of BPRCP*

fellowship was approved to be part of the Berean PRC outreach program.

Through the Doon PRC in collaboration with the Berean PRC in Manila, God richly blessed us with funding for the building of the worship house. What we have been praying for, for the past two years, finally is a reality. Truly God is ever faithful to His children.

On Nov. 18, 2006, Saturday, our missionary pastor, Rev. Audred Spriensma, with the delegation from Doon PRC, Rev. David Overway and Elder Alan VanBemmel, and Elder



Bible Study attendees

Allen Brummel from the Foreign Mission Committee made a visit to Gabaldon fellowship to further provide support and encouragement

heavily from the series of devastating typhoons that hit the country last year. They found comfort in God's loving hands through the PRC churches.

The day was a busy day for all of us. In the morning a Tagalog worship service was held at the house of one of the brethren. The service was attended by some fifteen believers including the delegation. With authorization from the mission committee, a word of edification based on the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 was delivered by yours truly.

After the service, a sumptuous lunch of local delicacies was prepared and served by the Gabaldon brethren. Shortly after, the ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of a church building on a 300 square-meter lot purchased by the group for the purpose of a future worship place was led by Rev. Spriensma. Rev. Spriensma prayed for God's blessing on the project.

Late in the afternoon, yours truly was again privileged to conduct a Bible study, also in Tagalog, in



Church project in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija (about 30% complete) December 2006

another brother's house on the Five Solas of the Reformation.

The whole day affair was a picture of warm and pleasant fellowship of the saints. Before departure time, the brethren took turns in thanking God for Rev. Spriensma's efforts and the PRC's kind and wholehearted support.

The delegation particularly was pleased with the brethren's hospitality, simplicity and zeal to learn and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

With all the encouraging developments taking place in our fellowship, we have high hope of a fruitful gospel labors ahead of us. With the support and assistance being extended to us in various ways by the PRCA through the Berean PRC, we are confident that our labors together for the gospel's sake will be God-glorifying.

With love and prayers from,  
The Gabaldon Fellowship