MINISTRY UPDATE
AUGUST 2025 – JANUARY 2026

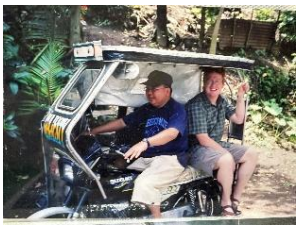
Esteemed Brothers and Fathers in the Lord;

Greetings in the name our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our only comfort in life and death!

In year **2002,** three ordained Pastors, and Elders **(Rev. Edwin Puzon, Rev. Renato Domingo and Rev. Napoleon Narag, Elder Rafael Martinez, Elder Jose Cabugao and Elder Alfred Santiago)** considered leaving their denomination, the **Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines (CRCP).** The reason behind such thought is because of disappointments and discontentment to the nonchalant and deliberate departure of the denomination from the unchanging truth and practices of our forefathers in biblical times and of the Reformation. Generally, Pastors and Elders, including the members, had become indifferent to their roots and exchanged the truth of biblical and historic Christianity to the most appealing approach and techniques of the modern Church. Doctrines and practices that are man-made, focusing on easy-believism, personal experience based theology, man-centered worship, prosperity centered gospel, church governance that are ruled by the powerful and rich and no longer by plurality and parity of Elders and many other practices and teachings that the Scripture doesn't warrant. Given this sickening situation, a greater conviction and passion moved the three Pastors and the three Elders to return to the old path in which our forebears, from the Scripture and the history of the church, committed and sacrificed their lives.

Glory to God for he heard our cries and considered our longings to serve him in the way he revealed in His word. In the early months of 2005, out of God's great work of providence, two official delegates, **(Rev. Matthew Powell and Rev. Guillermo Baloy)** was sent to the Philippines, by the Synod of the **Reformed Church of the United States** (RCUS) to explore the possibility of cooperation in establishing a true and indigenous Reformed Church in our country and in propagating the only one and true Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

FIRST DELEGATES FROM RCUS WHO VISITED THE PHILIPPINES



The initial visit of the two Ministers from RCUS was followed by another visit of two other ministers, **Reverends Guillermo Baloy and Michael Voytek.** During this time, a deeper

discussion on the process of partnership was taken seriously. Some of the days of their visit was spent on Seminars on What it means to be Reformed and other important topics that has to do with being Reformed. It was also during this time that the **three Pastors and the three Elders** finally left their denomination, together with their respective local congregations. The three Pastors were then subjected to examination regarding their orthodoxy and were found to be knowledgeable and committed to the historic Reformed faith of 16th century. They named their group **"UNITED COVENANT REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE PHILIPPINES."**

In the 3rd quarter of 2005, RCUS Synod sent another batch of five ministers to the Philippines to conduct seminars on Covenant Theology, Church Polity and to institute our newly formed denomination. After the institution, they also assisted us in forming our Classis. It is worth mentioning the names of those who came and who in our history as Church will always be remembered. They are **Rev. Vernon Pollema, Rev. Jay Fluck, Rev. Matthew Powell, Rev. Michael Voytek, Rev. Guillermo Baloy. (So Sorry, I was not able to save pictures for this event).** Great thanks, from the bottom of our hearts, to these esteemed brothers and fathers, how you've guided us to become a true bearer of the cause of Christ and propagators of the historic Reformed Faith. We truly appreciate your labors of love and dedication in guiding us to truth and in helping us institute our denomination. Huge and deepest thanks too to the whole body of RCUS for all the given efforts and actions you undertake to be where we are now.

I smile and behold the hand of the Lord is with us when I remember how you placed things in order for us when you instituted us. One of the well-respected and seasoned representative, Rev. Vernon Pollema reminded us; "We are not a federation of Churches but a denomination, emphasizing that the true Church of the Lord Jesus is one in all the world. (Belgic Confession – Article 27-28). He asks us a very direct probing question, giving notice and stress on the word "CHURCHES", saying; "Why name your group **"UNITED COVENANT REFORMED CHURCHE(S) IN THE PHILIPPINES",** do you plan to just federate together as individual local churches, having your own form of government in your respective local Churches or are you going to represent yourselves as one body of believers who are one in Christ? That question made us realized the truth behind that declaration, thus, instead of retaining our name; **"UNITED COVENANT REFORMED CHURCHE(S) IN THE PHILIPPINES"** we unanimously decided to change it to **"UNITED COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES", without "S" in the word "CHURCHES."** agreeing with truth that there is only one Church in all the world and that is the true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, things has not been easy for us regarding this matter. When we are about to register our new identity to the **Securities and Exchange Commission,** a government institution that requires all entities to submit regular reports of their activities and financial incomes. Along the

way, we found out that we were not able to comply with the said requirement. The easiest way to avoid the penalties and strenuous work in recalling all what we have done and the records of income of our denominations, we choose to register a new name and that is why our identity was changed from **UNITED COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES** to **"PEARL OF THE ORIENT COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH."** We thank the Lord for gifting us with an able and diligent deacon who takes care of all our legal documents. He is given the responsibility in submitting a regularly reports regarding our registration and dues.

In our individual life and even in the life of our Churches, things does not always happen favorably to us according to what we want. The reality is, unforeseen and painful things comes without our liking and expecting it. Personal prejudice, the desire to become "someone powerful" among equals, and the spirit of wanting to dominate others, rear its ugly face sooner or later because we think we are entitled to it. It really sadden us when those whom we've been for years in serving the Lord in joy and in pain leave us because of personal agenda and wayward style of life. One of the Pastor who pioneered in the establishment of POCRC left because of personal biases. The other one migrated to Canada and no longer has any interest in the life and ministries of POCRC. Sad to be reminded, but one of the Elder was advised to leave the Church where he is an elder because of his bad testimony in the community. He was referred to another POCRC Church but discontinued attending that Church because of personal reasons we do not know. Heavy in the heart as it is, but the Lord allowed these incidents to happen for us to learn to be dependent on Him alone in everything.

Confronted with such happenings, discouragement and a feeling of a sense of lost is inescapable. POCRC was left with a few key leaders and a massive ministry demands, given also the growing demands of the ministries of our denomination. We are faced with great task, especially me and Pastor Rafael Martinez, in ministering to our Churches with no Pastors and in visiting and ministering to our missions outreaches. This has been the case for me, in the span of more or less ten years. I need to sacrifice a lot, be away from my family and my own local Church for two weeks, travel by bus, a very exhausting journey, ten hours, (one way) at the most, twice a week, just to be with our local Churches without Pastor, to minister to them. This is aside from other needed visit to our missions work. My time and my life was consumed most to this commitment which has become a necessity that I have to fulfill and endure. This eventually causes my illness to worsen.

In my last visit to my doctor for check-up, way back 2010, she advises me that I need to retire from the ministry if I still want live long. She concluded that the source of my maladies are because of stress, overfatigue and depressions, all because of being too much concerns about the life and needs of our Churches and missions work. Before I left her clinic, she exclaimed

saying; ***"Do not come back to me anymore for any consultation if you will not retire, I will no longer entertain you!"*** Glory to God, I am still alive and continually serving the Lord despite infirmities after almost ten years of not retiring from the ministry.

God has been good to us despite all the tragedies and challenges we went through; we were able not only to persevere but stand firm in fulfilling our calls for the further establishment of God's Kingdom. The famous words of Augustine that says; ***"God provides what He demands"*** indeed became a reality in our experiences. We are sustained because of his mercy and great provisions. The challenge is still enormous, but with God's faithfulness we can overcome. Soli Deo Gloria!

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HTS PHILIPPINES

Another great blessings the Lord provided for POCRC for its continuous growth and stability is the establishment of the **Heidelberg Theological Seminary - Philippines.** In May 2016, I was given the opportunity to attend the 70th Synod Meeting of the Reformed Church of the United States. The purpose of my visit is to promote the ministries of our denomination, its situations and needs and directions. One of the great fruit of that visit was when I went to South Dakota in Sioux Falls for an appointment with Dr. Maynard Koerner. During our meeting, I was asked by Dr. Maynard how can he help the POCRC. I just gave him a very short answer saying; **"TRAIN OUR MEN."** The opportunity to further the Kingdom of God is enormous that there is always shortage of workers. Dr Maynard took my words seriously and in October of 2018 he went to the Philippines, offered two courses, Reformed Worship and Prolegomena, thus HTS Philippines was born.

The work of HTS through Dr. Maynard continued. He again went back to the Philippines, offered another two courses, gave copies of recorded lectures for students to watch, conduct on-line classes to complete their degree. By the grace and provisions of the Lord, three students graduated in year 2023 and was given the degree of Master in Theological Studies.

These men are now actively serving their respective local Churches and are working hard for the furtherance of God's Kingdom. From its humble beginning, and through the prayers and supports of the brethren who love to see the work of the Kingdom prosper, most especially the sacrifices of Dr Maynard, HTS ministry in the Philippines grew and is continuously growing. There are several students from different parts of the country enrolled at HTS Philippines. These men are already involved in Church Ministries and are hoping they become fulltime workers when they finish their course. We are grateful for our two fulltime students accepted as regular students of HTS USA. Their course schedule is a big challenge for them because they have to stay awake from 9 o'clock in the evening to 5 o'clock the following morning, Philippine time, which is unusual for them. Nonetheless, they are willing to endure the task to be prepared for Pastoral ministry.

Our two students are involved in Pastoral ministry with the supervision of the Church where they are a member. Thank you very much Dr. Maynard and those who are supporting HTS Philippines, our students for HTS USA, for all your dedication and partnership with us in the ministry of POCRC.

WITH DR. MAYNARD IN SIOUX FALLS SOUTH DAKOTA AND HTS CLASSES PHILIPPINES

THE GROWTH OF OUR DENOMINATION

We can only boast in the Lord for His great works to us. Up to date, we now have seven instituted Churches, one church who went out from Protestant Reformed Church and in process of affiliation with us an four Missions outreaches. But sad to say that we lost one instituted Church and two missions work two years ago. I believe that this is not particular in our experience, since there are also similar incidents happened to other denominations. But despite such sad episodes in our life as a Church, the Lord is teaching us to persevere in our calling and to trust him in everything because he is the one who hold all things. The Church belongs to Him and so her victory is sure.

THE ORDINATION OF REV. RAFAEL MARINEZ

Certainly, great are the works of the Lord in the lives of his Church and his people. Our brother **Rafael Martinez,** a former elder who has been with us since the conception of establishing a true Reformed Church in the Philippines, responded to the call of the Lord to be ordained as a minister of the Word for POCRC, after three years of encouragement and prayers. He was examined during our Mid-year Classis Meeting in August of 2022, sustained the examination satisfactorily and was officially ordained the Sunday after the Classis Meeting. This was a great relief for me because my duties and responsibilities to visit Churches without Pastors was lessened, especially in Pangasinan. Some of our colleagues have deserted us and the ministry of POCRC, but we thank the Lord for upholding us in all our struggles by giving us other three ordained ministers in the person of **Rev. Vic Bernales, Rev. Crisostomo Santos and Rev. Rocky Simbajon. Elder Tons Mantalaba** who is presently shepherding the "Christ our Hope Covenant Reformed Church in Davao and **Elder Peter Balones** who is responsible in shepherding our missions work in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija (both are HTS Philippines student) are the next in line to become Ministers of our denomination.

REV. RAFAEL MARTINEZ ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION AS PASTOR OF PEARL OF THE ORIENT COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH – SAN CARLOS CITY, PANGASINAN

MINISTRY AND PERSONAL UPDATE

In my more than 40 years in the ministry, I know that many, if not all, will agree with me when I say that serving the Lord is not only difficult but complex. With all the demands it entails, surely it makes one dismayed and at times groans. No wonder, almost all those whom the Lord called to serve him makes excuses and rejects His call. It is also a fact, even today, many are leaving the ministry because they were not able to bear all the miseries, loneliness and depressions the ministry demands. The man of God Jeremiah has experienced all that has been said about the cost of faithfully serving the Lord. In Jeremiah 9:2; Jeremiah expressed his depression and weariness by wanting to leave the ministry the Lord called him to do, saying; ***"Oh, that I had in the desert a lodging place for travelers, so that I might leave my people and go away from them; for they are all adulterers, a crowd of unfaithful people."***

I believe most of us if not all of us has also gone through such experience in the ministry. With the condition of my health that I've been bearing for many years already, I am no longer able to do what I've been doing before. I am now at the point in my life where I am experiencing the status of being a tired man and already about to reach the end of my rope. But like what the Apostle Paul says in Philippians 1:23-24 "***I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.***"Paul expresses this inner conflict between longing for heaven and staying to serve others on earth because of a condition that makes ministry difficult for Him. But despite such situation, he remains steadfast to use the remaining days of his life for the benefit of the believers and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ as a whole. With such a backdrop, I wish to share with you what the Lord still allowed me to do despite my dismal condition because of my worsening health condition

MINISTERING TO THE CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN SAN CARLOS CITY PANGASINAN

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF NEW ELDERS AND DEACON POCRC SAN CARLOS

MINISTERING TO OUR BALIWAG MISSIONS WORK

MINISTERING TO THE CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS IN DAVAO CITY

ELDERS TRAINING

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD, DAVAO COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH

INSTALLATION OF ELDERS AND INSTITUTION OF CHRIST OUR HOPE COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH

MINISTERING TO OUR MISSIONS WORK IN LAGRO, FAIRVIEW QUEZON CITY

ELDERS TRAINING

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

ADMINISTERING SACRAMENTS

MINISTERING TO THE BRETHREN OF COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH OF DAGUPAN CITY.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

INTERVIEW, ORIENTATION FOR PROFESSION OF FAITH AND PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH

MINISTERING TO OUR MISSIONS WORK IN SAN PEDRO LAGUNA

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

INTERVIEW OF THE INCOMING MEMBERS

MINISTERING TO OUR LOCAL CHURCH IN CALAUAN LAGUNA

REGULAR WORSHIP AND MINISTRY OF THE WORD

PROFESSION OF FAITH

ADMINISTERING SACRAMENTS

2nd VISIT OF REV. TRAVIS GRASSMID IN PCRC
January 18, 2026

OTHER EVENTS AND MINISTRIES OF POCRC

RELIEF OPERATTION IN THE PROVINCE OF CEBU AND LEYTE – The Philippines had at least 20 typhoons a year. Last year, a supper typhoon hit the Province of Cebu, its neighboring cities and towns. The province of Leyte was also affected by this typhoon. Together with the contributions of our local Churches and the remaining fund from the contributions of RCUS Churches and other Reformed denomination, reserved for such untoward events, moved by compassion and concern to lessen the depressing condition of our countrymen, the Executive Committee of our Classis decided to send help to two areas affected by the said typhoon.

TALISAY CITY – CEBU

ALBUERA LEYTE

CONFERENCE AND REGULAR CLASSIS MEETING – Our 21st Regular Classis Meeting was held last January 12-17, 2026. The first two days of the meeting was devoted to a short conference on Reformed Church Government, Church Discipline, and Addressing some concerns on the Constitution of the RCUS. The lectures given by **Reverends Travis Grassmid, Michael Voytek and Gil Baloy** were indeed very edifying. Thank you so much dear brothers for always being with us in our journeys in the faith.

THE CONFERENCE LECTURES

The last three day of meeting was spent on the discussions about the concerns of our denomination and to fellowship.

CLASSIS MEETING

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH – We cannot say but thank you to our Father in Heaven who sustained us in all our trials and sufferings as a denomination through His work of great providence. We thank our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for His work of redemption, a guarantee that we will forever be victorious in our journey in serving Him until He comes again and take us to Himself in His Kingdom. Glory be to the Holy Spirit that in times of weaknesses and pains, He is always there to strengthen and comfort us, giving us the inspiration to continue in our commitment in being His servant.

The Church at present is a church militant, continue battling with the works of the devil. The Church might be going through many difficulties and challenges but we are assured that victory

is always ours. POCRC is tossed here in there by many waves and wiles of the devil and faced by many pressing needs and painful happenings, as many Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ do. But we always hold with confidence to the declaration of the Apostle Paul, that He who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So we endure and continue fulfilling our ministries despite everything since we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. Yes, we might be hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we might be perplexed by what life and serving the Lord brings us, but we will never be in despair. We might be persecuted by the works of the devil and evil men whose desire is our downfall but we will never be forsaken. We might be struck down by ill report, but no one can destroy us, since our God is always on our side as His people and no one can separate us from the love of God that is Christ Jesus our Lord. The works of the Lord in the life of POCRC are indeed evidence that God is truly at work in us. We entreat you brothers to please continue praying for us as we do the same to you. To our God alone be the all glory.

Serving the Lord with you perseveringly,

Your Brother,

PASTOR NAP NARAG