

GRACE MINISTERIAL ACADEMY



Training men...

*to preach the Word of God &
pastor the church of Christ*

Second Semester
2015 - 2016

c/o Cubao Reformed Baptist Church
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Progress Report

But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God...
2 Corinthians 6:4

Paul has just announced the acceptable time and day of salvation - and this is at the first coming of Christ. He then shows the negative imperative of this for the ministry. A minister must be careful not to give offence that casts blame on the ministry. After the negative, he then asserts the positive imperative.

But what does Paul mean by, *we commend ourselves in every way*? It cannot mean self-praise. That will contradict his own approach in this letter, that he would *rather boast of infirmities and weaknesses*. The parallel of 4:2 explains this, *by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God*. Commending oneself is to demonstrate that God's approval is sealed upon one's ministry.

The semester began with this opening message: ***An effective ministry is mindful to commend God's approval on it.***

Paul has a long list of how this commendation is to be achieved. It can be grouped into three. First, *Endurance in distressful providence*. Second, *Godliness in personal character*. Third, *Faithfulness in opposite conditions*.

It is hoped that the semester ended with the seal of God's approval upon GMA in its ministry of *Training men to preach the Word of God, and pastor the Church of Christ*.

Nine Graduates

(Report of Brian Ellis)

March 31st was a special day for Grace Ministerial Academy (GMA) as nine men finished their four years of study in the Academy, and have been recognized. They come from various locations in the Philippines, and most of them will be returning to the churches where they are from - while some are moving on to take up pioneering work in various places.

GMA does not issue degrees or other standards of recognition, but just a simple diploma to say the student has completed the course at GMA. Still, between 25 and 35 men come to enroll in the Academy. We provide a simple course for only three days a week as the men usually return to their home churches on Fridays, and come back to GMA on Mondays. The course may be simple but it involves deep study, reading, as well as work at the Biblical Languages of Greek and Hebrew.

Why do they come to a school which has no frills or degrees except a simple certificate of completion? Many of the men first came to the annual Pastors' Conference of Cubao Reformed Baptist Church, an annual event every first week of February every year. This year was the 26th Conference where more than 300 men crowded into the auditorium of the church to listen to men from here and abroad



Graduating Batch of 2016

From left to right: Ben Patrick Vispo; Froilan Rivera; Jairus Sedrik Misajon; Lazaro Malabayabas; Rojune Aldemo; Levi Ilhig; Ezekiel Asis; Lester John Abella; and Jonathan Cortez

expound the Word of God, teach on pastoral matter, and lecture on Church History or on the lives of great men of God from the past. At the conference, the men usually receive up to nine good God-honouring books, to take away with them on condition that they read them. Through the Conference, many men have moved in their theological understanding to embrace the doctrines of God's sovereign grace. This is in answer to our prayers and desires to see a work of reformation here in the Philippines.

Please pray for the work of Grace Ministerial Academy, and for our students as they take up the work in different provinces of the Philippines. May the Lord be pleased to guide, direct, and use all the graduates of Grace Ministerial Academy in the work of the gospel and the establishment of God-honouring churches.

Alumnus Ordained and Church Covenanted

On January 16, Erwin Cadalin (batch 2010) was ordained as the pastor of the newly covenanted church of Morong Reformed Baptist Church. There were fifteen covenanting members.

Erwin was serving under the pastor of his former church when his study in GMA brought him to the persuasion of the doctrines of grace. His pastor then demanded that he retract his conviction or to leave his salaried position. Erwin chose to stand by his conscience, and left his church. His graduation from GMA among the batch of 2010 proved the correctness of that decision.

After years of serving as a worker of Cubao Reformed Baptist Church, the Lord directed his ministry in the growing town of Morong in the province of Rizal.

May this decision prove yet once more that the Lord knows how to own His Word that is proclaimed faithfully.



Erwin Cadalin (Batch 2010), kneeling down, is ordained as a pastor of the Morong Reformed Baptist Church. The Church covenanted on the same occasion of Erwin's ordination.

The Graduates, 2016

Lester John Abella

Born in San Fernando, La Union, Lester has been ministering in the place of his birth. Given the distance, his weekly travel to attend his classes in GMA was full of struggles. But he was determined to persevere in, what he calls, *the best Bible School of training men for the ministry*.

The theological subjects of *Soteriology* and *Pastoral Theology* were the most life-changing influences on him. Every oral reporting, which students do once a semester, was always a memorable experience.

As a full-time pastor, Lester is in for many more memorable experiences.

Rojune Aldemo

Through the study of Pastoral Theology, Rojune testifies, "I did numerous self-assessments to evaluate myself in relation to my calling in the ministry. This course intensified the seriousness of becoming a minister to God's people."

Roj is now in Calauag, Quezon, serving with Pastor Romy Endaya another GMA alumnus (batch 2014). Soon, he will have to answer to that serious call to the pastorate.

Ezekiel Asis

Eze spent time studying for the ministry in Bro. Eddie School of Ministry, named after the famous local Charismatic preacher, Br. Eddie Villanueva. He moved to GMA to seek a more in-depth knowledge of theology and pastoral ministry.

The major impact on him of his study is a "better appreciation for the duties and responsibilities of a pastor, realizing the significant weight of the calling." He has been seeking to apply this to his present ministry as a preacher in Trinity Bible Church, his church in San Pablo City. Upon graduation, he aims to focus on opening outreaches.

Jonathan Cortez

Even before his last semester was over, Jonathan faced a serious challenge of conscience. He had decided to leave his own church in San Pablo City, and began a new work in Alaminos. To him, that was the application of what he has absorbed in study.

Having tasted the joy of graduation, he gives this advice to the students: *Make the most of your time here in GMA. Everything is worth doing.*

Levi Ihig

A native of Baybay City of Leyte province, Levi earned a degree in Theology in one of the famed seminaries of the south: Evangelical Theological College of the Philippines (ETCP) in Cebu. His encounter with Reformed teaching in a pastors' conference led him to seek theological study in GMA. He appreciates how the high level of academic discussion was always applied to pastoral ministry and individual concern.

While presently ministering in the church in Tondo, Levi is still contemplating whether to return to his native place for his ministry.

Lazaro Malabayabas

Years spent in GMA study demanded much self-denial for Larry. He has a large family to attend to in Marinduque. On top of this, he often has to be personally present in an ongoing legal case. He has often thought of quitting, but with his family's understanding and support, he persevered.

After his graduation, Larry returned to Marinduque and is now starting a church planting work. There, he is now happy being in the ministry with his family.

Jairus Sedrik Misajon

Most of his time as a student, Jairus was single. But he got married before his last semester was over. It must have been an inspiring decision, having tempered what he considers his "easy-go-lucky attitude and lack of clear direction in life."

He ministers as a deacon in his church, where the pastor is GMA alumnus Ramen Caliwag (batch 2015). He still has plans for further theological study. He has especially absorbed the subject of Evangelism, with its right application of Calvinism to one's gospel witness.

Froilan Rivera

A graduate with distinct honor of FEBIAS College of Bible, Froi also took a course in Asian Theological Seminary. When his soteriology became Reformed, he found in GMA a school that can reform the rest of his views.

Presently, Froi is serving as a fellow elder of Jorge Gumopas (batch 2009), another GMA alumnus. As pastor of Sovereign Grace Christian Church in San Pedro, he is able to apply what he considers the most influential lesson on the Regulative Principle. He says, "This did not only change my view of worship, but it has challenged me since worship can only be acceptable to God when done in accordance with what is explicitly commanded in the New Testament."

Ben Patrick Vispo

A licensed civil engineer, Ben raised many eyebrows when he decided to be in the ministry. a first for Grace Baptist Church, where the pastor is the principal of GMA. His graduation four years later was a time of celebration for the church.

According to Ben, among many, GMA has taught him to look at preaching as the primary ministry of the Word. He believes that "It is in preaching that God most powerfully speaks to people and it is in preaching where I can expect to see God's work in the lives of sinners."

Godspeed, Prof. Gilbert MacAdam

Prof. Gilbert MacAdam delivered the Word of challenge on this year's Commencement Service. It also marked his last ministry in GMA. His family will be moving to his native Scotland, where he will take up a new pastoral work.

The Lord be with you, Prof. Gilbert. We appreciate your ministry in GMA.