

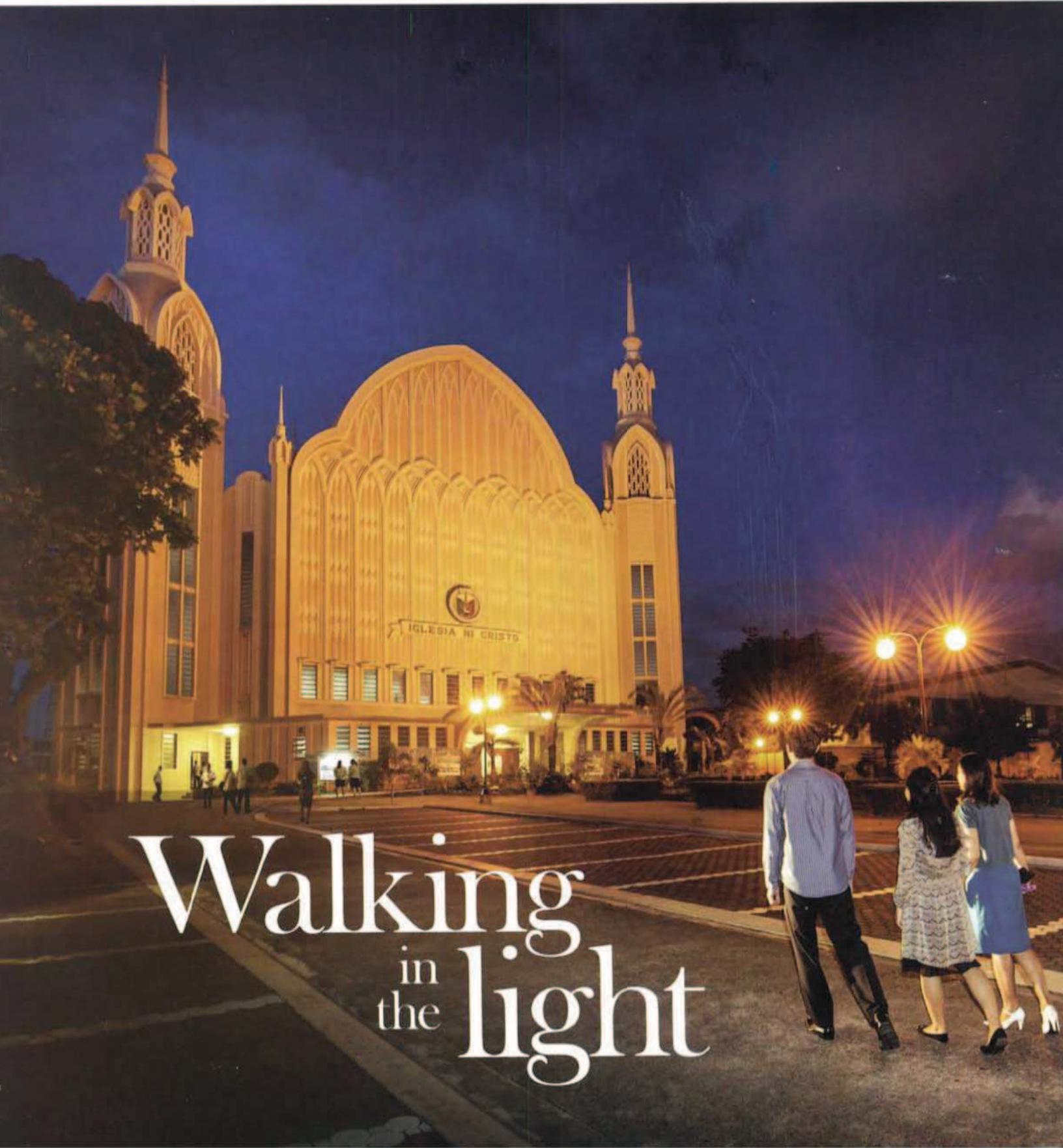


PASUGO

OCTOBER 2017

GOD'S MESSAGE

The Magazine of the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church Of Christ)



Walking
in
the light

Blessed moments with Brother Eduardo V. Manalo

When he travels long, great distances
To visit and see how we are all doing
Making sure each of us remains strong,
Firm in our faith and divine calling ...

When he speaks to us God's holy words
With power, courage, and conviction,
Enlightening our minds with the truth
And giving our hearts inspiration ...

Such blessed moments with our beloved leader—
Brother Eduardo Manalo, our Executive Minister—
In our memories we'll deeply treasure
And to God we'll always be thankful for.

When he reaches out his hand to us
When he smiles and looks into our eyes
When he greets and happily talks with us
With comforting words and good advice ...

When we see him enter the house of worship
And see that our prayers to God are answered
For he is well, safe from harm and danger,
Never backing down, always pressing onward ...

When he makes his petition for us to the Father
Asking Him to let His power on us descend
When he begs God to work a miracle for our sake
And to help us endure until the very end ...

Such blessed moments with our dearest Brother
Make us see and feel God's love unfailing
Such blessed moments make us stand more firm
To fight on for our faith and gain life everlasting.

Marlex C. Cantor • Quezon City, Philippines





BLESSED. The ordination of new ministers on September 16, 2017 at the Iglesia Ni Cristo Central Temple (Story on page 22)

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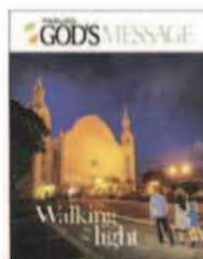
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OUR COVER

A family on their way to a worship service, depicting a Christian household that lives with divine guidance.



PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN AMERICA IN A 'DEATH SPIRAL'

NEW RESEARCH shows that the United States is a nation of small churches, with 61 percent having 100 people or fewer in attendance each week.

Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources conducted a study based on 1,000 randomly selected churches with available data for 2013 and 2016, which showed "that 65 percent of churches are declining or plateaued."

Rainer explained that "a declining church with 200 weekly worshipers or more declines at a rate of 4 percent each year. A declining church with an attendance of less than 100 declines at a rate of 7.6 percent per year. When the weekly attendance is less than 50, the church declines at a rate of 8.7 percent a year."

Rainer observed, "It's a death spiral. Declining smaller churches decline much more rapidly than larger churches. Once the declining church goes below 100 in attendance, its days are likely numbered."

source: <http://www.christianpost.com> article by Brandon Showalter entitled, "Are Small Churches in a 'Death Spiral'?"

Praying for the dead: Biblical or not?

Q: Why don't members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* pray for their dead?



A: Members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) do not pray for their dead because it is not prescribed by the Bible. Not only is this practice unbiblical, but it is also pointless. This is so because the Bible says:

"For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; **Nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun.**" (Eccl. 9:5-6, *New King James Version*, emphasis ours)

Those who die return to dust (Gen. 3:19), lying in their graves until the heavens are no more, or on Judgment Day, the time when they will rise again to face judgment (Job 14:12; II Pet. 3:10; John 5:28-29; Matt. 25:31-34, 41, *NKJV*).

Indeed, praying for the welfare of the dead is in vain. Clearly, there is nothing the living can do that will benefit the dead. For these reasons members of the Church Of Christ do not pray for their dearly departed.

For questions, comments, and suggestions, e-mail us at pasugo@iglesianicristo.org.ph or pasugo@inc.org.ph or send your letters to any of our editorial offices (see staff box). We reserve the right to edit letters for reasons of space and clarity. Sender's name may be withheld upon request.



When days are dark

FOR MANY PEOPLE, dark clouds of worry and uncertainty still loom largely on the horizon as the year 2017 enters its last quarter.

To the keen and observant eye, it is quite easy to see the miserable world that people are living in today. Many are troubled by the rising frequency of devastating natural disasters, epidemic diseases, widespread poverty and unemployment, worsening pollution, inadequate food and water supply, among many others.

The situation is even made more grim by talks of impending nuclear war, even as armed conflicts continue to rage in different parts of the world, terrorist attacks keep on killing people indiscriminately, and the global menace of drug abuse and addiction remains unabated.

Perhaps this year's most serious international crisis is the row brewing in the Korean Peninsula, which many fear might escalate into a full-blown nuclear war if either of the opposing sides makes any miscalculated move. The growing specter of terrorism is also a cause of alarm. This year alone, there are already around 1,100 violent incidents carried out by terrorist groups. Likewise, the high number of drug users indicates how huge a problem illegal drug trade is. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), there are about 250 million drug users worldwide—29.5 million of them have already been adversely affected by their addiction.

Although the world economic growth offers some good news, yet for some economists and analysts, the current economic climate is something to be wary of.

For them, it resembles the one that triggered the global financial crisis a decade ago. They foresee another economic bubble building up that is bound to burst.

These days are indeed dark and difficult times. And what makes these days even darker for many is the widespread and worsening deterioration of moral values. Incidents of hate crimes, racism, defamatory hate speech, discrimination, religious persecution, corruption, and other morally reprehensible acts continue to affect many lives.

When days are dark, there are people who lose hope and direction in their life. In such situation, others are easily swayed by the bad influence surrounding them, thus they also fall into committing wicked works. For that not to happen to us, we need light to illumine our path.

The Bible teaches us about the lights that can provide us guidance. The Lord God is light (I John 1:5). The Lord Jesus Christ is also a light, "the light of the world" (John 8:12). God's word is a light to our path (Ps. 119:105). And God's messengers are also likened to light (Acts 13:47; II Cor. 5:18-20) because the message they bring with them will "give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (II Cor. 4:6, *New King James Version*).

For our path to be enlightened, especially during these dark times, we need to let God be the light of our life by obeying His teachings which Jesus Christ and His messengers taught (John 12:49-50; John 8:12; Luke 6:46; Rom. 10:15; Mark 16:15-16). If we do this, darkness will be turned into light and we can overcome any problem that we face in life (II Sam. 22:29-30, *Living Bible*).

Let God's light—His words—also shine through us so that others may benefit from them, too. If God's teachings abide in us, we will not stumble or make wrong steps (John 11:9-10). Moreover, our obedience to God's commandments, laws, and instructions will brighten our path to the promised eternal life (Prov. 6:23; John 1:4).

Let us therefore remain obedient to God's teachings to benefit from them. The apostles exhort us to be submissive to God (James 4:7) and to the minister whom He has given the authority to administer the Church Of Christ and to preach His words (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*; Col. 1:25). That is one of the all-important functions that Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the Executive Minister of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ), fulfills: proclaiming God's words. Thus, Brother Eduardo Manalo tirelessly preaches the words of God to people from all walks of life. Despite the dangerous and dismal situation of the world, he travels far and wide to spread God's message of salvation—a true beacon of hope in these dark and trying times.

Let our hearts and minds be filled with the light that comes from God's words that are taught to us by the ones whom He authorized to preach them. Thus we shall have nothing to worry about even if the world's situation may take a turn for the worse, for we shall always have God's guidance in our journey to the promised eternal life. ●

—BIENVENIDO A. SANTIAGO JR.
Associate Editor

BY VICTORIOUS EVERY MEASURE

By DENNIS C. LOVENDINO

AS IT STRIDES past its centennial, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) shows no sign of slowdown or stagnation. The opposite, in fact, is true: the brethren's enthusiasm in pursuing the Lord's works toward further victories is at an all-time high. This is in no small part due to the able and inspiring leadership of the Executive Minister whom God has placed to steer the Church's affairs.

By every measure, the victories the Church has reaped in the last eight years have God's fingerprints all over them. The journey may have not been smooth-sailing; oftentimes, the road is rough and perilous. But time and again, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* has weathered the fiercest of storms—all because God keeps His promise to His Messenger in these last days, Brother Felix Y. Manalo, and the work he was commissioned to begin, that He will help, strengthen, and uphold them (Isa. 41:9-13).

Against tremendous odds, the Church today continues to grow by leaps and bounds, and the triumphal procession in all her endeavors marches on. Though some detractors tried to smear, hamper, and destroy altogether the Church and its work, they all failed miserably and were put to shame. For God long ago declared concerning this mission of salvation, "I work and who can hinder it?" (Isa. 43:13, *Revised Standard Version*).

So, as we commemorate the eight blessed years of our beloved Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, of being at the helm, we humbly render our collective praise and thanksgiving to our Father Almighty and to His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom we attribute the wondrous triumphs the Church continues to enjoy.

Here are some of the Church's milestones during the last eight years:





PROPAGATION AND EXPANSION

34 new ecclesiastical districts established

36 additional countries and territories reached by the Church

Great Proclamation of God's Words held on September 26, 2015 through the preaching of the Executive Minister to more than a million people—the great bulk gathered at the Philippine Arena, and the rest in thousands of various sites worldwide

Launching of *Kabayan Ko, Kapatid Ko* (My Countrymen, My Brethren) spearheading *Lingap-Pamamahayag* (Outreach-Evangelical Missions) all over the Philippines, with attendees averaging hundreds of thousands

More than 450 former pastors and preachers from other religions joined the Church

EDIFICATION

173 congregations in 40 countries and territories across six continents visited by Brother Eduardo V. Manalo to edify the faith of the brethren

Executive Minister sets foot on the continents of Africa, Australia, and South America for the first time

More than a million and a half Church officers added since 2009

Livestream worship services began to be conducted for more than 140 sites in 20 ecclesiastical districts outside the Philippines





TRAINING AND ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

3,490 ministers ordained

First ordination of ministers outside
the Philippines held in Humble, Texas
on December 28, 2011

College of Evangelical Ministry (CEM)
elevated to Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church Of
Christ) School For Ministers (SFM)

For the first time, ministerial students
numbered more than 10,000

13 new extensions of the SFM
added (7 in the Philippines
and 6 abroad)

BUILDING OF HOUSES OF WORSHIP AND OTHER EDIFICES

791 houses of worship
(712 in the Philippines and 79 overseas)
and 1,033 barangay chapels constructed,
for a total of 1,824

The biggest house of worship outside
the Philippines, the 1,360-seater Barcelona,
Spain chapel, dedicated to God
on July 28, 2012

The Philippine Arena, the world's biggest
mixed-use indoor theater, and the Philippine
Sports Stadium at the Ciudad de Victoria complex
inaugurated on July 21, 2014

Other major edifices built—SFM Building,
Honorata de Guzman-Manalo Building,
Pilar Manalo-Danao Multimedia Center,
Avelina Manalo-Makapugay Building
of the New Era General Hospital,
and the Salvador G. Manalo Building



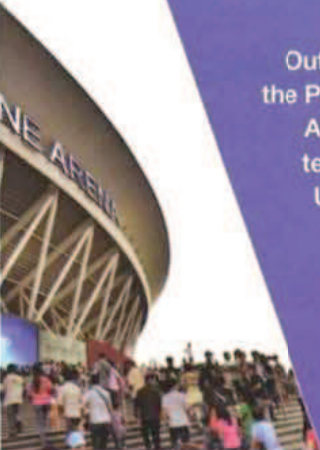


HUMANITARIAN AND LIVELIHOOD PROJECTS

Iglesia Ni Cristo livelihood project, UNLAD International (Unified Livelihood and Advocacy for Development International, Inc.) spearheaded the building of garment factories and 25 self-sustaining eco-farming communities

Housing communities built in Alangalang, Leyte; Paracale, Camarines Norte; and Tampacan, South Cotabato

Outreach missions conducted outside the Philippines through the International Aid to Humanity program, benefiting tens of thousands of indigents in the United States of America, Australia, Brazil, Japan, and several countries in Africa



SPORTS, CULTURE, AND ARTS

Unity Games and EVM Cup launched

Epic movie, *Felix Manalo*, received major awards, including Best Picture from two Philippine award-giving bodies

INCinema full-length film, *Walang Take Two*, awarded in various international film festivals, such as in London, Berlin, and Madrid 🌐



The great benefit of walking in the light

By LLOYD J. CASTRO

AS HE LEADS the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) members towards attaining salvation, the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, exhorts them to soldier on in the Lord's holy works as they journey through this dark, wicked world.

Through the instrumentality of God's Messenger, the members of Christ's true Church have been transferred from the power of darkness into His marvelous light (Acts 26:17-18; I Pet. 2:9-10; Col. 1:12-13). They have been forgiven of their sins by Christ's redemption and hence have the hope for eternal salvation (Col. 1:14; Acts 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*; Rom. 5:8-9).

Just as the members will never want to let go of this priceless grace, so does the Executive Minister who does not want any one of them to be left behind in their journey by being overcome again by darkness. Out of love and concern, he tirelessly teaches the brethren the words of God that Brother Felix Y. Manalo,

whom the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* believes is God's Messenger in these last days, began preaching 103 years ago.

The requirement

One of these teachings the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* members have been constantly reminded about concerns what Christ requires of His servants:

"Then Jesus said to them, 'A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.'" (John 12:35, *New King James Version*)

True Christians should no longer walk in darkness. They have been saved from that condition, so it is only right and reasonable that Christ requires them to walk in the light. By this, He meant believing in the light:

"While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.' These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them." (John 12:36, *Ibid.*)

In that particular instance, the light Christ was referring to is Himself (John 12:46). He is the light not only because He preaches God's words, which is the lamp and light to our path (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23) but also because those who follow Him shall not walk in darkness (John 8:12, *NKJV*). Believing in Christ and His teachings is equivalent to believing in God Who sent Him and gave Him the words to proclaim (John 6:29; 12:49-50).

The Almighty God, of course, is Light and is the creator and source of light. His messengers, the greatest of whom is Christ, and the Administration He placed in the Church are lights, for they preach His words (II Cor. 5:18-20; Col. 1:25). The true Christians themselves are made lights of the world (Matt. 5:14).

Thus, it is vital that Church Of Christ members continue to firmly believe in the Lord Jesus and in God's words that He taught so that they may continue to walk in the light.

The evidence

As an organization, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* has the evidence of walking in the light:

“But if we are walking in the light, as he is in the light, we are all united with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son makes us clean from all sin.” (1 John 1:7, *Bible in Basic English*)

Christian unity is taught and practiced staunchly in the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. A faithful member who walks in the light will never cause divisions in the Church and will never separate from it. He will continuously uphold the unity of the Church and will remain united with the Church Administration.

Another proof of walking in the light is that “the blood of Jesus his Son makes us clean from all sin.” The Bible proves that what was made clean or redeemed with Christ’s blood is the Church Of Christ (Acts 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*).

So, one cannot just simply claim to be in the light and to be walking in it; he must be in the true Church Of Christ. However, to simply remain in his membership in the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* is also insufficient; he must make sure that he is being cleansed. This is the condition of those who bear more fruit:

“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” (John 15:2, *NKJV*)

Christ is the vine and the members of His body or Church are His branches (John 15:1; Col. 1:18). Every member, being His branch, is expected to bear fruit of righteousness (Phil. 1:11) by being obedient to the words of God (John 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:22).

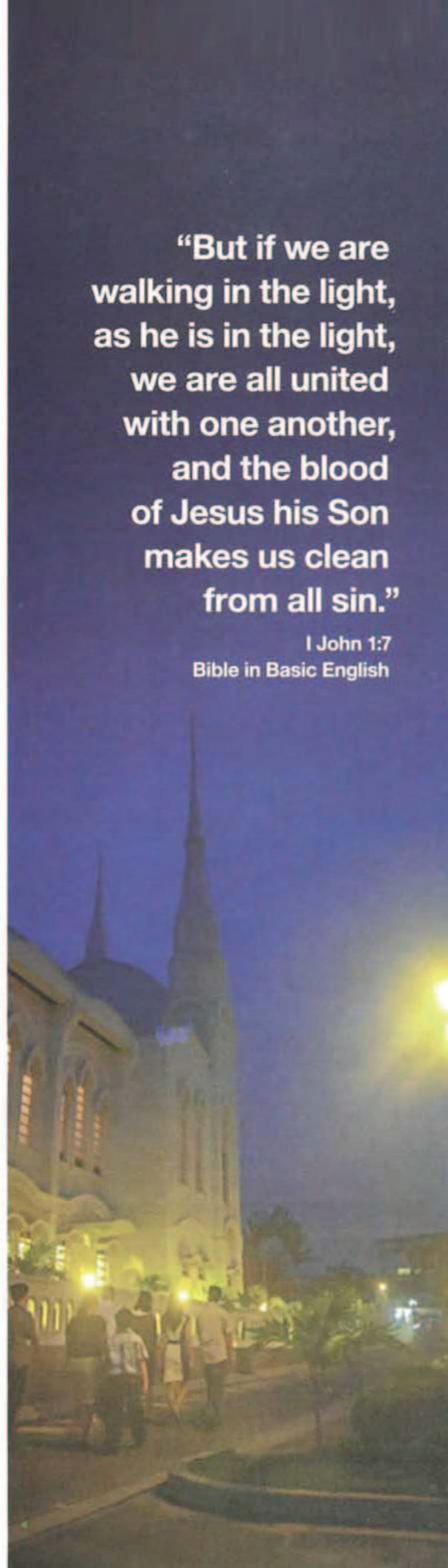
Christ guaranteed that “every *branch* that bears fruit He [the Father] prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” Moreover, Christ said, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples” (John 15:2, 8, *NKJV*).

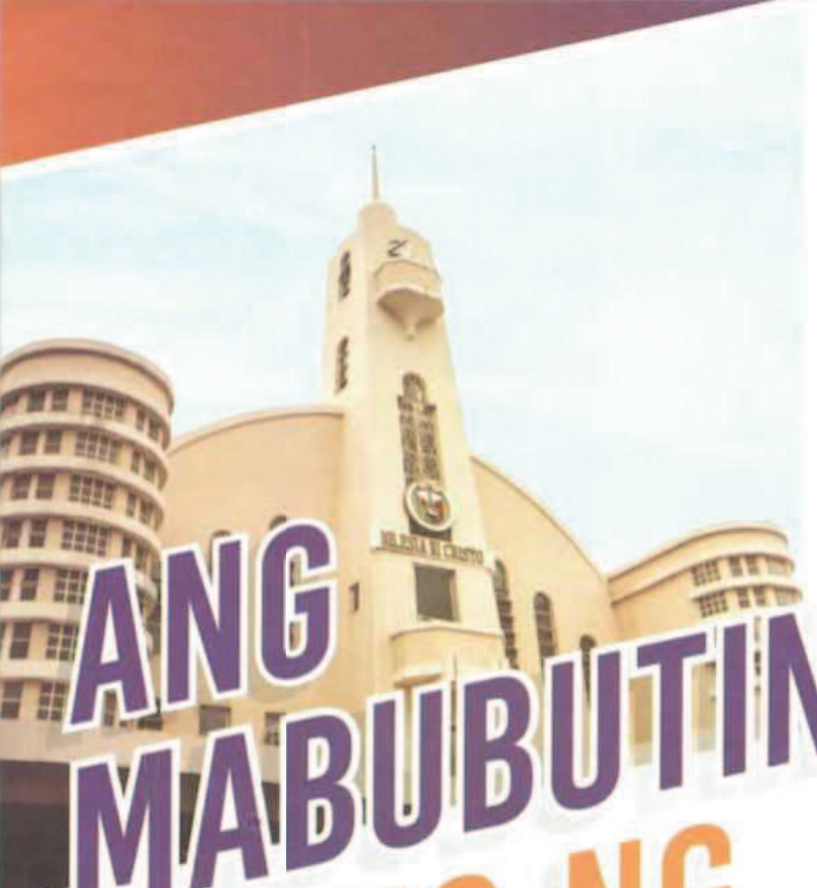
This is why the Church Administration always encourages all the brethren not only to lead a life of holiness or in accordance with God’s teachings but also to take active part in all the works of the Church. Indeed, in the spirit of unity and conviction, whatever situation their lives may be in, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* members all over the world are devoted to worshiping and serving God, and to edifying one another’s faith. They fervently help in propagating the pure gospel so that they may be instrumental in leading many people back to God. In so doing, they are able to bear much fruit, glorify the Father, and prove they are truly Christ’s disciples.

As they strive to maintain such sterling Christian quality, they will not be overtaken by darkness but be able to reach the end of their journey and inherit the kingdom of light, the Holy City, illumined by Christ Himself and by God’s glory (Rev. 21:23). ☺

“But if we are walking in the light, as he is in the light, we are all united with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son makes us clean from all sin.”

**1 John 1:7
Bible in Basic English**





ANG MABUBUTING PLANO NG PANGINOON

AGOSTO 26, 2017

CALOOCAN, METRO MANILA NORTH
IKA-96 ANIBERSARYO

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ANG ILAN SA MGA HAKBANG na ginagawa ng tao upang makamit ang magandang kinabukasan ay ang pagpaplanong mabuti at pagsasakatuparan nito. Para sa mga tunay na kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, ang higit na mahalaga ay ang plano ng Panginoong Diyos para sa kanila at ang lahat ng pagkakataong maisagawa ang paglilingkod na nakalulugod sa Kaniya.

Si Kapatid na Omar V. Diño, 61 taong gulang, pangulong diakono sa Lokal ng Caloocan, Distrito Eklesiyastiko ng Metro Manila North, ay nagplanong maghanapbuhay sa ibang bansa. “Taong 1980 o 1981, kung hindi ako nagkakamali, noong inaayos ko ang papeles ko upang makapag-*abroad*,” paggunita niya.

Mula sa mga aral ng Diyos na itinuturo sa Iglesia, naunawaan, natutuhan, at sinampalatayanan ni Kapatid na Omar na tanging ang Diyos ang makapagbibigay ng tagumpay sa kaniyang mga plano. Dahil dito, naging bahagi ng kaniyang paghahanda ang pagsangguni sa Pamamahala ng Iglesia. “Ang Pamamahala ang kasangkapan ng Diyos para gabayan tayo,” pahayag niya. Kaya naman, inilapit niya noon sa ministrong katuwang ng Pamamahala para mangalaga sa kanilang lokal ang kaniyang plano. Wika niya, “Nagpaalam ako sa destinadong ministro sa aming lokal na mag-a-*abroad* ako para maghanapbuhay.” Kasabay nito ang kaniyang taimtim na mga pananalangin sa Diyos.

Napagtanto niya na sa bansang balak niyang puntahan ay hindi na niya magagawang tuparin ang tungkulin niya at ang paglilingkod sa Diyos tulad ng nagagawa niya sa sariling bansa. Naalala niya ang payo ng ministro na ang pagpapala ng Diyos ay hindi lamang sa isang lugar—“kung pagpapalain ka sa ibang bansa ay



maaaring pagpalain ka rin dito." At ang lalo niyang natandaan na ipinayo sa kaniya ng ministro: "Dito, nakatutupad ka ng tungkulin. Nakatutulong ka sa lokal."

Sumampalatayang lubos si Kapatid na Omar na may mabuting plano para sa kaniya ang Diyos. "Ipinagpauna ko ang ukol sa Diyos. Nagpasiya ako na huwag nang [mag-abroad]." Napatunayan naman niyang hindi siya nagkamali sa kaniyang pasiya na isantabi ang sarili niyang plano alang-alang sa paglilingkod sa Diyos. "Hindi ako nanghinayang. Hindi ako nag-abroad pero nabuhay ako nang maayos. Ibinigay ng Diyos ang mga kailangan namin. Hindi man ako naging masagana sa materyal na bagay, masagana naman ako sa biyayang espirituwal. Ang tungkulin na tinanggap ko ay biyayang kaloob ng Diyos,"

pahayag pa niya. Si Kapatid na Omar ay kabilang sa pamunuan ng lokal sa loob ng 37 taon at mula noong 2005 ay hinirang siya bilang pangulong diakono ng lokal.

Si Kapatid na Cholita S. Quiambao naman, 60 taong gulang, isang diakonesa, ay nagtrabaho noon bilang isang *domestic helper* sa bansang Israel. Dumating ang isang pagkakataong kailangan niyang mamili sa dalawa—kung paghahanapbuhay o ang paglilingkod sa Diyos. "Kagaya noong nasa Israel kami, lilipat [sana kami] ng Canada. Nakita ko na mahahadlangan ang pagsamba ko kung lilipat ako kaya nagdesisyon ako na umuwi sa Pilipinas. Aanhin mo ang magandang buhay kung hindi mo [naman] nagagawa ang tamang paglilingkod," pahayag niyang may paninindigan.

Ipinagpapasalamat ni Kapatid na Cholita ang biyayang dulot sa kaniyang pamilya ng pagpili niya sa kagustuhan ng Ama. "Hindi man kami mayaman sa materyal na bagay, hindi naman kami naghihirap. Napagtapos ko sa pag-aaral lahat ng mga anak ko. Nakita ko rin sa kanila ang sigasig sa pagtupad ng tungkulin. Sila mismo mula pagkabata, mula sa Pagsamba ng Kabataan hanggang sa kasalukuyan, ay mga maytungkulin."

Si Kapatid na Antonio "Toni" A. Santos naman, 61 taong gulang, ay nagtrabaho rin sa ibang bansa. Ngunit dahil sa pagpapahalaga sa tungkulin, hindi na muling binalak ni Kapatid na Toni ang mangibang bansa kahit na alam niyang hindi kasinglaki ng kinikita niya roon



ang kinikita niya sa Pilipinas. “Nang matapos ang kontrata ko, bumalik ako sa Pilipinas at ako ay naging pangulong mang-aawit,” pahayag niya. Ibinahagi niya ang kaniyang paninindigan: “Minsan, nagkakasabay pa ang trabaho at saka ang pagtupad. Uunahin ko ang pagtupad dahil mas mahalaga ito. [Para] sa Ama ito. Ibibigay naman ng Ama ang mga biyaya [kailanma’t] maglilingkod tayo.”

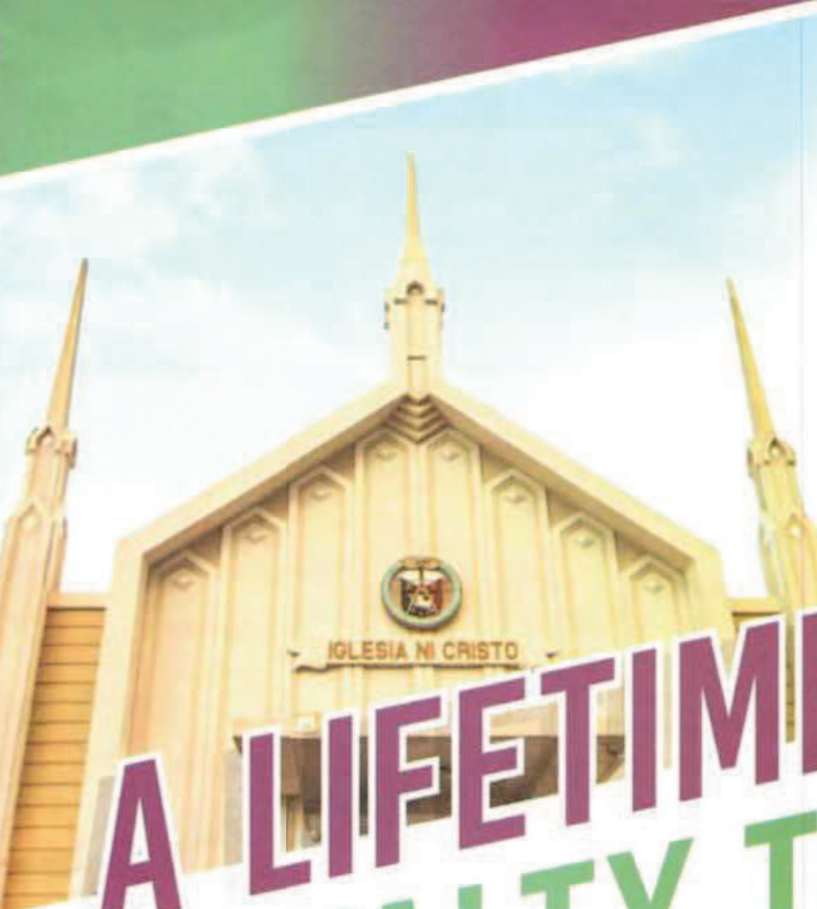
Noong Agosto 26, 2017, pinangasiwaan ng Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan, Kapatid na Eduardo V. Manalo, ang isang tanging pagsamba sa Lokal ng Caloocan bilang paggunita sa ika-96 na anibersaryo ng lokal. Binigyang-diin ng Namamahala na ang Diyos ay may mabuting plano para sa Kaniyang mga lilingkod. Ipinayo ng Kapatid na Eduardo na hindi sila dapat

mabahala o mabalisa tungkol sa anumang bagay, kundi lubos na magtiwala sa Diyos.

Ayon kay Kapatid na Omar, isa sa mga natutuhan niya mula sa itinuro sa pagsamba ay “Maging mapanalanginin tayo. Huwag tayong padaig sa mga suliranin. Huwag tayong nerbiyusin [dahil] sa mga pagsubok para maitaguyod natin ang ating tungkulin.”

Nangako ang mga kapatid sa Lokal ng Caloocan na itataguyod nila ang kanilang paglilingkod sa Diyos hanggang sa wakas. “Habang may buhay at lakas ako, kailangang tuluy-tuloy sa pagtupad. Tutulong ako sa lahat ng gawain, lalo na sa gawaing pagpapalaganap,” pahayag ni Kapatid na Salfely Galang, 76 taong gulang na maytungkulin sa pananalapi. Sinabi naman ni

Kapatid na Eulalia M. Canlas, 87 taong gulang na diakonesa, na, “Kahit mayroon na akong karamdaman, maglilingkod pa rin ako sa Ama hangga’t mayroon akong buhay.” Sabi ni Kapatid na Lita I. Alvarez, 91 taong gulang na maytungkulin sa pananalapi at isa sa mga naunang kapatid sa Lokal ng Caloocan, na: “Hindi ako papayag na wala akong tungkulin. Mahal na mahal ko ang tungkulin ko. Wala na akong ibang iniisip kundi ang paglilingkod sa Diyos.” Paninindigan naman ni Kapatid na Omar, “Anuman ang mangyari ay gagampanan ko ang aking tungkulin. Hindi ko ipagpapalit ang paglilingkod ko sa anuman o sinuman. Hindi ako bibitiw hangga’t kaya ng aking katawan. Dito ko naramdaman ang tunay na pagpapala ng Panginoong Diyos.” ☺



A LIFETIME LOYALTY TO THE LORD

SEPTEMBER 2, 2017
BANABA CERCA, CAVITE SOUTH
80TH ANNIVERSARY

Written by Cerisse M. Esguerra and Remlyn M. Lingcoran
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PROTECTING THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORY of a country is an arduous task. But, soldiers are committed to fulfill this objective. Though every citizen is encouraged to join the military service, not just anyone can become a soldier. Aside from going through intense physical training, many qualities are demanded of an aspiring soldier, which include obedience, loyalty, determination, and integrity."

"As a soldier and, more so, as a Church officer, I have to be loyal and devoted to the duty that I was sworn in. Just as I was able to fulfill my duty being a soldier until I retired, I will all the more fulfill my duty as a Church officer until my death," Brother Benjamin Mojica said with conviction. He is from the local congregation of Banaba Cerca, ecclesiastical district of Cavite South. Despite the obligations he had when he was a soldier, these did not hinder Brother Benjamin from fulfilling his duty in the Church.

Brother Benjamin's grandparents were pioneers of the local congregation of Banaba Cerca. He witnessed how the brethren there devoted themselves and remained loyal to God despite what they went through in life. He shared that "we not only witnessed but also experienced severe persecutions. Whenever we were conducting evangelical missions, which were called *pulong propaganda* back then, stones were hurled at the venue. What we did was pray. And our Almighty God answered our prayers. Those who persecuted us at that time stopped. Some even became members of the Church a few years later."

The brethren in Banaba Cerca Local Congregation may be faced with many problems, but they still prove their loyalty and faithfulness to the Almighty God. "I am able to remain loyal to God

by trusting in Him, indeed, putting my full trust in Him. Though living in this world is becoming more difficult—trials abound—but still, I never allow myself to be hindered. I continue trusting in what God can do in my life,” said Sister Jane Romen, a choir member and a Children’s Worship Service (CWS) teacher.

Sister Rowena Panganiban, a deaconess, also shared how she stood by her conviction when hardships came into her life. “With the many trials that came to us, we placed our trust in the Lord God by conducting devotional prayers. We sought help from Him Whom we know is the only One Who can help us. During those times, we all the more committed ourselves to fulfilling our Church duties,” she expressed.

To further strengthen the faith of the brethren, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the

Executive Minister, led them in a worship service on the second day of September 2017 coinciding with the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the local congregation of Banaba Cerca. It was the first time that they were visited by the Executive Minister. The brethren were full of enthusiasm and inspiration. “We were really happy when we knew that Brother Eduardo would visit us. Like what other brethren say, being visited by the Executive Minister is our long-held dream. Now we witnessed its fulfillment,” said Brother Cesar Esguerra, a deacon and retired soldier.

In his homily, Brother Eduardo emphasized the characteristics that a Church member must have, for it is what the Lord God requires of him in order to be worthy of salvation. Being loyal and having a high degree of faithfulness to the Lord, Brother AJ





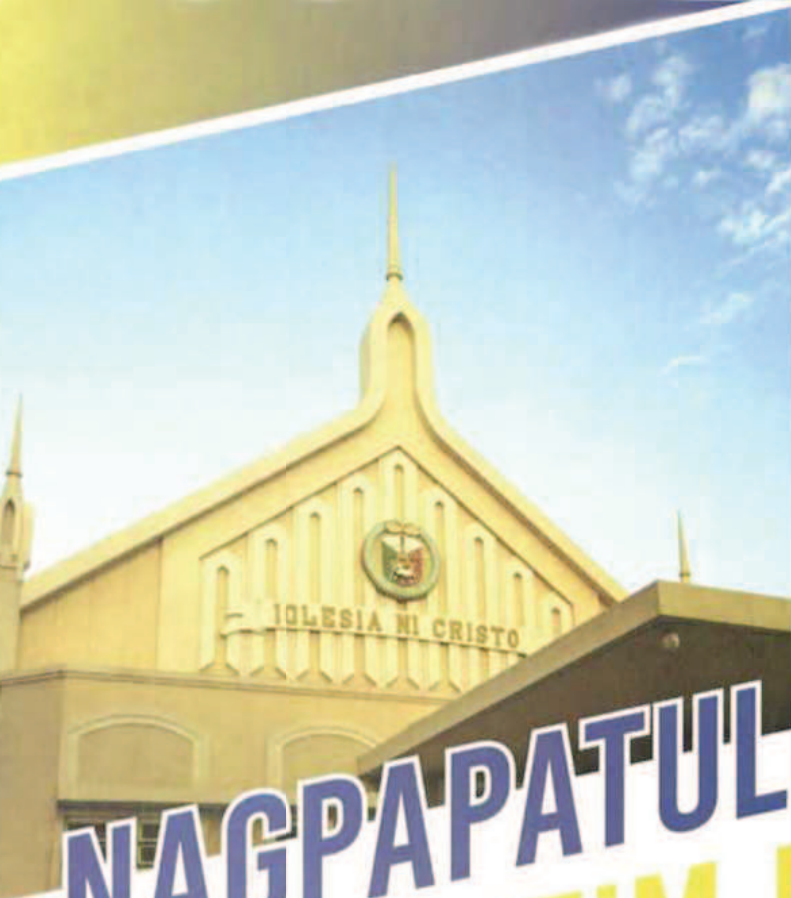
Bringas is active in performing his duties as a choir member, local secretary, finance officer, and *Binhi* officer. He said, "I have learned how important it is to be loyal. I promise God that until the end, I will remain loyal in performing my Church duties and in my being a member of the Church Of Christ." Sister Rowena added, "I learned to all the more be determined in fulfilling my obligations. Through our being Church officers and by dedicating ourselves to our duties, we become stronger in faith and we will remain steadfast for the rest of our lives."

"After I heard the words of God taught by Brother Eduardo, I became more firm in my faith. Just like what he taught, we should be loyal to our duty from the beginning until the end. The degree of our loyalty should increase. I will continue to be active and participate in all the activities that the Church

Administration launches. I will continue to enjoin my household in serving and worshipping God," Brother Cesar said.

"As a member of the Church Of Christ, I will dedicate myself to my duty, with the help of the Father, because He is the One Who gives strength and wisdom," Sister Jane promised.

Parallel to the 80 triumphant years of God's work in their local congregation is the triumph of its individual members in overcoming trials in life. Members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* in Banaba Cerca promise God that they will remain obedient, loyal, determined, and having integrity as His true servants. More than soldiers valiantly fighting to win a battle, Church members relentlessly strain forward as they battle against trials and remain in the Church to be worthy to receive God's promised reward—salvation on Judgment Day. 🌟



NAGPAPATULOY SA TAIMTIM NA PANANALANGIN

SETYEMBRE 9, 2017

BALINTAWAK, METRO MANILA NORTH
IKA-87 ANIBERSARYO

Written by Vanessa G. Alojado
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TAKOT, PANGAMBA, WERBIYOS. Ito ang mga nararamdaman ng tao kapag nararanasan nila ang mga pinsalang dulot ng kalamidad, sakuna, mabibigat na karamdaman, at iba pang mga nakapanlulumong pangyayari. Dahil sa malagim na kalagayang ito ng mundo, dumaraing ang mga tao. Naghahanap sila ng tulong upang mabigyan ng lunas ang mga suliraning nakapagdudulot sa kanila ng kapighatian.

Sa panig ng mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, batid nila na ang mga suliranin ay kaakibat ng buhay rito sa mundo. Itinuturing nila ang mga ito na pagsubok at pagkakataon upang mahayag ang tibay ng kanilang pananampalataya sa magagawa ng Panginoong Diyos sa kanilang buhay.

Isa sa mga dumaan sa mabibigat na pagsubok ay si Kapatid na Ambrosio N. Tasi. “Noong 1997, naaksidente ang aking asawa. Napinsala ang dalawa niyang binti. Maliliit pa lamang ang mga anak namin noon. Noong una ay hindi ko alam kung ano ang gagawin ko,” sabi niya. Makalipas ang ilang taon, isa pang trahedya ang hinarap ng kaniyang pamilya. “Ako naman ang naaksidente noong 2009. Ang sabi ng doktor ay kailangang putulin ang aking paa kaysa magdulot ito ng lalong pinsala sa akin,” patuloy niyang pagsasalaysay.

Nakaranas din ng hapis at kasawian si Kapatid na Ben B. Villafloz nang dumating sa kaniyang pamilya ang isang hindi inaasahang pangyayari. “Napakahirap na pagsubok ang dumating sa amin noong pumanaw ang aking nanay. Sobrang sakit ng loob ang aking naramdaman,” pahayag ni Kapatid na Ben. Hindi pa man lubusang nakababawi sa lungkot na dala-dala, isa pang matinding dagok ang dumating sa kanilang buhay. “Mahigit isang buwan pagkatapos na mailibing

ang aking nanay, sumunod naman na pumanaw ang aking Ate.”

Subalit, sa kabila ng malulubhang pinagdaanan, nalampasan nina Kapatid na Ambrosio at Ben ang mga nakalulungkot na pangyayaring iyon sa kanilang buhay. Hindi sila pumayag na sila ay manghina bunga ng kasawian, kundi patuloy nilang itinaguyod ang kanilang pamumuhay at hindi sila nahadlangan sa paglilingkod nila sa Diyos.

Ibinahagi ni Kapatid na Ambrosio ang naging reaksiyon niya sa kabila ng nangyari: “Bilang tao, nalungkot at nahapis ako. Pero ang inisip ko, makakaya ko ito dahil nariyan ang Panginoong Diyos na gagabay sa akin.” Namalaging positibo ang kaniyang pananaw sa buhay dahil na rin sa kumbiksiyon na kaniyang taglay. “Hindi ibibigay ng Diyos ang mga pagsubok na hindi natin makakayanan. Lagi akong handa anuman ang

pagsubok na dumating sa akin,” pahayag pa niya. Si Kapatid na Ambrosio ay tumutupad bilang *watchman* ng lokal at diakono sa Lokal ng Balintawak.

“Salamat sa Ama at Siya ang naging kanlungan ko. Lagi akong pumapasok sa kapilya at nananalangin sa Ama. Humihingi ako sa Kaniya ng lakas para malagpasan ko ang matinding kalungkutan sa buhay ko,” pagsasalaysay ni Kapatid na Ben. Ang naging reaksiyon ni Kapatid na Ben sa dumating na pagsubok sa kaniya ay bunga na rin ng natutuhan niya mula sa Pamamahala: “Itinuro ng Kapatid na Eduardo Manalo na anumang pagsubok ang dumating sa ating buhay, dapat nating tandaan na binigyan tayo ng Panginoong Diyos ng karapatan na manalangin sa Kaniya.”

Sa pagtuturo ng Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan sa pagsambang kaniyang

pinangasiwaan bilang paggunita sa ika-87 anibersaryo ng Lokal ng Balintawak noong Setyembre 9, 2017, binigyang-diin niya na sa harap ng mga nakasisindak na mga pangyayari sa mundo, kailangan na maging mapanalanginin ang mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Batay sa sinabi ni Apostol Pablo na nakasulat sa Biblia, itinuro ng Namamahala na ang mga tunay na lingkod ng Diyos ay hindi dapat ninenerbiyos o nababahala. Ang dapat na gawin ng mga kaanib sa Iglesia ay magpatuloy sa taimtim na pananalangin.

Sa maraming pagkakataon ay napatunayan sa buhay ng mga lingkod ng Diyos ang bisa ng panalangin. Kaya patuloy na pinanghahawakan ng mga kaanib sa Iglesia ang katotohanang ito at nananatili sila sa tapat at taimtim na pagtawag sa Panginoong Diyos. “Ayon sa itinuro ng Namamahala, sa



lahat ng bagay na aming kinakaharap, dapat laging manalangin,” sabi ni Kapatid na Daisy I. Pangan, diakonesa sa Lokal ng Balintawak.

“Natatandaan ko noong walang-wala kami. Patuloy pa rin kaming mag-asawa sa pagtupad ng aming tungkulin. Patuloy kaming nanalangin sa Panginoong Diyos,” pag-alaala ni Kapatid na Daisy. Nanghawak sila sa itinuturo ng Banal na Kasulatan na hindi pinababayaan ng Panginoong Diyos ang mga lingkod Niyang nagtitiwala sa Kaniya. Ibinahagi ni Kapatid na Daisy kung paano pinagpala ng Diyos ang kanilang pamilya: “Nagkaroon kami ng magandang hanapbuhay. Napalaki naming maayos ang aming mga anak at sila ay nakatapos sa pag-aaral. At ang higit na ikinatutuwa naming mag-asawa, nasa tungkulin ang mga anak namin.”

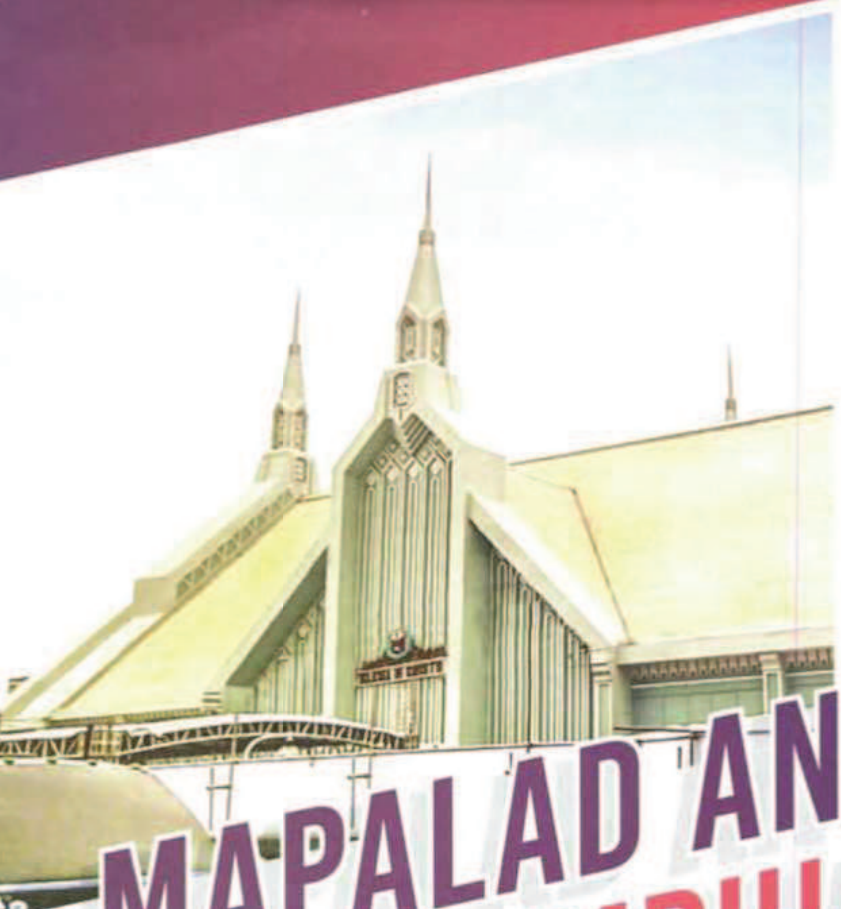
Hindi lamang sa mga panahong dumaraan sa mabibigat na pagsubok nananalangin ang mga tunay na kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Sa lahat ng panahon ng kanilang buhay, lubos nilang inihahabilin sa Diyos ang kanilang kalagayan. “Sa araw-araw kong pananalangin, dito ako laging humihiling ng lakas at proteksiyon mula sa Ama. Sa pagtupad ko ng tungkulin, idinadalangin ko sa Panginoong Diyos na ako ay



patnubayan Niya,” pahayag ni Kapatid na Frederick D. Vicente, organista sa Lokal ng Balintawak.

Dahil sa lakas at inspirasyon na dulot ng kanilang taimtim na paglapit sa Panginoong Diyos, naipagpapatuloy ng mga kaanib sa Iglesia ang kanilang paglilingkod at mga pagsamba sa Diyos. Hayag sa kanila ang matibay na pagtitiwala at pag-asa sa magagawa ng Ama. “Walang imposible sa Diyos dahil ang lahat ng bagay ay kayang-kaya Niyang ibigay. Ang kailangan lamang ay maging tapat at masunurin sa Kaniya,” pananalig ni Kapatid na Ambrosio.

Taglay ang tibay ng loob, nananatiling matatag ang paninindigan ng mga kaanib sa Iglesia anuman ang kanilang maranasan sa buhay. “Kahit ano ang aking kalagayan, patuloy pa rin ako sa pagtupad ng aking tungkulin bilang *watchman* ng lokal at diakono. Nakapagdadalaw ako sa mga sakop ko. Sa ganang aking sarili, hindi ko magagawa ang mga gampanin ko, kundi ito ay dahil sa awa at tulong ng Panginoong Diyos,” pahayag ni Kapatid na Ambrosio. Ganito naman ang kumbiksiyon ni Kapatid na Daisy: “Pangako naming mag-asawa, kasama ang aming mga anak, na lalo kaming magpapakasigla sa pagtupad ng tungkulin. Patuloy kaming makikipagkaisa sa Pamamahala at tutulong sa mga gawain. Susundin namin ang mga aral ng Diyos na itinuturo ng Pamamahala. Hindi kami titigil sa pananalangin.” ☺



MAPALAD ANG KINAKAMPIHAN NG DIYOS

SETYEMBRE 23, 2017

PASIG, METRO MANILA EAST
TANGING PAGSAMBA

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BA'T IBANG URI ng mga problema ang nararanasan ng bawat tao, lalo na sa panahon natin ngayon na laganap ang kahirapan, kaguluhan, at terorismo. Idagdag pa rito ang mga kalamidad—bagyo, lindol, pagbaha, at mga katulad nito—na nagdudulot ng takot at pangamba sa mga tao. Sa buhay ng mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, dumarating din ang pagkakataon na nasusuong sila sa mahihirap na sitwasyon, lalo pa't alang-alang sa pagtataguyod nila ng kanilang paglilingkod sa Panginoong Diyos.

"Ako ay isang organista sa Lokal ng Pasig. May isang pagkakataon na ako ay itinalaga ng aming tagapagturo ng awit na tumupad sa Lokal ng Taguig. May bagyo noon, at sa pagtungo doon, hindi na maaaring lumakad o sumakay ng jeep. Kailangang sumakay ng bangka dahil mataas na ang tubig-baha sa paligid," pagbabalik-tanaw ni Kapatid na Norlito C. Santiago. Sa mga tunay na kaanib sa Iglesia, ang gayong kalagayan ay hindi nagiging hadlang sa kanila. Itinataguyod nila ang mga pagsamba sa Diyos kahit sa mahirap na sitwasyon. "Nang makarating kami sa kapilya, nakita ko na naroroon na ang mga kapatid," pagsasalaysay ni Kapatid na Norlito. Sa kabila ng kalagayan nilang iyon, tinupad pa rin nila ang kanilang pananagutan sa Diyos, ang sumamba sa Kaniya. "Awa ng Diyos, mapayapa naming naisagawa ang pagsamba," pahayag pa ni Kapatid na Norlito.

Nariyan din ang mabibigat na karamdaman na nagpapahirap sa buhay ng tao. Isinalaysay ni Kapatid na Emelita F. Tamayo ang hinarap ng pamilya niya: "Ang pagsubok sa amin ay noong nagkaroon ng mabigat na sakit ang aking anak sa loob ng halos limang buwan." Sa harap nito, ang tanging kanlungan nila ay ang Diyos. "Nagpapanata



kami sa kapilya at nagtiwala sa magagawa ng panalangin," wika ni Kapatid na Emelita, isang mang-aawit sa Lokal ng Pasig. Pinatotohanan niya kung paano nahayag sa kaniyang anak ang awa ng Diyos: "Sa kabila ng karamdaman niya, patuloy pa rin siyang nakadadalo sa mga pagsamba ... kung nakita ninyo siya noon ay talagang nakakaawa siya at malala ang kaniyang karamdaman subalit ngayon ay bumuti na ang kaniyang kalagayan."

Bagaman may pagkakataong dumaraan sa iba't ibang mabibigat na pangyayari, taglay ng mga kaanib sa Iglesia ang matibay na pananampalataya kaya naitataguyod nila ang

mga pagsamba sa Diyos. "Sa lahat ng mga bagay na aking pinagdaanan sa buhay, ang naging inspirasyon ko ay ang mga itinuro sa akin na mga aral ng Diyos. Sinasampalatayanan ko na anuman ang mangyari ay hindi pababayaan ng Diyos ang mga tapat na lingkod Niya," pahayag ni Kapatid na Kimberly G. Tayoto, kalihim ng lokal at guro sa Pagsamba ng Kabataan.

Sa mga pagsamba, pangunahing tinatanggap ng mga kaanib ang mga aral ng Diyos na nagbibigay-lakas sa kanila upang makayang harapin ang mga hamon ng buhay. Ibinahagi ni Kapatid na Emelita ang kaniyang pananalig sa pagsasabing, "Sa mga aral na itinuturo sa panahon

ng pagsamba, lalo kaming nagiging matatag sa harap ng mga pagsubok na aming nararanasan." Kaya noong Setyembre 23, 2017, sa pagsambang pinangasiwaan ng Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan, Kapatid na Eduardo V. Manalo, sa Lokal ng Pasig, Distrito Eklesiyastiko ng Metro Manila East, muling nakatanggap ng biyayang espirituwal ang mga kapatid.

Binigyang-diin ng Namamahala ang itinuturo ng Biblia na upang magtagumpay sa paglilingkod at makarating sa kaligtasan, mahalaga na natitiyak ng lingkod ng Diyos na kinakampihan o sinasamahan siya ng Diyos. Kahit dumaaan pa sa matitinding problema ang mga tapat na lingkod ng Diyos,

siguradong makapagpapatuloy sila sapagkat ang pag-ibig ng Diyos sa kanila ay hindi makikilos, kundi mananatili sa kanila. Tiyak na maaasahan nila ang pangakong ito ng Diyos. "Ang Diyos ay tapat sa mga pangako Niya. Ang sinabi Niya ay tiyak na mangyayari. Kaya kailangan na patunayan natin ang ating pagtitiwala sa Kaniya. Kailangang patunayan natin

sa Kaniya, dahil mas mahalaga sa atin ang ating paglilingkod sa Kaniya," pahayag ni Kapatid na Kimberly.

Ito rin ang lubos na sinasampalatayanan ni Kapatid na Rosalina A. Roldan, isang diakonesa: "Mula pa noon, lagi nang nasa isip at puso naming mag-asawa ang pagsunod sa mga utos ng Diyos. Iyon ang pangunahin sa aming mag-

paglilingkod sapagkat, para sa kanila, ito ay ginagawa nila para sa Diyos. "Hindi tayo lugi kahit anuman ang isakripisyo natin alang-alang sa pagsunod sa Diyos, materyal na bagay man iyan, oportunidad sa buhay, o maaaring kaugnayan sa mga taong mahalaga sa atin," sabi ni Kapatid na Kimberly.

Ibinahagi naman ni Kapatid na Irene B. Tolentino ang damdamin niya sa paglilingkod sa Ama: "Kaligayahan ko ang paglilingkod sa Diyos. Napakahalaga sa akin na masiyahan ang Ama sa aking paglilingkod sa Kaniya. At nararapat na masaya tayong naglilingkod sa Kaniya hanggang sa wakas. Anuman ang mangyari, hindi ako uurong bagkus mananatili ako hanggang sa wakas."

Ganito naman ang tugon ni Kapatid na Kimberly tungkol sa kahalagahan na matiyak na



na mahal natin Siya," pahayag ni Kapatid na Norlito.

"Sa pagtuturo ng ating Namamahala, hindi ko malilimutan ang [sinitas niyang] turo ng Biblia na mapatutunayan ang pag-ibig sa Diyos kung gagawin natin ang mga bagay na iniuutos Niya. Alam ng Panginoong Diyos kung isinasantabi natin, kung kinakailangan, ang mga bagay o oportunidad alang-alang sa ating mga pananagutan

asawa, maging sa aming mga anak. Nakapananatili kami sa tungkulin dahil sa gabay ng Diyos, kahit ano ang dumating sa buhay." Nauunawaan nila ang halaga ng pagsunod at pananatili sa pagtupad ng tungkulin. "Hindi tayo malulugi kailanman kapag tayo ay sumunod sa Panginoong Diyos," pahayag ni Kapatid na Rosalina.

Nagagawa ng mga tapat na lingkod ng Diyos ang magsakripisyo alang-alang sa

namamalagi ang pakikisama ng Diyos sa kaniya: "Kailangang manatili ang kaugnayan ko sa Ama. Sisikapin kong manatili sa panig Niya upang ang pag-ibig Niya ay manatili sa akin. Kaya hindi ako magpapabaya sa aking paglilingkod, hindi ako lalabag sa mga utos Niya, at sisikapin ko na lagi akong nakasusunod sa mga utos ng Diyos na tinatanggap namin sa pamamagitan ng Pamamahala na inilagay Niya sa Iglesia." 🙏

SHEPHERDS

MORE FOR THE CONTINUOUSLY GROWING FLOCK

ORDINATION AND 43RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE
IGLESIA NI CRISTO (CHURCH OF CHRIST) SCHOOL FOR MINISTERS

By CELERINO G. BACLAAN

AS THE ALMIGHTY GOD continues the finishing touches of His last work for man's salvation, the commitment of His appointed leader to oversee the entire Church ascends more noticeably today as he fulfills the tasks entrusted to him. The sixth ordination since January 2017, the Church Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, ordained 32 trained men on September 16, 2017 to be added to the list of the Church's ministers to help him in shepherding the continuously growing flock and in propagating more intensively the gospel throughout the world. The sacred gathering held at the Central Temple in Quezon City, Philippines at 5:00 a.m. was also witnessed by thousands of brethren via videolink in selected sites or extensions around the world.

In his preaching, the Executive Minister, who is

in his 8th year of victorious leadership, cited the compelling circumstances calling for prompt actions to send more ministers and ministerial workers to shepherd God's people in these last days and to propagate the true Christian faith. Unstopped by various hindrances, the Church has been intensifying more its worldwide mission for man's salvation by "snatching" more people out of the fire (Jude 1:23) and leading them to enter Christ's flock, as His Second Advent is truly fast approaching.

Now spread in 139 countries and has crossed racial and cultural boundaries, members of the Church Of Christ are also facing the threats of worsening economic crisis, destructive calamities, and escalating terrorism. To cope with these disturbing global occurrences and their day-to-day battles for survival and for keeping their faith, the brethren need greater care and supervision.



Brother Eduardo brought this condition closer to the attention of the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church Of Christ) School For Ministers as it commemorated its 43rd anniversary last September.

VIRTUES OF GOOD SHEPHERDS

In his homily, the Executive Minister underscored that to be a minister of the gospel one does not take this honor upon himself but he must be called by God (Heb. 5:4). He not only cited but also highlighted the traits the one called should possess, among which are the following: his deep desire and hope is to never fail in his duty at all times (Phil. 1:20); a



good shepherd, like Christ, lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:10-12); keep his life free from the love of money and is satisfied with what he has, trusting in God that He will never abandon him (Heb. 13:5); like Moses, he prefers to suffer with God's people and be their shepherd on their way to the promised land; and works hard serving the Lord with a heart full of devotion (Rom. 12:11-12).

The newly ordained and their relatives, when asked randomly about what they thought and felt while Brother Eduardo was expounding on those traits, they found it inspiringly moving. Sister

Maura M. Manalansan, a 94-year-old deaconess of Tondo Local Congregation and grandmother of Brother Ron Justinne M. Velasco, said: "I prayed to God Almighty that He guide my grandson to be able to keep his divine calling and fidelity to Him and to the Church Administration." An Iglesia Ni Cristo Central Office volunteer worker, Sister Yollanda S. Facal, expressed: "I prayed to God, fervently imploring Him to bestow upon my son, Cad Jesriel, those traits of a good shepherd who will take care of the brethren and strengthen their faith. And even at worst times in their life he will be with them to protect

them, willing to face all dangers and offer his life for the Church." Brother Kenneth A. Ouano, a newly ordained, declared: "I know what my limitations are. A fundamental value the School For Ministers has instilled in us and was emphasized by the Executive Minister in the lesson he preached was complete trust in God Who will help those He called to be the shepherds of Christ's flock for which they are ready to give their life."





LAYING ON OF HANDS

The height of this sacred gathering was the Executive Minister's laying on of hands before the brethren witnessing the ordination of the new ministers. The three brethren who were interviewed, were also asked about their thoughts and feelings about it. Brother Kenneth humbly said: "It was indeed a divine affirmation of my being a minister of the

gospel who more fervently desires to serve the Church till my last breath." Sister Yollanda answered from her heart: "Our merciful God has finally answered what we [CJ's father and I] have been praying for since before that our son will be among those willing to give their lives in helping the Church Administration fulfill the tasks of overseeing the Church and

of proclaiming God's message for man's salvation." With overwhelming joy, Sister Maura stated: "While the Executive Minister was ordaining Justinne, I took it as a greater blessing to our family and prayed to God to make him a faithful shepherd of Christ's sheep."

The Church understands that there is a much greater demand for ministers as the

1. ALARCON, Daryl O.
2. ALFEREZ, Melver A.
3. ANQUILLANO, Michael A.
4. ASTILLERO, Alvin B.
5. BACLIG, Rodel A.
6. BARBECHO, Hilmer S.

7. BARCILLANO, R-R B.
8. BARON, Eleazar B.
9. BONDOC, Manuelito E.
10. CABRERA, Jayson G.
11. CAYABYAB, Neil Z.
12. EMPAY, Arnel D.
13. FACAL, Cad Jesriel S.
14. FAJARDO, Buena P.
15. HAYCO, Jhel Larry P.
16. MANDO, Peter John F.
17. MARZAN, Marvie V.
18. MENDIGORIA, Dexter F.
19. ONOYA, Jovito R.

20. OUANO, Kenneth A.
21. PALMONES, Julius D.
22. PARALE, Pastor B.
23. RODRIGUEZ, Ricardo G.
24. RUBIN, Edrome DC.
25. SALAZAR, Normand C.
26. SAN MATEO, Wilfredo P.
27. TABORA, John-john I.
28. TAMAYO, Ruben M.
29. TURQUEZA, Noel B.
30. VELASCO, Ron Justinne M.
31. VIDALLON, Vilson F.
32. YBAÑEZ, Rhodman Lloyd L.

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NEWLY ORDAINED MINISTERS



world approaches its end. As it races against the time of Christ's Second Advent, its mission to snatch people out of the fire gets closer to its end. The Church remains fully united with the Church Administration to fulfill its mission for man's salvation. Every time the Executive Minister does the laying on of hands to new ministers, the entire Church rejoices. 🌟

THE TASK OF MOLDING MORE SHEPHERDS

THE ROLE of the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church Of Christ) School For Ministers is very important because this is where the teaching and molding are done to the men whom God would utilize as His instruments not only to help care for the Church but also to propagate the true gospel for man's salvation," said Brother Bobby P. Fernandez.

Brother Bobby, an instructor in the School For Ministers, was among the thousands who attended the worship service officiated by the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, at the Central Temple in commemoration of the 43rd anniversary of the School For Ministers. "It is vital that as ministerial students undergo training in the school, they are 'refined and molded,' equipped with the qualities God seeks in those He places as leaders in His nation," said Brother Cesar B. Pedrozo, one of the senior instructors of the School.

Every year, thousands of young men from the Church's ecclesiastical districts around the world enroll at the Church's ministerial school. They must go through rigorous training and tests and must qualify based



on the standards set by the Church Administration before becoming ministerial workers.

Ministerial students are imbued with ministerial values that mold them to become shepherds of God's flock. "The school expects the students that after listening to the ministerial values taught by the Executive Minister through his homilies and through the instructors in the school, they will remember those values and put them into practice right away," said Brother David G. Agunia, also a faculty member of the school.

"Ministerial students learn that being a minister is such a noble duty. If the leaders of nations are mandated by people, ministers are leaders in God's nation and are elected by Him," expressed Brother David. Once a ministerial worker receives the laying on of hands by the Executive Minister during ordination, this does not mark the end of his lifelong pursuit but the start of a renewed commitment to fulfill his God-given duty. "Being ordained [as a minister] is indeed a blessing and the one ordained is entrusted with greater responsibilities. The Church Administration expects him to completely devote himself to fulfilling his duties," Brother David added. 🙏

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EXECUTIVE MINISTER GRACES SCHOOL EXHIBIT

Brother Eduardo V. Manalo graced the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Church Of Christ) School For Ministers's multimedia exhibit on September 19, 2017, at its main campus in Quezon City, Philippines. The Executive Minister together with the *Sanggunian* and the school's administrative staff viewed the exhibit presented by the students in commemoration of the institution's 43rd anniversary.

Bearing the theme "Attaining Victory in Fulfilling our Duty," the exhibit showcased the ministerial student's works as products of the various multimedia skills they learned through the different special projects—photography, video editing, music, writing, digital graphics and animation, and engineering—under the Special Tasks Force (STF) program. These projects are geared to help the ministerial students fulfill their various Church functions. 🙏





EVM leads inauguration of Salvador G. Manalo Building

By GERSON S. NONATO

THE *IGLESIA NI CRISTO* held an inauguration of the newly constructed Salvador G. Manalo (SGM) building on September 19, 2017. The ceremonial ribbon cutting was led by the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo with his wife, Sister Lynn V. Manalo. It was followed by the reading of the marker by Brother Radel G. Cortez. The event was attended by the ministers, ministerial workers, and volunteer workers from different departments of the INC Central Office. The finance department even rendered a song for the Executive Minister.

Situated within the Iglesia Ni Cristo Central Office complex, the four-storey building was named after Brother Salvador G. Manalo, as a remembrance of his long-years of service to God as a minister and his significant roles in the development of the finance office of the Ecclesiastical District of Manila during his time. The edifice was built by the Church to answer the Department of Finance's need for more office spaces.

For the members of the Church, this newly constructed building is an added proof that God continues to fulfill His promised victory to the Church. Brother Epitacio A. Gavino, a minister of the gospel, said, "Amid the worsening poverty in our time, the Church Of Christ is constantly progressing in all of its endeavors. It is a clear indication that God continues to fulfill His promises to the Church." 🌟



The vital role of the Church Administration in ensuring our salvation

By ROLAND A. AGUIRRE

WE FONDLY REMEMBER certain people especially during memorable occasions. Thus, the 31st of October cannot pass unnoticed by members of the Church Of Christ across the globe because it is the date of birth of Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the Executive Minister of the Church Of Christ. Such occasion elicits a variety of positive emotions in the hearts of brethren—joy, pride, respect, gratitude, and inspiration.

But more than the heartfelt sentiments that linger in us is the firm belief in the vital role the Church Administration, led by the Executive Minister, fulfills in ensuring our salvation on Judgment Day. Hence, his birth anniversary gives us a good opportunity to reflect and examine if we have maintained proper fellowship with the Church Administration and to determine, through biblical precepts, how this fellowship can be made stronger.

Working for our edification

Through the authority given by God, the Church Administration

works for our edification, as stated by Apostle Paul, one of those who administered the first-century Church Of Christ: “Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction” (II Cor. 13:10, *New King James Version*).

In view of this, the Executive Minister continues to fulfill the function to preach God’s commandments (Col. 1:25) entrusted by Him. Standing firm and holding fast those truths preached to us will make us stronger in the faith, thereby, ensuring our salvation:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.” (I Cor. 15:1-2, *NKJV*)

Conversely, those who refuse to listen to those entrusted to preach the words of God will not escape punishment or will not

be saved (Heb. 12:25). Also, the Church Administration continues to exhort us to be “blameless in holiness before our God” (I Thess. 3:13, *Ibid.*) by renewing our lives because those who walk in crooked paths will perish—their paths are headed toward death (Prov. 5:5-6). The death that awaits those who live unrighteous or ungodly lives refers not only to the cessation of breath but also to the second death or the eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

It is only right and proper, then, that the members of the Church Of Christ remain in fellowship with the Church Administration. They work so diligently so that we can reach spiritual maturity for us to receive the promised eternal inheritance.

Ensuring our fellowship with God

The apostles have stated in unequivocal terms that one who has fellowship with the Church Administration also has fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ: “That which we have

seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3, *NKJV*).

It is imperative then that we maintain our fellowship with the Church Administration or make it stronger. The Bible makes it clear how it can be done: "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Heb. 13:17, *New International Version*).

It behooves us then to completely unite with, recognize, obey, and submit to the Church Administration placed by God in the Church Of Christ, given the significant blessing such endeavors entail: fellowship with God and with Christ.

Admonishing and teaching

The Church Administration teaches us the words of God both by means of preaching and by letter: "So then ... stand firm and hold on to those truths which we taught you, both in our preaching and in our letter" (II Thess. 2:15, *Today's English Version*).

To this end, the Executive Minister painstakingly prepares the lessons for the congregational worship services to make sure that we receive the truths from the Bible. Also, we receive, from time to time, pastoral letters. Through both methods, we are guided on how to conduct our lives and fulfill our

duties to God. Clearly, the Church Administration does not tire in "admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom" (Col. 1:28, *NIV*).

Therefore, true servants of God take very seriously every preaching done in the Church Of Christ, inasmuch as we are not being taught opinions or mere human knowledge but the words and the wisdom of God (I Thess. 2:13). Indeed, we should constantly obey, even if the one who leads us is not physically present with us or even if we are out of his sight (Phil. 2:12).

In addition, Brother Eduardo Manalo, just like Apostle Paul, reminds us to endure and remain faithful amid persecutions and hardships, making us worthy of entering God's eternal kingdom: "We proudly tell God's other churches about your endurance and faithfulness in all the persecutions and hardships you are suffering. But God will use this persecution to show his justice. For he will make you worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering" (II Thess. 1:4-5, *New Living Translation*).

Sacrificing and suffering for our sake

Like previous Church presiding elders, Brother Eduardo Manalo continues to endure many sufferings for the sake of the brethren whom he teaches. However, these sufferings do not cause him to be discouraged nor disheartened; instead, he even rejoices in his sufferings, because all the afflictions he is experiencing, is for the sake of the Church (Col.

1:24). As Apostle Paul said, "I am ready not only to be bound but even to die ... for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13, *New Revised Standard Version*).

This is what Brother Eduardo Manalo is doing for us: he is devoting his whole life for the sake of the Church—sacrificing and suffering and even offering his own life, if need be—firmly believing, just like Apostle Paul, that to die is gain (Phil. 1:21). And so, such service above self and personal aggrandizement should be imitated by Church members around the globe in the performance of their God-given duties and responsibilities.

Laboring for our salvation

So noble and holy is the purpose of the Church Administration behind its labors and sacrifices in performing its God-given tasks: to present us perfect in Christ. Apostle Paul attested to this: "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me" (Col. 1:28-29, *NIV*).

Consequently, such spiritual perfection for which Brother Eduardo is laboring and sacrificing tremendously will make us worthy of receiving salvation, as Apostle Paul made it clear: "Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Tim. 2:10, *NKJV*). ●

Ang pamumuhay na hinahanap ng Diyos sa mga Cristiano

Sinulat ni ARNEL M. ARMENIA

Batay sa leksiyong itinuro ng Kapatid na Eduardo V. Manalo, ang Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan ng Iglesia Ni Cristo, sa pagsambang kaniyang pinangasiwaan sa lokal ng Ugong, Metro Manila East noong ika-14 ng Hulyo, 2017

ANG PAGIGING TUNAY NA Cristiano ay hindi sinasalita lamang kundi pinatutunayan sa gawa. Ayon sa Biblia, sinungaling ang nagsasabing siya'y Cristiano ngunit ayaw namang sumunod sa ipinag-uutos ng Panginoong Jesucristo (1 Juan 2:4, *Living Bible*). Dahil utos Niya ang pagpasok sa kawan o *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Juan 10:9, 16; Gawa 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*), dapat itong sundin ng sinumang nagnanais na maging Cristiano.

Ang hinahanap ng Panginoong Diyos

Magkagayunman, hindi sapat na maging kaanib lamang ng tunay na Iglesia para ibilang siyang tunay na Cristiano. Ayon kay Apostol Juan, hinahanap ng Panginoong Diyos sa mga Cristiano ang pamumuhay na kauri ng pamumuhay ni Cristo:

“Sinumang nagsasabing siya'y isang Cristiano ay dapat mamuhay gaya ng ginawa ni Cristo.” (1 Juan 2:6, *LB*)*

Dito ay nililina sa atin na dapat mamuhay ang mga Cristiano na katulad ng sa ating Panginoong Jesucristo. Upang atin itong magawa,

hindi na tayo kundi ang Panginoong Jesucristo na ang Siyang dapat na mabuhay sa atin:

“Ako ay ipinako nang kasama ni Cristo. Hindi na ako ang nabubuhay, kundi si Cristo na ang nabubuhay sa akin. At ang buhay na ibinubuhay ko ngayon sa laman ay ibinubuhay ko sa pamamagitan ng pananampalataya sa Anak ng Diyos, na umibig sa akin at nagbigay ng Kaniyang sarili para sa akin.” (Gal. 2:20, *English Standard Version*)*

Kung tunay na si Cristo na ang nabubuhay sa atin, dapat ay nabubuhay tayo ayon sa pananampalataya ng ating Panginoong Jesucristo. Dapat natin itong matiyak sapagkat ito ang inaasahan sa atin ng Panginoong Diyos. Ang ganitong uri ng kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay hindi na namumuhay na katulad ng mga makasalanang tao ng sanlibutan:

“Huwag [kayong] kumilos tulad ng mga makasalanang tao ng sanlibutan. Bayaan [ninyong] baguhin ng Diyos ang inyong buhay. Una sa lahat, bayaan ninyo na bigyan Niya kayo ng isang bagong isipan. Sa gayon, malalaman ninyo kung ano ang nais ng Diyos na gawin ninyo.

At ang mga bagay na ginagawa ninyo ay magiging mabuti at nakalulugod at sakdal.” (Roma 12:2, *New Life Version*)*

Marapat lamang na hindi na tayo mabuhay na gaya ng mga tagasanlibutan sapagkat ang kanilang ginagawa ay ang sarili nilang nais o gusto at hindi kung ano ang kalooban ng Diyos. Kapag pinili nating mabuhay gaya nila, tiyak na darating din sa atin ang galit ng Diyos:

“Noong una, lahat tayo ay namuhay na tulad ng mga taong iyon. Namuhay tayo na ang binibigyang lugod ay ang ating makasalanang sarili. Ginawa natin ang lahat ng bagay na gustong gawin ng ating mga katawan at pag-iisip. Tayo ay mga [masasamang] tao. Dapat sana'y naranasan natin ang galit ng Diyos dahil sa ating naging kalagayan. Nakakatulad tayo ng lahat ng mga tao.” (Efe. 2:3, *Easy-To-Read Version*)*

Upang huwag bumagsak sa atin ang galit ng Diyos, dapat tayong mamuhay ayon sa uring hinahanap sa atin ng Panginoong Diyos. Matitiyak natin ito sa pamamagitan ng patuloy na pakikinig at pagsasakatuparan ng mga aral ng Diyos na itinuturo sa atin sa loob ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Dahil sa ang mga maytungkulin

sa Iglesia—pangunahin na ang mga ministro at manggagawa—ang naghahatid sa atin ng mga aral ng Diyos, mahalaga na makinig at sumunod tayo sa kanila. Napakahalaga nito sapagkat ang mga inilagay ng Diyos na maytungkulin sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay nagkakaisa sa layunin. Ito ay ang maihatid ang buong Iglesia sa kasakdalan:

“At hinirang Niya ang ilan na maging mga apostol, ang iba’y mga propeta; ang ilan na maging ebanghelista, ang iba’y mga tagapangaral o tagapagturo. Ang nagkakaisang layunin ng kanilang paggawa ay ang madala ang mga Cristiano sa “maturity” (o kahustuhan ng gulang, kasakdalan, pagiging ganap), maihanda sila sa maka-Cristianong paglilingkod at sa pagpapalago sa Iglesia ni Cristo, hanggang sa maabot natin ang pagkakaisa sa pananampalataya at higit na pagkakilala sa Anak ng Diyos, at kamtin ang “maturity” (o kahustuhan ng gulang), maging ayon sa sukat ng kalagayan ng pagiging ganap ni Cristo.” (Efe. 4:11-13, *Norlie’s Simplified New Testament*)*

Ito ang dapat pakatandaan ng lahat ng maytungkulin sa loob ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Upang matugunan ito ng mga maytungkulin, dapat na sila at ang kani-kanilang sambahayan ang unang nakikitang sumusunod sa mga kalooban ng Diyos. Nananagot din ang mga maytungkulin na paalalahanan, payuhan, at buong pagmamalasakit na ituwid ang sinumang kapatid na masumpungan sa paglabag. Sa ganitong paraan, makakatulong sila upang ang Iglesia ay makarating sa kasakdalan.

Ang dapat gawin ng mga Cristiano

Upang makatugon sa uri ng pamumuhay na inaasahan ng Panginoong Diyos sa mga Cristiano, dapat nilang taglayin ang isipan ng Panginoong Jesucristo:

“Sa inyong pamumuhay, dapat kayong mag-isip at kumilos tulad

ni Cristo Jesus ... At sa Kaniyang pamumuhay bilang tao, nagpakababa Siya sa Kaniyang sarili at lubos na nagmasunurin sa Diyos, kahit na naging dahilan iyon ng Kaniyang kamatayan —kamatayan sa krus.” (Filip. 2:5, 8, *New Century Version*)*

Ang nagtataglay ng kaisipan ni Cristo ay hindi masuwayin kundi lubos na masunurin sa lahat ng kalooban ng Panginoong Diyos. Ito ang katangian ng mga tunay na kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*.

Kaakibat ng pagtataglay ng kaisipan ni Cristo, inaasahan din ng Diyos na taglayin natin ang damdamin ng Kaniyang bugtong na Anak:

“Yamang nagtiis si Cristo at nagdaan sa paghihirap, dapat din kayong magtaglay ng damdaming tulad ng sa kaniya; dapat din kayong handa na magpakasakit. Sapagkat tandaan ninyo, kapag nagtitiis ang inyong katawan, nawawala ang kapangyarihan ng kasalanan, at hindi na ninyo gugugulin ang mga nalalabing taon sa buhay ninyo sa pagsunod sa masasamang nasa, kundi magiging sabik kayo na gawin ang kalooban ng Diyos.” (I Ped. 4:1-2, *LB*)*

Kailangan talaga ng pagtitiis upang makasunod sa mga kalooban ng Diyos. Kung hindi natin taglay ang pagkamatiisin ni Cristo, hindi natin magagawang sundin ang mga kaloobang ito ng Diyos, maging ang iba pang mga utos na dapat sundin ng mga Cristiano.

Ang makikita sa mga nakatugon

Kung paanong hindi sa salita lamang ang pruwera ng pagiging kay Cristo o pagiging Cristiano, hindi rin sa salita lamang mapatutunayan ang pagtataglay ng damdamin at kaisipan ni Cristo. Ang mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay marapat na *spiritually fit*:

“Huwag [mong] aksayahin ang panahon sa pakikipagtalo tungkol

sa lokong mga palagay at hangal na mga alamat at mga kuwentong-bayan. Gugulin [mo] ang iyong panahon at lakas sa pagsasanay sa pagpapanatiling angkop [o karapat-dapat sa espirituwal na paraan].” (I Tim. 4:7, *LB*)*

Maliwanag na ang kaanib sa Iglesia na *spiritually fit*—may “malusog” o maunlad na buhay-espirituwal—ay hindi kung sinu-sino o kung anu-ano ang pinakikinggan. Ang kaniya lamang pinakikinggan ay ang mga salita ng Diyos sapagkat ang pagsunod sa mga ito ang ikababanal. Ang kasangkapan ng Diyos sa pagtuturo ng Kaniyang mga salita ay ang Pamamahala sa loob ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Col. 1:25). Dahil dito, mahalaga na kung ano ang itinuturo ng Pamamahala, iyon ang pinakikinggang mabuti at buong kasabikang isinasagawa—hindi ang mga bagay na salungat o labag—sapagkat iyon ang kalooban ng Diyos. Ang pakikinig at pagsunod sa mga aral ng Diyos ay hindi lamang ikababanal kundi ito rin ang susi upang matiyak ng isang Cristiano na tatanggapin niya ang mga pagpapala ng Diyos sa buhay na ito at sa buhay na darating:

“[Sapagkat] Ang pagsasanay sa iyong katawan [Pisikal na ehersisyo] ay nakatutulong sa iyo sa ilan [o maliliit] na mga kaparaanan, subalit ang paglilingkod sa Diyos [ang kabanalan] ay nakatutulong sa iyo sa lahat ng paraan sa pamamagitan ng paghahatid sa iyo ng mga pagpapala [yayamang taglay nito ang pangako] sa buhay na ito at sa hinaharap na buhay rin.” (I Tim. 4:8, *Expanded Bible*)*

Dahil sa biyayang dulot ng paglilingkod sa Diyos at ng pagpapakabanal, tinuturuan tayo ng Namamahala sa Iglesia na palaguin natin ang ating *spiritual strength*. Mangyayari ito kapag nagpapakasigla tayo sa ating paglilingkod sa Diyos:

Sundan sa pahina 34

Spiritually **STRONG** despite travails in life

By MARIE F. RUIZ

ROUGH TERRAIN, muddy on rainy days. Among the trials faced by the pioneering members of the Pinugay Congregation decades ago was the 15-kilometer trail they had to traverse on foot to and from the house of worship of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) in Teresa, Rizal, Philippines. But with their fervent desire to worship God and perform their duties in the Church, they

were relentless. One of them is Sister Ambrocia S. Cocal, a deaconess who is now 94 years old. She could not forget the time when she and her family came to settle in Barangay Pinugay, Baras, Rizal more than 40 years ago. Murky, with thick underbrush, was how she described the place. "And the road was difficult," she said, "but it's a good thing I was stronger then, at the age of 52." As difficult as the road was their day-

to-day living. "We mostly ate *kamoteng kahoy* (cassava). We experienced a lot of trials. But with God's help, we survived," she tearfully expressed.

Every time Brother Joselito and Sister Gloria Decena and their children went to the house of worship in the town of Teresa, Brother Joselito would carry their two older children on his shoulders while Sister Gloria carried their youngest. "The farthest we would walk was when she had choir practice in Tanay," said Brother Joselito, a deacon who is now 67 years old. They brought their children along with them because they wanted them to know how in serving God, one should be ready to make sacrifices, if need be, to fulfill his or her divine duties. "We wanted them to learn how important it is to worship God. They must continue worshipping Him to receive His help and guidance, so they would not go astray," said 66-year-old Sister Gloria, the local congregation's choir leader.

Recollecting her experience, Sister Victoria V. Bangit said that she was pregnant with their youngest when she, her husband, and their nine children came to live in Pinugay in 1977. "It's



mountainous," she said of the place. But her faith was that if the birds in the sky lived by God's grace, then He would all the more take care of her family. "God answers our prayers. He makes the impossible possible for us," Sister Victoria, a 78-year-old deaconess, said with conviction.

With the same degree of faith, Sister Corazon O. Estuita, who converted to the Church in 1937 and is now 91 years old, said that "when we came to live here in 1975, I had faith that God had a purpose for us here and He would not forsake us." Although life was hard, they were consoled by, among others, strong Christian brotherhood. "We [the brethren] were always together in Church activities, away from the evils in this world. It is in Pinugay where my faith was strengthened through the help of the Church officers," she added.

According to Sister Lourdez A. Zapata, now 79 years old and likewise a convert who was baptized in 1961, when she and her family arrived in Pinugay in 1973, the first thing they

did was to look for the nearest house of worship which they found out was the one in Teresa. "But we did not allow the distance to hinder us from attending the worship services," she said, adding, "We kept on praying that God help us in our daily lives and help us find work. God heard all our prayers and, even if we go through trials, we remained strong in our membership in the Church Of Christ."

Despite facing the hardships of living in a far-flung area, not to mention the persecution from people who did not understand their faith, still they were persistent in their duty to worship God and propagate His words. "We walked five to six kilometers to invite people to the Bible studies," said Brother Gregorio S. Domingono Sr., who is still strong today at 91 years old. He was converted to the Church in 1954. Brother Pedro A. Aragon, a deacon, said that they experienced

harassment from troublemakers "but we were steadfast in following God's commands and we truly felt strengthened during worship services."

Likewise, it was through active attendance in the worship services that Sister Trinidad B. Nicdao, also a convert baptized in 1975 who is now 80 years old, became strong in faith which is why she was able to withstand persecution and hardships. "Even if life was hard, I was still able to continue my services to God," she said.

Brother Ricardo M. Zapata Sr., baptized in 1957 and now 78 years old, said of their travails, "It was hope against hope. We found solace in prayers and in worship services. We prayed to God for long life; that we could continue our services to Him. He granted our prayers. We live to this day and we were even given recognition as pioneers of the local congregation of Pinugay."

(Standing, L to R)
Brothers Pedro
Aragon, Ricardo
Zapata Sr., Pablo
Ladrillo (resident
minister), Gregorio
Domingono Sr.,
and Joselito
Decena (Seated,
L to R) Sisters
Trinidad Nicdao,
Corazon Estuita,
Ambrosia Cical,
Victoria Bangit,
Gloria Decena, and
Lourdez Zapata



These pioneers were triumphant in the face of adversities and they were also successful in propagating God's words. "We were able to invite people to the Church and we also found other brethren who lived farther away," Sister Ambrocía said with a warm smile etching through her beautiful furrowed face.

Having been able to convince people to join the Church and with other brethren settling in Pinugay, they sought the approval of the Church Administration for them to hold worship services in their area. The first group of brethren in the area formed the Pinugay Extension in 1973. Their first place of worship was the house of Brother Leonardo Bassig. In 1974, they were allowed to build a temporary house of worship using a couple of varieties of the bamboo including the *buhò*, a slender bamboo, for the *sawali* walls (splits of bamboo interwoven to make the walling). It had a seating capacity of 60 and was completed in March 1975. And, to the delight of the brethren, the extension was elevated into a local congregation on October 19, 1975.

"We were so happy. We no longer had to walk far. Our house of worship that time was built just down the road by the river," Sister Gloria said. All the more inspired, the brethren intensified their efforts in propagation and were able to establish Bible study venues in the mountainous areas of Baras and Antipolo.

After a couple of years, in 1994, they were allowed to replace their house of worship with a bigger one, a semi-concrete structure, built up slope. In 1998, it was renovated to accommodate 100 worshippers at a time. Due to the congregation's growing membership, an

additional place of worship was eventually designated, namely, the Cinco Extension.

"And we did not stop praying to God to ask for a beautiful and permanent house of worship. Now we have one!" Sister Ambrocía said.

On March 19, 2016, the Iglesia Ni Cristo Engineering & Construction Department started construction of their new 1,531-seater house of worship. On June 30, 2017, it was dedicated to God through a worship service officiated by the Church's Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, to whom, at an earlier date during *Balikbayan Day* at the Iglesia Ni Cristo Central Office in Quezon City, Sister Ambrocía had the wonderful opportunity to personally convey this desire of the brethren from Pinugay for him to lead the dedication.

"Our hearts are filled with joy. God's blessings abound in our local congregation here in Pinugay. We now have a magnificent house of worship," Brother Gregorio said. "This is such a great blessing from God. In times of hardship and in times of plenty, we glorify God," Sister Ambrocía declared.

These pioneers—from whom the heavily burdened can draw inspiration—have withstood the test of time, remaining strong in faith. And seeing their hearts' desire come true, they are truly thankful to the Almighty God, for they now have an awe-inspiring house of worship nestled on the slopes of mountainous Pinugay. 🕊

*(With assistance from
Diana Lhee Guimary)*

NOTE: All interviews were translated from Filipino.

Ang pamumuhay ... mula sa pahina 31

"Ibinababala ko sa inyo nang maaga, mga mahal na kapatid, upang kayo ay makapagbantay at hindi matangay ng mga pagkakamali ng masasamang taong ito, baka kayo mismo ay maguluhan din. Sa halip, lumago [kayo] sa espirituwal na kalakasan at maging lalong nakakikilala sa ating Panginoon at Tagapagligtas na si Jesucristo. Sa Kaniya ang lahat ng kaluwalhatian at maningning na karangalan, kapuwa ngayon at magpakailanman. Paalam." (II Ped. 3:17-18, LB)*

Kaya, marapat na tumugon tayo sa panawagan ng Namamahala na isulong natin ang ikapagtatagumpay ng lahat ng gawain sa Iglesia. Kapag ginawa natin ang ating bahagi sa lahat ng gawain ng Iglesia, tiyak na magiging *spiritually fit* at *spiritually strong* tayo anupa't makararating tayo sa kasakdalan na inaasahan sa atin ng Panginoong Diyos.

Ang inspirasyon ng mga Cristiano

Hindi natin dapat pag-alinlanganan na makakaya nating tugunan ang inaasahan ng Diyos sa atin. Bagama't sa sarili natin ay hindi talaga natin kaya, hindi naman tayo pababayaang ng Diyos. Ipinangako Niya na Siya ang magiging tagapagturo natin at Siya ang magbabantay sa atin:

"Sinabi Mo sa akin, Ituturo Ko ang daan na dapat mong lakaran. Ako ang magiging iyong tagapagturo at Siyang magbabantay sa iyo." (Awit 32:8, *Contemporary English Version*)* 🕊

*Ang mga talatang sinipi ay isinalin mula sa Ingles



Kapag ang mundo ay saklot ng kadiliman

ANG NATATANAW NG MARAMING TAO sa hinaharap ay ang madidilim na ulap ng pagkabahala at kawalang katiyakan habang papasok na sa huling tatlong buwan ang kasalukuyang taon.

Sa mga mapagmasid at mapanuri, hayag na hayag ang napakahirap na sitwasyon ng buhay ng maraming tao. Nababahala sila sa dumadalas na pagdating ng mga mapaminsalang kalamidad at epidemiya ng mga sakit, sa laganap na kahirapan at kawalan ng trabaho, sa malubhang polusyon, sa kakulangan sa pagkain at malinis na tubig, at marami pang iba.

Lalong lumulubha ang sitwasyon dahil sa mga usap-usapan tungkol sa pinangangambahang digmaang nukleyar, habang may mga nagaganap nang armadong tunggalian sa iba't ibang panig ng daigdig, habang ang mga terorista ay walang habas na kumikitil ng buhay ng tao, at habang ang malaganap na salot ng pag-abuso at adiksiyon sa ilegal na droga ay hindi pa rin masugpo.

Marahil ang pinakamalubhang krisis na pandaigdig ay ang namumuong gulo sa Korean Peninsula, na pinangangambahang mauwi nga sa isang digmaang nukleyar kung magkakamali sa gagawing hakbang ang alinman sa nagbabangayang panig. Ang paglaki ng banta ng terorismo ay isa ring dahilan ng pagkabahala ng marami. Sa taong ito lamang, humigit-kumulang sa 1,100 insidente ng karahasan ang inihatik ng mga teroristang grupo. Ang malaking bilang naman ng mga lulong sa bawal na gamot ay nagpapakita kung gaano kalubhang problema ang kalakalan ng ilegal na droga. Ayon sa United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), nasa 250 milyong katao na sa buong mundo ang gumagamit ng ilegal na droga—at 29.5 milyon sa mga ito ay malubha na ang adiksiyon.

Bagaman ang pag-igi ng ekonomiya ng mundo ay magandang balita, gayunman, para sa ibang ekonomista at *analyst*, ito ay isang bagay na nakapag-aalala pa rin. Para sa kanila, ang kasalukuyang takbo ng ekonomiya ng mundo ay nakakatulad ng nangyari bago ang pandaigdig na krisis pinansiyal isang dekada

na ang nakararaan. Ayon sa kanila, mayroon na namang namumuong *economic bubble* na maaaring sumambulat.

Tunay na madilim at mahirap ang kasalukuyang panahon. Ang lalo pang nakapagpapadilim nito para sa marami ay ang lumalaganap na krisis sa moral. Ang pagkakaroon ng *hate crimes*, *racism*, *hate speech*, diskriminasyon, pag-uusig na panrelihiyon, korupsiyon, at iba pang gawang imoral ay nakaaapekto sa maraming tao.

Sa mga araw ng kadiliman, may mga nawawalan ng pag-asa at nawawalan ng direksyon ang buhay. Sa gayong kalagayan, may mga taong madaling maibuyo ng masamang impluwensiya sa paligid nila sa paggawa ng kasamaan. Upang iyon ay hindi mangyari sa atin, kailangan natin ng ilaw na tatanglaw sa ating landas.

Itinuturo ng Biblia ang mga liwanag na gagabay sa atin. Ang Panginoong Diyos ay ilaw (I Juan 1:5). Ang Panginoong Jesucristo ay ilaw, “ang ilaw ng sanlibutan” (Juan 8:12). Ang salita ng Diyos ay liwanag sa ating landas (Awit 119:105). Maging ang mga sugo ng Diyos ay itinulad din sa ilaw (Gawa 13:47; II Cor. 5:18–20) sapagkat ang mensaheng dala-dala nila ay ang magbibigay ng “liwanag ng pagkakalila sa kaluwalhatian ng Dios” (II Cor. 4:6).

Upang ang ating landas ay matanglawan sa panahong ang mundo ay saklot ng kadiliman, kailangan nating gawing ilaw ng ating buhay ang Diyos sa paraang sundin ang Kaniyang mga kautusan na itinuro ni Cristo at ng Kaniyang mga sinugo (Juan 12:49–50; Juan 8:12; Lucas 6:46; Roma 10:15; Mar. 16:15–16). Kung ito’y gagawin natin, ang kadiliman ay magiging liwanag at magagawa nating malampasan ang mga problemang kinakaharap natin sa buhay (II Sam. 22:29–30).

Dapat ding magliwanag ang ilaw ng Diyos—ang Kaniyang mga salita—sa pamamagitan natin upang ang iba man ay makinabang din dito. Kung nananahan sa atin ang mga aral ng Diyos, hindi tayo matitiosod o madudupilas (Juan 11:9–10). Higit sa lahat, ang pagsunod sa utos, batas, at saway ng Diyos ang tatanglaw sa daang patungo sa pangakong buhay na walang hanggan (Kaw. 6:23; Juan 1:4).

Ano ang Iglesia Ni Cristo?

Sinulat ni GREG F. NONATO

Mamalagi tayong sumusunod sa mga aral ng Diyos upang makinabang tayo sa mga ito. Tinuturuan tayo ng mga apostol na maging mapagpasakop sa Diyos (Sant. 4:7) at sa ministrong binigyan ng Diyos ng karapatang mamahala sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* at magpahayag ng Kaniyang mga salita (Heb. 13:17; Gawa 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*; Col. 1:25). Ito ang isa sa mahahalagang katungkulang isinasakatuparan ng Kapatid na Eduardo V. Manalo, ang Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*: ang pagpapahayag ng mga salita ng Diyos. Kaya, walang kapagurang ipinangangaral ng Kapatid na Eduardo Manalo ang mga salita ng Diyos sa lahat ng tao. Sa kabila ng mapanganib at mapanglaw na sitwasyon ng mundo ngayon, sinisikap niyang marating ang iba't ibang panig ng mundo upang maipalaganap ang mensahe ng Diyos tungkol sa kaligtasan—ang tunay na tanglaw ng tao sa panahong ito ng kadiliman at kahirapan.

Payagan nating mapuno ang ating puso at isip ng liwanag na nagmumula sa mga salita ng Diyos na itinuturo sa atin ng mga binigyan Niya ng awtoridad na ipangaral ang mga ito. Sa gayon, wala tayong ipangangamba kahit lumubha pa ang sitwasyon ng mundo dahil laging sasaatin ang gabay ng Diyos sa paglalakbay natin patungo sa buhay na walang hanggan. ☺

—BIENVENIDO A. SANTIAGO JR.
Associate Editor

MARAMI ANG hindi lubos na nakabatid sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Inaakala ng iba na ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay katulad lamang ng iba't ibang samahan ng pananampalataya gaya ng Metodista, Baptista, Mormons, at marami pang iba. Kaya't minarapat naming talakayin sa artikulong ito kung ano ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*.

Ito ang Iglesiang itinayo ni Cristo

Paano ipinakilala ng Panginoong Jesucristo ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*?

“At sinasabi ko naman sa iyo, na ikaw ay Pedro, at sa ibabaw ng batong ito ay itatayo ko ang aking iglesia; at ang mga pintuan ng Hades ay hindi magsisipanaig laban sa kaniya.” (Mat. 16:18)

Ipinakilala ni Jesus na Siya ang nagtayo o nagtatag ng Iglesia. Siya rin ang nagmamay-ari nito—ito ang diwa ng sinabi ni Cristo na “aking iglesia.” Maling-mali ang nagsasabing ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay itinatag ng Kapatid na Felix Y. Manalo. Isa ring kamalian na sabihing ang iba't ibang pangkatin ng pananampalataya ay itinatag ni Cristo at ang mga ito ay Kaniya.

Ang mga kay Cristo

Ipinakilala ni Apostol Pablo na ang mga kaanib sa Iglesia ay pawang kay Cristo:

“At hindi pa ako nakikilala sa mukha ng mga iglesia ng Judea na pawang kay Cristo.” (Gal. 1:22)

Bakit natin natitiyak na ang tinutukoy ni Apostol Pablo na “pawang kay Cristo” ay mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*? Tunghayan natin ang pagkakasalin ng talatang ito sa *New Pilipino Version*:

“Hindi pa ako kilalang personal sa mga iglesya ni Cristo sa Judea.” (Gal. 1:22)

Nilinaw sa saling ito ng Biblia na ang Iglesia na nasa Judea na pawang kay Cristo ay hindi tumutukoy sa iba't ibang pangkatin ng pananampalataya kundi sa mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Samakatuwid, ang parirala rito na “kay Cristo” ay tumutukoy sa mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*.

Ang tunay na sumasampalataya kay Cristo

Maraming tagapangaral ang nagtuturo na sapat nang sumampalataya lamang kay Cristo para maging Kaniya. At bukambibig ng maraming naakit nila na sila ay sumasampalataya na raw kay Cristo. Subalit paano ba makikilala ang tunay na sumasampalataya sa Panginoong Jesucristo? Kapag ipinahayag ba ng isang tao na “Sumasampalataya ako kay Cristo” ay maibibilang na siya sa mga

tunay na sumasampalataya? Ganito ang tugon ni Cristo:

“Datapuwa’t hindi kayo nagsisampalataya, sapagka’t hindi kayo sa aking mga tupa. Dinirinig ng aking mga tupa ang aking tinig, at sila’y aking nakikilala, at sila’y nagsisisunod sa akin.” (Juan 10:26-27)

Ayon kay Cristo, ang tunay na sumasampalataya ay kabilang sa Kaniyang mga tupa. At ang kinikilala ni Cristo na kabilang sa Kaniyang mga tupa ay ang mga nakinig at sumunod sa Kaniya. Ang hindi sumusunod kay Cristo ay hindi maibibilang sa Kaniyang mga tupa at ang hindi kabilang sa Kaniyang mga tupa ay hindi totoong sumasampalataya. Alin ang sinabi ni Jesus na dapat sundin ng tunay na sumasampalataya upang mapabilang siya sa Kaniyang mga tupa?

“Muli ngang sinabi sa kanila ni Jesus: ‘Katotohanan, katotohanang sinasabi ko sa inyo, Ako ang pintuan ng mga tupa. ... Ako ang pintuan; ang sinumang pumasok sa kawan sa pamamagitan ko ay magiging ligtas.’” (Juan 10:7, 9 *New English Bible*, isinalin mula sa Ingles)

Ang sabi ni Jesus, Siya “ang pintuan ng mga tupa” at upang mapabilang sa Kaniyang mga tupa ay dapat pumasok sa kawan sa pamamagitan Niya. Ang kawan na dapat pasukan ng tunay na sumasampalataya ay ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Gawa 20:28). Kaya ang tunay na sumasampalataya ay ang nasa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*.

Lahing hirang

Ayon kay Apostol Pedro, ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay lahing hirang, bansang banal, at bayang pag-aaring sarili ng Diyos:

“Datapuwa’t kayo’y isang lahing hirang, isang makaharing pagkasaserdote, bansang banal, bayang pagaaring sarili ng *Dios*, upang inyong ipahayag ang mga karangalan niyaong tumawag sa inyo mula sa kadiliman, hanggang

sa kaniyang kagilagilalas na kaliwanagan.” (I Ped. 2:9)

Bakit natin natitiyak na ang tinutukoy rito ni Apostol Pedro ay ang mga kaanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*? Sa naunang talata (I Ped. 2:5), ang tinutukoy ay ang bahay na ukol sa espiritu, na walang iba kundi ang *Iglesia* (I Tim. 3:15). Hindi lamang si Apostol Pedro ang nagturo na ang *Iglesia* ay lahing hirang. Natutuhan niya ito sa Panginoong Jesucristo:

“Ako’y hindi ninyo hinirang, nguni’t kayo’y hinirang ko, at aking kayong inihalal, upang kayo’y magsiyaon at magsipagbunga, at upang manatili ang inyong bunga: upang ang anomang inyong hingin sa Ama sa aking pangalan, ay maibigay niya sa inyo.” (Juan 15:16)

Tiniyak ng Panginoong Jesucristo na ang tinutukoy Niya na Kaniyang hinirang at inihalal ay ang Kaniyang mga sanga (Juan 15:1, 5). Kung itinutulad sa tao, ang katumbas ng puno ay ulo at ang mga sanga ay ang mga sangkap ng katawan. Si Cristo ang ulo at ang *Iglesia* ang katawan (Col. 1:18). Malinaw kung gayon na ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay ang lahing hirang at may kahalalan mula kay Cristo.

Ito ang tinubos ni Cristo

Ano pa ang pagpapakilala ng Biblia sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*?

“Ingatan ninyo kung gayon ang inyong sarili at ang buong kawan na rito’y hinirang kayo ng Espiritu Santo na mga katiwala, upang pakanin ang iglesia ni Cristo na binili niya ng kaniyang dugo.” (Gawa 20:28, *Lamsa Translation*, isinalin mula sa Ingles)

Ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang binili o tinubos ni Cristo ng Kaniyang sariling dugo. Ang aral na ito ng Biblia ay sinasalungat ng paniniwalang ang lahat ng tao ay natubos ni Cristo. Dahil sa pagtubos na ginawa ni Cristo sa mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, nalinis ang kanilang budhi at nagtamo sila ng karapatang maglingkod sa Diyos (Heb. 9:14).

Ito ang ililigtas ni Cristo

Paano pinatunayan ng Biblia na ang *Iglesia* ng ililigtas ni Cristo ay ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*? Ganito ang pagpapatunay ng Biblia:

“Sapagkat ang lalaki ang ulo ng kanyang asawa, tulad ni Cristo na siyang ulo ng iglesia, na kanyang katawan, at siyang Tagapagligtas nito.” (Efe. 5:23, *Magandang Balita Biblia*)

Ipinakikilala ng Biblia na ang *Iglesia* ay katawan ni Cristo sapagkat Siya ang ulo at Tagapagligtas nito. Pansinin na ang ililigtas ni Cristo ay ang *Iglesia* na Kaniyang pinangunguluhan. Ang katotohanang ito ay sinasalungat ng paniniwala ng iba na maliligtas din ang mga tao kahit saang relihiyon sila kaanib. Ano ang katuwiran kung bakit ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang ililigtas at bakit hindi maliligtas ang hindi *Iglesia Ni Cristo*?

“At ngayong napawalang-sala na tayo sa pamamagitan ng kanyang dugo, lalo nang tiyak na maliligtas tayo sa poot ng Diyos sa pamamagitan niya.” (Roma 5:9, *Ibid.*)

Ang tao para maligtas ay kailangang matubos ni Cristo ng Kaniyang dugo. Ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang tinubos ni Cristo ng Kaniyang sariling dugo. Dahil sa bisa ng dugo ni Cristo na ipinantubos sa *Iglesia*, ang mga kaanib nito ay napawalang-sala kaya’t tiyak na sila ay maliligtas sa galit ng Diyos. Bakit hindi maliligtas ang hindi *Iglesia Ni Cristo*? Sapagkat ang gayon ay hindi natubos. Kapag ang tao ay hindi kabilang sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* hindi rin siya kabilang sa mga tinubos ni Cristo.

Pinakahahangad namin na magkaroon ng ganap na pagkaunawa ang mga tao sa kung ano ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Naunawaan nawa ng lahat na ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay itinatag ni Cristo; ang mga kaanib nito ang mga kay Cristo; ito ang tunay na sumasampalataya kay Cristo; ito ang lahing hinirang; ito ang tinubos ni Cristo ng Kaniyang sariling dugo; at ito ang ililigtas ni Cristo sa Araw ng Paghuhukom. ☪

An inspiring success in the works of the Church



By GERSON S. NONATO

PROGRESSING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS, the ecclesiastical district of Metro Manila South (MMS) is the biggest in geographical scope among the six ecclesiastical districts of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) in the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines. Geographically, MMS covers the 4th district of the NCR which is composed of the six urbanized cities such as Makati, Pasay, Taguig, Muntinlupa, Parañaque, and Las Piñas. It is in these cities we can find the country's

premier international airport. A prominent city in this Southern area of Metro is Makati City. It is known as the financial capital of the Philippines, where most of the highly reputable companies and corporations (national and multi-national), major banks (local and international), and the tallest skyscrapers in the country are found. Also in Makati, as well as in Taguig, can be found the upscale restaurants and shopping malls, hotels, and entertainment hubs that make these two cities known.

But noticeably, standing distinctly amid these busy places for business and leisure are the houses of worship of the Church Of Christ such as those of the local congregations of Bel-Air, Evangelista, Guadalupe, Makati, Sacramento, among many others. United in purpose with the Church Administration in serving and glorifying God, the district has succeeded remarkably in the various works of the Church especially in the field of edification and propagation.



The making of the prodigious district

Originally, only one ecclesiastical district covered the entire Metro Manila—*Dibisyon ng Maynila*. In the mid-90s, to further meet the needs of the Church for its tremendous growth in Metro Manila, the Church Administration divided the ecclesiastical district into two: Metro Manila North and Metro Manila South. With Brother Israel U. Flores as its first District Supervising Minister, Metro Manila South had consisted of 21 Local Congregations until 2006—Bel-Air, Better Living, Evangelista, Guadalupe, Ibayo, Jackson, Las Piñas, Makati, Malibay, Muntinlupa, Pamplona, Parañaque, Pasay, Proprietarios, Sacramento, Severina 18, Signal Village (now Central Signal), St. Joseph, Talon, Tunasan, and United Parañaque 1.

That year, Brother Eraño G. Manalo approved the restructuring of the Metro Manila districts wherein 30 more local congregations were added to MMS. Among them were the two pioneer local congregations of

REMEMBER WHEN

July 27, 2007

On the 93rd anniversary of the Iglesia Ni Cristo, the National Historical Institute of the Philippines installed a historical marker at the birth site of Brother Felix Manalo in Tipas, Taguig City. Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, then the Deputy Executive Minister of the Church, graced the unveiling ceremonies.

May 10, 2008

Brother Eduardo Manalo, led the commemoration of the birth anniversary of Brother Felix Manalo. It was held in the birth site of Brother Felix in Tipas, Taguig City.

October 11, 2010

Inauguration of the district office situated within the compound of the local congregation of Evangelista. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was led by Brother Israel U. Flores, the district supervising minister.

April 26, 2013

The Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo led the inauguration of the new district office located in No. 4102 Gen. Mascardo St. corner Evangelista St., Brgy. Bangkal, Makati City.

May 1, 2015

Metro Manila South Family Fun Day was held in Phil. Army Gym & Recreation Ground, Taguig City. Led by the Christian Family Organizations, this activity gave time for family bonding and welcomed new members of the Church.

August 1, 2015

Special gathering of all Church officers in ecclesiastical district of Metro Manila South, held in Cuneta Astrodome, with more than 20,000 attendees.

February 7, 2016

Edification thru Voice and Music (EVM) outreach program was held in Taguig City University. The Christian songs rendered in this musical activity all the more inspired the brethren in serving God.

February 20, 2016

More than a hundred thousand brethren from the ecclesiastical district of Metro Manila South participated in the worldwide distribution of Pasugo magazines.

April 9, 2016

The youth members in the ecclesiastical district gathered in The Tent, Acacia State, Taguig City, for “KADIWA Involved, Let’s walk this way”, an activity meant to guide the youth members on how they should uphold their membership in the Church.

May 1, 2016

Band Together was held in MMS wherein the youth members of the Church showcased their talents in a special musical presentation. Brother Angelo Eraño V. Manalo, coordinator of the Christian Family Organizations, attended the said musical presentation.

June 24, 2016

An Evangelical Mission and Aid to Humanity or Lingap sa Mamamayan was held in Cuneta Astrodome. More than 30,000 of about 60,000 attendees were guests.

October 16, 2016

The sixth anniversary of the establishment of the ecclesiastical district of Metro Manila South was commemorated in Cuneta Astrodome. Various programs and competitions—Welcome Kapatid Ko, Himig ng Kaligtasan, district final of Musikang Atin 2016— were held.

December 17, 2016

Brother Eduardo V. Manalo led the year-end thanksgiving worship service of the local congregation of Napindan. This momentous occasion was also witnessed thru video link in the local congregations of Pateros and Tipas.

Tipas and Pateros. From then, the Church Of Christ has continued to flourish vigorously in Metro Manila, now comprised of six ecclesiastical districts—Central, Manila, Metro Manila North, Metro Manila South, Metro Manila East, and Quezon City.

Unflagging devotion to Church duties

Over the years, Metro Manila South went through numerous ordeals and tribulations. Not to mention the occurrences of the devastating calamities such as super typhoons *Ondoy* and *Yolanda* that left thousands of people homeless and lifeless. In such situations, instead of losing hope, members of the Church in the district all the more turned to God and drew strength from Him through serving and worshipping Him.

Driven by the assiduous desire to all the more devote their life to serving God, the brethren holding offices in their local congregations has continued to increase in number over the years since the district’s establishment. Moreover, the Church officers are continuously guided and taught on how they should fulfill their duty in accordance to the will of God. Spearheaded by the Church Administration, special gatherings of the Church officers are held regularly to ensure that they are highly motivated and spiritually inspired in performing their duties. One such event was that held in Cuneta Astrodome on August 1, 2015 which was attended by thousands of Church officers. On that occasion, the Bible-based homily delivered by Brother Mathusalem V. Pareja uplifted the Church officers.

“It is clear to me what has been taught to us from the Bible that all our efforts and sacrifices in fulfilling our duties will not be in vain. The lesson taught truly inspired us to carry on and never be hindered in fulfilling our duties to God,” said Sister Mayumi M. Samonte, a deaconess in the local congregation of Tipas.





EVANGELISTA



IBAYO



PASAY



MADRIGAL



MUNTINLUPA

United in God's work of salvation

United in purpose to bring glory to God, Church members in MMS, are nonstop in helping to propagate the words of God. Numerous evangelical missions were held in big venues that resulted to thousands—from different faiths—expressing their interest of joining the Church. One of these remarkable events was held in Makati Coliseum on July 19, 2016 with more than 20,000 attendees. It was awe-inspiring that more than half of the numbers of attendees were visitors and thousands have affirmed to undergo the process of joining the Church.

MMS also reaped a marvelous success in propagation using multimedia under the banner "International Evangelical Mission on Air and OnLine." Using different media platforms such as television and radio programs, mobile apps, and social media websites, the brethren were able to invite people to listen to the teachings of God that the Church Of Christ upholds.

The rigorous efforts of the brethren in MMS in the work of propagation were more noticeable when they held the baptism in the local congregation

Ecclesiastical District of
Metro Manila South

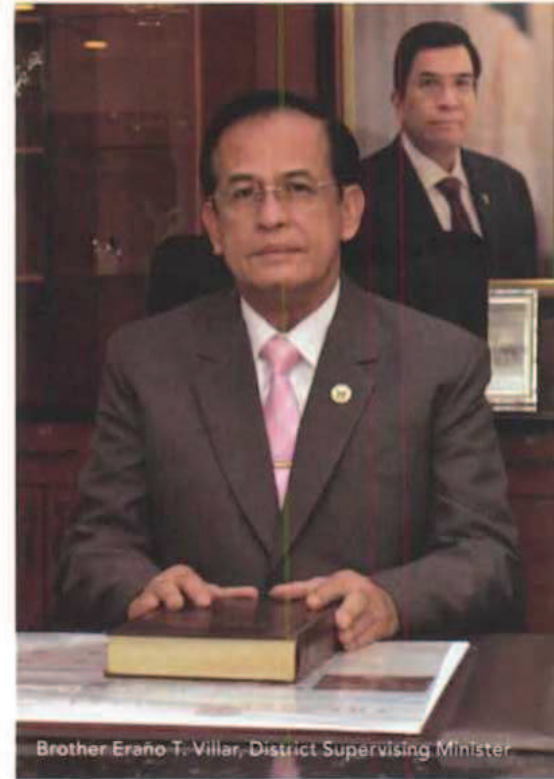


District Office

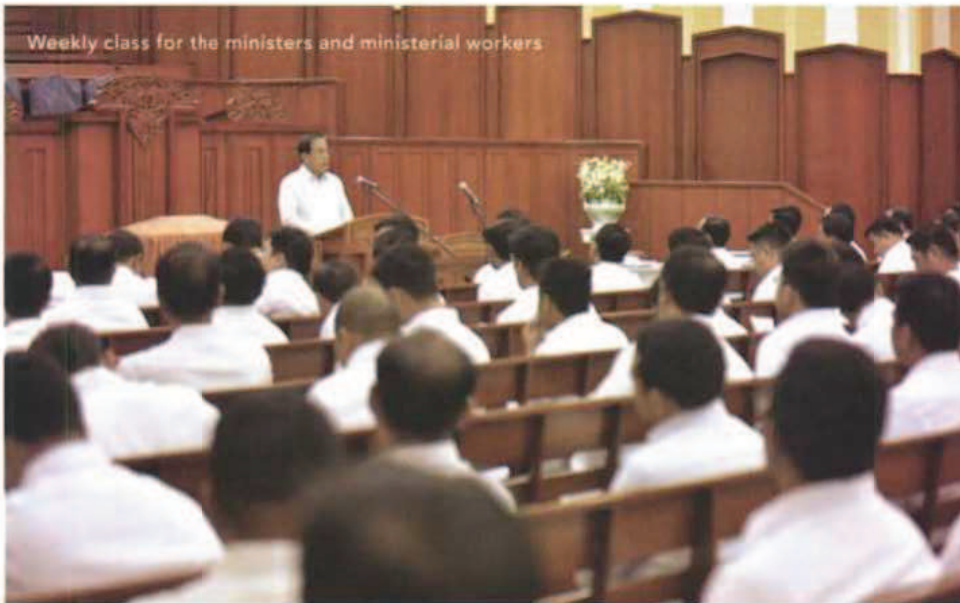
4102 General Mascardo
Corner Evangelista Street,
Barangay Bankal, Makati City

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS

- Admiral
- Alibang
- Almeriza
- Bagumbayan
- Bal-Air
- Better Living
- BF-Homes
- Parañaque
- BF International
- CAA
- Camp Sampaguita
- Central Signal
- Dang Hari-Malpay
- Evangelista
- Fourth Estate
- Golden Acres
- Guadalupe
- Hagonoy
- Ibayo
- Jackson
- Karunungan
- Las Piñas
- Lower Bicutan
- Madrigal
- Makati
- Malibay
- Multinational
- Muntinlupa
- Napindan
- NSP
- North Signal
- Pamplona
- Parañaque
- Pasay
- Perera
- Penbo
- Pinaagama
- Plaza Quizon
- Proprietaries
- Sacramento
- Saint Joseph
- Severina 15
- Sucel
- Sunrise-La Paz
- Taguig
- Talon
- Titas
- Tunasan
- UP 1
- Upper Bicutan
- Utusan
- Victoria



Brother Eraño T. Villar, District Supervising Minister



of Pasay on October 15 and 29, 2016 whereas more than 1,300 were baptized.

Pressing towards the goal

Led by the ministers, ministerial workers, and the Church officers, members of the Church in the district of Metro Manila South continue to press onwards to further victory by participating actively in all Church's works and remaining steadfast in their faith amidst the problems and sorrows they face in life.

Focusing toward their ultimate goal of receiving salvation on Judgment Day, they are fully united with the Church Administration in upholding their calling as members of the Church Of Christ until the end.

Brother Eraño T. Villar, the District Supervising Minister, said, "Having a firm trust in God's promises that He will never abandon us, whatever happens, although there is poverty, we will prioritize services to our Lord God and obedience to His will primarily the work of propagation." 🗣️

"Having a firm trust in God's promises that He will never abandon us, whatever happens, although there is poverty, we will prioritize services to our Lord God and obedience to His will primarily the work of propagation"

Brother Eraño T. Villar

Sharing the faith

Local congregations in the ecclesiastical district of **Australia West** proved their unity with the Church Administration in propagating the gospel by inviting friends and loved ones to attend the Worldwide Evangelical Mission spearheaded by the heads of each household; In **Quezon City** Ecclesiastical District, students of the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) were toured in the Iglesia Ni Cristo Museum and Gallery.

Contributing writers and photographers:
Brendan Samson, Reynaldo Arizala Jr., and Kenneth Ouano



QUEZON CITY





Edifying the flock

In Southeastern Seaboard

Ecclesiastical District, Church officers from some local congregations in US mainland, Carribean islands, Central and South America were brought together via live web conference for a district-wide meeting where they were inspired by the words of God through their district minister, Brother Matthew Capistrano. Also on that occasion, hundreds of brethren across numerous countries took oath as Church officers;

In the Alberta Region, ecclesiastical district of **Western Canada**, members of the Church spent their time united in an activity with the Iglesia Ni Cristo Music Department dubbed INC Music Collaboration; In Phnom Penh, Cambodia, **Southeast Asia I** Ecclesiastical District, members of the Children's Worship Service (CWS) were taught by the CWS officers about gardening.

Contributing writers and photographers: Robert Tapales, Zandrea de Guzman, and Patrice Peñaranda



SOUTHEASTERN SEABOARD



WESTERN CANADA



PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA



Caring for others

Brethren in the ecclesiastical district of **Eastern Samar** participated in a coastal clean-up drive led by their district minister, Brother Dante Mujar. The activity was conducted in the coastal areas of Borongan City, Dolores, and Hernani.

Contributing writer and photographer:
Lhor Noble



EASTERN SAMAR



VIZIANAGARAM, INDIA



RIZAL

Growth and Expansion

Another baptism was held recently in **Vizianagaram, India**, which yielded the most number of new members in the history of propagation work in India. Former pastors from different religions are among those who were baptized; In the Philippines, many were also baptized in the ecclesiastical districts of **Rizal**, **Mindoro Occidental**, and **Negros Occidental**.

Contributing writers and photographers:
Kay Ann Bentazal, September Luz, Claudine Iyong,
Mica Banogon, and Caj Menor



MINDORO OCCIDENTAL



NEGROS OCCIDENTAL



A life now dedicated to God

By CHRISTOPHER KING

ASSUMING THAT MOST PEOPLE on the bus I took to school each day in Southeast Seattle were Catholics like I was, talking about religion had never come to my mind. I was then very active in the Catholic Church at that time and since I wanted to be closer to God, I became an altar boy and had affiliations with the choir. I wanted to do all I can to make my relationship with God even stronger. Whatever I could do to please Him was my goal. I would get up early on Sundays, way before I had to go to mass, to watch televangelist ministers preach their versions of salvation—by having Christ as one’s personal savior and just doing well in your life. It was all simple and convenient but there was always this nagging disconnect in my faith. I could not figure it out.

One particular day in 1984, I again took the bus to school. Without me knowing, there were *Iglesia Ni Cristo* members on that same bus. Since most passengers were Filipinos I assumed they were all Catholics like me at that time. That day I spoke with a good friend on the bus. I asked, “Are you getting ready for Christmas?” She said, “Oh, I do not celebrate that.” “Are you not Catholic?” I asked, and she said, “No, I am a Christian.” I then told her, “I also accept Christ as my personal savior and so, I am a Christian.” She grinned and said,



“No, that is nowhere in the Bible.” After my confused look at her and our ensuing discussion, she invited me to a Bible study.

Sister Evelyn de Guzman lived in West Seattle where I attended school. She had a friend, Brother Rommel Hernandez, who was also on that bus that day and who lived just down the street from me. When he indeed picked me up, I was beyond impressed. When we arrived at the house of worship of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) in Seattle, I was greeted by all the members there and I really felt the sincerity of their kind greetings. Into the lesson, I was all okay with the Scriptures

but when the moment came that I heard that one must be in the fold or Church Of Christ in order to receive eternal life, I looked up with this face of ‘What?!’ I immediately had my defense and the question came on. Offended, curious, attentive—every adjective was with me then. I was much offended and did not come back for a couple of months.

Summer break came and, when I was not working, I was hanging out with my neighborhood friends—members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. One day, we were all playing basketball and the game just stopped. I was wondering, “Why are you all stopping?” “There is a Bible study



***I knelt down and prayed
to ask God for help and mercy,
so I can worship Him.***

calling me back. Brother Rommel's family would take me to the 6:00 p.m. worship service at the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. My friendships grew in the Church and I bonded with more and more families, especially in my neighborhood. All of them always made sure I would be able to make it to worship service and Bible studies.

I went through the Bible study with Brother Dominador C. Santos, a minister of the gospel who really cared for my understanding and well-being. In July of 1987, I was baptized in the true Church Of Christ at the house of worship in Seattle. There is no doubt in my heart that I have become part of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ and knew I am going to be saved come Judgment Day. I received a huge blessing in my life. I was also forewarned that there will be trials, and these trials are going to be heavier and different. Brother Dominador also kept reminding me from the Bible that trials and tests of faith come with being in the true Church. Not long after my baptism, I was persecuted by my mother for giving importance to the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. It felt like there was a hole in my heart because I love the Church. One time, I found myself grounded for a week and could not go out even for worship service.

The next day, there was worship service and I knew I had to go. The time was nearing for me to go over to Brother Rommel's house so I could ride with them. I called them and let them know what was going on. His mom talked to me and said, "Pray

and beg God. He will not allow you to miss service. Trust in Him." I did just that; I knelt down and prayed to ask God for help and mercy, so I can worship Him. Something came over me as a humble bravery. And I left the house to attend the worship service. When I got home, I did not get into trouble with my mom. She even asked me if I had already eaten. Though this was not life-threatening, spiritually, this was huge. God wanted to see how much I love Him. God took care of me to be able to worship Him and I never forgot this experience. This situation really strengthened my faith. When I share this story with my friends today, it inspires them, too. Another thing I love about being in the true Church Of Christ, as officers, we have experiences and stories that we can just openly share with other fellow officers and members making us all proud of our strong faith.

My priority in life is to serve God. I am motivated by what Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:21, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain." The world and the flashy material things cannot do anything for me, but God will provide me with all I need. With this, I can then dedicate my entire life to the service of our Almighty God and our Lord Jesus Christ. I could not fathom what my life would be outside the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Praises to the Almighty God and our Lord Jesus Christ for calling me into the true Church. I am a true and a very proud member of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ). ☺

tonight and we have to get ready," one said. I was close to them all by now and didn't want the day to end like that. That perfect opportunity came and they all said, "Come with us." I said, "Okay."

I went and after that session, I began to speak with the minister. At that point, I could not stop asking questions. That was the turning point that bonded me closer with the members of the Church and moving forward with the Bible studies. My family, although devoted Catholics, were all right with the idea of me checking out other religions. But when it came to the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, they seemed to have a problem. They didn't even know much about it, but would call it a cult because there has been no cross ever since on its edifices. But my friends who were in the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* kept

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Siyang tunay na kawal ng Diyos

Espirituwal na tabak, tangan niyang tunay na kawal—Tungkuli'y di inangkin pagkat Diyos ang naghalal. Itinalaga siyang bantay nang huwag tayong masakmal Ng kalabang nakakatulad ay leong gutom, umuungal.

Bitbit ang kalasag ng Katuwiran, sa labana'y di umaatras—Sinasalag niya, kasinungalingang matalim at marahas. Di siya pumapayag, malinlang tayo ng may dilang-ahas, Kaya siya'y nagtuturo nang tayong lahat ay maligtas.

Magiting sa labanan sapagkat Katotohanan ang baluti—Isinasabuhay niya, mga aral ng Diyos—pawang mabuti, Pinanghahawakan ang nasusulat: sa matuwid, may ganti, Kaya di iindahin magkalatay man nang pagkahapdi-hapdi.

Banta man ay nakaamba, patuloy siyang naglalakbay, Kahit na magkakalayo tayo, hinahatdan niya ng alalay. Ang hinahangad niya, tayo ay mamalaging matitibay, Katulad niya, di mangangatal pag-umangil ang kaaway.

Sa paggunita ko sa pagsilang niyang bantay ng kawan, Nagbalik sa isipan ko, naitanong sa akin nang minsan: "Bakit nga ba para sa atin, nakahanda siyang masaktan At sa gawa'y pinatutunayan, ang buhay sa atin ay laan?"

Mahal niya ang Panginoong Diyos at Panginoong Jesus; Mahal niya ang Iglesia Ni Cristo—tayong mga tinubos.

Arnel M. Armenia
Quezon City, Philippines



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