

MAY-JUNE 1986
Pasugo
GOD'S MESSAGE

ISSN 0116-1636

SPECIAL ISSUE
In Commemoration Of
Brother Felix Y. Manalo's
Centennial (1886-1986)

100th

Birth Anniversary
Of Brother
FELIX Y. MANALO





IGLESIA NI CRISTO
CHURCH OF CHRIST
Quezon City, Philippines

Message



10 May 1986

**TO ALL MY BROTHERS AND
SISTERS IN THE CHURCH OF
CHRIST :**

On this, the 100th birth anniversary of Brother Felix Y. Manalo, it is only fitting that the whole Church of Christ or Iglesia ni Cristo, here in the Philippines as well as in distant lands across the oceans, remember him with love, reverence and pride. For as the Last Messenger of God, this man of great and unshakeable faith devoted his entire life, talent and energy

to the Church and all its members. He was God's chosen instrument for making the Iglesia ni Cristo what it is today.

We remember him fondly as the one who tirelessly preached the true and pure gospel to us until we developed the true faith and love of God, acquired the right to worship God, and were adopted as God's children and therefore heirs to God's promises.

We recall vividly and with gratitude the untold sacrifices and persecutions he endured from the time he began preaching the Church of Christ in 1914 up to his death in 1963 — almost a half-century of uninterrupted stewardship of the Church. Throughout that soul-wrenching but glorious period he set aside personal comfort and

convenience and relentlessly scoured this far corner of the world in search of God's beloved sheep, and gently and patiently gathered them together under one flock.

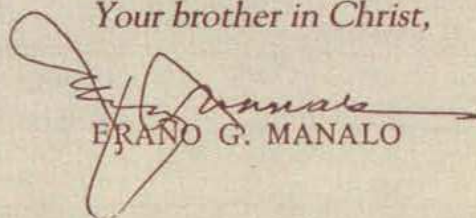
We remember with great admiration and pride his singular uprightness and rectitude, and his unceasing exhortation to all brethren to abandon the old, wicked ways and walk in a new path, the path of life. Doubtless, his was a demanding call; yet he was in reality echoing an earlier call by the Apostle Paul to the brethren then: "That you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain." (Phil. 2:15-16, RSV).

In celebration of the first centennial of Brother Felix Y. Manalo, our remembrance of him — rich in love, reverence and pride — must be relevant and meaningful to each and every one of us in the Church of Christ. We must all renew and reaffirm our commitment to God and the Iglesia ni Cristo that with firm and unflinching resolve we will continue to live by the true and undiluted teachings he fervently preached during his lifetime.

Such a reiteration of commitment, which I earnestly ask all brethren in the Church to make, and a determination to go through the difficult process of casting away the old self and walking in the newness of life, on the right path, are the best ways to give deeper meaning and significance to this commemorative observance of his centennial.

May the blessings of our Almighty God be with us all now and forever.

Your brother in Christ,


ERANO G. MANALO

Pasugo

GOD'S MESSAGE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
IGLESIA NI CRISTO

May-June 1986
Volume 38 • Number 3

Publisher
Iglesia ni Cristo

Editor-in-Chief
Bienvenido C. Santiago

Managing Editor
Feljun B. Fuentes

Editorial Associates
Benjamin Santiago Sr.
Tomas C. Catañgay

Contributing Editor
Teofilo C. Ramos Sr.

News Editor
Antonio E. Bocobo Jr.

Writers
Divino A. Ledesma
Celerino G. Baclaan
Arsenia B. Sison
Randy L. Weir
Elmer A. Sarmiento
Alfred Boyer Jr.
Noel R. Vallejos

Artist
Eranio P. Castro Sr.

Photographer
Orlando Barrera

PASUGO is published bi-monthly by the *Iglesia ni Cristo*, Church of Christ. Editorial Office: *Iglesia ni Cristo* Central Office, Corner Central and Don Marcos Avenues, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Tel. No. 98-06-11. Entered as second-class mail matter at the Central Post Office in Manila on February 13, 1979. Published under PCPM Certificate of Registration No. Sp. 237. Manuscripts and photographs submitted for editorial consideration should be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope and return postage. The PASUGO assumes no responsibility for the return of unsolicited materials. Copyright 1986.

CONTENTS

3 Editorial

5 Felix Y. Manalo and the Iglesia ni Cristo
Isabelo T. Crisostomo

11 Reminiscence
A Photo Folio

22 "Kung Tayo Man ay Pinag-uusig"
An excerpt from a sermon of Brother Felix Y. Manalo

24 The Commission of Brother Felix Y. Manalo
Tomas C. Catañgay

27 The Legacy of a Great Builder
Antonio E. Bocobo Jr.

30 The Iglesia ni Cristo Engineering and Construction Department
Arsenia B. Sison

35 What They Say About Brother Felix Y. Manalo
Compiled by Emmanuel Diaz, Pedrito Placio and Dr. Corazon Osorio

39 The Belief of the Iglesia ni Cristo
Bienvenido C. Santiago

43 "They Shall Declare My Praise"
Edward M. Maranan

46 Ka Pilar and the Church's Choir
Ramon C. Reyes

50 The Central Temple: Fulfilling A Prophecy
Rodante D. Marcoleta

55 Social Services: Reaching Out for People
Nicanor P. Tiosen

57 Lingap sa Mamamayan: A Concern for the People
Rosalina P. Castro

58 Modern Families, *quo vadis?*
Rebecca P. Santos

60 The Making of a Minister
Adriel O. Meimban

65 PITAK / Ang Sugo at ang Paglilingkod ng Tao sa Diyos
PILIPINO / *Bienvenido C. Santiago*

67 Ang Anghel na Nagbababala
Saturnino A. Francisco

70 Ang Ikatitiyak sa Sugong Halal ng Diyos
Benjamin Santiago Sr.

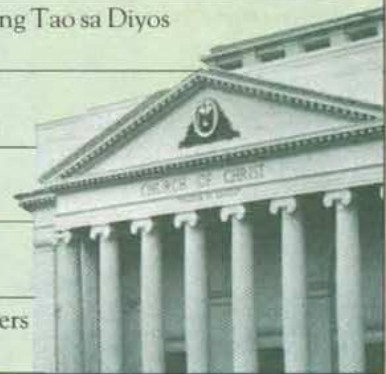
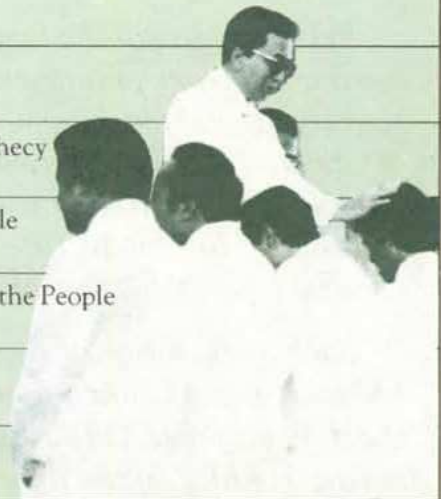
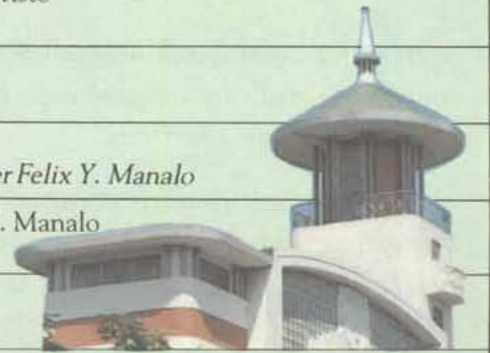
72 Ang Ikatitibay ng Sambahayang Cristiano
Teofilo C. Ramos Sr.

76 Overseas Expansion: Onward to New Frontiers
Alfred Boyer Jr.

88 The Iglesia ni Cristo Central Office
Feljun B. Fuentes

92 The Church Administrators

Our Cover: *A portrait (oil on canvass) of Brother Felix Y. Manalo by Brother Rodrigo G. Villasin.*





Remembering The Last Messenger Of God

MAY 10, 1986 marks the hundredth birth anniversary of Brother Felix Y. Manalo, the man whom God had chosen in these last days to preach the pure Gospel of salvation, gather His sons and daughters, and bring about the re-emergence of the Church of Christ in the Philippines.

The mission which he carried out with singular dedication and unreserved commitment had gone a long way from a humble, almost imperceptible, beginning in 1914 to the resounding worldwide evangelical work that it is today. It has inexorably appealed to a countless number of persons.

None of its early critics and detractors could have imagined that it would survive the persecutions and unkind criticisms they have battered it with. The odds against it were so great that anything less than the miraculous intervention of divine power could not serve as a satisfactory explanation for its enormous success.

A few decades after the inception of Brother Felix Y. Manalo's ministry, significant changes began to occur in the religious and social situation from which it had emerged. A considerable number of people were set off into new ways of social and personal existence where biblical teachings are meticulously translated into practice and religion went beyond mere rituals and lip-service to God. Even the critics and students of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* would at least concede to that.

A noted Filipino writer once remarked: "Even those who deplore the *Iglesia*... admit that it's the one church in the Philippines that communicates with the poor and that has the power to reform lives. The stories of drunks who gave up the bottle, of gamblers who forsook the table, of thugs who turned into men of peace when they became a *kapatid* are not apocryphal. In the *Iglesia*, and perhaps only in the *Iglesia*, do conversions in the fullest sense of the word still occur in our day." (Nick Joaquin, 1963).

To us, members of the *Iglesia ni Cristo*, Brother Felix Y. Manalo's mission amounts to a lot more than just influencing social and cultural realities. It was God's own work for salvation. And Brother Felix Y. Manalo was the messenger whom He and His Son Jesus Christ sent to bring His message in these last days, as the numerous biblical prophecies attest, to set us apart from the world, from the clutches of false religions and vain superstitions, for us to regain the right to serve and worship the living God. This he did by preaching the Word of God as written in the Bible.

Through almost a half-century of unselfish and untiring effort, Brother Felix Y. Manalo led and administered the Church and guided it on the way to salvation and eternal life. His love and compassion for the Church had been amply manifested in the innumerable sacrifices he so heroically suffered. Yes, indeed, he was a hero of the faith.

For us whose salvation has been his greatest concern, we can offer no less than to remember him with fondness. Let us thank God for bringing into the world, one hundred years ago, the man He chose to be His messenger whom He entrusted with the task of bringing us back to Him. Let us live up to the Last Messenger's expectations and admonition. Let this centennial celebration of his birth anniversary be an occasion to strengthen our faith and to give greater impetus to the Church's missionary work — which is but a continuation of the work begun by our beloved Brother Felix Y. Manalo.

— Bienvenido C. Santiago

GRAND EVANGELICAL RALLY
OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
DAGUPAN CITY, FEB. 11, 1955





Remembering The Last Messenger Of God

Felix Y. Manalo And The Iglesia ni Cristo

Isabelo T. Crisostomo

FOREWORD

HE was a pioneer in the real sense of the term—innovative, persevering, impelled by a vision, courageous. Moreover, his faith in God and Jesus Christ was pure and unshakable. When he set out on his great mission, he was convinced it was the will of God and that God would therefore make him prevail against all odds.

Felix Ysagun Manalo was right. His success in preaching and leading the *Iglesia ni Cristo* or Church of Christ has been phenomenal by any standard. The Church, or the INC, as it is commonly known, has grown into a giant religious organization from its modest beginnings. It covers the entire Philippines, north to south, with new congregations and missions in distant parts of the globe. It is the only church in a third world country which has successfully "invaded" the Protestant west and Catholic Europe.

If for this shining achievement alone, Felix Y. Manalo should be an honored name in the gallery of heroes in the history of the world's religions. There is enough reason to cast his name in marble and granite through perpetuity.

This year, 1986, is the centennial of the birth of Felix Y. Manalo, who first preached the Church of Christ in 1914 and led the Church through decades of ordeal and triumph, uncertainty and hope. Before his death on April 12, 1963 at the age of almost 77, Manalo has succeeded in laying the solid foundations and sturdy underpinnings of the Church on which his successor-son, Eraño, has continued to build with dynamism and firm resolve.

* Condensation of a forthcoming book of the same title. The author, former president of the Philippine College of Commerce, now the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, is a noted writer and consultant on management and education.

Manalo The Man

FELIX Manalo was born on May 10, 1886 in a small nipa house in Calzada, a sitio in the barrio of Tipas, Taguig, Rizal (now Metro Manila) province, the first child of Mariano Ysagun, a farm worker and fisherman, and Bonifacia Manalo, an ordinary but determined housewife. Both parents were devoutly Catholic. *Aling Pacia*, especially, was a known *manang* or faithful lay member, a devotee of the patron saint San Antonio. Happy with the arrival, they had him baptized and christened Felix in a neighboring Catholic chapel. Like most other parents they must have thought their son could be their support in their old age, unaware that Felix was destined for activities less mundane, transcendent.

To ensure that her first-born would be steeped in her own faith, *Aling Pacia* always took him to services in their chapel. When he was old enough, the boy was enrolled in the *caton* class of Macario Ocampo ("Maestro Cario") in Tipas, a school during the Spanish period in which were taught the rudiments of fundamental human skills and basic Catholic doctrines, prayers and practices, as well as reading, writing and arithmetic. The school was utilized by the Spanish friars to regiment Filipino children and transform them into docile and subservient colonials.

Little Fisherman, Shepherd

Felix consequently became devoutly religious, to his mother's delight. Then, while not yet ten years old, he was initiated into the life of a fisherman and helped his father fish in Laguna Bay, reminiscent of the disciples whom Christ made "fishers of men." He also became a herd boy, though he tended, with cousin Modesto Ysagun, carabaos, not a

flock of sheep, a preoccupation also figuratively similar to that of early leaders of God's chosen people. They trapped field mice whose meat was good for nourishment. Much earlier in history, David of Israel was a shepherd who slew the giant Goliath. Did Manalo have his own Goliath?



Brother Felix Y. Manalo strikes a pensive mood in this photo.

The robust, hyperactive Felix, though born poor, early showed signs of fortitude and endurance. Once, he beat many other boys in a contest to determine who could stay longest standing barefooted atop an anthill crawling with maddened red ants. Another time he prevailed over a boy in a whiplash fight that lasted for hours and made him ill for a week. To Felix, it was not the pain but victory that mattered.

In 1896, the year the Philippine Revolution against Spain broke out,

Mariano Ysagun died, leaving the ten-year old Felix and his younger sister, Praxedes, orphaned. Their hardships increased. About three years later, in 1899, his mother married again, this time to a widower, Clemente Mozo. She bore him five children but only two survived: Fausta and Baldomero. Mozo him-

self died two months before Baldomero's birth. His death forced the twice-widowed *Aling Pacia* to find work in a small *sawali* (woven bamboo strips) factory.

Manila Beckons

In 1898, the year General Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed the independence of the Philippines from Spain, Felix, then 12, and his cousin Modesto left for long-beckoning Manila. There he learned photography from another cousin, Serapio Ysagun, and apprenticed in

a studio owned by an uncle, Manuel Manalo. He also learned other crafts like goldsmithing, barbering and hatmaking.

In 1900, the cousins stayed in a parish house in Sampaloc, Manila where the parish priest was an uncle, Mariano Borja. A lover of fighting cocks, the priest not only fed and gave them quarters but told them tales of great men which doubtless inspired the two young boys, especially Felix, to weave dreams. *

It was in that parish where Felix found a Bible, which he began to read hoping to find passages confirming his religious beliefs. Doubts began to rise in his mind; the Bible was silent about his faith. Consequently, he began to reject the old, ritualistic Catholic practices. To find the truth, he embarked on a religious odyssey.

Religious Odyssey

When Aguinaldo proclaimed the first Philippine Republic, the dominant Filipino religious grouping was the Iglesia Filipina Independiente or Philippine Independent Church headed by Fr. Gregorio Aglipay. It was popular and avowedly nationalistic, but held no attraction for Felix. For he believed that it was not really independent of the Catholic Church as claimed by its founder: while opposing some Catholic doctrines, it required its members to follow them.

His fancy turned to an esoteric group called the *Colorum*, founded in 1840 by Apolonio ("Hermano Pule") dela Cruz as *Cofradia de San Jose*. Condemned as heretical and therefore unrecognized by the Spanish government, it nevertheless attracted several adherents because it claimed direct communication with God. Felix gave it a try but quickly left it when he realized the claim was false.

He then moved to Parañaque, Rizal (now Metro Manila) where he opened a small hatshop with Eusebio Sunga. One night, he listened to a debate between a priest and a Protestant minister. He thought the latter won, and again his Catholic faith was badly shaken.

Next, he joined the Iglesia Metodista Episcopal, and soon became a pastor in Manila. With his quick mind and profound passion to learn, he became an asset to the Methodists. Later, while engaged in missionary work, he learned his mother was dying and raced home to Tipas to be by her side. He rejected the last sacrament for her. When she died, the parish priest denied her burial in the Tipas Catholic cemetery, and had to be buried in the Aglipayan cemetery.

Not long afterwards, he adopted his mother's surname, Manalo, as an expression, according to his sister Fausta, of affection and great reverence for his mother.

Sometime later, he became a pastor of Presbyterian Church. Then he discovered another Protestant group, the Christian Missionary Alliance, known as the Disciples of Christ in the United States, which baptized its members by immersion. Knowing that this practice most closely adhered to the Bible, he joined the Disciples and became an evangelist. At about this time he met Teresa Sereneo from Paco, Manila, whom he eventually married. They had one child who died in infancy.

When he was 25, Manalo joined the Church of the Seventh-Day Adventists and became one of its most outstanding evangelists. After the death of his first wife, he met a petite young girl of 19 from Manila, Honorata de Guzman. On May 10, 1913, on his 27th birthday, they were married. Honorata became his lifetime companion and partner.

They had seven children—three girls and four boys.

Rationale For Odyssey

Minister Teofilo C. Ramos of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* explains that the fiery Church leader drifted from one religion to another because he had "to saturate himself with biblical lore as God's way of preparing him for his divine mission."

Manalo's love affair with the Adventists, or *Sabadistas*, ended after he began to question some of their doctrines, particularly their Saturday (Sabbath) observance. The hierarchy reacted by discrediting him. When in 1913 he resigned as a minister and as a member, his odyssey ended. But he was plunged into a deep religious crisis.

Disenchanted with organized religions, Felix Manalo familiarized himself with atheism and agnosticism. But even as he discussed and debated with atheists and agnostics, his anguished soul cried that what he really needed was to be close to God and to spread the Gospel—the problem was how. Some Church ministers say Manalo was convinced that eventually a revelation would burst upon his consciousness like a sun as it happened to Paul the Apostle on his way to Damascus.

The 'Calling' Of Manalo

One day in November, 1913, Felix Manalo gathered all the religious literature he had accumulated and arranged them, with a pile of unused notebooks, sharpened pencils and the Bible, on a table inside a small, dimly-lit room in Eusebio Sunga's house in Pasay. He instructed everyone in the household that he should not be disturbed, then kept himself in seclusion. So intense was his concentration that he became oblivious of time, food and the world outside. He emerged

from that seclusion after three days and three nights of intensive study and reflection, his notebooks filled with notes, certain that God had commissioned him to perform a mission.

A Church minister says that Manalo's "commission" was in accordance with biblical prophecies pertaining to God's calling a "messenger from the Far East" (Rev. 7:2-3), who would preach to God's sons and daughters (Isaiah 43:5-6; 46:11; 41:9-11). His task would involve stamping the seal of the living God on the foreheads of God's servants, and bringing the "other sheep" which were not within the Church during the time of Christ into the fold so that "there shall be one flock, one shepherd."

It was a formidable mission. But, as explained by Church ministers, Felix Manalo, like Moses and Paul, was prepared for it. True, he had received much of his biblical education from American authorities and institutions, but this was not unique. Moses, an Israelite, was educated and raised in the culture of Egypt in preparation for his mission of leading his fellow Israelites from Egypt back to their homeland.

Paul—proud, cruel, patrician—was an inveterate persecutor before he became a messenger of God with members of the Christian Church as his victims. When Christ called Paul, He assigned him to the Gentiles, people who had no covenant with God, in preparation for his mission of leading them from the wrong path to the true faith of Jesus Christ.

Manalo's Mission

WHEN GOD CALLED men to undertake missions, they must have experienced God, as Martin Luther did, in such "a life-changing way that it led them to

launch movements which became great churches" and changed Christian history in dramatic ways. In the case of Felix Manalo, his calling occurred during his seclusion in Sunga's room. According to his wife, Honorata, Manalo intimated to her one night before starting to

His mission was specific: to preach the Iglesia ni Cristo.

propagate a new faith that the mission given to him by God was specific: to preach the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. In pursuing this mission he would also persuade his fellow pastors from other sects to unite and preach the same church.

First Meeting, Baptism

One day in July 1914, Felix Manalo and wife, Honorata, left Pasay without a centavo between them and proceeded to Sta. Ana, Manila. He deliberately did not bring any money, said his wife, for he wanted God to perform a miracle in their life. Before reaching their destination—Punta, Sta. Ana—they had to cross the Pasig river by boat. A boatman ferried them across without the two-centavo fare—Manalo promised to pay him later.

In Punta, he asked for his friends Apolinario Ramos and wife, Engracia. They were staying in the workers' quarters of the construction firm, Atlantic Gulf & Pacific Company. Manalo then sent someone to pay the boat fare. That night, with the permission of the Ramos couple, he conducted his first religious meeting in their room with only a handful of people listening.

As he continued to hold nightly meetings more came to listen, drawn not only by the novelty of his

biblical teachings but by their eagerness to see the young evangelist who even then was renowned as a brilliant, spellbinding speaker. Indeed, Felix Manalo, then only 27 going on 28, had a commanding personality and exceptional eloquence. His listeners were struck by his mastery of the Bible and the compelling power of his exposition. Every statement he made was based on the Bible.

Not long after that first meeting the first 14 converts to the *Iglesia ni Cristo* were baptized, by immersion, by Felix Manalo at the Sta. Ana portion of the Pasig river. To ensure privacy, the baptismal area was enclosed with white cloth held up by bamboo poles. Manalo waited in the baptistery for the converts. Before him, in the waist-deep water, he urged each of them to raise their hands, state their allegiance to God, Christ and the Bible, and reaffirm their loyalty to their new faith. Then he immersed them one by one in the clear river water "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

This first batch of converts, according to Church records, was composed of Barbara Cordero, Juan de la Cruz, Juana de la Cruz, Maximiano Diosenito, Remigia Guevarra, Pedro Inocencio, Federico Inocencio, Tomas Inocencio, Emilia de Leon, Felicisimo de Leon, Estanislao Mangilit, Engracia Ramos, Gorgonio Sta. Maria and Eugenia Yuzon. They became the nucleus of the first congregation or *lokal* of the Church of Christ. They first held their worship services in the house of Apolinario and Engracia Ramos, then to the larger house of Atanacio Morte, where the first *Banal na Hapunan* or Holy Supper was held.

From Manila, Manalo decided to preach the Church in his hometown of Taguig. By this time, early 1914, their first child, Pilar, was born. He assigned Federico Inocencio, whom

he had trained and ordained as the first Church minister, to administer the Sta. Ana congregation during his absence. Preaching in Tipas, he encountered wave upon wave of harassment and persecution. Many of his own townmates swore at him, stoned his meetings, intimidated and harmed members and their guests. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1914, he was able to baptize a few converts, including one of his most rabid persecutors, Serapio Dionisio.

Registered, Church Reaches Out

To avoid accusations of preaching an unrecognized church, Felix Manalo decided to register the *Iglesia ni Cristo* with the Philippine government. He asked a lawyer-friend, Juan Natividad, to assist him. On July 27, 1914, the *Iglesia ni Cristo* was officially registered, the date of its registration coinciding with the outbreak of World War I. It was registered as a "corporation sole" with Felix Manalo as Executive Minister. Among the more notable converts at this time were three Protestant ministers: Justino Casanova, Norberto Asuncion and Victor Magsalin. The first two were later ordained as Church ministers, with Casanova becoming the Church's first General Treasurer.

From Taguig, Felix Manalo reached out to Pateros, then Pasig, where he established new congregations. He toiled day and night, with hardly any rest and sleep, and suffered from lack of proper nourishment. He personally supervised the *lokals*, attended to members' problems, conducted nightly evangelization in different places and spent long hours preparing Bible lessons for the services. Soon, as a result of too much suffering and sacrifice, he vomitted blood, indicating his lungs had been damaged. His once robust, proud body, forced beyond its

capacity for endurance, was utterly vitiated. But Manalo, then only 28, did not give up. He prayed fervently to God for help, exercised regularly and increased his food intake. Back on his feet again, he immediately resumed his work by the summer of 1915.

His listeners were struck by his mastery of the Bible and the compelling power of his exposition.

From his home province, Manalo in late 1915, returned to Manila and inaugurated a missionary campaign in populous Tondo. Small meetings evolved into big rallies and public debates between Manalo the accomplished debater and leaders of other religious groups. These debates highlighted the logic and validity of the Church's teachings and served as an effective propaganda tool. Meanwhile, rivals vanquished by Manalo escalated their campaign of hate and persecution against him and the Church.

First Ministry School

As the Church kept growing and expanding, Manalo's need for more assistants became pronounced. Consequently, in the house of a member, Leoncio Javier and his wife, in Tondo, which also doubled as a chapel, he organized the first batch of ministerial students: Justino Casanova, Norberto Asuncion, Norberto Cruz, Federico Inocencio, Marcelo Lemen, Sancho de Guzman, Teodoro Santiago, Santiago Lopez, Teofilo Ora, Januarijo Ponce, Basilio Santiago, Quirino Santos and Benito Simbillo. Some would become pillars of the Church; others, like Ora, Ponce and Basilio Santiago would, as we shall see, conspire to wreck it.

The lessons Manalo imparted to his students and the congregations were uniform and prepared by himself. The ministers were given outlines. To facilitate reproduction of the outlines, Manalo devised a novel copying method — a crude *gulaman* or gelatin press which Honorata operated. It was a labor-consuming process. In 1916, Marcelo Lemen, a Tondo religious worker employed in a printing house, suggested that the lessons be reproduced in printed form. Manalo agreed and the first printed lesson or *texto* came out on March 26, 1916.

Having consolidated his modest gains in Rizal and Manila, Manalo next reached out to the region north of Manila. In 1916, when he was about 30 years of age, he fielded three ministers—Justino Casanova, Santiago Lopez and Teodoro Santiago—to Guiguinto, Bulacan. Thirty new members were baptized and a congregation was immediately organized in barrio Tabi. When the membership reached 80, the members, pooling their efforts, built a small chapel where they conducted services.

In 1917, Manalo visited Nueva Ecija, accompanied by Teodoro Santiago and Januarijo Ponce. A congregation was later formed in Gapan. The following year, he dispatched missionary forces to Pampanga and footholds were established in the towns of Bacolor, Arayat, Guagua, San Simon and Lubao. That same year, a new *lokal* was organized in Malabon, Rizal, with 30 new converts, led by Justino Casanova.

On December 25, 1918, ministers of the Christian Mission honored Felix Manalo as an outstanding evangelist. The certificate was signed by Ministers Leslie Wolfe and Higinio Mayor, attested by Attorney V. Dimagiba. The affair, held at the Gloria Theater in Tondo, Manila, was attended by

Church members and several Protestant pastors.

In May 1919, Manalo presided at the first ordination of Church ministers, laying his hands on Justino Casanova, Teodoro Santiago and Federico Inocencio.

Quells Internal Revolt

In August 1919 Manalo visited all local congregations before departing for the United States to advance his Bible studies. He advised his brethren to keep united and protect one another during his absence. One day in September that year he sailed for the U.S. and stayed in Berkeley, California, burying himself in Bible research and studies, and attending classes in a school of religion. When he returned in 1921, he found the Church rocked by an incipient revolt led by Teofilo Ora and Januario Ponce, Church workers who had been left out in the 1919 ordination.

Assisted by Basilio Santiago, another Church worker, Ora and Ponce attacked Manalo for alleged extravagance and immorality. Knowing the existence of the Church itself was in danger, Manalo acted decisively and called an emergency meeting of all ministers and elders in the Church office in Gagalangin, Tondo, with Justino Casanova presiding. Manalo defended himself by belying the charges and presenting supporting documents. Then in a division of the house, he won decisively.

Defeated, Ora and Company founded their own Church, the Church of God in Jesus Christ, inviting recruits from the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. Their recruitment efforts were initially effective and for a while the *Iglesia* was dangerously decimated. Manalo then took to the field to gather the members back to the flock, and once more, peace reigned in the Church. On the

other hand, the new church of Ora and Ponce withered away.

Massive Growth And Expansion

SOON THE LOCAL congregations, each congregation roughly equivalent to a Catholic parish, grew into Divisions, each Division equivalent to a diocese. Pampanga became the first Division in 1924 with Teodoro Santiago as the first Division Minister or Administrator. Next came Tarlac (1925) under Reymundo Mansilungan; Laguna (1928) with Andres Tucker as first Division Minister; Nueva Ecija (1930) administered by Prudencio Vasquez; Zambales (1931) under Benito Simbillo; Bulacan (1932) under Jacinto Torres; Cavite followed (1932), administered by Feliciano Gonzales. Eventually, other Divisions were rapidly established; then Pangasinan (1934) under Placido Pascua.

Other provinces in Southern Luzon followed: Batangas (1936) with Eugenio Cortes as first Division Minister; Tayabas (now Quezon), became a Division in 1936 under Glicerio Santos Sr.

Manalo then fielded some evangelical workers in Northern Luzon, specifically La Union, though that province became a Division only in 1943, with Felimon Sanidad as first Division Minister.

Next, the Church's missionary forces entered the Visayas. Cebu became a Division in 1937, with Alipio Apolonio as first Division Minister. Bohol, reached in 1938, became a Division in 1955 under Antonio Jerusalem. The Ilocos Norte Division was formed in 1938, administered by Placido Pascua. Manalo's home province of Rizal became a Division in 1939, with Telesforo S. Cruz as its first Division Minister. Isabela in the North became a Division in 1947, under Felix Suratos. Mindoro Oriental be-

came a Division in 1940 under Mariano Castro.

From Luzon and the Visayas, the Church reached out to distant Mindanao in 1941 with about 30 families belonging to the Church in Paco, Manila as vanguard. They first settled in Cotabato like pilgrims and immediately began evangelization. The campaign was productive but Cotabato did not become a Division then because World War II intervened. In 1946, however, the work resumed, and Manalo made Cotabato a Division under Mariano Suarez.

Years Of War And Liberation

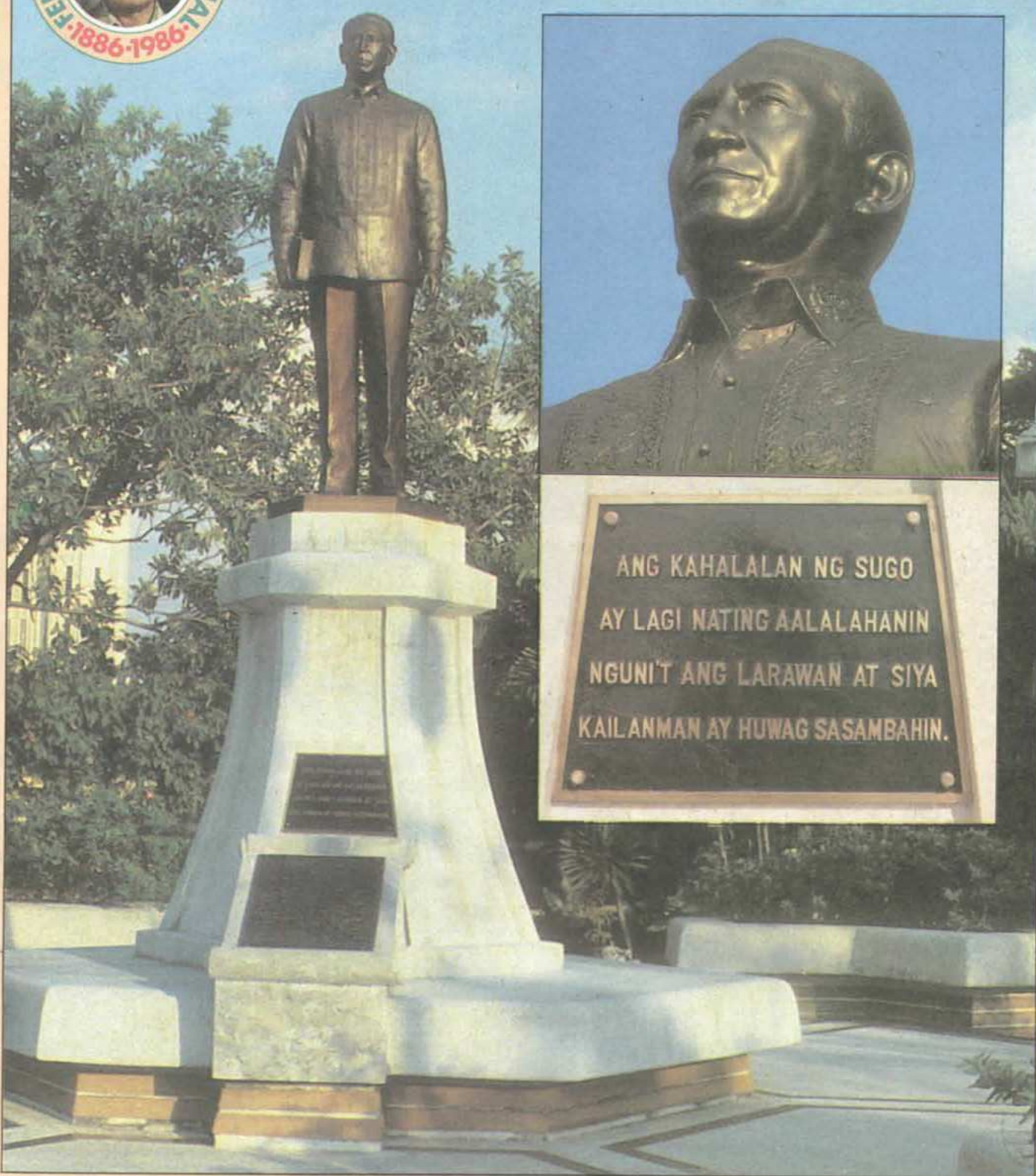
The Japanese occupation of the Philippines (1941-1945) cost the Church many ministers and Church workers who were maimed or killed. Manalo himself was threatened with death by the Japanese. Once, Japanese soldiers disrupted a service in Tayuman, Sta. Cruz, Manila, and tried to stop Manalo from officiating. They failed. Manalo later actively helped the resistance movement serving as information officer and extending them money, food and clothing. Unable to find direct evidence against his underground activities, the Japanese instead confiscated Manalo's properties.

As Japan's iron rule continued, Manalo proceeded with his mission. For more effective coordination, he consolidated all congregations in the Greater Manila Area into one Division under the supervision of Division Minister Benjamin Santiago. Then he sent Cipriano Sandoval to Baguio to start propagation work in the summer capital. Baguio became a Division in 1956 under the administration of Ramon Adalla.

On July 14, 1945, General Douglas MacArthur proclaimed the liberation of the Philippines from Japan. Later, the war ended after the



Reminiscence



ANG KAHALALAN NG SUGO
AY LAGI NATING AALALAHANIN
NGUNI'T ANG LARAWAN AT SIYA
KAILANMAN AY HUWAG SASAMBAHIN.





Brother
Felix Y. Manalo
tirelessly preached
the true and pure
gospel until we
developed the true
faith and love
of God.





PASUGO MAY-JUNE 1986



***H**is unceasing
exhortation to all to
abandon the old, wicked
ways and walk in the path
of life shall never be
forgotten.*



Brother
Felix Y. Manalo in a relaxed and joyful mood after holding a series of conferences with brethren in the various local congregations.

United States dropped the first atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan upon orders of President Harry S. Truman. With the Japanese gone, the *Iglesia ni Cristo* continued to encounter problems, this time in the hands of Filipinos; the People's Army against Japan known as the *Hukbalahap*, or *Huks* for short.

Once, on a visitation in Pam-panga, Manalo got word that the *Huks* would ambush him in the town of Lubao. On the way to the service, however, he slipped on a stairway and suffered a fractured leg. The ambush was thus aborted. The *Huks* were after Manalo's head because they believed he was an obstacle in their plan to seize government power since Manalo refused to cooperate with them. During the 1945 presidential election, for instance, Manalo and the Church supported Manuel Roxas while the *Huks* campaigned for Sergio Osmeña Sr. This led to the *Huks* kidnaping and liquidating Church ministers, workers and members. As a result, several members fled from Central Luzon to seek sanctuary in places where there were Church congregations.

In 1948, the Church began to build its first central office and official residence of the Executive Minister at Riverside street in San Juan, Rizal. Meanwhile, the *Huks* tried again to assassinate Manalo but failed.

Post-Liberation Growth

The Church of Christ remained united, firm and progressive even during those trying years. It remained intact and firm under Felix Manalo's administration. Immediately after the war, in 1945, he resumed his offensive in Northern Luzon. He made Cagayan a Division in 1947 with Jose Nisperos as first Division Minister, and Ilocos Sur (1948) a Division under Felimon Sanidad.

In August 1947, he sent evangeli-

cal workers to the Bicol region. Albay became a Division in 1948 under Prudencio Vasquez. Camarines Norte came next, in 1948. Evangelization began in Camarines Sur in 1947, though it became a Division only in 1964 under Mario Rejuso. Work in Sorsogon began in 1948; the province was made a Division in 1951, again with Mario Rejuso as first Division Minister. That same year, the Church entered Abra in the North; it became a Division in 1951, administered by Melencio Torres.

Manalo then reopened his Visayas offensive. He had entered some of the provinces in that region before the war. In 1949, he made Marinduque a Division with Pablo de Leon as Division Minister. Leyte became a Division that year with Felix T. Ortiz as first Division Minister. So did Mindoro Occidental, under Pedro D. Almedina. Davao was made a Division in 1953, administered by Antonio Jerusalem, as well as Lanao, with Rufino Pangan as first Division Minister. Manalo made Catanduanes a Division after the first baptism was held there in April 1950 under Jose San Esteban.

Manalo converted Masbate into a Division in 1951 with Jerusaleo Vasquez as first Division Minister; Capiz in 1954, administered by Gregorio Earnshaw. Negros Oriental also became a Division in 1950, under Filemon P. Bautista; and Samar in 1955, administered by Teofilo Bernardino. Zamboanga del Sur (Pagadian), where evangelization began in 1950, was made a Division in 1962 with Remias Reformado as first Division Minister. Angel B. Canicosa was the first Division Minister of the Division of Romblon (1951). Misamis Oriental became a Division in 1954 under the administration of Samuel Gaña; Misamis Occidental in 1955, also under Samuel Gaña; and Surigao in

1947 under Perfecto S. Padilla. At about the same time Palawan became a Division administered by Pablo de Leon. Ipil, Zamboanga del Sur, was also made a Division in 1960 administered by Honorio Castro.

A Protestant author, Dr. Arthur Leonard Tuggy, attributes the *Iglesia ni Cristo's* fantastic growth to, among other factors, dedicated laymen eager to spread their message and an effective deployment of ministers. "And behind all of this," he notes, "was the continuing charismatic leadership of its founder-head, Felix Manalo, now firmly anchored to a doctrinal base as God's messenger for the Philippines..."

Chapels As Progress Indices

PARALLEL TO THE CHURCH'S growth was its massive church-building progress. The first chapel built on Gabriela street in Tondo, Manila in 1918, fashioned out of sawali, nipa and wood, typified the style and materials of the early chapels, though they kept springing up like mushrooms across the nation. After the war, Manalo began to build magnificent concrete chapels, the first of these in Washington, Sampaloc, Manila, completed in 1948. Next came the chapel-and-official residence of the Executive Minister in San Juan, Rizal, a palace no less, situated on an elevated hill overlooking much of San Juan, Rizal. The grand complex was designed by Architect Juan Nakpil.

In 1953, three modern cathedral-size chapels rose up in Cubao, Quezon City, Caloocan City and Syquia, Sta. Ana, Manila. In 1954, the Baclaran chapel in Pasay was constructed followed in 1955 by the house of worship in Baguio City and another great edifice in Solis, Tondo, Manila. Two other similar chapels were built in 1956 in

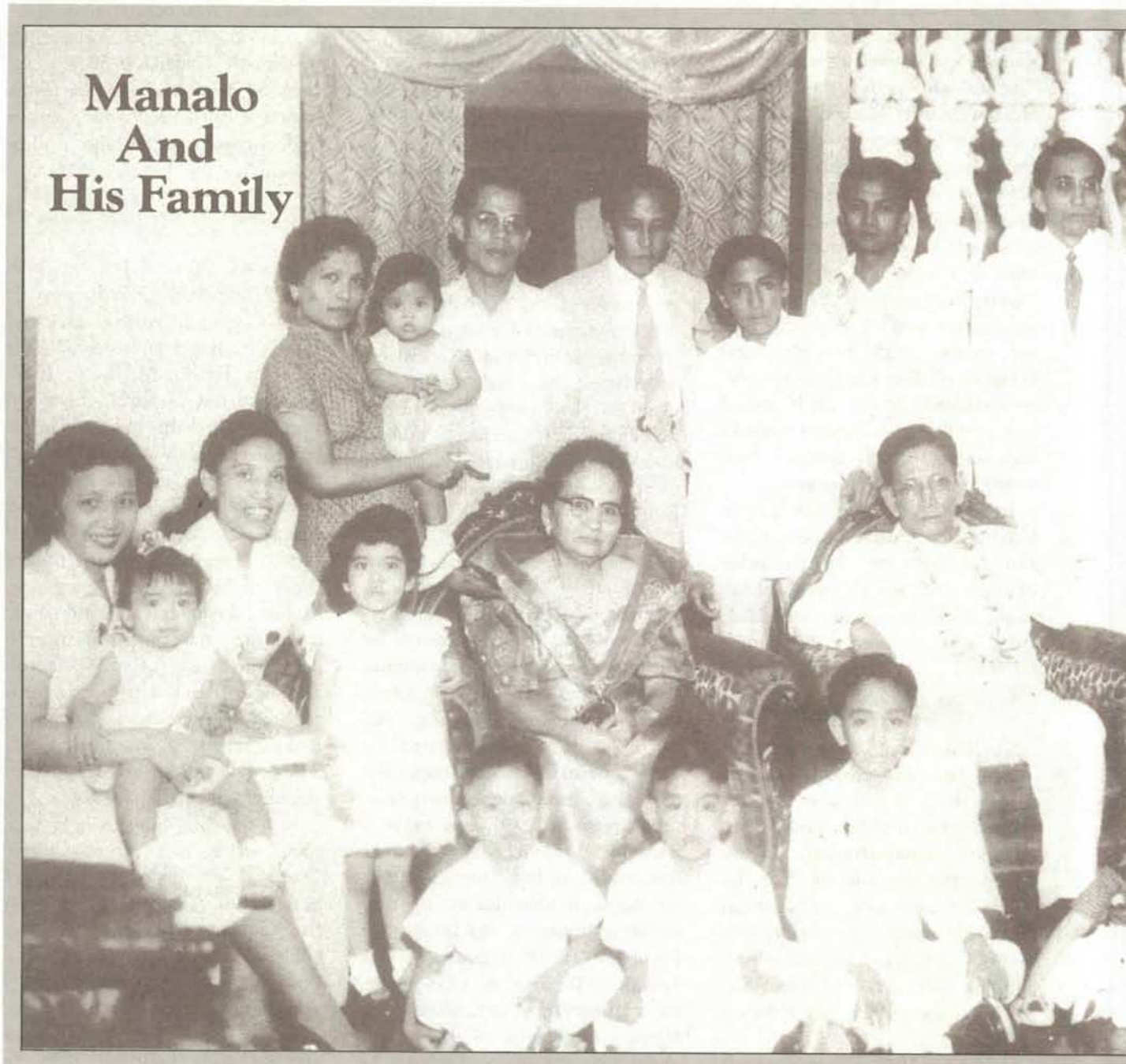
Angeles, Pampanga and Artacho, Pangasinan. Others followed in 1957: Paco, Manila, and Tipas, Taguig, Rizal, then in San Jose, Mindoro; Arayat, Pampanga; Cabanatuan City; Bacoor, Cavite; Orani, Bataan; Salinas, Cavite; and Balintawak in Quezon City. Soon giant INC chapels were also dominating the skylines of Tarlac; Malabon, Rizal; Lucena City in Quezon; Naujan, Mindoro; Bel Air,

Makati; Daet, Camarines Norte. Other landmarks of Church progress were built in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City (1962); Cavite City; Concepcion, Tarlac; Hagonoy, Bulacan; Naga City; Mapalad, Pampanga; Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija; Grace Park, Caloocan City; and Apalit, Pampanga.

Construction of these indicators of progress and Church permanency

is not only a necessity but in compliance with God's mandate saying, "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them". (Exodus 25:8); and, "The house which I am to build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods... prepare timber for me in abundance, for the house I am to build will be great and wonderful" (II Chron. 2:5, 9, RSV).

The Church builds these modern



synagogues from its own funds, without any aid from any source, foreign or domestic. As the present Executive Minister, Eraño G. Manalo, stresses:

"You can ask the government, or any bank and financial institution in the Philippines, if the Church of Christ ever borrowed from them even a single centavo, and they will say, 'No,' for we never did. We have been building all our chapels with

the voluntary contributions of our members."

Need For A Successor

Felix Manalo made his second trip to the United States in August 1938 at the instance of the Christian Alliance Society. He welcomed the opportunity to deliver speeches abroad at their invitation for it would also enable him to undergo

treatment of a stomach ailment. He was able to comply with some speaking engagements but unable to undergo treatment for when he fell ill he instructed his secretary, Cirilo Gonzales, to bring him back immediately to the Philippines.

Arriving in Manila after four months in the United States, the 52-year-old leader was welcomed at Pier 7 by thousands of Church members. He was pleased but his health



FELIX MANALO and his wife Honorata left six children — two girls and four boys. The eldest, Pilar, is a music expert and is the overall Choir Directress of the Church. An alumna of the Philippine Women's University, she studied choral conducting and voice production under local and foreign masters.

The second child is Avelina, also a PWU alumna in business administration. She was widowed by her husband, Dr. Emiliano Makapugay, who rendered free medical services to Church members during his lifetime.

The eldest boy, Dominador, is now dead. An engineering alumnus of Mapua Institute of Technology, he was in charge of Church construction projects until his death.

Salvador is the fourth child of the Manalos. A sportsman and athlete in his youth, he is today a full-fledged ordained minister of the Church, having been invested on May 11, 1959.

Eraño is the third boy. Affectionately known as "Erdy" and called "Ka Erdy" by Church members, he is the present Chief Administrator or Executive Minister of the Church. He was born on January 2, 1925 and literally grew up on his father's knees. As a young boy, he had a consuming interest in his father's work and mostly stayed by his side,

poring over books and various religious literature, studying the Bible, committing to memory many of the Bible lessons his father had prepared for the ministers. Seeing his inclination and temperament, the elder Manalo encouraged his son to share with him the solitude and tranquility of his study and whetted his appetite to know.

Eraño studied at the San Juan Academy in San Juan, Rizal. After completing his primary course, he completed secondary education in the same institution. After finishing high school, he enrolled in a Manila university for a law course. But the Second World War interrupted his study. Instead, he concentrated on religious work, joining his father as he presided over Church services and rallies and serving as his Bible reader. Consequently, Eraño developed a strong and magnetic stage presence and a mastery of the Tagalog language, the principal medium of Church propagation. Rather than resume university studies, he decided to be a full-time Church minister.

On May 10, 1947, Eraño was made treasurer of the Division of Manila, then General Treasurer of the Church. On May 13, 1947, he

Left photo: Brother Felix Manalo and Sister Honorata with children and grandchildren.

troubled him.

But it was only in 1953, at 67, that he met the idea of succession head-on. On January 23, that year, he summoned all division ministers and senior officials of the Church after their regular ministerial meeting to a special conference. He announced that when his time came, there must be someone to take his place. The unexpected announcement stunned the ministers because

Manalo was then quite young and appeared very healthy.

At 2 o'clock that afternoon, the meeting proceeded with Felix Manalo presiding. The voting was held. The names of Eraño G. Manalo, Isaias Samson and Isaias Reyes were presented as candidates. Samson obtained two votes, while Eraño G. Manalo obtained all of the remaining votes. He was subsequently proclaimed unanimously as the fu-

ture Executive Minister. The body then elected his would-be assistants: Teofilo C. Ramos, as his "right-hand man" and Cipriano Sandoval as his "left hand."

Manalo's Final Days

AS A RESULT OF HIS sacrifices, Felix Manalo again felt his health deteriorating rapidly. His ulcer relentlessly seized him with se-



Sister Pilar Manalo Danao



Sister Avelina Manalo Makapugay



The late Brother Dominador G. Manalo

was ordained a full-fledged minister. He became the minister-in-charge of the entire Division of Manila in 1951 and found an opportunity to test and improve his administrative skills. Concurrently, he wrote on religious subjects and had his pieces published. On January 17, 1955, at the age of 30, he married Cristina "Tenny" Villanueva of Laguna. They have six children, three boys and three girls. The eldest child is Eduardo, now a full-fledged minister, in charge of the Metro Manila III Division. The other children are Lolita, Erlinda, Liberty, Felix II and Marco.

Under Eraño G. Manalo's administration, the Church has embarked on an aggressive program of



Brother Salvador G. Manalo



Brother Bienvenido G. Manalo

vere pain that medicines procured from drug stores could not assuage. Consequently, he decided to seek treatment in the United States.

After bidding goodbye to his brethren, he enplaned on August 17, 1955 for the United States, accompanied by his son Eraño and nursing aide Librada Enriquez. Legions saw him off at the airport, among them President Ramon Magsaysay. In the United States, they stayed in a hotel

not far from the John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, where he would seek treatment. There he continued to receive Church reports from Manila. President Ramon Magsaysay phoned his concern and best wishes. Then Manalo changed his mind and decided to proceed to New York instead, and entered the Presbyterian Medical Center on September 2, 1955. The doctors who examined him advised surgery

of the stomach after curing his diabetes. On September 9, he was successfully operated on for ulcers.

A month later he returned to Manila and was again welcomed by a huge throng led by President Magsaysay. Without having fully rested, Manalo, then 69, resumed the killing pace of his work attending and addressing rallies.

It was only after many years later, in February 1963, that Manalo fell gravely ill. He was rushed to St. Luke's Hospital in Quezon City where doctors decided to remove immediately "an intestinal obstruction." Manalo rejected surgery, saying, "Doctors can cure only those who are not yet to die, not those whose time to die has come." By March 21, 1963 his incapacitation was total, and he was transferred to the Veteran's Memorial Hospital. Doctors operated on him but failed to give him relief from pain.

On April 2, the doctors worked on Manalo again to sew back part of his intestines which had burst and hemorrhaged. On April 11, they performed a third surgery on him. It proved to be the last.

The following day, April 12, 1963, at 2:35 o'clock in the morning, the brilliant, tireless and courageous Filipino religious leader who had brought the *Iglesia ni Cristo* to great heights of glory and prominence, breathed his last. He was 77 years old. It was his 49th year as chief steward of the Church.

Manalo's Interment

Hundreds of thousands of faithful mourned the death of their "elder brother" at the San Juan chapel. Later, the body was transferred to the new cathedral-chapel in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City where members from far-flung provinces and cities continued to stream for a last glimpse of their fallen leader.



Brother Eraño G. Manalo

foreign expansion, and undertaken socially oriented projects for its members and the public at large. Its construction program is carried out without let-up. Evangelization is facilitated by such modern tools as a college for evangelists, radio station, and regular radio and television programs in different stations. Modern in his orientation, Executive Minister Manalo, aside from utilizing the latest tools of communication, propagation and management, has also built a comprehensive school, the New Era College which is open to Church members and non-members alike.

The youngest child of Felix and Honorata Manalo is Bienvenido. Born on August 28, 1935, he is a

civil engineering alumnus of the National University. With the death of his eldest brother, Dominador, he has taken over the duties of overall superintendent of Construction, putting to good use the training he received during his apprenticeship under his late brother. "Bien" is married to Norma Mesina; they have three children.

The growth of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* is rapid, continuous and inexorable. It seems to be the fulfillment of God's promise to his chosen people: "Seek you first the kingdom of heaven, and all others shall be added unto you." It is a divine promise Church of Christ members consider with unalterable faith, confidence and certitude. **P**

On April 23, 1963, as he had wished, Felix Manalo was interred in the pagoda housing his office and private study below the Executive Minister's residence in San Juan, Rizal, there to remain up to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Before his death, Manalo revealed to his senior ministers his vision of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* in this manner:

"The Church of Christ will con-

tinue to grow and prosper. Much of the glory and power of other churches will be transferred to this Church because it is the true Church founded by Christ."

AFTERWORD

Manalo died after almost 50 years of leading the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. At the time of his death he had already secured its stability, having estab-

lished and nurtured a strong body of ministers and evangelical workers, a nationwide network of deacons and deaconesses, internal Church organizations for young and old, tested propagation tools like religious debates, public rallies and informative publications like the *Pasugo* and, above all, a body of biblical doctrines other churches have not successfully disputed. Under his leadership he had forged a strong bond of brotherhood among

HOMILY

"Kung tayo man ay pinag-uusig"

(An excerpt from a sermon of Brother Felix Y. Manalo delivered on April 7, 1955 in a worship service held at the house of worship in San Juan, Metro Manila.)

KALULUGDAN BA NG Diyos ang mga umurong dahil sa pag-uusig? Dito sa Hebreo 10:38 ay ganito ang nakasulat:

Ngunit ang aking lingkod na matuwid ay mabubuhay sa pananampalataya: at kung siya ay umurong, ay hindi kalulugdan ng aking kaluluwa.

Ang mga uurong bunga ng mga pag-uusig ay hindi kalulugdan ng Diyos. Ang sabi ni Apostol Pablo, "ang aking lingkod ay mabubuhay sa pananampalataya, ngunit kung umurong, hindi ko siya kalulugdan." Kung binabata ninyo at tinitiiis ninyo ang mga pag-uusig, at kung nagpapatuloy kayo sa pananampalataya at pinawawalang-

halaga ninyo ang mga pag-uusig sa paraang hindi ito nakahahadlang sa inyo, kayo'y kabahagi sa mga hirap at sakit ni Cristo.

Ano ang kapalarang idudulot sa atin kapag tayo ay nagtiis at nagbata ng mga pag-uusig? Sa II Tesalonica 1:5 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

Na isang tandang hayag ng matuwid na paghukom ng Dios; upang kayo'y ariing karapat-dapat sa kaharian ng Dios, na dahil dito'y nangagbabata rin naman kayo:

Ang kapalarang idudulot sa atin kapag tayo ay nagtitiis, inaalimura, inaalipusta, hinahamak, at itinatakil ng mga tao ay ikapagiging dapat natin sa araw ng paghuhukom.

Kung Bakit Tayo Pinag-uusig

Talaga bang nakasulat na ang isang Iglesia ni Cristo ay hindi makaiwas sa pag-uusig? Nakasulat. Kaya, kapag tayo ay pinag-uusig, huwag tayong manghihina, huwag tayong malulungkot ni manlalamig. Kung hindi kayo uusigin, hindi kayo tunay na Iglesia ni Cristo sapagkat ito ay ipinagpauna na ni Cristo sa kaniyang mga alagad o sa mga Iglesia ni Cristo. Bakit tayo pinag-uusig? Dahil ba sa tayo ay gumawa ng katampalasanan? Narito ang dahi-lan sa I Pedro 4:14-16:

Kung kayo'y mapintasan dahil sa pangalan ni Cristo, ay mapapalad kayo; sapagkat ang Espiritu ng kaluwalhatian at ang

Espiritu ng Dios ay nagpapahingalay sa inyo.

Ngunit huwag magbata ang sino-man sa inyo na gaya ng mamatay-tao, o magnanakaw, o manggagawa ng masama, o gaya ng mapakialam sa mga bagay ng iba: Ngunit kung ang isang tao ay magbata na gaya ng Cristiano, ay huwag mahiya; kundi luwalhatiin ang Dios sa pangalang ito.

Pinag-uusig kayo dahil sa katuwiranang pinagbabatayan ng ating pananampalataya. Ito ay katunayan ng pagiging tunay na kay Cristo. Isa ito sa mga patotoo ng Diyos na kayo nga ay kaniyang Iglesia. Tinutupad lang ng Diyos ang mga tanda na dapat matupad sa inyo. Anong kahulugan niyan? Ito ang ikapagkakaron natin ng karapatan na maging dapat sa araw ng paghuhukom.

Inuusig kayo? Labanan ninyong matatag ng inyong pananampalataya. Huwag kayong tatalikod kahit anuman ang mangyari! Ang gusto ko ay tumatag kayo at tumibay. Sa gitna ng mga pag-uusig, manatili kayo sa paglilingkod sapagkat pagdating ng araw ng paghuhukom ay aariin kayong karapat-dapat. Ito ang malaking kagantihan sa inyo ng langit. Kaya, kahit hindi pa tayo namamatay ay alam na natin kung ano ang mangyayari sa atin.

Kaya mamatay man ang isang Iglesia ni Cristo na nanatiling masigla, nagtiis, nakipagbaka sa mga pag-uusig at pinagpilitan na

Church members and kept them united and in harmony.

It was on this strong, enduring foundation that his successor, Eraño G. Manalo, has had to build.

When the torch was passed to the then 38-year-old Eraño in 1963, he pledged, "I intend to carry on my father's mission, persevere according to his method, and inspire discipline and piety among my brothers and sisters in the Church. I know I

have their support and vote of confidence."

Those who believed the Church of Christ would deteriorate after the death of Felix Manalo were grossly disappointed. For, on the contrary, the pace of its growth has accelerated. The new steward has proved to be a modern, equally effective leader and administrator. Under his leadership the Church has spanned and transcended the oceans and stamped the indelible imprint of

siya ay makapagbigay-lugod sa Diyos, wala na siyang hatol. Ang sa kaniya ay ang kagantihan pagdating ni Cristo.

Ang Ating Pag-asa Sa Likod Ng Mga Pag-uusig

Ang pag-uusig ay napakalakas. Karanasan na ng maraming kapatid ito pero nagtiis sila, hindi sila tumalikod sa Iglesia at sa paglilingkod sa Diyos. Hindi sila tumalikod sa kanilang pananampalataya. Si Cristo nang makaranas ng mga pag-uusig ay hindi tumalikod sa Diyos, hindi Niya iniwan ang kaniyang tungkulin dahil sa hirap ng pag-uusig kundi ibinigay Niya ang Kaniyang buhay hanggang sa Siya ay namatay. Ganyan din kayo. Tatagan ninyo at lakasan ninyo ang inyong loob. Sa gitna ng mga pag-uusig ay huwag magmaliw ang inyong pag-ibig kundi lalo kayong sumulong dahil sa pag-uusig.

Araw-araw bulayin ninyo na kayo ay Cristiyano, na kayo ay Iglesia ni Cristo, na kayo ay pag-aari ni Cristo, na kayo ay patay na sa kasalanan, na kayo ay napako na sa krus kalakip ni Cristo nang kayo'y ilibing sa bautismo. Nang kayo ay umahon sa tubig, katulad ng pagkabuhay ni Cristo, mabuhay kayong mag-uli sa panibagong buhay. Ipangako ninyong luluklok kayo sa kagustuhan ng Diyos at siya ninyong susundin araw-araw.

Tumalaga kayong mabuti hanggang sa kamatayan, at magtiwala kayo na sa pamamagitan ng

pagtitiis ninyo ng mga pag-uusig, kayo'y aariing karapat-dapat sa araw ng paghuhukom. Umaasa akong kayo'y magpapakatibay, hindi ninyo bibigyan ng halaga ang mga pag-uusig. Sa halip ay matutuwa kayo at inyong makikini-kinita na mayroon kayong ganti. Ito ang magiging kalasag ninyo sa araw ng paghuhukom.

Kaya huwag kayong uorong sa pag-uusig, mga kapatid. Magpapasalamat kayo sa Diyos at sabihin ninyo sa Kaniya na "salamat po at nakapananatili ako na kahit na ako ay hinahamak, niwawalang halaga, itinatakuwil, nilalait, at pinagsasalitaan ng masama, hindi nawawala sa akin ang pag-ibig ko sa Iyo, hindi nawawala ang pananalig ko, hindi ko ipinagpalit ang hirap ng aking katawan at ang sakit ng aking puso sa pag-uusig kaysa pagtatakuwil ng pag-ibig ko sa iyo. Nagpapasalamat ako sa Iyo, Diyos ko, sapagkat sa kabila ng mga pag-uusig na nagdaan sa buhay ko, hindi ako umurong, hindi ko pinahahalagahan ang aking sarili para ikubli sa mga paghamak at paglibak ng tao kundi hinamak ako dahil sa pag-ibig ko sa Iyo at kung mayroon pang darating na pag-uusig, gawin Mong ibayo ang lakas ng aking pananampalataya at matiis ko ang lahat sapagkat ito ang tanda na may malaki akong ganti, ito ang tanda na ako ay nakasisiguro na sa araw ng paghuhukom ako ay aariin Mong karapat-dapat sa Iyong kaharian. Ipanalangin ninyo ito. **P**

Christianity among other Asian peoples, Americans, Europeans, Africans and even among Muslims in the Middle East.

Eraño G. Manalo is quick to point out, however, that the success of the Church should not be attributed to him. In his own words:

"All the power and the glory which the Church is enjoying result from the fact that when I assumed the position, the Church already had a firm and solid foundation laid by the late Executive Minister. The Church is now enjoying the fruits of his vision, his sufferings and sacrifices, his love and fortitude. Above all, everything is happening according to the will of God." **P**

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

In preparing to write his book, the writer was assisted by Church ministers Teofilo C. Ramos Sr., Bienvenido C. Santiago, Adriel Meimban and Jerson T. Samson. He also used for reference materials the unpublished masteral thesis of Professor Julita R. Sta. Romana, the still unpublished biography of Executive Minister Felix Y. Manalo by Professor Dolores Garcia, and the unpublished biography manuscripts of Bienvenido C. Santiago and Adriel Meimban on the same subject. Aside from periodic conversations, Minister Ramos also lent the author some printed materials about Brother Manalo, as did Minister Benjamin Santiago, a long-time associate of the Church leader and erstwhile editor, and writer of the Pasugo. The latter publication is reservoir of vital information about the Church and its deceased leader.

For Brother Manalo's temperament and prophetic vision, much is drawn by the author from occasional talks with the present leader of the Church, Ka Erdy Manalo.



The Commission Of Brother Felix Y. Manalo

Tomas C. Catañgay

“Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.”

— Isaiah 46:11

ONE OF THE doctrines which we believe in, but unfortunately is misunderstood or unknown to many, concerns God's messenger in these last days. Some say that there is no need for a messenger in our times of great knowledge. They argue that the Holy Scriptures has already been written and translated in so many languages and dialects; preachers abound everywhere. Why then, they question, must God send a messenger to teach men His doctrines? They aver, “Can God's messenger or preacher of His doctrines, if there is one today, be better than those who have studied and were trained in the modern ways of winning people to God?”

Although people know and accept that, from time to time, God sends a messenger to make known His will to men, they cannot accept and believe that Brother Felix Manalo is one of God's messengers. In fact, they choose

to believe in someone else to be God's messenger in these last days, alleging that a Filipino with little education and a scant knowledge of English could not be God's instrument in propagating the Gospel. All their arguments and queries tend to belittle, in one way or another, the importance of those whom God had sent, especially God's messenger in our time.

The importance of God's messenger is clear:

Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” (Jn. 6:29, NKJV)

The prerogative and authority to send someone on God's behalf belong to God alone. It is not, has never been, and will never be our idea to promulgate our own doctrine concerning God's messenger.

To be sent is tantamount to be called by God:

And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. (Heb. 5:4, *Ibid.*)

Today, very few reject the commission of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles. The majority now sincerely believe that Christ and His Apostles were sent by God, although during their time, they were rejected. They weren't accepted as having been sent by God. The reason behind their rejection of Christ and His Apostles was not due to the doctrines they preached nor the miracles wrought by God through them. The reason behind the rejection of Christ by many people during His time is that He was the son of a carpenter (Mt. 13:55-57). On the

part of the Apostles, they were rejected because they were uneducated and untrained men (Acts 4:13). However, their lowly stature in society did not, in any way, negate their commission from God.

Why do we believe in the commission of Brother Felix Manalo as God's messenger in these last days? Was he sent by God? It is well to remember that being sent is tantamount to being called by God. And one of the means by which God sends or calls His messenger is by prophecy. Here is what the prophet Isaiah said concerning God's messenger in these last days:

Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it. (Is. 46:11, NKJV)

This prophecy of Isaiah concerns a man from a far country. He was likened to a bird of prey from the east. God Himself guaranteed the fulfillment of this prophecy: "I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it," he said.

The one sent or called by God, including his offspring or descendants, will emerge from the Far East. They are recognized by God as His sons and daughters from the *ends of the earth*.

Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them

The one sent by God will emerge from the Far East.

back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth. (Is. 43:5-6, *Ibid.*)

James Moffatt translated Isaiah 43:5, thus:

From the far east will I bring your offspring, and from the far west I will gather you.

The prophecy specified the place — Far East — and the time element involved — *ends of the earth*. Before unravelling the fulfillment of the prophecy, we must first ascertain the time element involved. The *end of the earth* is of course the *end of the world* or the *second coming* of our Lord Jesus:

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?' (Mt. 24:3, NKJV)

If the *end of the earth* is also the *end of the world* or the *second coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, when, then, is the time of the *ends of the earth*? It is well to remember that the disciples were asking for the sign of Christ's second advent. What was the answer of the Lord Jesus?

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against

kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilence, and earthquakes in various places.

All these are the beginning of sorrows...

So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the very doors. (Mt. 24:6-8,33, *Ibid.*)

Wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes precede the end of the earth or the second coming of Christ. In fact, these happenings signify that Christ's second advent is at the *very doors*.

According to Apostle John who wrote the book of Revelation, he saw a scroll or a book, sealed with seven seals:

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. (Rev. 5:1, *Ibid.*)

By way of an explanation, the Bible clarifies this book, thus:

The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed,... (Is. 29:11, *Ibid.*)

The important events of the Christian era were revealed to Apostle John by means of a vision (Rev. 1:1) and this vision of the Christian era was likened to a book with seven seals. Thus, the whole Christian dispensation is divided into seven seals or periods of time. The end of the sixth seal (one end) is the door to the seventh seal (another end) and of course the end of the seventh seal ends the whole Christian era. From the end of the sixth seal up to the end of the seventh is what the Bible refers to as *ends of the earth*.

In order to determine the beginning of the *ends of the earth*, we must ascertain what happened at the end of the sixth seal. The Apostle John says, thus:

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold...

And the kings of the earth, the earth men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of mountains. (Rev. 6:12, 15, *Ibid.*)

The reason for the hiding of all kinds of people in the caves at the end of the sixth seal is that they wanted to hide themselves from the wrath of God. (Rev. 6:17) What is this "wrath" of God that caused all kinds of people at the end of the sixth seal to hide themselves in caves? Is this Judgment Day as others aver? Certainly not, for no one can hide himself from the wrath of God on the Day of Judgment (II Pt. 3:7, 10). The "wrath" of God alluded to is the slaughter of armies of all nations:

Come near, you nations, to hear, And heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come from it.

For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations, And His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them. He has given them over to the slaughter. (Is. 34:1-2, *Ibid.*)

We know that the slaughter of armies of all nations is what historians call "world war." The First World War which started on July 27, 1914 is the beginning of the *ends of the earth*. Why not the Second World War

when it was also a global conflict of the armies of all nations? Because the beginning of the sixth seal is heralded by earthquakes. Prior to the global conflict of 1914 there occurred *the great earthquake* of Lisbon in 1755. How about the sun's darkening, the moon becoming like blood, and the stars falling from heaven? All of these events happened prior to the First World War of 1914. (*His Glorious Appearing, An Exposition of Matthew Twenty-Four*, pp. 56, 58, 61-62, 63-65)

Now let us gather the clues to ascertain he whom God has called or sent.

Place: Far East

Time: *Ends of the earth* or 1914.

To belittle God's messenger is to reject the salvation of man's soul.

Function: To execute God's counsel, that is, to bring God's righteousness and salvation to those who are stubborn-hearted and far from righteousness (Is. 46:12-13). The Gospel is God's righteousness and power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16-17). The man called by God to execute His counsel is a minister of the Gospel.

It is a fact that the Philippines is a country in the Far East (*Asia and the Philippines; World History by Boak, Slosson & Anderson*).

Concerning the time of emergence, way back in 1914 July 27, 1914, to be exact, Brother Felix Manalo, a minister of the Gospel, registered the *Iglesia ni Cristo* with the government of the Philippines. He was sent by God at the precise time when all people were far from righteousness.

These are the reasons why we believe that God has sent Brother Felix Manalo as God's messenger in these last days.

Does it mean, however, that because he was sent to bring God's righteousness and salvation he does become a saviour? Absolutely not! Christ is the appointed Saviour. (Luke 2:11; Mt. 1:21)

How are men to be saved through the function of the one sent by God although he is not the Saviour?

I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you,

to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me. (Acts 26:17-18., *Ibid.*)

The one sent by God, like Apostle Paul, will open the eyes of the people to whom God sent him. Thus, they are delivered from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Brother Manalo performed his God-given task of preaching the Gospel — God's righteousness and power unto salvation. To belittle, therefore, God's messenger is to belittle or to reject the salvation of man's soul!

Those who value salvation will readily accept the importance or value of God's messenger in these last days.

People must, therefore, seek the law of God from God's messengers (Mal. 2:7); to them were entrusted the ministry and the words of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18-20).

What is the evil consequence of rejecting those sent by God?

He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me. (Lk. 10:16, *Ibid.*)

The verdict is very clear: "...he who rejects you (those who were sent) rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him (God) who sent Me." To reject the one sent is to reject God who alone has the prerogative and authority to send His messenger. Thus, to accept the one sent is tantamount to accepting God. There is no other way!

How grave is the sin of those who reject God's messenger? It is worse than the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah:

And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city! (Mt. 10:14-15, *Ibid.*)

The sins of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will not be forgiven on Judgment Day. As a matter of fact, they were punished by God here on earth and will still be punished come Judgment Day. Yet, according to Christ, the sins of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will be more tolerable than the sins of those people who reject those whom God has sent through Christ. Thus, Christ enjoins the people about His timely message: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (Jn. 6:29, *Ibid.*)

How about the lowly stature of the messenger who is a Filipino (as if being born a Filipino relegates an individual to the lowest stratum of society)? What is to be believed in God's messenger is not his person, but his commission as the one sent by God. (Mt. 10:42)

This year, 1986, marks the 100th birth anniversary of Brother Felix Manalo. We are happy and very grateful to have been called by God and numbered among God's chosen ones in these last days through the preaching function which Brother Manalo fulfilled up to his last days of life. He remained true and faithful to the ministerial task given him by God. We hope and pray that others would also be called by God to the Church of Christ through the preaching of God's words by the present Executive Minister, Brother Eraño G. Manalo. As a minister according to the stewardship from God, (Col. 1:25) the Church of Christ, *Iglesia ni Cristo* in Pilipino, has triumphed here and abroad and is continuously winning thousands of people into the true fold. Praise be to God!

The Legacy Of A Great Builder

Antonio E. Bocobo, Jr.

WAY BACK IN 1918 as the *Iglesia ni Cristo* was establishing its footholds in Manila and environs, Brother Felix Y. Manalo saw the need for the building of structures which would serve as houses of worship for the growing number of adherents. For this reason, the pioneering members of the Church in Tondo, Manila fashioned out the first house of worship from humble *sawali* and bamboo materials. The structure was constructed along Gabriela street in that most populous district of Manila.

Earlier, the Church conducted its worship services in the homes of some of its members. In Punta, Sta. Ana where the first congregation was formed, services were rendered to God in the residence of Apolinario and Engracia Ramos. But as the locale's membership grew, the need for a bigger place of worship became even more apparent. Thus, when the first holy supper of the Church was held, the brethren of Punta had to hold it in the house of Brother Atanacio Morte.

Solution To A Pressing Problem

As the evangelization work of Brother Manalo continued to expand, the problem of space in places of worship became serious. The residences of brethren proved to be inadequate. Even the locales in the provinces experienced the same problem. To remedy the situation, Church members followed the Tondo example by constructing makeshift houses of worship from light materials like *cogon*, bamboo and nipa. Some of the locales which built their chapels in this manner were Tiaong, Bulacan; Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija; Sapang Tagalog, Tarlac; and General Trias, Cavite.

Evidently, this type of houses of worship did not last long. They served as temporary quarters only to the throng of faithfuls committed to the glorification of the Lord. In the 1930s, as the Church continued to progress, a bigger and more comfortable kind of house of worship became a pressing necessity. Consequently, Brother

*Punta, Sta. Ana, Metro Manila
house of worship*



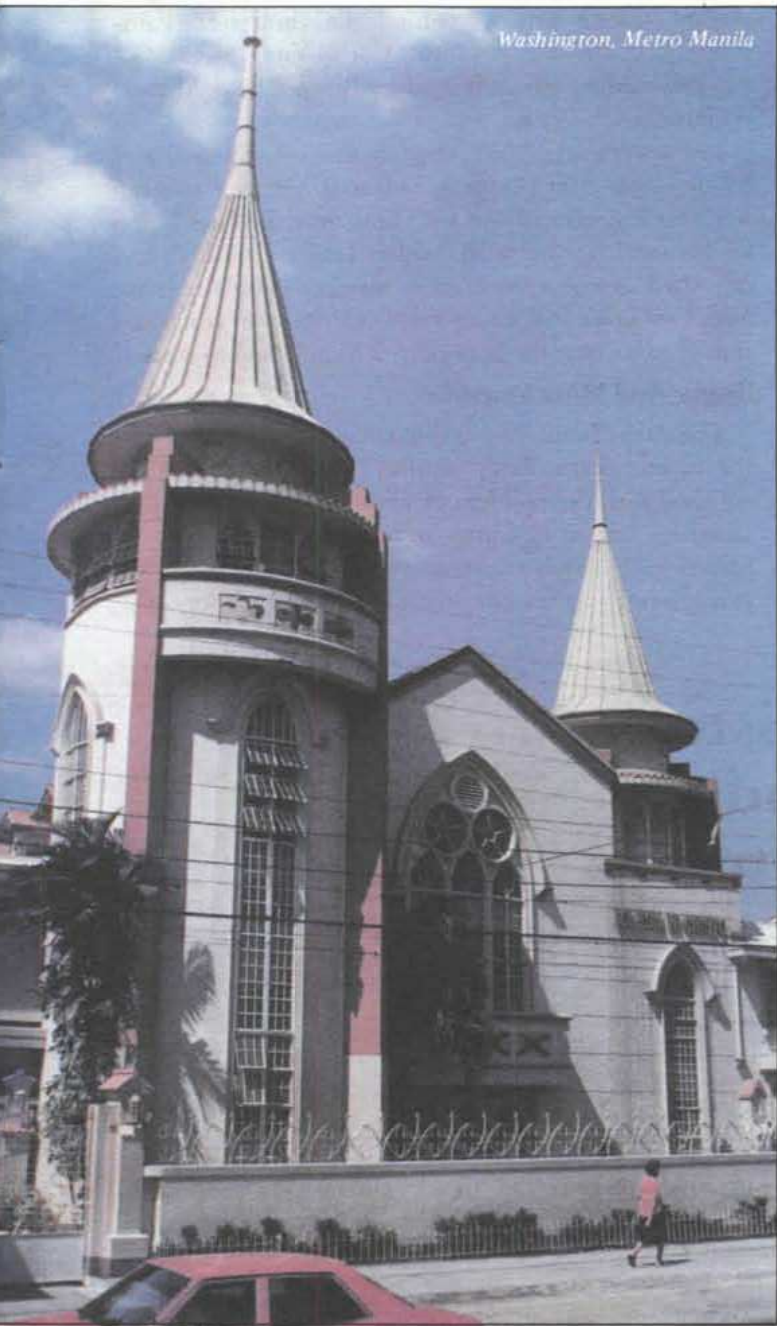


Manalo decided on the building of medium-sized chapels from sturdier materials such as wood and galvanized iron. Some of the locales whose chapels were built in the same era and have survived for more than five decades now were those of Bambang, Luisiana, Sta. Maria and Sinaloa in the division of Laguna.

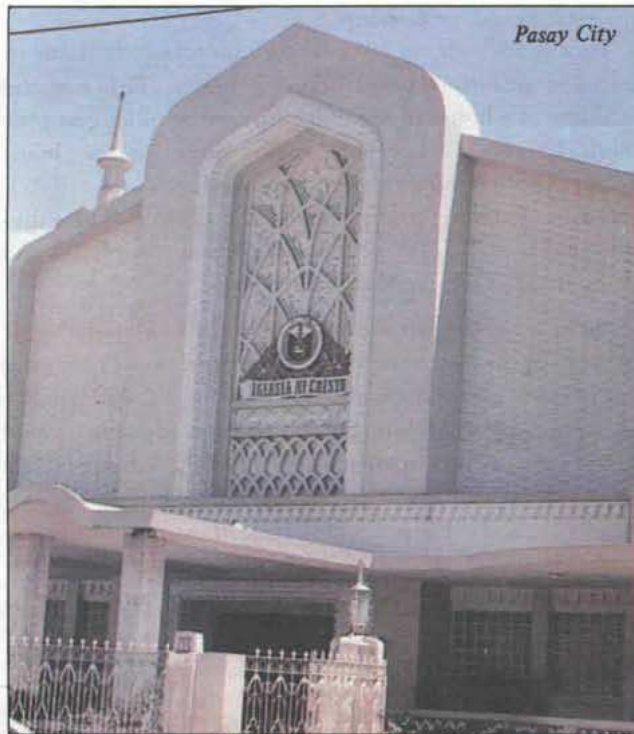
From the wood-and-galvanized iron structures evolved the semi-concrete houses of worship which are commonly used before the outbreak of the Second World War. The Punta, Sta. Ana chapel is a classic example of this type of structure. Dedicated to God in 1937 and renovated in 1977, this house of worship continually serves the brethren in Punta.

*“And the Temple which
I built will be great, for our
God is greater than all gods.”
— II Chronicles 2:5, NKJV*





Washington, Metro Manila



Pasay City



Syquia, Sta. Ana, Metro Manila

Concrete And Permanent

The next type of house of worship which the Church built during the administration of Brother Manalo was that which rose from the ruins of the Second World War. In 1948, as the country was sifting through the wreckage of the war, Brother Manalo decided that it was time to build concrete and permanent edifices for worship services. As an initial step, the Church employed the services of Architect Rufino Antonio Sr. to draw the design for the first concrete house of worship, which was built along Washington (now A. Maceda) Street in Sampaloc, Manila. The completion of the 800-seat castle-like building paved the way for the construction of more new,

majestic houses of worship.

Four years later, in 1952, the Church launched one of its most ambitious construction projects. This was the building of a house of worship cum central office complex along Riverside (now F. Manalo) Street in San Juan, Rizal. Architects Juan Nakpil and Carlos Viola collaborated in designing and planning the project. The fully-air-conditioned 1,200-seat structure was completed and dedicated to God on March 17, 1952.

Simultaneous with the building of the F. Manalo house of worship in San Juan was the construction of another major edifice in Caloocan City. Built on a 2,000-square-meter lot along Mabini Street, the spread-eagle-shaped house of worship can seat some 1,000 worshippers at a time. The building was dedicated to God in July 1952.

1953 saw the birth of one of the most beautifully-designed house of worship of the Church. Located along E. Rodriguez Avenue, the Cubao *kapilya* is famous for its

elegant rosette window behind the choir loft. Painstakingly planned by Architect Carlos Viola, the 1,000-capacity edifice was dedicated by Brother Felix Manalo on January 29, 1954.

Just a week after the Cubao dedication, the 500-seat Syquia, Sta. Ana (formerly Havana) house of worship was also consecrated to God. This time, Brother Eraño G. Manalo, together with Brother Teofilo C. Ramos Sr., officiated at the consecration services. The single-towered structure still serves the 2,000-member congregation residing near the boundary of Manila and Makati.

Bigger And More Magnificent

The other house of worship constructed in 1954 was the cathedral-size Pasay *kapilya*. The structure had to contend with the problem of aeronautical height as provided by law to buildings near airports and other air facilities. Through meticulous planning and thorough execution, Pasay became one of the bigger and more mag-

The Iglesia Ni Cristo Engineering And Construction Department

Arsenia B. Sison

THE VITAL EXECUTOR of the *Iglesia ni Cristo's* house of worship building program is the Engineering and Construction Department. It is housed at the annex building of the Central Office, whose present chairman is Brother Bienvenido G. Manalo, the youngest among the children of Brother Felix Y. Manalo. He is ably assisted by Brother Herman E. Bilang, one of the staff's senior architects. "Ka Bien" and "Ka Manny," as they are simply called, work hand in hand to oversee the widening mission of the department. *Ka Bien* has been supervising the department for six years now. He succeeded the late Brother Dominador G. Manalo, his eldest brother, who was the first administrator of the Church infrastructure program. "Ka Dorling" (Dominador) started serving in this capacity in 1955 and continued administer-

ing the department for 24 years.

The Engineering-Construction Department (INCECD) was formally organized by Brother Eraño G. Manalo in 1971. It grew and developed into a systematized and centralized body with more than 2,000 personnel in different parts of the country today. Its manpower includes architects, engineers, surveyors, draftsmen, skilled carpenters, masons, painters and non-skilled laborers. The INCECD formerly availed of the services of architect Carlos Viola and Juan Nakpil. Lately, however, the department decided to go on its own planning and designing new houses of worship. This function is now undertaken by a pool of experienced architects and engineers.

With *Ka Bien* and *Ka Manny* at the helm, the department's senior



*Brother Bienvenido G. Manalo,
INCECD chairman*

architects and engineers also include Brothers Edelfredo A. Enriquez, Herminigildo Lopez, Daniel O. Ocampo, Manolo P. Almazar, Luisito B. Sison, Gregorio R. Silva, and an ordained minister, Samson B. Besa. Their combined and concerted efforts in conceptualizing any construction project have resulted in the execution of new but more utilitarian design. Once a blueprint is approved, the untiring hands of thousands of both highly skilled and unskilled workers begin the execu-

nificent edifices of the Church. Though lacking in the height and grandeur of the other houses of worship, its interior design is in itself awe-inspiring. It has a main nave, a balcony and two wings on each side of the main nave. Overall, it has a capacity of more than 2,000 people.

One feature which characterized houses of worship in this era was the existence of covered porch or terrace at the front or the external wings of the worship building. This curious architectural feature can be found in the Cubao, Pasay, Syquia and Caloocan houses of worship. It is also prominently present in the 1955-built Solis, Tondo house of worship. The design of the 900-seat structure was drawn by Architect Raul Villanueva. The construction was supervised by the late Brother Dominador Manalo.

Brother Dorling's (as Brother Dominador was more affectionately known) involvement in the building of the Solis *kapilya* marked the beginning of his more than two

decades of service as the first chief of the Church's Engineering and Construction Group. After this initial project, all construction efforts of the Church were entrusted to him by Brother Felix Manalo.

Dotting The Country's Skyline

After building the first seven concrete houses of worship of the Church in Manila and its suburbs, Brother Felix Manalo decided that 1956 would be the right moment to start dotting the country's skyline with the now-distinct neo-gothic design of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* chapels. In the early months of that year, the Construction group headed by Brother Dorling laid the foundations of the first concrete provincial house of worship in Baguio City. Built on a hillside overlooking Magsaysay Avenue in that famous mountain resort, the Baguio chapel provides an ideal setting for worship services. The 1,700-seat edifice was consecrated to God on December 6, 1956.

tion of the real concrete edifice.

Though the department's main concern is the construction of houses of worship, it also provides other services for the Church such as repair, maintenance, and installation of electrical wirings. They are also concerned with the building of Church-operated schools, like the New Era College, houses, offices, dormitories, clinics, and even recreation facilities such as the bowling center.

The magnitude of the department's work is awesome. The department built an average of 30-32 houses of worship per year in this decade alone. In 1985, 39 concrete houses of worship were completed, the largest of which was constructed in Murphy, Metro Manila. Earlier, from 1969 to 1980, an average of 20 to 23 houses of worship was erected annually. Considering this rate, it is not surprising to know that the Church was able to construct 500 houses of worship in a span of 21 years from 1964 to 1984. Built during this era are three of the Church's biggest worship buildings namely, the Central Temple in Diliman, Quezon City (1984: 7,000 seats); Tondo, Manila (1967: 5,000 seats) and Cebu City (1968: 2,500).

Of these, the most-challenging project ever confronted by the work force is the Central Temple in which the whole construction team plus a support group of 1,300 workers concentrated their efforts to come up with this most elegant and magnificent structure. Its grandeur and brilliance (especially at nighttime) have become the subject of awe and envy to many.

Recently, another significant development has taken place in the department. Now that the Church has gone beyond the oceans, reaching some five continents, the Engineering Department has acquired a new dimension. It now also supervises the building of worship edifices in foreign Church congregations. The building of houses of worship abroad poses a big challenge to the department. Formerly, the Church used to purchase buildings from Protestant sects then renovate them to fit the typical *kapilya* design. Reconstruction work would be done in consultation with the Engineering Department, with actual construction details attended by the locale.

The past few years saw the construction of Filipino-designed chapels beyond the Pacific as evi-

denced by the recently-dedicated houses of worship in National City and San Gabriel Valley, both in California. Brother Bien Manalo, assisted by Brother Daniel Ocampo, another senior architect, supervised the construction of these projects — from the planning stage, designing, up to the actual execution of the design. As of this time, however, workers are still locally hired. The department is considering the possibility of sending its own men abroad, knowing they are more capable and fully-equipped for the task. This year, INCECD is overseeing the construction of chapels in Virginia Beach (Eastern Seaboard) and Waipahu, Hawaii.

The department is not alone in the construction and maintenance of houses of worship and other buildings of the Church. It cooperates with other departments such as Finance, for allocation of funds; the Legal Department for the veracity of documents, especially the land titles; and the Foreign Department, for overseas construction work requirements.

The Department considers 1986 as one of its busiest years. Before this year ends, about 45 concrete chapels are planned for completion.

The following year, three major houses of worship with a total capacity of 3,550 were completed. These were the houses of worship of Paco, Manila; Angeles City, Pampanga; and Tipas, Taguig, Rizal. The Paco edifice can seat 1,500 worshippers. It is situated along San Marcelino Street in the busy southern Manila district. The Angeles City house of worship on the other hand, was the first concrete edifice of the Church in Central Luzon. It has a seating capacity of 1,300. The Tipas, Taguig chapel sits 800 people at a time. It is historically significant for Tipas was the birthplace of Brother Felix Y. Manalo.

Faster Pace Of Construction

With the proven capability of completing three major houses of worship a year, the construction group exerted more efforts at maximizing its building skills quantitatively and qualitatively. In 1958, several houses of worship, both concrete and semi-concrete, were built. The most notable of these were the chapels in San Jose, Min-

doro Occidental and Arayat, Pampanga. Before the decade ended in 1959, three more concrete places of worship were completed. These include the houses of worship in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija; Bacoor, Cavite; and Orani, Bataan.

During that time, the Cabanatuan City central chapel was the biggest and the most impressive, with a seating capacity of 2,500. Today, it remains as the biggest in Central Luzon and the fourth largest nationwide in terms of seating capacity.

Another four major Church buildings were constructed in 1960. These were the houses of worship in Batangas City; Tarlac, Tarlac; Malabon, Rizal; and Lucena City, Quezon. Tarlac and Lucena City both can seat 1,700 people each, Batangas City has a capacity of 1,500 while Malabon has 1,000. In 1961, the major project was the Daet, Camarines Norte house of worship in the northern part of Bicol Peninsula.



The first major edifice of the New Era College at its permanent site in Culiat, Quezon City will be inaugurated on May 10, 1986.

Thirty-three of these will rise in Luzon, six in the Visayas, and six in Mindanao. Thousands of laborers are recruited and deployed to the construction sites to accomplish their missions for this year.

Significantly, this year (the centennial year of Brother Felix Y. Manalo) is marked by the initial phase of another big project of the department. The first major building of the sprawling New Era university complex will be inaugurated in May 1986. Its architect-designer,

Brother Luisito Sison, sees the full completion of the university in 15 years. The NEC complex spreads over a land area of 16 hectares along Redeemer and Joseph Streets in Barangay Culiat, Diliman, Quezon City. As envisioned, the NEC would be one of the largest and most modern educational centers in the country. As of now, the first building of the NEC, the dormitories, the 500-meter oval and grandstand, are undergoing full development on the allotted area of three hectares.

The Church's development program never stops. Its job calendar is already filled up for the years to come. Shortage and unavailability of construction materials may stand in the way, but the Church is optimistic about finishing all of its projects in a year. The workers themselves are motivated by the need for a spiritual refuge where the brethren could communicate with God in peace and comfort. As builders they are fully aware that whatever they do, no matter how minor it would be, is of great importance and vital contribution to the making of houses of worship.

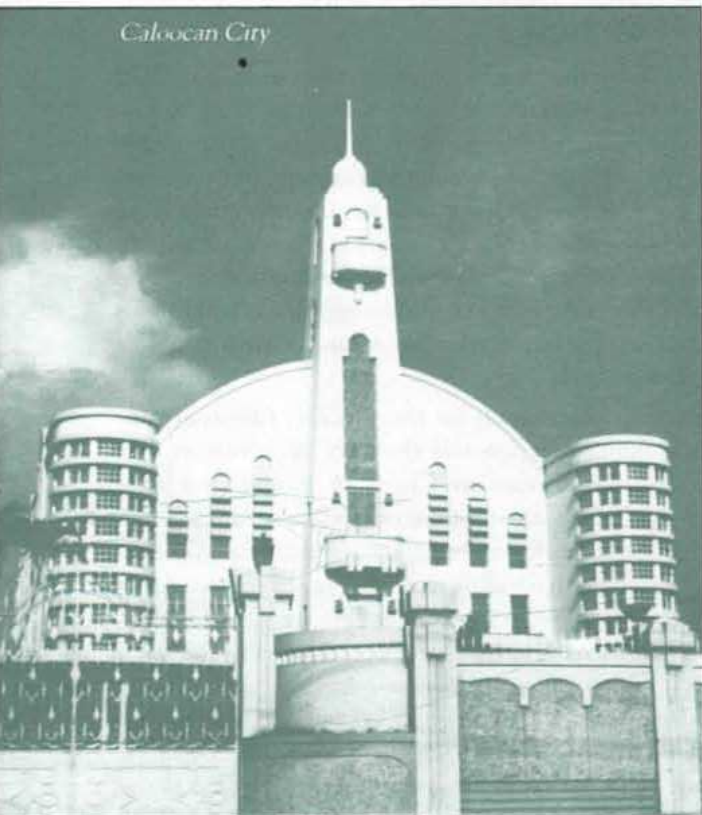
Each member of the whole construction team — from the architect to the engineer down to the average skilled and unskilled worker — is so enthusiastic in exercising his duties to the optimum, with finesse, with a sense of dignity, with a common purpose — to build for God's glory.

As of this writing, there is still one thing which the department has yet to overcome and is confident to surmount, with God's help, and that is, to maximize its working capacity to meet the ever-increasing demand of the growing congregations all over the world. **P**

Cabanatuan City



Caloocan City



San Francisco, Quezon City



San Fernando, Pampanga



Bago Bantay, Quezon City



Peak Of FYM Era

The construction history of the Church during the FYM era reached its peak in 1962. That year, Cabanatuan City's three-year hold on the seating-capacity title was broken with the building of the San Francisco del Monte house of worship in Quezon City. Completed and dedicated to the Almighty in May 1962, the 3,200-seat Frisco chapel became a favorite venue for the holding of important events like ordinations and anniversary celebrations of the Church.

The 1,600-seat Cavite City place of worship was also finished in 1962, and so was the Concepcion, Tarlac chapel which can fill some 1,300 people.

Before the demise of Brother Felix Y. Manalo on April 12, 1963, the foundations of three big houses of worship were laid already by the Church Construction arm. The San Pablo City house of worship in Laguna situated at the edge of the scenic Sampaloc Lake was finally completed in November 1963. The slightly bigger San Fernando, Pampanga edifice was dedicated the following month. The recently repainted structure which was nicknamed *Templo* Central Luzon seats 2,300 while its San Pablo City counterpart can hold 2,200 worshippers.

Closing the FYM construction era was the completion of the very popular Bago Bantay house of worship in 1964. Located along the busy Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (then called Highway 54), this edifice represents one of the last efforts of Brother Manalo.

A Builder's Legacy

One cannot help but be astonished by the magnitude of Brother Felix Manalo's infrastructural legacy. Many observers are amazed by the Church's capacity to build. With the majority of its members coming from the nation's poor, they wonder at how the Church could have afforded the construction of houses of worship which are themselves statements of grandeur and affluence. The truth is that construction of these magnificent buildings is financed purely out of the voluntary contributions of Church members.

The only valid reason for the success of Brother Manalo's building program was the very same reason that catapulted the *Iglesia ni Cristo* to prominence as a Christian Church: the promise of God's assistance.

Since the overall emphasis and objective of Brother Felix Y. Manalo in building landmark houses of worship is the glorification of God and the realization of His Divine will, it is only natural that God would give His blessings to this important area of His messenger's mission.

God commanded His people to build houses where they can worship Him. Like the wise King Solomon, Brother Felix Manalo built great houses, for God is the greatest of all.

P

What They Say About Brother Felix Y. Manalo

Compiled by Emmanuel R. Diaz
and Pedrito B. Placio



A portion of the column item of Sol H. Gwekoh which was published in The Manila Times on May 9, 1966.

BROTHER FELIX Y. MANALO has achieved for the cause of religion what no other Filipino has done or ever will be able to do. Starting with himself as sole member in the early part of 1914, the Church he preached has reached a membership of millions not only here among Filipinos but also abroad among other races. From makeshift nipa shacks for chapels, the Church now has ornate houses of worship for the brethren wherever they are found in numbers.

The phenomenal growth of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* in the 72 years since her reappearance in the Philippines cannot but bring attention to the man who brought this about. Many things have been written and said about him, some derogatory, others antagonistic, a few scoffing, but most show grudging admiration and reluctant respect and praises.

It is exactly one hundred years ago that Brother Felix Manalo was born. The Church he preached has grown to such proportions that the world cannot help but be aware of her forceful existence. He has deservedly earned for himself a place in history. It is in recognition of his achievements that the Church has proclaimed a centennial celebration to commemorate his birth.

What do people, especially nonmembers of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* say about him? About his mission and work? About his leadership? About his personality?

The following quotations were taken from works and writings of prominent authors and writers who have made objective studies about him.

On His Mission And Work

"...Felix Manalo formally started the *Iglesia ni Cristo* (INC) in a makeshift bamboo chapel on the blighted fringes of Manila in Punta, Sta. Ana. Manalo's views on Christianity and his interpretation on the teachings of God were so unorthodox that he and the church were ridiculed and looked upon with scorn by the predominantly Catholic populace. People, even his friends, were skeptical about his ideas on the 'true church'. But gallant as he was, Manalo persevered through all the mockery. Patiently, he trained other men to be ministers and established 'locales' composed of poor workers and their families.

"Slowly the *Iglesia ni Cristo* gained recognition and a following that unbelievably spread far and wide, around the country and all the way to the West..."

—Cynthia S. Jacinto, "*Iglesia ni Cristo, From Ridicule to Reverence*," **MANILA Magazine**, December 1983, p. 31.

"When the *Iglesia* started, in 1914, it was only one man possessed by an apocalyptic vision; and that man turned his vision, within a few months, into a brotherhood with some 80 members. That small flock gathered on the Isla de Punta in Sta. Ana has become the biggest little church in the country today."

—Quijano de Manila, **Ronnie Poe and other Silhouettes**, 1977, p. 97.

"What Felix Manalo and his *Iglesia* have done is demonstrate all over again that Christianity, when practised in earnest, always succeeds, not only in spiritual but even in material terms."

—*Ibid.* p. 105.

Republic of the Philippines
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo
Quezon City



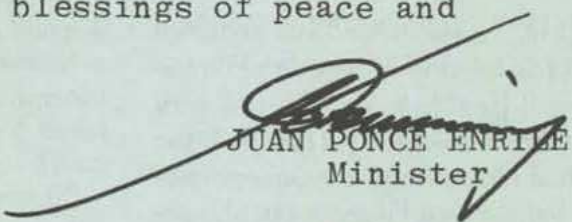
M E S S A G E

The Centennial Year of Bro. Felix Y. Manalo is a special occasion to be cherished by the flock who remembers him for his good and noble leadership.

Only a few men are gifted with the spiritual vision which Bro. Manalo carefully nurtured in his generation. Today, the seeds he planted have sprouted and bore fruit, a solemn testimony to his vision and dedication.

Bro. Manalo is forever alive in the hearts of men whose lives were touched, in one way or another, by his sense of nationalism which was not the fashion in his time, but today serves as an enduring legacy to the Filipino people.

May Divine Providence continue to shower the Filipino people the blessings of peace and prosperity.


JUAN PONCE ENRILE
Minister

"Almost penniless, alone and unknown, Manalo bravely founded a religious movement amidst the stiff opposition of already well-established denominations and at a time when nationalism was taboo even in the spiritual realm. His success however is history in itself, for he was able to create a sect with a distinct Filipino identity.

His ministry of 48 uninterrupted years of spiritual leadership gave Manalo the rare distinction of being the only person in any religious sect in history to have reigned that long..."

— Sol H. Gwekoh, "Hall of Fame", *The Manila Times*, May 9, 1966.

"Ka Felix had a difficult time in his mission of establishing the Iglesia ni Cristo. In the beginning there was none of the adoring, tumultuous flock around him. When he first voiced his teachings, he and his sprinkling of followers worshipped in makeshift bamboo chapels on the blighted fringes of the city of Manila.

"Patiently, he trained other men to be his ministers as

fast as he could establish 'locales' (small congregations of poor workers and their families in the city). The poor workers responded to his teachings. Who but Ka Felix cared for them?

"Today, the Iglesia has some 2,000 ordained ministers and hundreds of regular workers administering to the spiritual and temporal needs of its members. The Iglesia now has strongholds in Asia, the United States, Japan and Europe."

— Deedee M. Siyangco, *Philippine Panorama*, August 29, 1982, p. 28.

"With its more serious and larger following the Iglesia ni Kristo was organized in 1914 by Felix Manalo. It has since become one of the richest and most powerful groups in the country."

— Alfredo Roces, editor, *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation*, 1978, p. 1624.



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
MANILA

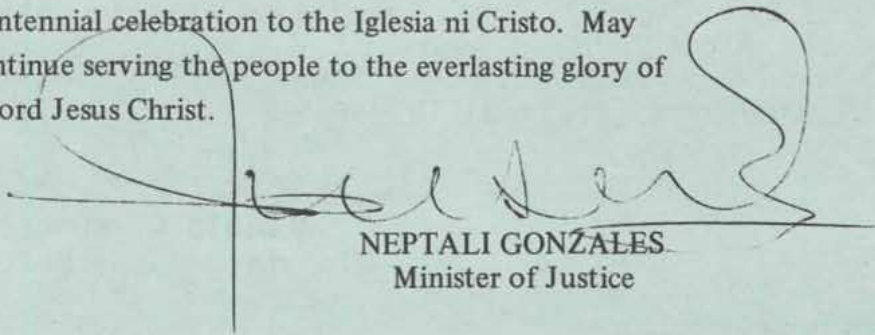


MESSAGE

I am greatly honored and privileged to be able to extend sincere commemorative greetings to the Church of Christ (Iglesia ni Cristo) on the occasion of the first centennial anniversary of the birth of the late Executive Minister Felix Y. Manalo.

To ordinary mortals like us, rarely do we find an opportunity such as this to reminisce on the life of great religious leaders like Brother Felix Manalo. The success of his God-inspired mission, which he began in 1914, is all too evident in the fantastic growth of the Church here and abroad. Its grand chapels which dominate our skylines are unequalled in their magnificence.

Happy centennial celebration to the Iglesia ni Cristo. May the Church continue serving the people to the everlasting glory of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.



NEPTALI GONZALES
Minister of Justice

"By the time of his death, April 12, 1963, Felix Manalo Ysagun had already established a rare distinction: he was the only person in any religious sect in history to have held a spiritual ministry of 48 uninterrupted years. The success of the religious movement that he founded — Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ) — is in itself history, for Manalo was able to propagate his church in the midst of other already well-established denominations and proved that a religious movement with a Filipino identity was possible."

— Mac Fabian, *Felix Manalo (A Great Spiritual Leader)*, 1969, p. 5.

"...the Iglesia ni Cristo has shown a phenomenal growth. Starting from Manalo who, in 1914, constituted a religious hierarchy of one, the church has grown into a nation-wide organization noted for its ornate cathedrals, centrally-located chapels and well-knit ministers. A kind

of organization like it had never before been known in the Philippines. That Manalo made such an organization possible in the country is remarkable: that he was able to make it a great social force is a tribute to his indigenous aspiration and spiritual leadership..."

— *Ibid.* p. 9.

"...in his 48 years of ministership, Manalo shaped the INC into a coherent, well-knit unit of faithful members and officers while at the same time gaining new converts by leaps and bounds."

— *Ibid.* p. 12.

"...The Iglesia is the true and long dead Church of Christ, quickened to life by the Lord's own Messenger — Bishop Felix Manalo."

— Alfredo Roces, editor, *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation*, p. 1728.



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Office of Budget and Management
MALACAÑANG, MANILA

M E S S A G E



If the late, lamented Brother Felix Manalo of the Iglesia ni Cristo were living today, he would be fully 100 years this 10th of May 1986. But even though he is gone his memory is worth remembering and should remind all of us, regardless of personal creed or religious belief, of the incredible sacrifices he endured in the course of preaching a church whose sole basis for existence is the Bible. The rise of this vigorous, relatively young Christian religion on this side of the earth is living proof of the success of his mission.

The present status of the Iglesia ni Cristo highlights, among others, the Church's many socially-oriented achievements. On the first hundred years of his birth, therefore, let us all remember with love and honor this extraordinary Filipino religious and spiritual leader.

ALBERTO G. ROMULO
Minister of the Budget

"...Bishop Felix Manalo, consistently upheld in his sermons, in the Church congregations, in his utterances in public rallies, and in writings, that he is a mere brother and, in keeping with his commission, teaches nothing of his own but merely converts people into the Church of Christ, and once therein these people should follow and obey that which God commands. This he does, for he seeks only the glory of Him that has sent him."

— Zoilo Galang, editor, *Encyclopedia of the Philippines*, Vol. XX, Manila, Philippines, c. 1958, p. 465.

"...Their beloved Brother Felix Y. Manalo was mocked and reviled even as he exhorted the 'kapatid' to abandon their worldly desires and instead seek the kingdom of heaven.

"But the Iglesia has a way of turning grief into strength. Rather than use force, the church, upon Felix Manalo's admonition welded themselves into a cohesive whole:

one mind, one spirit, and best of all, one vote. The ballot rather than the bullet."

— Cielo Buenaventura, *The Kingdom and the Power*, WHO, July 21, 1982, p. 36.

On His Leadership

"History indicates that particular honor and trust is given to one who claims to be a religious leader, especially if he shows an interest in the people and maintains that he possesses knowledge of 'God's truth'.

"Felix Manalo has been providing this kind of leadership since the Iglesia was started in 1914. He possesses eloquence in speech, skill in argument, mastery in organization.

— Albert J. Sanders, *A Protestant View of the Iglesia ni Cristo*, pp. 64-65.

The Belief Of The Iglesia Ni Cristo

*Basic Teachings of the Bible
Upheld by the Iglesia ni Cristo*

Bienvenido C. Santiago



Brother Eraño G. Manalo, the Church continues to grow by leaps and bounds.

Introduction

RISING IN THE FAR EAST IN 1914, spreading to the Far West and rapidly gaining foothold in many parts of the world, the Church of Christ (*Iglesia ni Cristo*) is viewed by nonmembers as shrouded in controversy and clouded in mystery. From one man to millions in just a little more than seven decades of existence, the growth of this Church indeed bewilders the human imagination.

Preached by Brother Felix Y. Manalo who consistently asserted that it was not he but our Lord Jesus Christ who founded this Church, and that he himself was just God's instrument or messenger to bring about its reemergence in these last days, the Church of Christ has risen and continues to rise to unprecedented heights of glory.

Students and critics of the Church of Christ in the Philippines tend to look for purely human explanations to this phenomenon. No doubt, the dynamic leadership of Brother Felix Y. Manalo, God's Last Messenger in these last days, is one of the factors that has contributed much to the rapid growth and expansion of this Church. This can be clearly seen in the fast increasing number of converts and the sprouting of hundreds of magnificent houses of worship, unhampered even by economic crises. The transformation in the lives of the members from their old, worldly and sinful ways to the new and righteous way of life based on Christian teachings as taught in the Bible is a stronger proof of the success of the Church leadership.

When the Last Messenger died in 1963, not a few expected the Church to crumble. They were soon bitterly disappointed, however. Under the stewardship of his son,

Although the quality of the Church leadership is a great factor in its strength, it is not the only proof of the Church's veracity. Millions of INC members have never personally met Brother Felix Manalo. Most of them became members of the Church after listening to its doctrines as preached by thousands of evangelical workers or ministers, believing in these teachings, and being baptized into the Church. It is the teachings upheld by the Church of Christ, therefore, as preached by the Last Messenger and the ministers, that continue to win people into this Church.

What are these doctrines?

The Absolute Oneness Of God

The *Iglesia ni Cristo* believes in the one and only true God, the Father, taught by our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles (John 17:3, 1; I Corinthians 8:6). The Bible teaches that the true God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and being a Spirit He has no flesh and bones (Luke 24:39).

This absolute oneness of God does not consist of three divine persons. The Bible indeed speaks of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit but it states also clearly and categorically which of the three is the true God. The Son Himself emphasized that the Father alone is the true God (John 17:3, 1). The prophets also teach that we have only one Father who created us (Malachi 2:10; Isaiah 64:8). He alone is God (Psalms 86:10; Isaiah 45:21); He is the only true God, there is no other God and no one is like Him (Isaiah 46:9).

God is from everlasting to everlasting, with no begin-

ning or end (Psalms 90:2), immortal (I Timothy 1:17), and does not tire or become weary (Isaiah 40:28).

He alone is the creator of heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things therein, and the seas and all that is in them (Nehemiah 9:6).

The Lord Jesus Christ

The *Iglesia ni Cristo* believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Matthew 3:17), the one and only Savior given by God (Acts 13:23). Christ is the sole mediator between God and men (I Timothy 2:5) and the only way to God (John 14:6).

Christ is not a God-Man. He is man in nature accord-

God has purposely hidden His words in mystery, so that men who strive to understand the Scripture through their own can never come to know the truth.

ing to His own testimony (John 8:40) and the teachings of His Apostles (I Timothy 2:5; Matthew 1:18). This is not a downgrading of the dignity of Christ, as some say of this belief. This is taken directly from the statements of both Christ Himself and His Apostles.

The attributes of a human being were found in Christ. He hungered (Matthew 4:2), thirsted (John 19:28), became weary or tired (John 4:6), slept (Matthew 8:24), and died (Matthew 27:50; I Corinthians 15:3). However, Christ as distinct from all men, is the only one who did not sin (I Peter 2:21-22; Hebrews 4:15).

Christ has been exalted by God and given a name above all other names, that at the name of Christ every knee should bow, those in heaven, and those on earth (Philippians 2:9-11). He has been placed by God far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, and every name that is named, and all things have been put under His feet (Ephesians 1:21-22). Christ will eventually subject all His power and authority to the true God (I Corinthians 15:27-28).

The Holy Spirit

The Church of Christ believes in the Holy Spirit. This is the Power (Acts 1:8) sent by the Father in the name of Christ, to teach and remind His messengers of all the things that Christ said (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit is also sent by Christ to help us in our weaknesses and infirmities (John 15:26; Romans 8:26). He strengthens, edifies and comforts the Church of Christ (Ephesians 3:16-17; John 14:26).

The Holy Scripture

The Church of Christ believes in the Bible as the sole basis of faith and service to God. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to those who believe, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed (Romans 1:16-17). The Holy Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished for all good works (II Timothy 3:15-17).

God has purposely hidden His words in mystery (Romans 16:25), so that men who strive to understand the Scripture through their own worldly knowledge can never come to know the truth (II Timothy 3:7). The Gospel preached by those who are not sent by God is called by the Apostles "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6-7). And the use of the Gospel which deviates from the truth or from its true meaning will ultimately lead to destruction (II Peter 3:15-16).

The Messengers Of God

The Church of Christ believes that the tasks of understanding the Bible, and teaching them without any alteration, without adding or diminishing, are exclusively given to the messengers of God (Mark 4:11-12; Romans 10:15; Deuteronomy 12:32). We believe that Brother Felix Manalo was God's Last Messenger; he was the fulfillment of the Biblical prophecies concerning the messenger from the Far East (Revelation 7:2-3) who would preach to God's sons and daughters in these last days (Isaiah 43:5-6; 46:11; 41:9-11).

God reveals the meaning of His words to His messengers by means of the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20-22), and the testimony that the messengers were taught by the Holy Spirit of God is that their teachings never contradict one another (I Corinthians 2:13).

God's Election

The Church of Christ believes that since ancient times, God has set apart His people to serve Him. Outside this election, man has no right to serve God (Psalms 4:3; Proverbs 1:28).

Those whom God had chosen in the patriarchal times were Seth, Noah, and Abraham. Then He set apart the Israelites. But the Israelites did not remain faithful to the covenant of God (Genesis 17; Daniel 9:11). After the fall of Israel, she was replaced by the Church of Christ (I Peter 2:9, 3-5; Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16; Acts 20:28). Eventually, after the death of the Apostles, this Church which was established by Christ in the first century departed from the true faith. It was apostatized

(Matthew 24:3, 11; Acts 20:29-30; I Timothy 4:1-3).

In these last days, God sent His messenger to administer man's return to the true teachings of the Church. And it is in the Philippines (in the Far East) where God sent an angel or messenger to preach the true and pure Gospel of Christ to the people in order to bring them back to the true Church (Revelation 7:2-3; Isaiah 43:5-7).

The Church Of Christ And Salvation

The Church of Christ believes that it is the only means of man's salvation in the Christian era. All men need salvation, for all men have sinned, hence, all of mankind should die in the lake of fire, the wages of sin (Romans 5:12; 6:23; Revelation 20:14). For man to be saved, he should enter in by Christ, by becoming a member of His Body or Church (John 10:9; I Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:18). Christ will save His Church (Ephesians 5:23).

Christ will not save anyone outside the Church of Christ because it would be against the law of God. His law requires that sinners should pay for their own sin (Deuteronomy 24:16; Revelation 20:14).

On Baptism

The Church of Christ believes in the baptism commanded by Christ (Matthew 28:19). The baptism commanded by Christ and preached by the Apostles is by means of immersion in water (Romans 6:4; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-38).

To qualify for baptism, one should be taught the words of God, believe in them, repent, and renew his life (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). An infant can not do these things therefore infant baptism is not practised in the Church of Christ. Infants or little children should be offered to God for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these (Matthew 19:13-15). Their baptism comes after they shall have qualified for it.

On The Church Administration

The Church of Christ believes that every member is duty-bound to submit himself to the Church Administration because it is God's commandment (Hebrews 13:17). This is so because God entrusted to the Administration the message and the ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18-20). To submit to the Administration is to be bound by the commandments and instructions (Matthew 18:18). To abide by the decisions laid down by the Administration is to abide by the words of Christ (Acts 16:4; Luke 10:16).

The Christian Way Of Life

We believe that all those baptized in Christ should put on Christ (Galatians 3:27). It is Christ who should live in them and no longer they themselves (Galatians 2:20).

Those who are truly in Christ should lead a righteous life based on the moral teachings of the Bible (II Corinthians 5:17; II Timothy 3:15-17).

Members of the Church of Christ are prohibited from eating blood under pain of expulsion (Acts 15:28-29; Leviticus 17:10).

Mixed marriage is strictly prohibited in the Church of Christ because since the very beginning, God has been against marriage between those who are His people and those who are not. In the sight of God, mixed marriage is a great evil and an act of treachery (Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Nehemiah 13:27). It was the major cause of the great deluge that destroyed the ancient world (Genesis 6:1-2, 5, 7).

It is in the Philippines where God sent a messenger to preach the true Gospel of Christ to the people in order to bring them back to the true Church.

Worship Of God

The Church of Christ believes that it is the whole duty of man to worship God and keep His commandments. Worship of God is man's inherent obligation, because He created us, hence, we do not belong to ourselves but to God (Psalms 95:6-7; 100:3).

Worship of God should be in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). God's name should be worshipped — this is worship in Spirit; and His will should be done in heaven by obeying His words — this is worship in truth (Matthew 6:9-10; John 17:17).

The Church of Christ in these last days (like the first-century Church of Christ) observes the worship service which is characterized by psalms and hymn singing, prayers, studying the words of God, revelation, and offerings (I Corinthians 14:26, 15; 16:2).

The Church of Christ performs offerings and contributions as God's commandment that must not be forgotten and with which God is well pleased (Hebrews 13:16). Every member of the Church of Christ should give according to the dictates of the heart; for God loves a cheerful giver (II Corinthians 9:7). The contributions must be prepared beforehand so that they may be voluntary and not compulsory. The faithful set aside and keep a certain sum proportionate to their gain or the blessings that God bestows upon them (I Corinthians 16:1-2; Deuteronomy 16:16-17).

Christ Himself highly regards the gathering together of the Church of Christ in congregational worship services, because every time His Church congregates, He is there

in their midst by means of His Spirit (Matthew 18:20; Galatians 4:6).

Congregational worship service is of extreme value in the Church of Christ; that is why, members are strictly forbidden to forsake it. To willfully forsake it is a grave sin (Hebrews 10:25-27).

The Brotherhood

The Church of Christ believes that members of the true Church of Christ should observe the brotherhood. Christ established a brotherhood inside the Church of Christ (Matthew 23:8). That is why members of the Church address one another as brother and sister.

Church of Christ members should love one another as commanded by Christ and as taught by the Apostles. This

*Those who are called
and will be saved
are gathered in
the Church of Christ.*

shows that they are the true disciples of Christ (John 13:34-35; I Peter 2:17).

It is evil to hate any brother in the Church. Whosoever hates his brother in the faith is considered a murderer and shall not attain everlasting life (I John 3:15).

To maintain the love for the brotherhood in the Church, members who have misunderstandings or disputes are commanded to reconcile (Matthew 5:23-25; Ephesians 4:32).

The Christian Unity

The Church of Christ subscribes to sacred unity. This is absolute unity, for in this unity, God, Christ, and the Church are joined together or united (John 17:23, 21).

The Church of Christ observes this unity in the name of Christ, to the glory of God (I Corinthians 1:10; 10:31), division or schism is strictly forbidden because Christ is not divided. Divisions and strife are earthly, sensual, and devilish (I Corinthians 1:10, 13; James 3:14-15).

The Church of Christ observes unity even in electing public officials (Philippians 2:2-3; I Corinthians 1:10). This is not to interfere with politics, but in obedience to God's commandment. This unity is never betrayed by a true member of the Church of Christ, even if some would be displeased.

The Resurrection Of The Dead

The Church of Christ believes in the resurrection of the dead. Christ would not have been resurrected if there

is no resurrection of the dead (I Corinthians 15:12-13).

There are two kinds of resurrection: those who have done good will rise and live, and those who have done evil will rise and be condemned (John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:14).

The dead members of the Church of Christ will be resurrected at Christ's second coming (I Corinthians 15:23) and those who are alive when He returns shall meet Christ in the air to be with Him in the dwelling that He has prepared for them (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

The Second Coming Of Christ And Judgment Day

The Church of Christ believes in the second coming of Christ. Christ Himself promised that He will return (John 14:1-3). This is also taught by the Apostles (I Thessalonians 4:15-16).

Members of the Church are commanded to be prepared for the second advent of Christ for no one knows the exact day and hour of His coming, except God, the Father (Matthew 24:36, 42, 44).

Christ, however, gave the signs to indicate His second coming and these are wars, famines, earthquakes in different places, as well as increasing hardships and wickedness which shall cause the love for God of many to wax cold (Matthew 24:6-8, 12).

The second coming is the day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men. On this day, the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire and be burned up (II Peter 3:7-10). The sound of the day of the Lord is bitter, the mighty man cries aloud there. Neither silver nor gold shall be able to deliver man on the day of the wrath of the Lord (Zephaniah 1:14, 18).

The Holy City, The New Jerusalem

The Church of Christ believes in the holy city. This is the place being prepared by Christ and promised to His disciples to which He will bring them on His return (John 14:2-3). The Holy City is glorious, having the glory of God (Revelation 21:10-18, 18-19, 21). This is the future home of the members of the Church of Christ who stay faithful up to the end. Life in the Holy City is perfect — no need for sun and moon and no night (Revelation 21:23-25; 22:5), no food and water shortage (Revelation 22:1-2), no more curse (Revelation 22:3), no hunger, thirst, sorrow, pain, death, evil (Revelation 7:15-17; 21:4).

Only those given by the Father to Christ can enter the New Jerusalem (John 17:12). And those given to Christ are called by God into the fellowship with Christ (I Corinthians 1:9) and this call is done by means of the Gospel as preached by God's messengers (II Thessalonians 2:14; II Corinthians 5:19-20). Those who are called are gathered in one body (Colossians 3:15) which is the Church (Colossians 1:18) called the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16; Acts 20:28, Lamsa).

'They Shall Declare My Praise'

Edward M. Maranan



"But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the Lord will hear when I call to Him." (Psalms 4:3, NKJV)

WHEN THE *IGLESIA NI CRISTO* began in the Philippines in 1914, its existence was unknown to the world. In its infant stages, the small gathering held their worship services in makeshift places, in tiny office rooms and in the houses of brethren — making no big stir and going about relatively unnoticed.

The first houses of worship built were humble to say the least — lifting not a brow but were even the object of ridicule and scorn. But from the days of the nipa hut chapel have arisen huge concrete houses of worship that dwarf the surrounding community and stand as landmarks in the many islands of the Philippines. In seventy short years from the first chapel built in Tondo, Manila in 1916, the construction project of the Church is highlighted by the completion of the Central Temple in Diliman, Quezon City, which to the tip of its tallest spire stands some twenty-eight stories high and can seat seven thousand worshippers — all of which leave those who view it in a state of awe and amazement.

And yet, the rapid pace of chapel construction has not

slowed down one bit but continues at a fever pitch. At present, the Church has widened its horizons by including in its agenda, the congregations outside the Philippines. Whereas before, the practice was to purchase existing religious edifices and renovating them to meet the specifications of the Church, now the Church Administration is committed to a program of building houses of worship in foreign congregations from the ground up. The recently constructed house of worship in National City, California, is among the recent accomplishments which include among others the one million dollar chapel complex in Washington, D.C.. The newly dedicated chapel in San Gabriel, California all the more establishes this new era of chapel construction outside the Philippines.

But then again, the outside observer may point out that building houses of worship is not unique to the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. After all, other religious organizations have been doing the same thing and many for an even longer period of time. There are those who may even boast that theirs is bigger and costlier.

However, what makes the houses of worship of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* unique from all the rest? Is it the architectural design with its characteristic spires reaching out to the sky? Is it the building materials or the construction techniques used, or perhaps the interior layout? No, these are not the things that set them apart from all the rest but rather that which gives value to the edifice in the first place, namely, the worship done by the people inside the house of worship. For only if the worship performed inside a religious edifice is acceptable to God would that building and everything else associated with such worship be of any worth before God. And this brings us to the uniqueness of the worship that the *Iglesia ni Cristo* renders to the Lord God Almighty.

The Popular Belief

There is a widespread notion held by many that so long as it is to God that man directs his worship, it does not matter which religion or church he belongs to or even how he serves God. It is believed that these things have no bearing whatsoever in determining the acceptability of man's worship but that all are recognized and accepted by God. But as we shall see in the course of this study, it is crucial that all who render worship to God know the truth about this matter, lest the end of all the time and effort used in performing such services become totally useless.

The important question then that needs to be resolved at this point is this: Is it true that all worship rendered by man to God is acceptable to Him? The one who could best tell us is none other than God Himself and Jesus quoted what He said as recorded in Matthew 15:9:

The worship they offer me is worthless; the doctrines they teach are only human regulations. (Jerusalem Bible)

It must be noted here that it is to God that the people directed their worship. But does the mere fact that worship is offered to God mean that it is automatically acceptable to Him? No! God Himself declared that there is worship that is worthless before Him.

Why is this so? Is it because to worship God in itself is vain?

Worship the Lord with joy; come before him with happy songs! Acknowledge that the Lord is God. He made us, and we belong to him... (Ps. 100:2-3, TEV)

Again, the answer is no, inasmuch as the very purpose of God in creating man is for man to serve and worship Him. This in fact is what gives worth to man as God's creation.

If this be the case, why then is there worship that is vain? When does man's worship become useless before God?

It is because of your sins that he doesn't hear you. It is your sins that separate you from God when you try to worship him. (Is. 59:2, TEV)

It is when God does not accept man's worship to Him that worship becomes useless. For what would be the use of all the time, energy, even money spent in the effort if the one being worshipped simply refuses to accept it? And what is the root cause why there is worship that God refuses to accept? Sin is the culprit which separated man from God and caused the forfeiture of his right to deify his Creator.

How then can people be put right with God from his alienated status? Can this be done through man's own way?

I can assure you that they are deeply devoted to God; but their devotion is not based on true knowledge. They have not known the way in which God puts people right with himself, and instead, they have tried to set up their own way; and so they did not submit themselves to God's way of putting people right. (Rom. 10:2-3, TEV)

Man, through his own means, cannot be put right with God. This can only happen through God's own way and to this, man must submit himself. The sad thing is that although there are those who are deeply devoted to God, they have nonetheless set up their own way of serving God instead of submitting to God's righteousness.

In such a case, how does God consider man's righteousness? Would God give it any value when man remains separated from Him because of iniquities?

But we are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (Is. 64:6, KJV)

As long as man has not been restored in God's good graces, and as long as sin alienates man from God, all of his "righteousness" become as filthy rags before the one he serves. Consequently, no matter how beautiful the edifice, no matter how elaborate the service and no matter how great the sacrifice made in connection to man's worship of God, all these things become worthless if man has not been restored in the rightful position to render the acceptable service to God.

God's Way — The Setting Apart

There is no question that there are many people today who sincerely desire to offer worship that is both pleasing and acceptable to God. However, as Apostle Paul pointed out, devotion by itself does not make worship acceptable, but rather, devoted service that conforms to God's righteousness. Hence, what all who serve God must know is how God restores man to be able to render worship that is acceptable to Him. To this question, the Bible gives the definitive answer in Psalms 4:3.

But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the Lord will hear when I call to Him. (NKJV)

This is God's policy. He is the one who sets apart for Himself the people who will deify Him. And what assurance did He give to those whom He had set apart? The Bible says, "the Lord will hear when I call to Him." What a tremendous difference! From worship that is worthless, from righteousness deemed as dirty rags, now God says He will hear their call. He will accept their worship.

In fact, setting apart or the process of election has been God's practice since patriarchal times. When God made His everlasting covenant with Abraham, He made perfectly clear as to who would have the exclusive privilege to deify Him.

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. (Gen. 17:1, 7, KJV)

Only Abraham and his seed had God as God. They alone enjoyed the right to worship God by virtue of the covenant which conferred to them their election. The seed of Abraham that shared the same privilege were Isaac, Jacob and ancient Israel which came from the loins of Jacob. The Scriptures attest to this in Psalms 105:9-10.

Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant. (*Ibid.*)

What is further biblical proof that Israel of the prophetic dispensation were indeed God's elect?

Do this because you belong to the Lord your God. From all the peoples on earth he chose you to be his own special people.

The Lord did not love you and choose you because you outnumbered other peoples; you were the smallest nation on earth. But the Lord loved you and wanted to keep the promise that he made to your ancestors. (Deut. 7:6-8, TEV)

Of all the nations that existed during that time, it was Israel alone which was recognized by God as His own special people. The Bible says that Israel was chosen by God from all the peoples of the earth. Again, this is the setting apart or the process of election. As God's chosen people, Israel had something that no other nation of that time possessed.

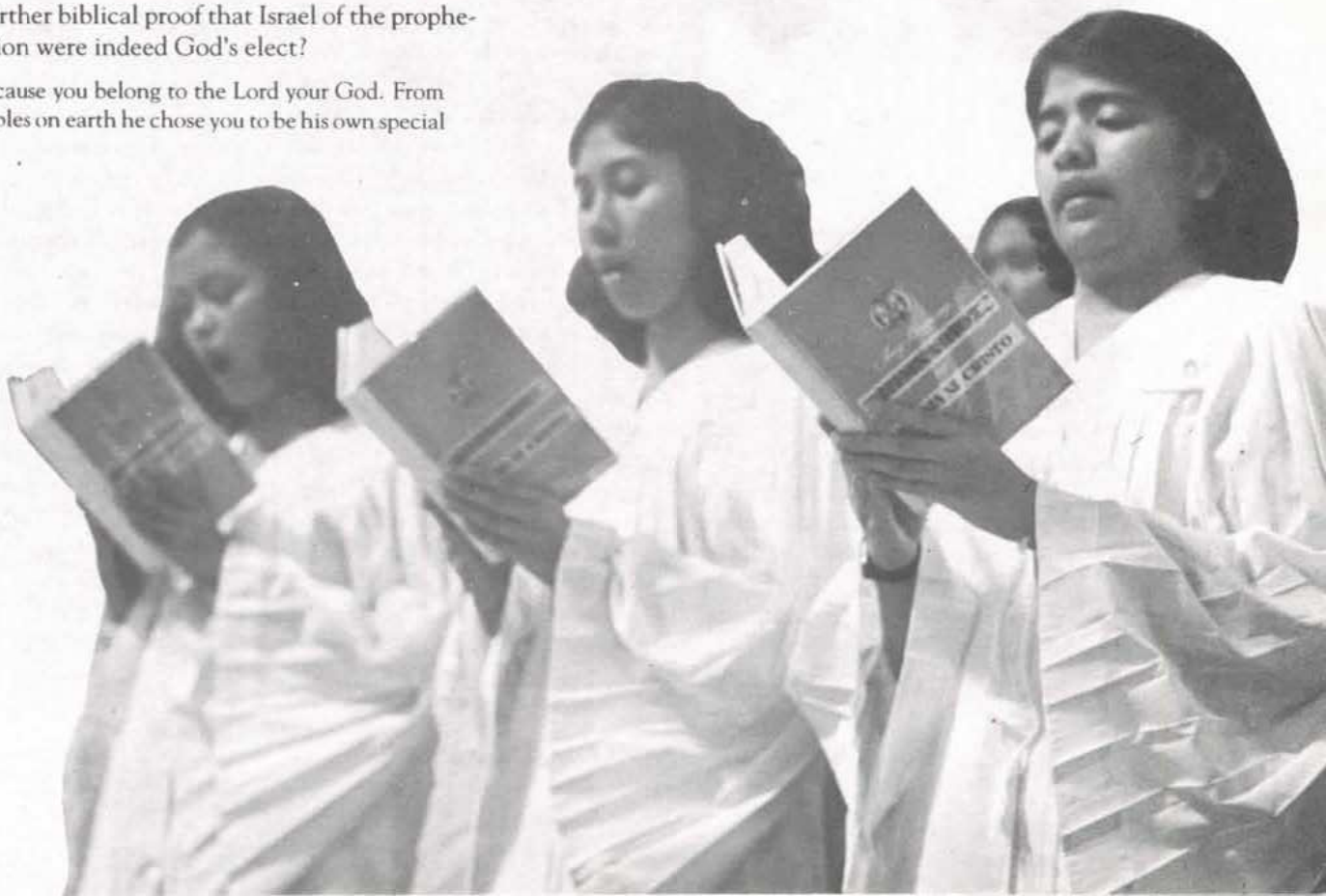
You have made Israel your own people forever, and you, Lord, have become their God. (II Sam. 7:24, *Ibid.*)

In their time, the right to deify God belonged exclusively to Israel. This is a biblical truth that cannot be denied. That this was unique to them is further substantiated by the following scripture:

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth,

***"Worship the Lord with joy; come
before him with happy songs!
Acknowledge that the Lord is God.
He made us, and we
belong to him ..."***

— Psalms 100:2-3



but in Israel. (II Kings 5:15, KJV)

From this passage emerges another truth: outside the scope of God's election, man does not have the right to serve God.

Inasmuch as Israel of old were God's people, bestowed the election to deify God, how does the Bible distinguish their worship of God?

They are God's people; he made them his sons and re-

vealed his glory to them; he made his covenants with them and gave them the Law; they have the true worship; they have received God's promises. (Rom. 9:4, TEV)

The Bible says, "they have the true worship." This is in direct contrast to worship that is worthless and unacceptable. It is also significant that to Israel was given the Law — the commandments and ordinance of God that are to be observed which form the sole basis by which they are to

Ka Pilar And The Church's Choir

Ramon C. Reyes



Sister Pilar Manalo Danao, the overall Choir Directress of the Church.

"COME, LET US PRAISE the Lord! Let us sing for joy to God, who protects us! Let us come before him with thanksgiving and sing joyful songs of praise."

Hymn-singing is a significant part in any congregational services or gatherings of the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. To render hymns of praises to God is one of the primary and fundamental obligations of INC members. The Church choir was established to

take the lead in fulfilling this fundamental obligation of the Church. We, who are members of the choir, have to humbly prepare and make ourselves fit for this spiritual exercise. The nature of the function we perform in the Church requires a special training and discipline different from that of other Church officers. There are essential preliminaries and other requirements that are needed to be undertaken prior to the execution of our duties during worship services.

Truly, we have to undergo hectic practices not only for vocal enhancement but also for a dispensation of appropriate conduct and bearing needed in discharging our responsibilities. The mass practices which require the choirs from neighboring locales to convene in a chosen place (particularly that with a bigger chapel) for a simultaneous teaching of the Gospel hymns. These choir rehearsals are usually administered by Sister Pilar Manalo Danao, overall choir directress, or by her aides to ensure the harmonious and uniform rendition of the songs recorded in the hymnbook called *himmario*. It is a point of fact that before rehearsals are held in the division level, the assigned directress' aides and some senior organists from various regions are met personally by Sister Pilar. She aims at implementing a centralized system of supervising the INC choirs from all over the world to maintain the harmony and consistency of the choirs in rendering the Church sacred songs. Aside from the regular days of practices, there are instances when extra rehearsals are scheduled espe-

cially when new hymns are taught during the mass practice. New hymns will finally be rendered during the services when Ka Pilar and her aides are convinced that choirs in respective locales can sing unto the Lord the new hymns with mastery, finesse and spirit.

Ka Pilar is the eldest daughter of Brother Felix Y. Manalo and Sister Honorata Manalo. She is the living institution that inspires, motivates and teaches the choir members to uphold and fulfill the obligations that God has bestowed upon them. Since the early days of the Church up to present, she remains the moving spirit behind the continued growth and development of every locale choir. She imposes rigid discipline to ensure prompt and dedicated performance by every choir member. Such discipline is uniformly implemented by the Church worldwide. Her inspirational lectures, seminars, and the issuance of circulars for the choir members are made regularly to maintain the order and discipline among the members of the choir. This is a great help to the Church because the members of the choir at their maximum performance are model Church members and are paragons of Christian living in their respective locales.

There are several classifications of choir groups in the Church. They are the INC Men's Choir, the Seniors-first group, Seniors-second group, Junior and Children's Choirs. The INC Men's Choir is the cream of the crop. It is composed of male members of the Senior Choir

worship God. Clearly then, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Israel of old serve as precedents that firmly establish God's way of setting apart the people who will serve Him.

However, Bible history bears record that Israel became unfaithful to the terms and conditions of the covenant, for which cause they were rejected by God as His people (Hosea 4:6; Isaiah 43:27-28). But did the falling away of Israel mean the end of the process of election? Absolutely

not! Even in the Christian era, God's policy of setting apart people for Himself stands, as Apostle Paul forcefully points out in II Timothy 2:19:

But the solid foundation that God has laid cannot be shaken; and on it are written these words: "The Lord knows those who are his" and "Whoever says that he belongs to the Lord must turn away from wrongdoing." (TEV)

There remains people in this dispensation that God re-



selected from the various locales where *Ka Pilar* has direct contact with. The locales which the Choir Directress oversees personally belong to the first group. Many articles had already been written about the outstanding performances and rendition of hymns by the INC Men's Choir. The Men's Choir are called upon during special occasions such as ordinations and the dedication of new houses of worship. They were also utilized during the early years of propagation of the Gospel in time of the Last Messenger of God. The senior and the second group choirs are composed of men and women whose ages range from 18 and above. The Senior Choir has the primary obligation to render hymns in every service or any gathering that requires hymn-singing in its

respective locale.

The Junior Choir on the other hand serves as alternate to the Senior or the second group whenever these choirs are attending to some other obligations. The juniors comprise young boys and girls who are 15 to 17 years old. They also undergo regular practices in preparation for their once a month performance in their respective locales.

Another group of boys and girls aged 8 to 14 compose the Children's Choir. This group leads in the hymn singing during the children's worship services held every Sunday. These young singers of the Church are trained to sing by heart. They follow the same discipline imposed on all the choir members of the Christian world.

All the above mentioned choir groups have a common aspect. A member must undergo rigid training of the voice and must possess a life of a true Christian. Members are solemnly inducted in an oath-taking ceremony after such training has been done with the exception of children below 12 years of age.

We all know that when we open our lips and raise our voices during congregational singing, we are indeed offering praises to our dear Lord. We sing with our hearts and with our souls. This in fact is the message of the first song we have in our *hymnario* as we are deeply inspired to sing it forever and it says "For it is in fervent singing, God is with us, comforting, Our sorrows in our hearts will vanish, Oh, there will be joy and peace." **P**

cognizes uniquely as His. The process of election continues.

In the early part of the Christian era, it was the Church of Christ of the first century that God recognized as His people. Apostle Peter attests to this in his epistle.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Pt. 2:9-10, KJV)

Formerly, those in the Church were not God's people. But after they were called from darkness to light, after having been set apart by God from the world, they became the people of God. And what is the primary reason why they were chosen out of the world? The Scriptures

God's children who will praise and worship Him will come from the far east at the "ends of the earth."

further say that they are to show forth the praises of Him who called them. They were the ones given the privilege to offer the acceptable worship of God.

But like Israel, the first-century Church of Christ also fell in the way of apostasy. After the death of the Apostles of Christ, false prophets arose from among the people and introduced false doctrines leading many disciples astray. Those who resisted the false prophets were persecuted and systematically killed. With the passing of centuries, what emerged is a church that has become completely different from that which Jesus established in the first century. Despite of attempts at reform, the church fell farther and farther away from pristine Christianity and even gave birth to religious offspring in the form of sects and denominations that are also not identifiable with the true Christian Church.

God's Elect In These Last Days

It has been God's established pattern to establish a new people when those whom He had elected to serve Him have fallen away. This has been the case since the slaying of Abel. The Bible teaches that in the time of Seth, men began to call upon the name of the Lord (Gen. 4:25-26). But when the sons of God (the generation of Seth) intermingled with the daughters of men (the generation of Cain), the world became wicked. As a result, God brought destruction upon the ancient world by means of the flood (Gen. 6:1-2, 5-8; 7:1). But before the destruction came, God chose Noah with whom He covenanted and saved, both he and his household (Gen. 6:8, 18-22;

II Pt. 2:5). The succeeding generation of Noah also disobeyed God's will by refusing to disperse and choosing instead to remain in the plain of Shinar and there built the tower of Babel. And so God confounded their language and caused them to scatter over the face of the earth. What followed of course is the setting apart of Abraham and the sacred covenant that God made with him.

The process of election which God used in forming ancient Israel and the Church of Christ of the first century as His chosen people is the same creating force He used to set apart the people who will worship Him in these last days. Long before the time of its fulfillment came, God had already announced His plan as uttered by His prophets:

Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old, Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Is. 43:18-19, NKJV)

God said that He will do a new thing. And when He does, the former things are not to be remembered, neither the things of old.

What is this new thing that God shall do? The Lord made it clear in the following verses:

The beast of the field will honor Me, the jackals and the ostriches, because I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen. This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise. (Is. 43:20-21, *Ibid.*)

God will form a people for Himself — His chosen people. For what reason did God say He would do so? They are the ones who shall declare His praise. There is no question that they have been set apart and given the right by God to deify Him.

Who are these people that God shall elect to praise and worship Him? They are God's children who will come from far, from the east at the "ends of the earth." The prophet Isaiah testifies:

Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back! Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth. (Is. 43:5-6, *Ibid.*)

As to which east they will come from, the translation of the Holy Scriptures by James Moffatt makes it specific:

From the far east will I bring your offspring, and from the far west I will gather you." (Is. 43:5)

God's work of setting apart in the last days will begin in the Far East. In fact, the Bible further identifies the place where God's elect shall emerge in the last days.

See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to

you. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them. Let them give glory to the Lord and proclaim his praise in the islands. (Is. 42:9-10, 12, NIV)

They shall praise God with new songs and glorify Him in the islands of the sea in the Far East.

With regard to the time of emergence, what is the proof that "ends of the earth" is in reference to time, specifically, the last days of the Christian Era? The same prophetic phrase was called by Apostle Paul as "ends of the world" (I Cor. 10:11, KJV) which is the "time when the end is about to come" (I Cor. 10:11, TEV). As early as the first century, Jesus had already made known that when the end of the world is near, there will be "wars and rumors of wars" and that "nation shall rise against nation" (Mt. 24:33, 6-7). Isaiah also made reference to a war that is global in scale, involving armies of nations of the world (Is. 34:1-3). History indeed bears record of the fulfillment of these prophetic revelations, namely, the First World War that broke out in 1914, followed by the Second World War in 1939. The year 1914 therefore is prophetically significant because it marks the beginning of the time "ends of the earth."

Did God's prophetic word indeed find fulfillment? Most definitely! And the fulfillment is the *Iglesia ni Cristo* (Church of Christ) that emerged in the Philippines in 1914. It is a geographical fact that the Philippines is in the Far East and is composed of over 7,100 islands. In this tiny archipelago in 1914, God chose to begin His work of setting apart the people who will worship and glorify His name.

The Process Of Election

As the Bible teaches that election is the way by which people can rightfully worship God, likewise the Bible also teaches the process by which people are established as God's chosen in the Christian Era. Apostle Paul made known the necessary elements as outlined in Ephesians 1:13:

And you also became God's people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised. (TEV)

Man must first hear and then believe the preaching of the true message or the gospel of Christ so as to become God's people. But for the true gospel of salvation to be heard, not just any preacher will do. Man must hear from one who is sent by God or from a messenger of God. Apostle Paul points out the step by step process:

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom

they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!' (Rom. 10:14-15, NKJV)

Only when there is a commissioned messenger of God could there arise God's elect. This is exactly what took place in the Philippines in 1914. God first called His chosen servant from the ends of the earth to whom He entrusted His righteousness.

Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Is. 41:9-10, KJV)

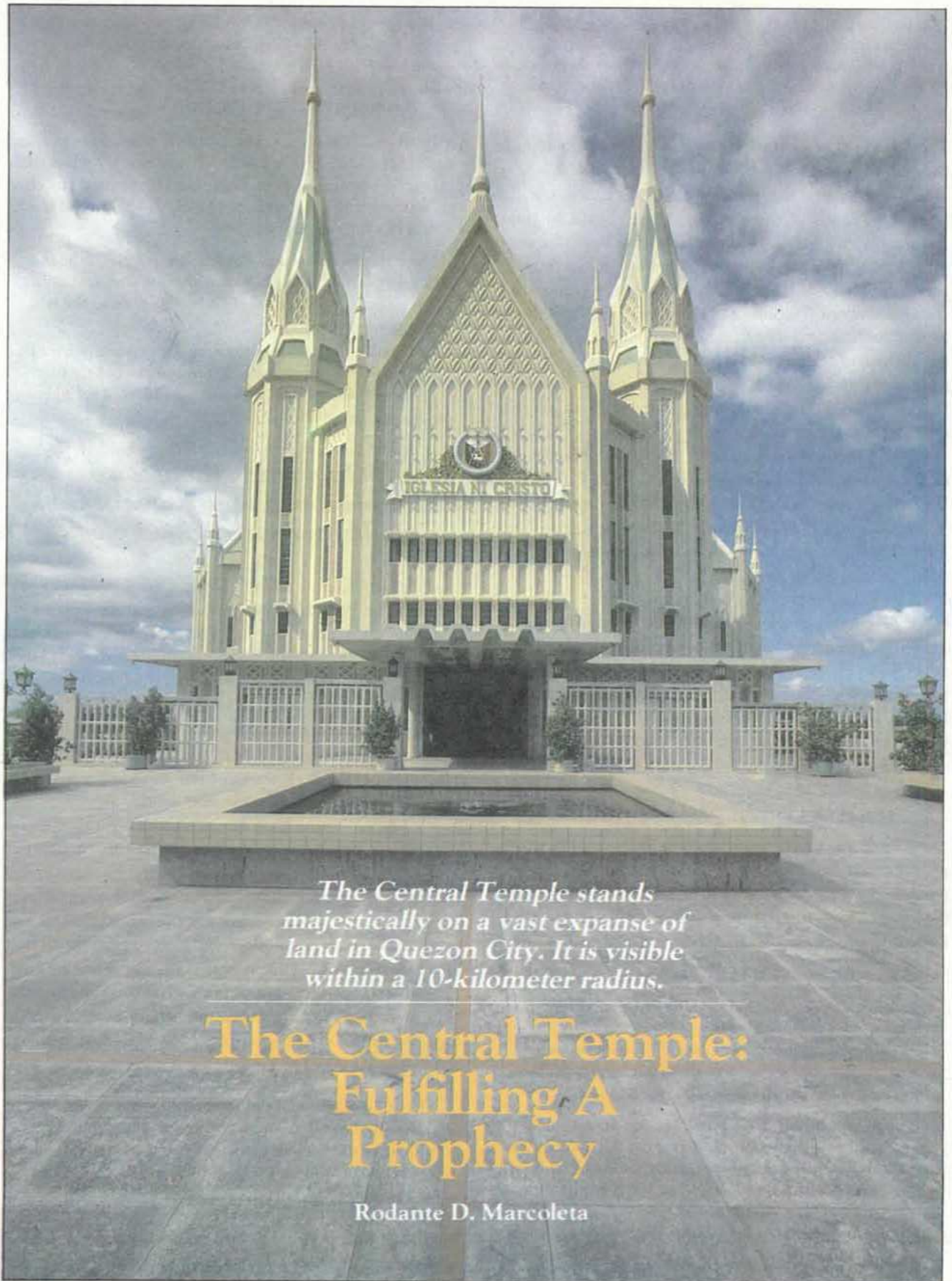
Only when there is a commissioned messenger of God could there arise God's elect.

God's righteousness is the Gospel (Rom. 1:16-17) and through the preaching of the Gospel, arose God's sons and daughters from the Far East. The messenger was Brother Felix Y. Manalo and through his dedicated labor of proclaiming the message of Christ, the *Iglesia ni Cristo* (Church of Christ) emerged in these last days.

The Gospel of salvation is now being preached far and wide by the present ministry of the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. Many people from all walks of life and various nationalities and cultures all over the world are becoming God's people. This is God's work. And it is for this reason that this Church, through the leadership of Brother Eraño G. Manalo, is fully committed in an unprecedented program of chapel construction throughout the world, continuously working for the edification of the brethren in their worship of God, knowing fully well that all of these sacrifices are not in vain, being securely anchored on God's election. Grounded on this solid foundation, the Church Administration echoes more strongly, especially in this the centennial year of God's messenger, the exhortation of the Apostle Paul.

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (II Pt. 1:10-11, NKJV)

Let God's people in these last days declare the praises of Him who had called us into this marvelous grace, now and forever more! **P**



The Central Temple stands majestically on a vast expanse of land in Quezon City. It is visible within a 10-kilometer radius.

The Central Temple: Fulfilling A Prophecy

Rodante D. Marcoleta

SINCE THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* (Church of Christ) on July 27, 1914, its progress has been remarkable in comparison with the accomplishments of other churches and denominations that had been in existence much earlier.

The fast-growing number of its congregations, within and outside the Philippines, is proof of its phenomenal growth. The discipline of its members, their brand of unity, high sense of brotherhood and interaction, and their adherence to the fundamental teachings of the Church have become subjects of serious and continuing socio-religious inquiries.

The most visible of these achievements are the houses of worship that started to grace the skyline of Metro Manila and its environs as well as the remote areas of Visayas and Mindanao since the advent of the 1950s. Perhaps because of their physical characteristics, not to mention their visual opulence, observers have related the development of the Church with the number and qua-

lity of these houses of worship.

From the humble *kapilyas* that described the Church's modest beginning, these places of worship have significantly improved until today their imposing presence can no longer be ignored.

The newest and most impressive of these religious buildings, the Central Temple, was dedicated in July 1984 as a major feature in the celebration of the Church's 70th anniversary.

The great temple built by King Solomon on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem for his God — for which he employed craftsmen to work on gold, silver, iron, brass and timber in abundance — was completed in seven years according to biblical accounts. The *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, employing a workforce of 1,300, finished the Central Temple in two

*The Iglesia ni Cristo
completed the
Central Temple
in two years.*

The photo below shows the Main Hall and the Choir Loft: a view from the Balcony.

years, utilizing more than 800,000 board feet of lumber, 3,677 tons of steel, 178,300 board feet of first-class mahogany, 126,765 bags of portland cement, 1,095 square meters of stained glass, and 3,527 square meters of glass mosaic tiles.

Largely influenced by the need to dedicate a house of worship that can accommodate an ever-expanding membership, the design of the Central Temple incorporated those perceived needs — from spiritual service to social and civic functions that are consistent with the Church's doctrines. But it has basically maintained the unique thumbmark of architecture it has personified since the 1950s which has evolved today into a progressive and contemporary art form, reflecting the stages of development within the Church.

The Central Temple is in itself a veritable gallery of art that befits an important landmark in a modern

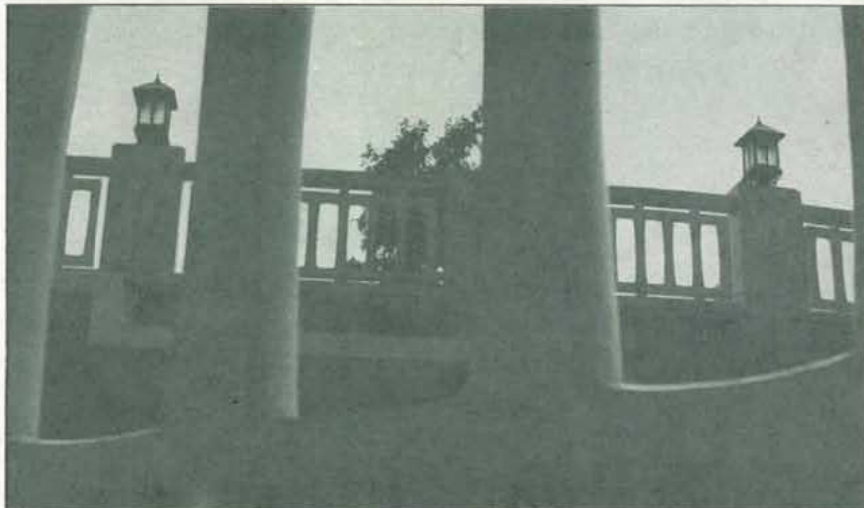




One of the octagonal front towers: keeping guard on the facade.



Structures in the temple's surroundings reveal geometric designs that complement its gothic looks.



mold of Philippine Artville.

Built primarily for God's glory, the Temple consists of five main areas where worship services can be held. The largest of these, the Main Hall (also called "Templo") located in the center of the building, has a total seating capacity of approximately 3,000: Main Nave, 1,652; Balcony, 720; Choir Loft, 200; and Nursery, 104. The coffering of this Main Hall, which is festooned with five crystal chandeliers dangling from the ceiling, catalogues a luxurious blend of craftsmanship. Observed at close range, the horizontal lines provided by the neat rows of upholstered sets and the arabesque of geometric swags punctuate an inspiring chemistry of lines and forms. The center chandelier alone — 5.5 meters in width and 6.5 meters in height — is an awesome pedant luminaire that cannot escape one's shrewd eyesight.

The 200-seater main Choir Loft, equipped with a Hammond electric organ and an electronic hymnal page indicator, is accented by classical rinceau that vignettes the back wall. The area is brightened up by the well-appointed sunburst, sending its golden ebullience against the muted subtlety of its hand-carved ring of stained mahogany. And with added glitter from circular incandescent lamps, dotting the girth of the sunburst against the grayish ceiling, the area is toned with sweeping vitality.

Two side chapels were also constructed and each is separated by folding panels. These side chapels (east and west wings) have a combined seating capacity of 1,931 people plus the added space provided by the observation rooms. These glass-enclosed observation rooms are fully air-conditioned and equipped with translator equipment intended for foreign members and visitors who are not at ease with the local language, and dignitaries as well who are invited during special occasions. Reflecting the various

sections of the Main Hall, the observation rooms are elaborately be-decked with fret patterns of polished mahogany that suggest an atmosphere of ethical seriousness. Ornate wood carvings stamp the doors of the wing chapels. Rich in decorative acoustic materials, the impressive effect of running vinettes in the background blend well with the strong lines of row seats in the foreground. The Choir Lofts of the side chapels, which can seat 42 choristers each, are garnished with distinguished blind arcade replete with ogee arches.

The Nursery Room, which can hold over a hundred people during worship services, is a glass-encased, fully-airconditioned area with deep mahogany finish punctuated by ivy motif.

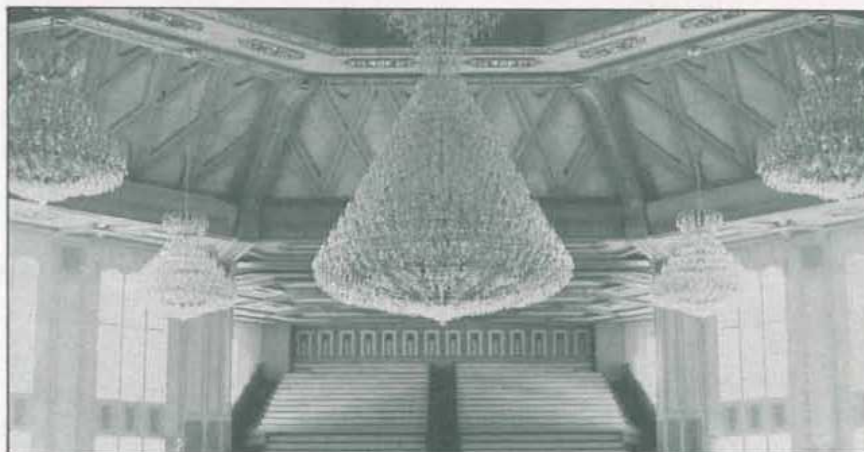
Another worship area, located at the ground floor of the building, is the Sanctuary which can seat a total of a little less than 2,000 faithfuls. It serves as a holding area in the event of an overflow in the Main Hall from which the service will be transmitted through a video circuit installed down this area on such eventualities. A colonnaded area, the Sanctuary teems with a continuous row of proto-doric columns embellished with vertical golden stripes. It has also a built-in Baptistry Pool that can accommodate roughly 600 converts. Another impressive piece of handiwork within the Sanctuary is the chandelier with its resplendent beam that mixes with the beautiful details of its classical floral base fraught with geometric tracery.

The main entrance to the Temple is through the escutcheoned break-front door that leads to the Sanctuary. The marbled vestibule and the slightly elevated floor level are easy focal points for entrants to this propylaeum. To reach the Main Hall, one has to ascend the solid newel stair housed inside the front towers or via the elevators.

The Central Temple's towers, finials and spires are the identifying external marks of the structure. The



The choir loft and the resplendent sunburst.



Above: The balcony and the five center chandeliers. Below: A classical floral base matches the beauty of this sanctuary chandelier.





Various sections of the Main Hall are reflected in the mirrors serving as windows of the observation rooms.



The Nursery Room is a glass-encased area with deep mahogany finish punctuated by an ivy motif.

towers distinctly embody the character of a house of worship similar to period style of architectures where ancient churches were adorned with belfries. The finials and fenestrations were adopted to create Gothic impressions that are regarded as the most fitting religious art.

There are six major towers and 22 spires that crest the rooftop of the Central Temple. The most prominent of these is the middle tower, a ribbed-top structure which finials resemble many praying hands lifted skyward. This middle tower, with a diameter of 10.15 meters, constitutes the tallest point of the building — a height of 285.36

feet from the ground.

A bit lower but larger in diameter, are the east and west wing towers — each measuring 12.01 m. in diameter — that rise from the hexagonal top of the side chapels. The two octagonal front towers stand proudly upright keeping their guard on the majestic facade of the Temple.

The Central Temple covers some 3,670.58 sq. m. of the promontory ground of the Church's 1.6-hectare property and has a total floor area of 11,768.03 sq. m. Like the old temple built by King Solomon which rests on a hill, the Central Temple is virtually visible within a 10-kilometer radius — an eye-catching ar-

chitectural paragon in its own right!

Following land topography, a Gallery Building was built in front of the Central Temple to make full use of the low-lying area of the property. This building houses a Museum and a Gallery. The former preserves the restored personal belongings of Bro. Felix Manalo, God's appointed last messenger. The Gallery, on the other hand, keeps the Church's historical paraphernalia and crafted dioramas that chronologize the stages of development of the *Iglesia ni Cristo*.

Viewed from above, the Central Temple takes the visual form of an eagle with the dominant resembling effect of the side chapels and the area for function rooms that take the shape of its wings and head, respectively. At night, the whole structure is illuminated by an exterior lighting system made up of high-powered sodium lamps that emit a well-distributed amber color.

But the Church does not take pride in having built this grand place of worship. To the officials and to the members of the *Iglesia ni Cristo*, building beautiful houses of worship is a solemn covenant to keep, a spiritual duty. With the sole purpose of glorifying the name of the Almighty God, the Church accepts no honor in such divine effort for it believes that the completion of the Central Temple is a fulfillment of a biblical prophecy recorded in Haggai 2:9, comparing this contemporary edifice with the ancient temple offered by Solomon, thus:

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace... (KJV).

P

About the author

Bro. Marcoleta is listed at the locale of Cupang, Antipolo, Division of Rizal. He has written a related article about the Central Temple in an international magazine published by Thomson Press Hongkong, Ltd. (*Asian Architect & Contractor*, September 1985 issue).

Social Services: Reaching Out For People

Nicanor P. Tiosen

ALTHOUGH PRIMARILY concerned with spiritual welfare, the Church of Christ or *Iglesia ni Cristo* is not at all uncaring or insensitive to the physical, social and other needs of the people. Since its emergence in the Philippines in 1914, through the instrumentality of Bro. Felix Manalo, God's messenger in these last days, the *Iglesia ni Cristo* has reached out for people through the preaching of the Gospel. Since then, the Church has touched many aspects of people's lives through the richness of Biblical precepts.

In fact, the Bible is replete with exhortations as to how God's people should conduct themselves and make their existence on earth worthwhile and truly rewarding. The Bible also teaches how people should relate to one another, thus promoting a harmonious and fruitful co-existence — a co-sharing of God's wonderful blessings. The Church of Christ is well aware of the value of God's commandments regarding human relations, particularly that which concerns the brotherhood.

The members of the Church of Christ firmly believe that to love the brethren in faith is not through words only but through actions. In times of need, the brother who truly loves another because he truly loves God could easily be identified, for Apostle John made this clear, thus:

If a rich person sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against his brother, how can he claim that he loves God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action. (I Jn. 3:17-18, TEV)

The Apostles projected love of the brotherhood not in the beauty of speech, but in its concretization — love manifested in deeds. Thus, the present Administration of the Church of Christ established the Department of Social Services, otherwise known as the *Kagawaran ng Paglilingkod Panlipunan*.

For Humanitarian Purposes

The Social Services Department is the Church of Christ's primary arm for humanitarian undertakings. It aims to help the brethren make themselves worthwhile and productive members of the community to which they belong.

This department serves not only the Church members but non-members as well. Through it, the Church opens its doors to unbelievers since, as Apostle Paul advises in his letter to the Romans:

Share your belongings with your needy fellow Christians, and open your homes to strangers. Ask God to bless those who persecute you — yes, ask him to bless, not to curse. (Rom. 12:13, TEV)

To show the nobleness of the love that members of the Church of Christ should offer their fellowmen, even those who do them wrong, Apostle Paul further states that:

If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody. (Rom. 12:17-18, TEV)

Nevertheless, it does not mean that there is no limit to the kind of relationship that we have with others, much less to the kind of help that we extend to them. The Bible has set the limits of Church assistance to others. Not everyone is entitled to its services. In the second epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, this is stated:

Our brothers, we command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to keep away from all brothers who are living a lazy life and who do not follow the instructions that we gave them... While we were with you, we used to tell you, "Whoever refuses to work is not allowed to eat." We say this because there are some people among you who live lazy lives and who do nothing except meddle in other people's business. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we command these people and warn them to lead orderly lives and work to earn their own living. (II Thess. 3:6, 10-12, TEV)

Social Services: Its Goal

As envisioned by the Church Administration, the Social Services Department aims to promote the development of Church members, particularly the needy and disadvantaged, along social, economic, physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects and enable them to fully realize their worth and human dignity and thus become self-reliant, economically productive and socially-responsible citizens who are able, to contribute to the development of their family and community. The Church Administra-

tion has emphasized specifically the need for the upliftment of the standard of living of the brethren through education and training that the Department of Social Services would regularly conduct in different points of the country, especially in depressed or less-privileged areas.

Its Specific Objectives

To carry out its foregoing goals, the department has the following specific objectives:

1. To encourage, facilitate and create opportunities for self-expression and attainment of proper attitudes and behavior among the brethren for self-fulfillment and social awareness.
2. To engage the brethren in various activities that will promote their social and economic development such as food production, volunteer community service, health and nutrition, population awareness, protection and conservation of natural resources and improvement of the natural environment.
3. To strengthen basic social, moral and cultural values, enhance social functioning, develop human responsibility of the brethren for the betterment of their family and community.

Program Strategies

As the Social Services Department is but a social arm of the Church, it shall always consult the Church Administration in all its undertakings. Only activities which are duly approved and certified by the Church Administration shall be carried out or implemented.

The department also operates respecting strictly the geographical subdivisions of the Church and properly coordinating with the duly constituted officers of the Church such as the Metro Manila coordinators, pastors and officers of the locale, and the division ministers in every division where a program or an activity may be launched. The department also coordinates with the officers of the *Buklod*, *KADIWA*, and *Binhi* as they are the direct clientele and target receivers of its services.

There are times when resources other than that which is generated from the brethren come from the outside. In such instances the department establishes linkages with government authorities and private entities which are willing to extend their help for humanitarian reasons. In its dealings with non-members, the department is guided by this biblical injunction: "Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody."

Its Clientele

The target receivers of the department are the following:

1. The economically needy, such as:
 - a. Brethren with aggregate family income of P450.00 a month or less. Included in this group are the jobless and under-employed family

- heads, and solo parent family
- b. Out-of-school youth
- c. Victims of disasters and social disorganizations
2. The socially inadequate, which include the following:
 - a. Families with problems of relationship
 - b. Children with emotional/behavioral problems
3. Indigent individuals with health problems.
4. The disabled and special groups such as:
 - a. Physically disabled persons
 - b. Elderly
 - c. Negative hansenites

Services Rendered

To carry out the purposes of the Social Services Department, the following services shall be conducted and implemented in depressed and deprived communities in the country:

1. Livelihood assistance
 - a. Job or vocational training programs
 - b. Job referrals/coordination
 - c. Food production campaigns
 - d. Calamity relief aids
2. Health and Nutrition
 - a. *Lingap sa Mamamayan* (a joint medical-dental mission extended not only to brethren but to non-members as well)
 - b. Safety Education Training
 - c. Environmental sanitation/beautification
 - d. Basic health care/home health care
 - e. Referrals through the *Maligaya* Health and Family Planning Center, FYM Puericulture, Maternity and Family Planning Center, and private clinics of brethren.
3. Social assistance
 - a. Guidance and counselling for youth and married couples
 - b. Family enrichment programs such as:
 - Responsible parenthood/Family Planning
 - Drug abuse control
4. Intellectual/Cultural development
 - a. Literacy programs
 - basic reading/writing skills
 - b. Courses in Human Relations/Management
 - Personality development seminars
 - Effective communication
 - Leadership training
 - c. Other related activities.

To ensure that the programs of the department shall be properly carried out or implemented, a secretary has been appointed by the Church Administration, who in turn shall be assisted by service coordinators along the different areas of social services.

Mechanics Of Implementation

The recipients of the services are chosen based upon a socio-economic survey conducted in selected locales, as approved by the Church Administration. Vital to the success of the surveys are students in the Bachelor of Evangelical Ministry who are trained for the purpose to float out the research instruments.

The result of the survey determines those who are to be given aid by the department. Aid comes directly from the Church Administration, or from the brethren through the locale leadership and officers, as well as from the officers of the *Buklod*, *KADIWA*, and *Binhi*.

Government agencies and private entities also serve as

source of resources, and the department maintains linkages and proper coordination with them.

Pilot areas are selected on the basis of the socio-economic surveys.

Finally, there is a year-end evaluation activity which will serve as the basis for future program implementation.

So far, brethren and non-brethren alike have already felt the benefits of the social services through the ongoing *Lingap sa Mamamayan*, Safety Education training, and medical missions and referrals that the Social Services department has extended. The Church of Christ is truly reaching out for people through this department, among various other instrumentalities. **P**

Lingap Sa Mamamayan: A Concern For The People

Rosalina B. Castro



UNKNOWN TO MANY, the beginnings of the social action program of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* through the free medical service project could be traced back to 1952. During that year, the Church's early involvement in this form of civic work was simply called *Medical and Dental Mission*. It was

under the auspices of the Church Administration with Brothers Benjamin J. Santiago Sr., Isaias Reyes, Dr. Virgilio P. Buelva and Dr. Castro as forerunners of the project. The favorite venue where they rendered services was at the Quiapo house of worship.

Three years later, the appellation

was changed to *Buklod Medical Mission*. This time, the group held office at the FGR Building along Buendia Avenue in Makati. Even during that early period, there had been suggestions for the Church to build a permanent health center to serve the poor and the needy but this effort did not prosper.

In 1963, the Golden Aim Women's Club, an organization of the lady members in the locale of F. Manalo, initiated the project to build the two-storey semi-concrete structure of Felix Y. Manalo Memorial Puericulture Center in San Juan, Rizal. It was inaugurated on May 10, 1965 and was opened to all INC members and nonmembers as well.

In 1977, almost a decade and a half after Brother Manalo's demise, the INC social action program was identified as *Christian Medical, Dental and Paramedical Mission* under the leadership of Dr. Eddie Nepomuceno. When a calamity occurred in Central Luzon in the last week of August 1978, the CMDPM volunteers were able to recruit 60 student nurses, most of whom were nonmembers. They came from the

University of the East, Centro Escolar University, De Ocampo and Saint Catherine Nursing Schools. The CMDPM and the 60 volunteers served thousands of people in Pangasinan, Tarlac and Pampanga.

In the latter months of 1981, the *Lingap sa Mamamayan* which is a brainchild of Brother Eraño G. Manalo, was born. This project was hatched out of concern for poor and needy people irrespective of their religious affiliations. It aims to extend medical, dental, social and legal assistance to members and nonmembers alike. Proceeding from these

objectives, it was decided that the most vital arm of the *Lingap* would be its medical, dental and paramedical teams. This group will provide free medical consultation and treatment, dental clinic, tooth extraction, health education, family planning seminars and medicines.

The objective of *Lingap* is not only to serve indigent people but also to foster goodwill and fellowship that transcends even the religious barrier. *Lingap* therefore is a proof of love to mankind. It is in itself a way of glorifying God.

The first *Lingap* project was conducted in the division of Pampanga on November 19, 1981. Since then, *Lingap* teams have been fielded throughout the nation to help the indigent members of depressed communities. Simultaneous with the creation of *Lingap* is the formation of an association of INC doctors, nurses, dentists, medical technologists and paramedical workers. Thus, Christian Medical, Dental and Paramedical Association (CMDPA) was established.

In 1985, the *Lingap*-CMDPA workers assisted in social action

Modern Families, quo vadis?

Rebecca P. Santos

HOMEMAKERS CRINGE in pain in reaction to skyrocketing prices of basic commodities even as they cling to the emaciated yet precious peso the breadwinner brings home. Wage earners labor under the uncertainty of their jobs, a gnawing anxiety brought about by that present-day villain called economic crisis. Both the young and old are shamelessly confronted with social pressures caused by urbanization — crimes, joblessness, alcoholism, prostitution, drug abuse. All these are in a vicious conspiracy to tear apart a lot of families.

Indeed, the family, society's most basic institution which a sociologist tagged as the best invention the world ever had, is imperilled by various forces at work, singly or collectively. Families sitting together to partake the three meals of the day seem to be a thing of the past. The same may be said of families gathered at dusk or in the evening to pray together. Forums where every member of the family shares his ex-

periences, problems, failures and victories seem to be as obsolete to modern families as coloring books are to a blooming teenager.

Parents and children co-exist under one roof, sometimes with hardly a kind word said to one another, a sad scenario created by the demands of modern living. Simply analyzed, people have to enjoy some amenities such as appliances to lighten the work of the homemaker. If the husband earns just enough for the basic needs, the wife has to find some employment and pass on her house responsibilities to a helper. The helper assumes the tasks she was not trained to do — a baby sitter, governess, laundry woman, meal planner, cook, cleaner, security guard all at once.

The scenario becomes sadder as one realizes that parents maintain the control over their children's lives only financially. Their full control, specially during the formative years, are threatened by their own lack of time to share with the children, as well as the pervasive and authoritative influence of television, school and peer groups. On top of these is the most severe threat to family life which stems from unemployment and lack of adequate income as a corollary of the present economic climate.

The lucky few who can afford

have placed many psychiatrists, marriage counsellors, family experts, even clairvoyants in good business. The not so lucky ones take the less expensive alternative as solutions to their problems — liquor, prohibited drugs, or wanton indifference to oneself and society. The more positive alternatives others resort to is a return to religion, the church, and spiritualism for panacea. This is the reason for the revival of church sharing session with the religious at the helm, prayer meetings, marriage encounters and family counselling sessions — what most churches refer to as the Christian way of enhancing family life amidst the pressing problems of modern society.

The *Iglesia ni Cristo* way does not recognize any revival. We do not revive what is there all along, do we? What we recognize is that everything in this world is fleeting; the only solid and stable institution is the Church and if it is solid as a whole, it has to remain solid in parts.

Deeply ingrained in the subconscious of every *Iglesia ni Cristo* member who is a parent is his responsibility as the family man. As such, he has to live by that responsibility in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ's own example Who gave His life for the sake of His body, the Church. Parents are often reminded of this

work in Ugong, Pasig; Punta, Sta. Ana; Antipolo, Rizal; Atimonan, Aurora and Lucena City in Quezon. This included the assistance sought for the victims of the fire that displaced some 15,000 people in San Andres, Paco on April 3, 1985.

Also in the list of notable *Lingap* activities were the services rendered in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija; Baguio City; Lubao, Pampanga; Cauayan, Isabela; Diliman, Quezon City; Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya; Lamondao, Davao; San Fernando, La Union; Cavinti, Laguna; Asun-

cion, Davao del Norte; and Naga City, Camarines Sur.

On January 2, 1986, the social project marked Brother Eraño's 61st birth anniversary by launching a Metro Manila sponsored *Lingap sa Mamamayan* in Manila (Magsaysay Village, Tondo), Pasay (Malibay) and Quezon City (Capitol). Some 5,000 people benefited from this humanitarian effort.

The divisions of Abra, Benguet, Mountain Province, Negros Occidental I, Nueva Ecija and Sorsogon led by their respective division ministers also participated in this

program.

Recently, the newly-established INC Social Services Department headed by Brother Nicanor P. Tiosen decided to hold monthly *Lingap* services. On March 15, 1986, five doctors, seven dentists, nine allied health workers and 17 INC Metro Manila Clinic personnel rendered civic aid to residents in St. Joseph, Las Piñas. Beneficiaries were 534 people in medical treatment while 270 citizens were given dental services. Dr. Alma Lirio-Ramos led the INC Medical-Dental Unit in the said *Lingap*. **P**

biblical guideline through the sermons they listen to on worship services.

Counselling on responsible parenthood comes early to the *Iglesia ni Cristo* couples. It is a requirement of the Church that grooms and brides submit to pre-marriage counselling sessions under the minister who would solemnize their nuptial service. Among other things discussed during these sessions are the factors that affect a happy wedded life, the sharing of parenthood responsibilities, sex education, and the common marital problems that undermine most marriages. This requirement aims to give couples a better perspective of what they are getting into before they take the leap.

Special worship services are periodically held in all locales during which the officiating minister extols the conduct of carrying oneself, parent or child, in consonance with the Scriptural guidelines. On these occasions, too, family members are reminded of the Lord God's promise that as long as they are righteous, not one of His chosen sons may be so wanting that he were to beg for bread.

In relation to this, the Church Administration has created a department on social services under the Central Offices of the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. One of the tasks of the new

The Church, solid as a whole, has to remain solid in parts.

office is to plan and implement livelihood programs addressed to various target groups of the Church population. Initially, plans on the macro level are being ironed out as plans on the micro level are under study. Some of these livelihood programs are not entirely new for such undertakings have been instituted about three decades ago. Some of the projects are just a restructuring of existing ones to make them more responsive to present needs.

Falling into the lure and folly of extra-marital relations is recognized as one of the short cuts to a broken home. It takes a lot of effort, courage, and adjustment on the part of every member of the family to get a broken home repaired. Preventive measures, they say, are easier to prescribe and follow than the cure. Hence, *Iglesia ni Cristo* couples are strongly advised to maintain a high emotional and spiritual resistance to worldly temptations. Keeping them involved in various socio-religious

activities of the Church organizations they belong to, engages their time.

The solid family is in every sense a religious family, religious not only in visible terms such as going to church together and taking active parts in church affairs. The term means something more. It means living in the name of the Lord, with the Lord, and for the Lord. Whatever the father does for a living, he does it in a straight and righteous way. While it is nearly impossible to be impeccable, the mother and the children on their own, strive to live, think, feel and do deeds in a truly Christian manner whether or not they are within someone's view.

It takes a lot of discipline to be able to dismiss a thought, word, intention, or deed — big or small — the moment one realizes it is wrong. The ability to do this takes a long time to develop. And the proper venue for its development is the home; the proper teachers, the parents. It is from them and the other members of the family that reinforcement of the intention to do and be good is expected on all occasions, at work or play.

If every home provides true religious instruction, nurtures it and provides the right climate for it to bloom and bear fruits, no longer has any one the right to ask: modern families, *quo vadis?* **P**

The Making Of A Minister

Adriel O. Meimban

CENTRAL to the life and existence of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* is the minister. It is to the minister that almost all the functions of the Church — from missionary work to visitation to preaching — are entrusted. He is at the nucleus of the religious community.

It is significant to note that the Church gives much importance to the minister and in general to the ministry. Ever since the start of Brother Felix Y. Manalo's preaching, the role of the minister has been of crucial importance to the Church. In fact, through the 72

years of the Church, marked by phenomenal growth and expansion, the duties of the evangelical worker have steadily increased. Before, Brother Felix Y. Manalo shepherded only a small group of souls, cultivating an association with such an intimacy that transcended the bounds of educational, economic

*How is a minister being developed in the Church of Christ?
What is to be an evangelical worker?*



means, and, lately, raced in an attempt to achieve what Christ calls the genuine Christian brotherhood. Now, the minister is expected not only to oversee the rapidly expanding Church worldwide but also to act as the brethren's guide, guidance counselor, one-man job placement bureau and arbiter of disputes.

Guardian, Advocate And Prime Mover

While the minister is the guardian of the strict and unchanging doctrinal heritage, he also acts as an advocate of innovations and a prime mover of action behind new and sometimes modern means of finishing projects. On the one hand, he preserves cherished Christian practices as seen in his constant exhortation to brethren to adhere to God's ordinances on proper Christian living. On the other hand, he initiates novel procedures to fulfill the missionary objectives of the Church.

Ministerial Functions

A minister of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* has two primal functions, namely, to propagate the doctrines of the Church of Christ and, to strengthen the faith of the brethren. Perhaps, the terms that can closely approximate the *Pilipino* terms for *pagpapalaganap* and *pagpapatibay* are propagation and edification, respectively.

How is a minister being developed in the Church of Christ? What is to be an evangelical worker? What are the traits and characteristics of a minister highly valued in the religious community? How committed is the *Iglesia ni Cristo* minister to the service? These and other queries the writer will attempt to answer for the reader's enlightenment.

The ministerial force of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* is classified into several levels. The highest level is that of the ordained, followed by the regular evangelical worker under

training, and lastly the volunteer students.

Rigid rules and discipline govern the development of a minister. This spiritual career, however, is considered the most noble in the Church. Brother Felix Y. Manalo, the Last Messenger, foreseeing the indispensable value of the ministry in

Essentially, the ministry is for men because of rigorous demands of the work.

meeting the needs of the faithful, laid down basic practices and instituted principles for the ministry. The essence of his profound concern for the ministry can be found in a five-year lesson series which is taught to every minister.

Code Of The Ministry

The five-year lesson series contains prescriptive rules and regulations as to the ethical, moral and pastoral behavior expected of the evangelical worker, as well as, among other things, doctrinal teachings regarding the relationship of the ministers with the Church Administration, and their functions and obligations. Rigid and strict is the process of developing these Church leaders.

In every provincial division, a ministerial class is conducted by the Division Minister. Most candidates for the school of ministry are young, averaging in age between 18 and 20 years. Moreover, all ministerial students are males. No female is accepted, although there have been earlier cases when women were accepted as students and were later helpful as evangelical workers. This was the time when the missionary force was really wanting in manpower. But in the 1960s, women were no longer permitted to act as ministerial workers in residence, that is, as administrators of locales. Essentially, the ministry is for men

because of the immensity and rigorous demands of the work.

The Spirit Of Sacrifice

Then and now, the Last Messenger always emphasized the "calling" attached to the ministry and the "spirit of sacrifice" which is needed to pursue the mission. While this extraordinary vocation constitutes the challenge of the divine duty, the response on the part of the individual pursuing the ministerial requirements comes in the form of a voluntary act to subordinate his personal will to that of the Almighty God. It was the Last Messenger who handled ministerial classes during his 49-year stewardship of the Church. The present Executive Minister pursues the precedent that as a male member enters the corps of ministers, he sheds off his old self in order to be re-modelled and re-cast into a new entity, the ideal state which Ephesians 4:24 embodies: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Once the male student signs the document or affidavit which contains his voluntary self-abnegation and abdication of worldly interests, as in the tradition of the Apostles like Paul and Peter, starts a program of training which would culminate in the ordination.

The Ministry: A Vocation

The duties to preach the Gospel of salvation to mankind, to administer the Church of true believers, and to strengthen their faith form the *raison d'etre*, the reason for being, of the minister within the *Iglesia ni Cristo*. Involvement and commitment are the hallmarks of the ministry. Ministerial students are taught that the ministry is not a profession but a vocation where no material rewards and financial gains should be expected.

Christ Jesus, in a parable (John 10:12-13) warned about the danger and disadvantage of a hired shepherd who runs away from his responsibility when a wolf comes.

The Church of Christ does not hire a shepherd to take care of the sheep (members). What would be impressed into the heart and mind of a young student is the "calling" of God for it is believed that the calling for the ministry is the highest form of spiritual service as attested in the New Testament (Hebrews 5:4): "No one chooses for himself the honor of being a high priest. It is only by *God's call* that a man is made a high priest — just as Aaron was called."

The delicateness and significance of ministership lie on its sublimity as a calling (Hebrews 3:1). The divinity of this calling, which can emanate from the only true God Himself, finds culmination in the ordination. This last is the occasion when God manifests His election.

As a vocation, the ministry can prove to be demanding of one's time, emotions, intellect and physical capacity. It is a life similar to that of a lawyer and a doctor. No routines, except those in line with the demands of the vocation, may be kept. There is consuming zeal within the minister that urges him to pursue his duties even when, ordinarily, he wouldn't wish to tackle them. From the time the hands of the Executive Minister are laid on his head at ordination, his life is changed. From then on, he shall have to exist in pursuit of the duties and responsibilities that are reposed on him through the ordination.

This is not to say, however, that he will be forced to neglect all other commitments, like those to his family. The same sense of responsibility that makes him see the imperative of propagating God's words wherever he is sent propels and motivates him to a life that must be a model in all respects. This means that his being a minister is the apex, the highest point of his existence, the foundations of which are an exemplary family life and humility of spirit that are both not to be neglected.

At best, the ministry is a sublimation and a transcendence of the in-

dividual's own spirit and personal ambitions. This, of course, is a philosophy of life that greatly demands renunciation of quite a number of things considered vital for the good life. This is then the reason that some shirk from the ministry. It is as if the pursuit of a preconceived goal is put to its end by ordination. In the Church of Christ, however, renunciation must not be taken as similar to the Catholic priesthood.

The ministry can prove to be demanding of one's time, intellect, and physical capacity.

Propagation

Propagation through the preaching of the Gospel is a process that does not sound as easy as modern advertising or seed-planting. Its scope in terms of time element, human effort, psychological dislocations and language difficulties is an index to the immense challenges confronting a typical *Iglesia ni Cristo* minister. Objectively, propagation involves the art of human relations, tactfulness, diplomacy as well as command of history and psychology.

On the spiritual level, though, the minister anchors his faith in God "for with God all things are possible." Faith then generates in his professed weak body the tenacity of the spirit and fluency of the tongue which he badly needs in his propagational undertaking. In fact, scripturally speaking, there are traits that must be cultivated in the life of the minister who spreads the Gospel of salvation throughout the world. These traits are: (1) he must be tested or "approved unto God"; (2) he must not be ashamed of his role or a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed"; and (3) he must use correct and straightforward words, "rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

In addition to standard criteria like a well-disciplined congregation, blessed leadership, marked signs of "progress" seen in the evangelical worker's personality, an evident maturity in his outlook, and other hidden potentialities, the abundance of his converts may elevate him to the highest level in the ministerial force, that of the ordained.

Before the year 1974 ended, the ministry undoubtedly witnessed changes as most aspects of the Church have undergone streamlining under Brother Eraño G. Manalo's able leadership since 1963. The ministry has been given the attention it duly deserves because the men who have worked as the pulse of the Church are being confronted face to face by the problems of leadership that come with modernization. Brother Eraño's plan was to make the education of a would-be minister more formal and well rounded. Brother Eraño exerted all possible efforts in the preparation of materials for the projected school for ministers which opened in late 1974.

When asked why such an institution seems to be getting some special attention from the Church Administration, Brother Manalo recalled the school built at Antioch where would-be teachers of God's words were trained before they were ordained and sent forth on their missions (Acts 13:1-5). This is of course very much like the usual practice being observed in the ministry at present where after the training period, the religious student-worker is ordained, if found fit for the ministry, then assigned to the locale where his services will be needed.

The idea of a formal education for religious workers is then not unprecedented because history can prove that men who have been called to spend their lives as workers for the propagation of the faith had undergone rigid training. Even du-

ring the time of Jesus Christ, it was an unwritten rule that the preachers of God's words underwent a period of educative activity before they could bring the faith to people. That there shall be differences in the rigidity of the training of religious workers is however tempered by the nature of the times. The period in which the school for ministers at Antioch flourished was markedly different from that in which our Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples. In the same manner, the 1970s and the 1980s demand an almost totally different approach and provides the atmosphere for a more refined training of a would-be minister.

The new scheme for education does not at all disregard the old plan described in the section on the volunteer and regular workers. In fact, the substance of the former programme is the core of the newer one. There have been some courses added to "polish the jagged edges", or what might have not been sufficiently stressed during the earlier times, to make the would-be minister more capable of meeting the challenges of the times. Started in October 1973, the school for ministers has among the "substance" or core subjects the doctrines, the ministry, and Bible history, but these are supplemented by intensive training in language, social sciences and the humanities.

The plan encompasses some five years of academic and ministerial education preparatory to ordination as a full-fledged minister. Both aspects of the education, academic and ministerial, undergo a "dry run" under seven instructors, four of whom are ministers. Of the non-ministerial or academic aspects of the five-year plan, language is given foremost importance. The national language, while already a native tongue of students, will yet be polished, especially among those who come from non-Tagalog speaking provinces. English is also given emphasis primarily because of the

fast-increasing number of the foreign congregations. Allowances have been made in the program to train ministers in foreign languages besides English should the need for these arise. The social sciences include psychology, sociology and history (World, United States and Oriental).

The ministerial aspect will be similarly rigid, emphasizing the ministry, but chiefly focused on the

Ordination to the ministry is an election by God of the men called to make His truth known.

doctrines of the Church. If one may at all liken the course to a degree-granting program that has a major field, one can say that the new course of study for ministers has as its major fields the ministry and the doctrines, with Bible and Church history as minor courses. The non-academic subjects would be the foundation courses. Elevation and election to full ministership, is, however, a delicate intangible that cannot be measured or predicted by even the best performance and the highest grades in formal classes.

Humility And Renunciation

Humility and renunciation that the *Iglesia ni Cristo* is concerned are qualities that do not exist in detachment. The minister is not an individual removed from the society where he moves. He is an integral and dynamic part of this social group and because he is such, he is in a position to advise his constituents.

Ordination to the ministry is an election by God of the men called to make His truth known. An idea of the delicateness and value of the authority with which God invests those whom He has chosen is recorded in the book of Deuteronomy 34:9:

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

The act of laying of the hand at ordination is an investiture of the qualities which are meant to elevate a man to a position of honor before the congregation, one which would make the faithfuls of the Church look up to him as a leader elected by God. This is because ordination essentially means the appointment of a man over the congregation, a leader "who shall go out before them and come in; that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep which have no shepherd" (Numbers 27:17). From this may be gleaned the nature of the ministry as a calling. It is the Bible, however, that best describes the ministry as a "heavenly call" (Hebrews 3:1), one that binds a man to "offer sacrifice for his own as well as for those of the people" (Hebrews 5:3). This he does without expecting a return of honor upon himself because he has been called by God to perform as leader of the people. His is indeed a sublime and honorable calling.

Ministerial Institute For Development

From 1974 to 1977, the School for Ministers known as Ministerial Institute for Development was located at Quiapo, Manila. During this period, several extensions were also in operation in Cavite, Laguna, Pampanga, Rizal and Bulacan. In the school year 1977-78, the campus site was transferred to Manna Building, Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, Quezon City. During this period, the school was given the name which it now bears, the New Era Evangelical College or for short EVCO. EVCO is also used in foreign locales especially in the United States where branches of the school for Ministers have been opened by the Church Administration.

...the spiritual harvest remains enormous.

New Scheme For Education

The new scheme for education in the Ministry which has been in effect since 1974 does not at all disregard the old plan started in 1914. In fact, the substance of the former programme is the core of the newer one. There have just been some courses added to polish the jagged edges, or what may have been neglected during the earlier times, to make the would-be ministers more capable of meeting the challenge of the times, at home and elsewhere in this world.

The plan encompasses some five years of evangelical and academic education preparatory to ordination as a minister. Basically, the ministerial students of the 1980s are being trained just like their counterparts in earlier decades: to propagate God's truth and to administer the souls of the brethren. On May 10, 1977, the EVCO held its first graduation-ordination program at Moriones, Tondo, Manila with 39 graduates.

In school year 1980-81, the School of Ministers started offering a bachelor's degree known as Bachelor of Evangelical Ministry (BEM). This 6-year program of study is duly recognized by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. The first batch of 40 students will be ordained and will receive their diploma on May 6, 1986 at the Central Temple.

New Era Evangelical College

Today, at the new and permanent site of the Evangelical College in Diliman, Quezon City, the faculty members and the students work and study together. There is one goal guiding every faculty member and the studentry alike: to produce the "laborers" needed for the last mis-

sion of salvation. Reviewing the past of the School for Ministers, one can only marvel at how the Lord Almighty has fulfilled His promise to this true Church. From only one minister in the person of the Last Messenger in 1914 until today, in the 1980s, with the thousands of ministers, the spiritual harvest remains enormous. Thus, the Evangelical College is saddled with the responsibility of recruiting, training and producing the necessary manpower to reap the vast harvest.

Edifice For Minister's Training

On June 12, 1978, a permanent four-storey edifice was inaugurated at the INC Central Office complex. This was the New Era Evangelical College (EVCO) building. The Executive Minister delivered a special message that succinctly projects the philosophy behind the ministerial vocation and the manner by which the ministers are to be developed. The gist of this message was:

The prime purpose of this school is for the glory of God. Let no one teach here anything that will alienate man from God. Let not this school be the battleground of warring students like other universities and colleges. Let nobody destroy the brotherly love that should exist between teachers and students, and discipline be maintained daily. But above all, let the implementation and the fulfillment of the words of God be the prevailing atmosphere inside this structure where wisdom dwells. I now call the teachers and students to align themselves with these sublime activities of the Church Administration. These are our ways of acknowledging God Who made all these and keeps us always in Him.

Analysis Of The Program Of Study

The program of study of an *Iglesia* minister consists of five years of

academic and evangelical course works for which he is graded and evaluated on a two-semester term per curriculum year.

It is important to note that from his third to his fifth year in the program, the ministerial student is required to undertake practicum work of 10 hours a day, 7 days a week or a total of 3,080 hours for one-month period. Practicum work consists of performing all functions of an ordained minister in preparation for actual ordination which takes place three years from the time he began his practicum.

Practicum

As a ministerial student doing practicum in a locale where he is assigned, the would-be minister works under the direct supervision of a Resident Minister of the locale. He is also required to submit a detailed report on his daily activities each week to enable the Church Ad-

...the ministerial student is required to undertake practicum work of 10 hours a day, 7 days a week, a total of 10,000 hours!

ministration to monitor his progress and determine, at the end of his program, if he meets the rigid standards of the ministry. Only then is he considered as a fully qualified candidate for ordination.

Thus, when an *Iglesia* minister is finally ordained he is an experienced and tested evangelical worker, having a total of nearly 10,000 hours of practicum, from his third to fifth year. After his ordination, he is fully qualified to become a Pastor or a Resident Minister, privileged to officiate at a baptism, solemnize a marriage or offer the children of brethren to God. These privileges are granted to him by virtue of his ordination. **P**

Ang Sugo At Ang Paglilingkod Ng Tao Sa Diyos

Bienvenido C. Santiago

ANG PAGPAPAHALAGANG iniyuukol ng Iglesia ni Cristo sa pagsusugo ng Diyos ay hindi maunawaan ng maraming tao. Kaipala'y itinuturing nilang kakatwa ang paniniwalang taglay natin na ang tao'y kailangan pang maugnay muna sa sugo ng Diyos bago niya malaman at maisagawa ang wastong paraan ng paglilingkod sa Maykapal.

Mangyari'y namihasa sila sa maling pagkaunawa sa tunay na kahulugan at pamamaraan ng paglilingkod sa Diyos. Ang iba'y nag-aakalang ang relihiyon o ang paglilingkod sa Diyos ay sa pamamagitan ng pagsasagawa ng mga tradisyunal na rituwal na kanilang kinamulatan: pag-rorosaryo, pagnonobena, pagluhod sa harap ng altar at iba't iba pang gawang karaniwang ibinibilang na relihiyoso na inimbento at itinatag lamang ng tao datapuwat hindi nakasalig sa mga Salita ng Diyos. Ang iba naman, bagaman nagpapahayag ng pananalig sa mga Salita ng Diyos, gayunman ay tinatanggap nila ang mga salitang yaon ayon sa sarili nilang "malayang" pakahulugan. Di katakatakang wala silang masumpungang puwang para sa Sugo ng Diyos sa pagsasagawa nila ng diumano'y paglilingkod sa Diyos.

Ang kanilang paniniwala ay nakasalig sa maling akala na sapat nang ang tao ay naglilingkod sa Diyos—anuman ang paraan at batayan—at yaon ay tatanggapin at bigyan ng Diyos ng kabuluhan.

Ano ang kamalian ng gayung paniniwala? Bakit nga ba kailangan pang ang tao ay maugnay sa sugo ng Diyos upang matiyak niyang wasto at may kabuluhan ang kaniyang isinasagawang paglilingkod? Ano ang kinalaman ng sugo sa paglilingkod ng tao sa Diyos?

Ayon sa Biblia, paano ang wastong paraan ng paglilingkod sa Diyos? Sa I Samuel 12:24 ay sinasabi: "Matakot lamang kayo sa Panginoon, at maglilingkod kayo sa kaniya sa katotohanan ng inyong boong puso..." Ang hinahanap ng Diyos na gawing paglilingkod ng tao sa

Kaniya ay yaong nakasalig sa katotohanan. Ayaw Niya ng kapaimbabawan; ayaw Niya ng kasinungalingan.

Alin ang katotohanang dapat pagbatayan sa paglilingkod? Ayon sa ating Panginoong Jesucristo, ang katotohanan ay ang mga Salita ng Diyos (Juan 17:17). Kaya alin mang paglilingkod sa Diyos na hindi nakasalig sa Kaniyang mga Salita ay hindi Niya pahahalagahan.

Ano ang kinalaman dito ng Sugo ng Diyos? Hindi ba maaaring matutuhan ng tao ang mga Salita ng Diyos sa pamamagitan ng kaniyang sariling pagsisikap lamang? Bakit sa sinugo pa ng Diyos siya dapat pumaroon? Ang sagot ay napakadali: "Sapagkat ang sinugo ng Diyos ay nagpapahayag ng mga salita ng Diyos" (Juan 3:34, MB).

Dahil dito, hindi mapawawalang kabuluhan ng tao ang sinugo ng Diyos kailanma't ayaw niyang pawalang kabuluhan ng Diyos ang kaniyang paglilingkod.

Paano kung sa pagsamba at paglilingkod ng tao sa Diyos ay hindi sa Salita ng Diyos na itinuturo ng sinugo siya makinig kundi sa salita ng tao siya magsalig, pahalagahan kaya ng Diyos ang kaniyang pagsamba? Ang pasya ng Diyos tungkol sa suliraning ito ay malaong panahon nang naipahayag ng ating Panginoong Jesucristo. Sinabi ng Diyos ayon kay Cristo: "Datapuwa't walang kabuluhan ang pagsamba nila sa akin, na nagtuturo ng kanilang pinakaaral ang mga utos ng mga tao" (Mat. 15:9).

Sa liwanag ng mga aral na ito ng Diyos, nalalantad sa atin ang kamalian ng maraming tao na ang relihiyong isinasagawa ay binubuo lamang ng mga rituwal at mga aral na gawa rin ng tao. Walang kabuluhan sa harap ng Diyos ang gayung uri ng paglilingkod kahit na nga ang mga yao'y lakipan pa ng pagpapakasakit, kahit "mayroong anyo ng karunungan sa pagsambang kusa, at sa pagpapakababa, at sa pagpapakahirap sa katawan" (Col. 2:23).

NGUNIT HINDI LAMANG ito ang maling paniniwalang taglay ng maraming tao sa kasalukuyan.

Sa lahat ng panahon na ang Diyos ay may gawaing pagliligtas ay mayroon Siyang isinusugo.

Nariyan din ang paniniwala ng iba na bagaman nagpapanggap na kumikilala sa mga Salita ng Diyos gayunman ay tinatanggap ang mga salitang yaon ayon sa sarili nilang "malayang" pagpapakahulugan. At sapagkat ang sarili nilang pagkaunawa sa mga Salita ng Diyos ang higit na mahalaga para sa kanila ay wala silang makitang dahilan kung bakit mayroon pang dapat mangaral at magturo sa kanila. Hindi na raw nila kailangan ang sugo na magpapaunawa ng mga Salita ng Diyos sa kanila. "Bakit pa," ang tanong nila, "gayung nariyan na at maaaring basahin ninuman ang mga Salita ng Diyos?"

Para sa kanila ang aral tungkol sa pagsusugo ay isang kalabisan; at isang kakatwang relihiyon ang naniniwala sa pagsusugo. Para sa Diyos, ang gayung paniniwala ng tao ay isang tahasang pagsalungat sa Kaniyang panukala. Ang pagsusugo ay hindi gawa ng tao. Ang sabi ni Cristo: "Ito ang gawa ng Diyos na inyong sampalatayanan yaong kaniyang sinugo" (Juan 6:29).

Sa lahat ng panahon na ang Diyos ay may gawaing pagliligtas ay mayroon Siyang isinusugo. Sa panahong Cristiano, halimbawa, ang Diyos ay nagsugo. At ang pinakadakilang sugo Niya ay ang Kaniyang Anak mismo. Ganito ang sabi ng Kasulatan: "At upang kaniyang suguin ang Cristo na itinalaga sa inyo na si Jesus... Tunay na sinabi ni Moises, Ang Panginoong Diyos ay magtitindig sa inyo ng isang propetang gaya ko mula sa gitna ng inyong mga kapatid; siya ang inyong pakinggan sa lahat ng mga bagay na sa inyo'y sasalitain niya" (Gawa 3:20, 22).

Hindi masasabi ng mga tao noon na, "Ano pa ang katuturan ng pagsusugo kay Cristo gayung nakasulat na ang mga kautusan ng Diyos at mababasa ng sinuman?" Ang Matandang Tipan ng Biblia ay nakasulat na noong suguin ang ating Panginoong Jesucristo. Ngunit malinaw na sinasabi ng Kasulatan na si Cristo na sinugo ng Diyos ang dapat pakinggan, upang kanilang maunawa ang kalooban ng Diyos na nakatala sa Banal na Kasulatan.

Bakit Siya ang dapat pakinggan? Ano ang nasa Kaniya na dapat marinig ng tao? Balikan natin ang hula na ipinahayag ni Moises tungkol sa ating Panginoong Jesucristo. Sa Deuteronomio 18:18 ay sinasabi ang ganito: "Aking palilitawin sa kanila ang isang propeta sa gitna ng kanilang mga kapatid, na gaya mo; at aking ilalagay ang aking mga salita sa bibig niya, at kaniyang sasalitain sa kanila ang lahat ng aking iutos sa kaniya."

Malinaw na ipinakikita rito na talagang panukala ng Diyos mula pa nang una na sa mga Salita Niya dapat isalig ng tao ang paglilingkod nila sa Kaniya. Ito ang dahilan

kaya Siya nagsusugo. Sa sinugo Niya inilalagay ang kaniyang mga Salita na siyang dapat pakinggan at sundin ng mga taong maglilingkod at sasamba sa Kaniya. At sapagkat sa sinugo ito ipinagkatiwala, katungkulan ng taong umugnay sa sinugo. "At kanilang marapat hanapin ang kautusan sa kaniyang bibig," ang pahayag ni Propeta Malakias, "sapagkat siya ang sugo ng Panginoon ng mga hukbo" (Mal. 2:7).

MAY ISANG LALAKI, sa panahon ng mga Apostol, na nagngangalang Cornelio. Inilarawan siya sa Aklat ng mga Gawa ng mga Apostol na, "isang taong masipag sa kabanalan at matatakutin sa Diyos siya at ang boong sambahayan at naglimos ng marami sa mga tao, at laging nananalangin sa Diyos" (Gawa 10:1-2). Sa panukat ng mga tao ngayon, si Cornelio ay madaling makapapasa bilang isang relihiyosong tao na nagsasagawa ng paglilingkod sa Diyos. Sa panukat ding yaon ng mga tao ngayon, wala na silang makikita pang kulang kay Cornelio — sapat na ang ginawa niya upang siya'y tanggapin ng Diyos at paging-dapatin ang kaniyang paglilingkod.

Ngunit ang panukat ng Diyos ay iba sa panukat ng tao. Sa panukat ng Diyos, may kulang pa si Cornelio. Ang katunayan, nang minsang nananalangin si Cornelio, isang anghel ng Diyos ang napakita sa kaniya at ang isa sa mga sinabi sa kaniya'y, "Magsugo ka ng mga tao sa Joppe, at ipagsama mo yaong Simon, na may pamagat na Pedro" (Gawa 10:5). Si Apostol Pedro ang tinutukoy ng anghel. Ginawa ni Cornelio ang ayon sa ipinag-utos sa kaniya. At nang siya'y makaharap na ni Apostol Pedro ay kaniyang sinabi ang dahilan kung bakit umugnay siya sa kaniya: "Pagdaka nga'y nagsugo ako sa iyo; at mabuti ang ginawa mo at naparito ka. Ngayon nga'y kaming lahat ay nangaririto sa paningin ng Dios, upang dinggin ang lahat ng mga bagay na sa iyo'y ipinag-utos ng Panginoon" (Gawa 10:33).

...Katungkulan ng mga tao na umugnay sa sinugo.

Ano ang karapatan ni Apostol Pedro upang magpahayag ng mga utos at mga salita ng Diyos? Si Apostol Pedro ay kabilang sa mga sinugo: "Sinabi ngang muli sa kanila ni Jesus, Kapayapaan ang sumainyo: kung paanong pagkasugo sa akin ng Ama, ay gayon din naman sinusugo ko kayo" (Juan 20:21).

Saganang pinatutunayan dito ang napakalaking kaugnayan ng pagsusugo at ng paglilingkod ng tao sa Diyos. Ang sugo ang pinagkatiwalaan ng mga salita ng Diyos na dapat pagbatayan ng tao sa kaniyang paglilingkod sa Diyos.

SA MGA HULING ARAW na ito ay mayroon ding sinugo ang Diyos upang kasangkapanin Niya sa Kaniyang gawaing pagliligtas. Ang Iglesia ni Cristo ay sumasampalataya na si Kapatid na Felix Y. Manalo ang sinugo ng Diyos sa huling araw. Ang mga hula ng Kasulatan na nagpapakilala sa kaniyang kahalalan ay sumasaksi rin na sa kaniya itiniwala ang mga salita ng Diyos na dapat pagsaligan ng paglilingkod ng tao sa Lumalang.

Ang isa sa mga hulang nagpapakilala sa karapatan ni Kapatid na Felix Y. Manalo bilang sugo ng Diyos ay ang nakasulat sa Isaias 46:11: "Na tumatawag ng ibong mang-

daragit mula sa silanganan, ng taong gumagawa ng aking payo mula sa malayong lupain; oo, aking sinalita, akin namang papangyayarihin; aking pinanukala, akin namang gagawin." Ang sugong hinuhulaan dito na ang gawain ay itinulad sa ibong mandaragit ay magmumula sa silangan, sa malayong lupain. Ang Malayong Silangan na hinuhulaan ni Propeta Isaias na pangagalangan ng sugong ito ay tumutukoy sa Pilipinas, isa sa mga bansa sa Malayong Silangan. Ngunit ang dapat nating bigyangpansin sa pagkakataong ito ay ang sinasabi sa hula na ang sugong ito ang magsasagawa ng payo ng Diyos. Ang payo

Ang Anghel Na Nagbababala

Saturnino A. Francisco

NANG ISUGO NG Diyos si Jonas sa Lunsod ng Ninive upang ibabala ang pagpaparusang gagawin Niya dahil sa kasamaang naghahari doon, nagsipagsisi ang lahat. Mula sa hari hanggang sa mga mamamayan doon at nagbalik-loob sa Diyos. Nang makita ng Diyos ang kanilang pagtalikod sa kasamaan, sila'y pinatawad at hindi na itinuloy ang paggunaw sa lunsod (Jonas 3:1-10).

Gayundin ang isa sa mga gawaing itiniwala ng Diyos kay Kapatid na Felix Manalo — ang paghahatid ng babala sa mga pinagsuguan sa kaniya. Kung ang mga taong binababalaan ay magbabalikwap upang iwan ang gawang ikapapahamak, kakamtan nila ang dakilang biyaya ng pagsusugong ito ng Diyos.

Ang isa sa mga hula na tumutukoy sa pagsusugo ng Diyos kay Kapatid na Felix Manalo ay nakasulat sa Apocalipsis 14:9-11:

At ang ibang anghel, ang pangatlo, ay sumunod sa kanila, na nagsasabi ng malakas na tinig, Kung ang sinoman ay sumasamba sa hayop at sa kanyang larawan at tumatanggap ng tanda sa kaniyang *noo*, o sa kaniyang *kamay*, Ay iinom din naman siya ng alak ng kagalitan ng Dios, na nahahandang walang halo sa

inuman ng Kaniyang kagalitan; at siya'y pahihirapan ng apoy at asupre sa harapan ng mga banal na anghel, at sa harapan ng Cordero: At ang usok ng hirap nila ay napaitanlang magpakailan-kailan man; at sila'y walang kapahingahan araw at gabi, silang mga nagsisisamba sa hayop at sa kanyang larawan, at sinomang tumatanggap ng tanda ng kaniyang pangalan. (Amin ang pagbibigay-diin.)

Sa hulang ito na tumutukoy sa pagsusugo kay Kapatid na Felix Manalo, hinuhulaan na ang sugong kakasangkapanin ng Diyos ay maghahatid ng babala tungkol sa parusang sasapitin ng lahat ng may tanda sa *noo* o sa kanyang *kamay*.

Anghel O Sugo Na Nagbabala

Bakit natin natitiyak na ang paghahatid ng babala na binabanggit sa hulang ito ay gawain ng sugo? Ang ipinakita sa pangitain na nagsasabi ng babala ng Diyos ay isang anghel. Ang salitang *anghel* ay nangangahulugang sinugo. Pinatutunayan ito sa Lukas 1:19 at ganito ang mababasa:

At pagsagot ng *anghel* ay sinabi sa kanya, Ako'y si Gabriel, na nananayo sa harapan ng Dios; at ako'y *sinugo* upang makipag-

usap sa iyo, at magdala sa iyo nitong mabubuting balita. (Amin ang pagbibigay-diin).

Ang kahulugan ng salitang *anghel* ay sinugo; ito ay tumutukoy sa tungkulin at hindi sa kalagayan sa pagkalahang.

Ang uri ng anghel na nakikilala ng karamihan sa mga tao ay ang mga nasa kalagayang espiritu na nananahan sa paligid ng luklukan ng Diyos (Heb. 1:13-14). Hindi matanggap ng ibang tao na ang isang taong tulad ni Kapatid na Felix Manalo ang siyang maging katuparan ng hinuhulaang anghel na ipinakita sa pangitain sa Apocalipsis 14:9-11. Dapat mabatid ng lahat na ang tao man ay tinatawag na anghel, kailan man at isinusugo. Mapatutunayan natin ito sa pamamagitan ng pagsipi sa sulat ni Apostol Santiago, sa salin na tinatawag na *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*. Dito ay may katumbas na salitang Griyego ang salitang *sugo*:

In the same manner was not also Rahab the harlot declared righteous by works, after she had received the *messengers* (angelos) hospitably and sent them by another way? (James 2:25, Emphasis ours.)

PASUGO MAYO-HUNYO 1986

ng Diyos, ayon sa Awit 107:11 ay ang Kaniyang mga salita: "Sapagkat sila'y nanghimagsik laban sa mga salita ng Diyos, at hinamak ang payo ng Kataastaasan."

Kung gayon namamalaging umiiral ang patakaran ng Diyos hanggang sa mga huling araw na ito na kailanma't maglilingkod ang tao sa Kaniya, yaon ay dapat isalig sa Kaniyang mga Salita na ipinangangaral ng Kaniyang mga sinugo.

Sapagkat "paano silang magsisipangaral, kung hindi sila mga sinugo?" (Roma 10:15). Sa sugo lamang ipinagkatiwala ang salita ng pagkakasundo, ayon kay Apostol Pablo: "Datapuwat ang lahat ng mga bagay ay pawang sa

Diyos, na pinakipagkasundo tayo sa kaniya rin sa pamamagitan ni Cristo, at ibinigay sa amin ang ministerio sa pagkakasundo:

"Sa makatuwid baga'y, na ang Diyos kay Cristo ay pinakipagkasundo ang sanlibutan sa kaniya rin, na hindi ibinibilang sa kanila ang kanilang mga kasalanan, at ipinagkatiwala sa amin ang salita ng pagkakasundo.

"Kami nga'y mga sugo sa pangalan ni Cristo, na waring namamanhik ang Dios sa pamamagitan namin: kayo'y pinamamanhikan namin sa pangalan ni Cristo, na kayo'y makipagkasundo sa Dios." (II Cor. 5:18-19).

Sipiin na natin ang pagkakasalin sa Pilipino (PBS):

At gayon din naman hindi rin baga si Rahab na patutot ay inaring ganap sa pamamagitan ng mga gawa, dahil sa tinanggap niya ang *mga sugo*, [messengers sa English; angelos sa griyego] at kaniyang pinapagdaan sa ibang daan? (Sant. 2:25, Amin ang pagbibigay-diin.)

Ang salitang anghel na nagmula sa Griyegong "angelos," sa English ay "messenger," at nangangahulugan sa Pilipino na "sinugo." Tinawag ni Santiago na "angelos" o "mga sugo" ang mga taong tinanggap ni Rahab sa Jerico, sapagkat ang mga yaon ay "sinugo" ni Josue upang alamin ang kalagayan ng lunsod na kanilang babagtasin sa pagsakop sa lupain ng Canaan.

Ang Binababalaan

Papaano naman natin matitiyak na si Kapatid na Felix Manalo nga ang kinatuparan ng anghel na ipinakita kay Apostol Juan at sinulat sa Apocalipsis 14:9-11? Kikilalanin muna natin ang mga taong binababalaan ng mabigat na parusa — ang mga taong may tanda sa *noo* o sa *kanyang kamay*.

Bakit nagkaroon ng mga taong may ganitong tanda? Anu-anong uri ng mga tao sila? Sa Apoc. 13:16 ay ganito ang ating matutunghayan:

At gagawan niya ng paraan upang ang lahat, mga dukha at mga maginoo, mayayaman at

mahihirap, malalaya at mga alipin, ay magkaroon ng tanda sa *kanan nilang kamay at sa noo.*" (Apoc. 13:16, Trinidad; Amin ang pagbibigay-diin.)

Sadyang may nagbigay pala ng tandang ito sa noo at kanang kamay, at ang binigyan ay lahat ng nasasakop ng nagbigay: Maginoo, dukha, mayayaman, mahihirap, malalaya, at maging mga alipin.

Alamin natin ngayon: sinu-sino ang mayroong tandang ito? Sa isang maliit na aklat na pinamagatang *Siya Ang Inyong Pakinggan: Ang Aral Na Katoliko*, sinulat ng isang pari, si Padre Enrique Demond, na may pahintulot ang pagkalimbag ni

Ang tao man ay tinatawag na anghel kailanman at sinusugo ng Diyos.

Jose Bustamante, Prov. y Vicario General ay ganito ang nakasulat sa pahina 11:

Ang tanda ng Santa Krus ay siyang tanda ng taong katoliko, sapagka't siyang ikinatatangi at ikinaiiba ng mga taong Katoliko sa mga taong protestante, ...

May tanda ang mga taong Katoliko na ikinaiiba sa mga taong Protestante. Kung tawagin nila ito ay "tanda ng Santa Krus." Papaano ba nila ito itinatanda? Babasa pa tayo sa aklat din ni G. Demond, sa pahina ring yaon:

Ang paraang ginagawa sa paggamit ng Santa Krus ay dalawa: ang magantanda at ang magkrus. Ang pagaantanda ay ang paggawa ng tatlong Krus, ng hinlalaki ng *kanang kamay*, ang una'y sa *nuo...* (Amin ang pagbibigay-diin.)

Ang tinatawag na tanda ng Santa Krus ay tanda sa noo at kanang kamay (bagaman kung itutuloy natin ang pagsipi, may binabanggit pa silang bibig, dibdib, at balikat, ngunit ang talagang nangingibabaw sa tandang ito ay noo at kanang kamay). Pagka sinuri natin ang tandang ito mula sa pagbibinyag, pagkukumpil, pagsisimba taon-taon kung Miyerkoles ng abo (Miercoles de Ceniza), sadyang sa noo ito itinatanda at kanang kamay ang ginagamit ng nagtatanda.

Isa-isa nating sipiin dito rin sa aklat ni G. Demond ang ating mga katibayan. Sa pahina 168 ay ganito ang mababasa:

Ang mga bagay o seremonia na ginagamit sa Santo Bautismo

Hihinga ang pari na makatlo sa mukha ng bata na magwiwika: 'Umalis ka sa kaniya, karumaldumal na espiritu at bigyan mo ng lugar ang espiritu santong mapangaliw' Gagawin ng pari sa sanggol ang *tanda ng Santa Krus sa noo* at sa dibdib na wiwika: 'Tanggapin mo ang tanda ng Santa Krus' ...

Pagka ang sanggol na bininyagan ay magpipitong taong gulang na

Ito ang dahilan kung bakit sa ganang mga Iglesia ni Cristo, ang pagsusugo ng Diyos sa mga huling araw na ito ay isang dakilang biyaya na habambuhay na dapat ipag-pasalamat sa Diyos. Sa pamamagitan ng pagsusugo Niya kay Kapatid na Felix Y. Manalo nakilala natin ang tunay na Diyos, nakilala natin ang Tagapagligtas na si Jesucristo at ang Iglesia na siyang kaparaanan Niya sa gagawin Niyang pagliligtas. Natutuhan natin ang wastong paraan ng paglilingkod sa Diyos: ang paglilingkod na batay sa katotohanan na Kaniyang mga salita.

Kaya upang mamalaging karapat-dapat ang paglilingkod natin sa Diyos, sundin natin ang tagubilin ng

mga sugo ng Diyos. Ang isa sa kanila, si Apostol Pablo, ay nagsabi: "Gawin mong batayan ang mga aral na itinuro ko sa iyo yamang ang mga ito'y pawang katotohanan. Manatili ka sa pananampalataya at sa pag-ibig na tinanggap natin sa pakikipag-isa kay Cristo Jesus. Sa tulong ng Espiritu Santong nananahan sa atin, ingatan mo ang lahat ng ipinagkatiwala sa iyo" (II Tim. 1:13-14, MB).

Kung magkagayo'y hindi mawawalan ng kabuluhan ang pagsusugo ng Diyos at hindi rin mawawalan ng kabuluhan ang pagpapagal ng Kaniyang sinugo para sa ating kaligtasan. **P**

kailangan daw ang pagpapatibay. Ito ay dadalhing muli sa pari upang kumpilan. Papaano naman ang pagkukumpil? Dito rin sa aklat ni G. Demond, sa pahina 172, ay matutunghayan natin:

Ang Seremonias sa pagkukumpil

Itataas at ilulukop ng obispo ang kaniyang mga kamay sa mga kukumpilan na idadalangin manaog sa kanila ang Dios Espiritu Santo. At saka papahiran niya ang Santo Krisma na *ikukrus sa noo* ng kinukumpilan ... (Amin ang pagbibigay-diin.)

Taun-taon, kung lubos na ang gulang ng nabinyagan at nakumpilan, ay magsisimba siya kung Miyerkoles ng abo. Ito raw ang pagpasok ng tinatawag nilang kuwaresma. Ang mga nagsisimba, batay sa kanilang sinusunod na tuntunin, ay kinukurusang muli samantalang nakaluhod. Ganito ang nakasulat sa pahina 93 aklat ni G. Demond:

Sa Miercoles ng abo winiwika ng saserdote sa paggawa ng *krus sa abo sa noo* ng mga tao: 'Memento homo, quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteres.' (Amin ang pagbibigay-diin.)

Mapapansin natin na mula sa pagbibinyag hanggang sa pagkukumpil at patuloy sa pagsisimba ay nag-aantanda ng krus ang mga katoliko. Taun-taon kung Miyerkoles ng abo ay tinatandaan sila ng krus sa noo. Paano sila binibigyan ng tanda ng krus? sa *Christ's Seven*

Sacraments, inilathala ng "Knights of Columbus" at may pahintulot ni Arsobispo Joseph E. Ritter, sa pahina 12, ay ganito ang nakasulat:

The Sign of the Cross

Then the bishop, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, *lays his right hand* on their heads and traces on their *foreheads* the Sign of the Cross with blessed oil saying: 'I sign thee with the Sign of the Cross...' (Emphasis ours).

Sa Pilipino:

Pagkatapos, ilalagay ng obispo, sa pangalan ng Ama, ng Anak at ng Espiritu Santo, ang kanyang *kanang kamay* sa kanilang mga ulo at ibabakas sa kanilang *nuo* ang *tanda ng krus* na may binin-desyunang langis na nagsasabi: 'aking tinatandaan ka ng tanda ng krus. ...'

Samakatuwid, maliwanag na ang nagtataglay ng tanda sa noo at kanang kamay ay ang mga taong Katoliko — dukha man, mayaman, maginoo, malaya, at maging alipin.

Kung gayon, sino ang binababalaan na parurusahan araw at gabi, magpakailan-kailan man (Apoc. 14:9-11)? Walang iba kundi ang mga tumanggap ng tandang ito sa Iglesia Katolika Apostolika Romana.

Ang Katuparan

Ang suliranin na lamang ay "sino kaya ang anghel o sugo" na nakita ni Apostol Juan sa pangitain, at sinulat sa Apocalipsis 14:9-11?

Kanino kaya natupad ang hulag ito? Tahasan na naming matitiyak sa inyo na ito'y walang iba kundi ang Kapatid na Felix Manalo.

Hindi maaari na matupad ito kay Juan Bautista o kaya'y sa ating Panginoong Jesucristo. Lalong hindi kay Apostol Pablo, sapagkat sa kanilang panahon ay wala pa ang Iglesia Katolika. Wala pang may tanda sa noo at kanang kamay noon. Kaya nga hula pa lamang ang ipinahayag ni Juang Apostol. Nang matupad ang hula ay nang panahong patay na sila. Hindi rin naman masasabi na ito'y natupad sa mga mangangaral na nagsiwalay sa Iglesia Katolika. Sapagkat bagaman sila'y nagsiwalay sa organisasyon, kaugali pa rin sila ng Iglesia Katolika. Ang katunayan, sa halip na ituro nilang masama ang tanda ng krus, may mga krus pa rin sila. Si Kapatid na Felix Manalo lamang ang buong giting na nagpakilala ng kasamaan ng magtaglay ng tandang ito. Siya ang nagbabala ng parusang igagawad sa mga may tanda sa noo at kanang kamay.

Sana'y maunawaan ng bawat makababasa ang babalang taglay ng pagsusugo kay Kapatid na Felix Manalo, upang iwanan na ng lahat ang nagbigay ng tanda sa noo at kanang kamay. Iwaksi na ang tandang iyan, at magkaroon tayo ng pagkakataong maligtas, gaya ng naging kapalaran ng mga tao sa Ninive, sa panahon ni Jonas. **P**

Ang Ikatitiyak Sa Sugong Halal Ng Diyos

Benjamin Santiago Sr.

ANG IPINALALAGAY NG Aibang tao na ikatitiyak sa sugong hinuhulaan ng Biblia ay kung mababasa ang pangalan ng sugo sa hula. Iyan ang hinahanap ngayon ng marami. Ito kaya ang paraang itinuturo ng Diyos upang matiyak ng tao ang sugong inihalal Niya?

Kumuha tayo ng isang hula tungkol sa paghahalal ng Diyos ng Kaniyang sugo. Sa Isaias 40:3 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

Ang tinig ng isang sumisigaw,
Ihanda ninyo sa ilang ang daan ng
Panginoon pantayin ninyo sa
ilang ang lansangan para sa ating
Dios.

Ito ay isang hula na ipinahayag ni Propeta Isaias tungkol sa paghahalal ng Diyos sa isang sugo. Dito ay hindi binanggit ang pangalan ng sugong hinuhulaan. Kanino natupad ang hula ni Propeta Isaias tungkol sa isang tinig na sisigaw sa ilang at maghahanda ng daan ng Panginoon? Ang hulang ito'y naganap kay Juan Bautista noong siya'y nangangaral sa ilang ng Judea. Bakit natin natiyak na si Juan ang hinuhulaan? Sapagkat sa kanya natupad ang hula. Ang kinatuparan ng hula ang tiyak na tinutukoy sa hula.

Tangi kay Juan Bautista, sino pa ang sugong inihalal ng Diyos subalit hindi rin binanggit ang pangalan sa hula? Ang ating Panginoong Jesucristo. Aling hula ang tumutukoy sa ating Panginoong Jesucristo? Sa Isaias 61:1-2 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

Ang Espiritu ng Panginoong
Dios ay sumasaakin; sapagka't

pinahiran ako ng Panginoon upang ipangaral ang mabubuting balita sa mga maamo; kaniyang sinugo ako upang magpagaling ng mga bagbag na puso, upang magtanyag ng kalayaan sa mga bihag, at magbukas ng bilangguan sa nangabibilanggo;

Upang magtanyag ng kalugod-lugod na taon ng Panginoon, at ng kaarawan ng paghihiganti ng ating Dios; upang aliwin yaong lahat na nagsisitanis.

Ito ay hula na tumutukoy sa isang sugo ng Diyos. Bakit natin natiyak na ang hinuhulaan dito'y ang ating Panginoong Jesucristo, gayong hindi naman binanggit ang pangalan sa hula? Sino ang nagpaliwanag ng hulang ito? Sa Lucas 4:16-21 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

At siya'y napasang Nazaret na kaniyang nilakhan: at ayon sa kaniyang kaugalian, siya'y pumasok sa sinagoga nang araw ng sabbath, at nagtindig upang bumasa.

At ibinigay sa kaniya ang aklat ng propeta Isaias. At binuklat niya ang aklat, na nasumpungan niya ang dakong kinasusulatan,

Sumasaakin ang Espiritu ng Panginoon, Sapagka't ako'y pinahiran niya upang ipangaral ang mabubuting balita sa mga dukha: Ako'y sinugo niya upang itanyag sa mga bihag ang pagkailigtas. At sa mga bulag ang pagkakita, Upang bigyan ng kalayaan ang nangaaapi,

Upang itanyag ang kaayaayang taon ng Panginoon.

At binalumbon niya ang aklat, at isinauli sa naglilingkod, at naupo: at ang mga mata ng lahat ng nangasa sinagoga ay nangakatitig sa kaniya.

At siya'y nagpasimulang mag-sabi sa kanila, Ngayo'y naganap ang kasulatang ito sa inyong mga pakinig.

Bakit natin natiyak na si Jesus ang tinutukoy ng hula? Sapagkat sa Kaniya natupad. Ang katuparan ng hula ang ikatitiyak sa hinuhulaan.

Mayroon bang sugo ng Diyos sa huling araw na ito? Sa Isaias 41:9 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

Ikaw na aking hinawakan mula sa mga wakas ng lupa, at tinawag kita mula sa mga sulok niyaon, at pinagsabihan kita, Ikaw ay aking lingkod, aking pinili ka at hindi kita itinakuwil.

Ito ay isang hula tungkol sa sugo ng Diyos sa huling araw. Tiyak na ito'y sugo ng Diyos, sapagkat ito'y hawak ng Diyos, lingkod at pinili Niya. Ngunit sa hula'y hindi binanggit ang kaniyang pangalan. Gaya ng natiyak na natin sa unahan nito, hindi ugali ng Diyos na banggitin sa hula ang pangalan ng sugong hinuhulaan. Ang nasa hula'y ang panahon at dakong pagmumulan ng sugo. Kailan ang panahon ng sugong ito? Sa mga wakas ng lupa, ayon sa hula. Kailan ang mga wakas ng lupa? Upang matiyak natin ito, kailangang pag-aralan natin ang pagkakahati ng panahon ni Cristo. Sa ilang hati nahahati ang panahon ng ating Panginoong

Jesucristo? Sa Apocalipsis 5:1 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

At nakita ko sa kanang kamay niyaong nakaupo sa luklukan ang isang aklat na may sulat sa loob at sa labas, na tinataakang mahigpit ng pitong tatak.

Dito'y may sinasabing isang aklat na tinataakang mahigpit ng pitong tatak. Aling aklat ito? Literal na aklat kaya ito? Sa Isaias 29:11, ay ganito ang sinasabi:

At ang lahat ng pangitain ay naging sa inyo'y gaya ng mga salita ng aklat na natatatakan...

Ang aklat na natatatakan ng pitong tatak ay hindi literal na aklat kundi ito'y pangitain. Ang panahon ba ni Cristo'y ipinakita sa pangitain? Sa Apocalipsis 1:10, 17-19 ay ganito ang ating mababasa:

Ako'y nasa Espiritu nang araw ng Panginoon, at narinig ko sa aking likuran ang dakilang tinig, na tulad sa isang pakakak.

At nang siya'y aking makita, ay nasubasob akong waring patay sa kaniyang paanan. At ipinatong niya sa akin ang kaniyang kanang kamay, na sinasabi, Huwag kang matakot: ako'y ang una at ang huli.

At ang nabubuhay, at ako'y namatay, at narito, ako'y nabubuhay magpakailan man, at nasa akin ang susi ng kamatayan at ng Hades.

Isulat mo nga ang mga bagay na nakita mo, at ang mga bagay ngayon, at ang mga bagay na mangyayari sa darating;

Sa ilang bahagi nahahati ang panahon ni Cristo? Nahahati sa pitong buko ng panahon, na kung tawagin ay mga tatak — pitong tatak. Alin dito ang tinatawag na mga wakas ng lupa? Ang mga wakas ng lupa ay ang katapusan ng ikaanim na tatak at ang simula ng ikapitong tatak. Ang katapusan ng ikaanim na tatak ay isang wakas. Ang simula ng ikapitong tatak ay isa ring wakas, sapagkat ito ang wakas na hati ng panahon ni Cristo, at ang dulo ng

ikapitong tatak ay wakas naman ng sanlibutan. Anong petsa ang katapat nito sa ating kalendaryo? Upang ito'y mabatid natin, kailangngang malaman natin ang pangyayaring naganap sa katapusan ng ikaanim na tatak. Sa Apocalipsis 6:12 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

At nakita ko nang buksan niya ang ikaanim na tatak...

Dito'y sinasabing binuksan ang ikaanim na tatak. Ano ang pangyayaring naganap sa katapusan nito? Ganito ang sinasabi sa Apocalipsis 6:15:

At ang mga hari sa lupa, at ang mga prinsipe, at ang mga pangulong kapitan, at ang mayayaman, at ang mga makapangyarihan, at ang bawa't alipin at ang bawa't laya, ay nagsipagtago sa mga yungib at sa mga bato sa mga bundok.

Sa katapusan ng ikaanim na tatak, ang lahat ng uri ng tao ay nagsipagtago sa mga yungib. Ano ang dahilan ng pagtatago sa mga yungib ng lahat ng uri ng mga tao? Sa Jeremias 4:13, 19 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

Narito, siya'y sasagupang parang mga ulap, at ang kaniyang mga karo ay magiging parang ipo-ipo; ang kaniyang mga kabayo ay lalong matulin kay sa mga aguila. Sa aba natin! sapagkat tayo'y nangapahamak.

Ang hirap ko, ang hirap ko! Ako'y nagdaramdam sa aking puso; ang dibdib ko ay kakabakaba, hindi ako matahimik; sapagka't iyong narinig, Oh kaluluwa ko, ang tunog ng pakakak, ang hudyat ng pakikipagdigma.

Ano ang dahilan ng pagtatago sa mga yungib ng lahat ng uri ng tao sa katapusan ng ikaanim na tatak? May digmaan. Anong uring digmaan ito? Makabagong digmaan, sapagkat ang mga sandatang ginamit sa digmaang ito ay makabago. Anu-ano ang mga sandatang ginamit? Mga karo na

parang ipo-ipo at mga kabayo na matulin pa sa mga aguila, na may dalang kapahamakan at may hudyat kapag ito'y dumarating; at kung ito'y marinig ng mga tao'y kakabakaba ang kanilang mga dibdib at hindi sila matahimik, at nagsisipagtago sila sa mga yungib.

Alin itong mga karo na parang ipo-ipo? Ito ang mga tangke. Alin naman itong mga kabayo na matulin pa sa mga agila? Ito ang mga eroplano na may dalang mga bomba — tinatawag na "aerial cavalry" (*World History*, p. 478). Alin itong hudyat na kapag narinig ng mga tao'y kumakaba ang kanilang mga dibdib? Ito ang tunog ng 'sirena' na nagbababala na may pagsalakay mula sa himpapawid. Ano ang ginagawa ng mga tao kung ito'y marinig? Sila'y nagsisipagtago sa mga yungib, na sa makabagong tawag ay "air raid shelter."

Kailan naganap ang digmaang ito na unang ginamitan ng mga tangke at eroplano? Noong 1914. Bakit natin natitiyak na ito'y sa katapusan ng ikaanim na tatak at sa simula ng ikapitong tatak — na kung tawagin sa Biblia'y mga wakas ng lupa? Sapagkat sinabi ng ating Panginoong Jesucristo na kung ating makita na naganap ang digmaang ito, siya'y malapit na, nasa mga pintuan na (Mat. 24:33).

Samakatuwid, ang tinatawag sa Biblia na mga wakas ng lupa ay ang katapusan ng ikaanim na tatak at simula ng ikapitong tatak, na ang katapat na petsa sa ating kalendaryo ay 1914.

Sino ang sugong lumitaw noong 1914? Si Kapatid na Felix Manalo. Bakit sa hula'y hindi binanggit ang kaniyang pangalan? Gaya nang naliwanagan na natin sa unahan nito, hindi ugali ng Diyos na banggitin sa hula ang pangalan ng sugong hinuhulaan. Hindi sa pangalan matitiyak ng tao kung sino ang sugong inihalal ng Diyos sa pamamagitan ng hula. Bagkus, sa pamamagitan ng katuparan.

► 74

Ang Ikatitibay Ng Sambahayang Cristiano

Teofilo C. Ramos Sr.

ANG KATATAGAN NG sambahayan ay may malaking kinalaman sa katatagan ng lipunan o ng bansa, sa kabuuan. Bagaman pinakamaliit na bahagi ng lipunan ang sambahayan, nakakaapekto ito nang malaki sa kapakanan ng lipunan. Kung wasak ang mga sambahayan, nagbubunga ito ng masama sa lipunan sa kabuuan. Kapag matatag ang mga sambahayan na bumubuo sa lipunan ay nagiging matatag at matibay din ang lipunan o ang sambayanan.

Ang isa sa mga palatandaan ng paghina ng taling bumubuklod sa sambahayan ay ang bumababang pagtingin ng tao sa institusyon ng pagkakasal. May mga tao na hindi gaanong pinahahalagahan ang kasal. Ang iba'y nagsasama nang hindi nakakasal (karaniwang tinatawag na "live-in"). Sinisira naman ng iba ang bisa ng kasal sa pamamagitan ng diborsiyo. Nagaganap ito sa mga bansang may batas ukol dito. At, sa mga bansang hindi nagpapahintulot sa diborsiyo ay sukat na lamang na naghiiwalay ang mag-asawa at nakikisama sa iba bilang asawa.

Kung ating ibabaling ang ating pansin sa mga suliraning nagpaparumi sa lipunan, matutunton natin ang marami sa mga wasak na tahanan (broken homes). Karaniwan, sa mga wasak na tahanan nagmumula ang mga "drug addicts," lasenggo, "juvenile delinquents," at iba't iba pang gumagawa ng kasamaan.

Ilan lamang ito sa ibinubunga ng pagpapawalang-kabuluhan sa institusyon ng pag-aasawa o kaya nama'y ng di maingat na paraan o wala sa wastong panahon ng pag-aasawa.

Ano ang malaking kamalian ng mga taong nag-aakala na walang anuman ang pagpapawalang-bisa sa kasal o paghihiwalay ng mag-asawa?

Sa Mateo 19:5-6 ay ganito ang pahayag ni Cristo bilang pag-uulit Niya sa batas ng Diyos sa pag-aasawa:

At sinabi, 'Dahil dito, iiwan ng lalaki ang kanyang ama't ina, at magsasama sila ng kanyang asawa; at sila'y magiging isa.' Kaya't hindi na sila dalawa kundi isa. Ang pinagsama ng Diyos ay huwag paghiwalayin ng tao.

Ayon kay Cristo, ang mag-asawa na pinapagsama ng Diyos ay hindi na dalawa kundi iisa na sa paningin ng Diyos — ang pinapagsama ng Diyos ay hindi dapat paghiwalayin ng tao. Kaya, ang diborsiyo ay salungat sa panukala ng Diyos.

Bakit ganiyan kahalaga sa Diyos ang kasal? Sino ba ang lumalang ng kasal o ng pag-aasawa? Sa Genesis 1:27-28 ay ganito ang mababasa:

At nilalang ng Dios ang tao ayon sa kanyang sariling larawan, ayon sa larawan ng Dios siya nilalang; nilalang Niya sila na lalake at babae. At sila'y binasbasan ng Dios, at sa kanila'y sinabi ng Dios, Kayo'y magpalaanakin, at magpakarami, at kalatan ninyo ang lupa, at inyong supilin; at magkaroon ng kapangyarihan sa mga isda sa dagat, at sa mga ibon sa himpapawid, at sa bawat hayop na gumagalaw sa ibabaw ng lupa.

At sa Genesis 2:23-24 ay ganito pa ang pahayag:

At sinabi ng lalaki, Ito nga'y buto ng aking buto at laman ng aking laman; siya'y tatawaging Babae, sapagkat sa Lalaki siya kinuha.

Kaya't iiwan ng lalaki ang kanyang ama at ang kanyang ina, at makikipisan sa kanyang asawa; at sila'y magiging isang laman.

Napakahalaga sa Diyos ng kasal o ng pag-aasawa. Siya ang lumalang nito. Nang ang unang lalaki at unang babae ay pagsamahin Niya ay binasbasan muna sila ng Diyos, ang katumbas noo'y sila'y ikinasal. Ginawa silang isang laman, at noon din ay itinakda ng Diyos ang pamalagiang batas na ang Kanyang pinagsama ay ginawang isang laman at hindi dapat paghiwalayin ng tao. Lumalapastangan sa Diyos at sa batas ng Diyos ang mag-asawa na nagdidiborsiyo sapagkat pinawawalang-kabuluhan nila ang bagay na itinatag ng Diyos.

Ang nakakatulad ng nagpapawalang-kabuluhan sa pag-aasawa na itinatag ng Diyos ay ang nagpapawalang-kabuluhan sa itinatag ni Cristo na kaparaanan sa paglilig-tas. Alin ang itinatag ni Cristo upang ang tao ay maligtas? Sa Mateo 16:18 ay ganito ang mababasa:

At sinasabi ko naman sa iyo, ikaw ay Pedro, at sa ibabaw ng batong ito ay itatayo ko ang aking iglesia, at hindi makapananaig sa kanya kahit ang kapangyarihan ng kamatayan. (MB)

Ang Iglesia ay itinatag ni Cristo. Ang katotohanang ito ay nagpapakilalang mahalaga ang Iglesia. Hindi ito itatayo ni Cristo kung ito ay hindi mahalaga. Kapag sinabi ninuman na hindi kailangan ang Iglesia na itinayo ni Cristo, para na rin niyang sinabi na ang itinayo ni Cristo ay walang halaga. Samantalang ayon kay Cristo ang Iglesia na itinayo Niya ay hindi mapananaigan kahit ng kapangyarihan ng kamatayan. Ang nagsasabing si Cristo na lamang ang tatanggapin Niya at ang Iglesia ay hindi Niya kailangan ay nakakatulad ng taong nag-aakalang hindi masamang paghiwalayin ang mag-asawang pinapagsama ng Diyos.

Huwag ninyong isipin na tayo'y humihiwalay sa ating paksa. Ang pagkakaugnay ng mag-asawa ay itinulad ng Biblia sa pagkakaugnay ni Cristo at ng Iglesia. Sa Efeso 5:31-32 ay ganito ang mababasa:

Dahil dito, iiwan ng lalaki, ang kanyang ama't ina at magsasama sila ng kanyang asawa; at sila'y magiging isa. Isang dakilang katotohanan ang inihahayag nito — ang kaugnayan ni Cristo sa iglesia ang tinutukoy ko. (MB)

Nang ipaliwanag ni Apostol Pablo ang kaugnayan ni Cristo sa Iglesia ay inilarawan niya ang pagkakaugnay ng mag-asawa: iiwan ng lalaki ang kanyang ama't ina at magsasama sila ng kanyang asawa at sila'y magiging isa. Kaya, kung paanong mahalaga ang pagkakaugnay ni Cristo sa Iglesia ay gayon kahalaga ang pagkakaugnay ng lalaki at ng babae na mag-asawa. Si Cristo ang ulo ng Iglesia na katawan Niya (Col. 1:18). Kung paanong hindi dapat paghiwalayin si Cristo at ang Kaniyang Iglesia, hindi rin dapat paghiwalayin ang lalaki at ang babae na mag-asawa. Iyan ay paglabag sa batas ng Diyos at pagpapawalang-kabuluhan sa ginawa ng Diyos.

Paano mapananatili ang mabuting pagsasamahan ng mag-asawa? Ano ang dapat maging huwaran ng kanilang pagsasama? Sa Efeso 5:25, 33 ay ganito ang mababasa:

Mga lalaki, ibigin ninyo ang inyo-inyong asawa, gaya naman ni Cristo na umibig sa Iglesia, at ibinigay ang kanyang sarili dahil sa kanya.

Gayon man ay umibig naman ang bawat isa sa inyo sa kani-kanyang sariling asawa gaya ng sa kanyang sarili; at ang babae ay gumalang sa kanyang asawa.

Inibig ni Cristo ang Kaniyang Iglesia. Katunayan, ibinigay Niya ang Kaniyang buhay dahil dito. Sa gayon ding

paraan nararapat naman na ibigin ng lalaki ang kaniyang asawa. Ang babae naman ay nararapat gumalang sa kaniyang asawa.

Paano pa pinahalagahan ni Cristo ang Kaniyang Iglesia? Sa Efeso 5:28-29 ay ganito ang pahayag:

Dapat mahalín ng mga lalaki ang kani-kanilang asawa tulad ng sarili nilang katawan, Ang lalaking nagmamahal sa kanyang asawa ay nagmamahal sa kanyang sarili. Walang taong namumuhi sa sarili niyang katawan, bagkus ito'y pinakakain at inaalagaan, gaya ng ginagawa ni Cristo sa Iglesia. (MB)

Minahal ni Cristo ang Kaniyang Iglesia. Pinakain at inalagaan Niya ang Iglesia. Gayon din ang dapat gawin ng lalaki: mahalín, pakanin, at alagaan ang kaniyang asawa.

Ano naman ang dapat tularan ng babae sa pakikitungo sa asawang lalaki? Sa Filipos 3:8 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

Oo, inari kong kalugihan ang lahat ng bagay bilang kapalit ng lalong mahalaga, ang pagkakilala kay Cristo Jesus na aking Panginoon. Ang lahat ng bagay ay ipinalagay kong walang kabuluhan makamtan ko lamang si Cristo. (*Ibid.*)

Ang marami sa mga suliraning panlipunan ay matutunton sa mga wasak na tahanan.

Sa ganang tunay na Iglesia ni Cristo, ang pagpapahalaga niya kay Cristo ay nasa ibabaw ng lahat ng bagay. Ipinalalagay niyang ang lahat ay walang kabuluhan kung ihahambing sa lalong mahalaga, ang pagkakilala kay Cristo Jesus. Gayon din, dapat pahalagahan ng babae ang kaniyang asawa nang higit sa alinmang bagay. Kapag ganito ang pagkakaugnay ng lalaki at babae na mag-asawa ay magiging maligaya at matahimik ang tahanan.

Bakit mahalaga na matiyak ng mag-asawa na ang kanilang pagsasama ay ayon sa kalooban ng Diyos? Sa I Pedro 3:7 ay ganito ang paliwanag:

Kayo namang mga lalaki, pakitunguhan ninyong mabuti ang inyo-inyong asawa, sapagkat sila'y mahina, at tulad ninyo'y may karapatan din sa buhay na walang hanggang kaloob sa inyo ng Diyos. Sa gayon, walang magiging sagabal sa inyong panalangin. (*Ibid.*)

Ang pagmamahalan ng mag-asawa ay mahalaga sa harapan ng Diyos. Kailangan ng mag-asawa ang kapayapaan, sapagkat pareho silang tagapagmana ng buhay na walang hanggan mula sa Diyos. Ang kanilang kapayapaan ay kailangan upang huwag mahadlangan ang kanilang panalangin sa Diyos. Ang Diyos ay hindi Diyos ng kaguluhan, kundi ng kapayapaan. Upang dinggin ng Diyos ang mga panalangin ng mag-asawang

Hindi dapat itiwala lamang sa ibang tao ang mga anak.

Cristiano ay kailangang maghari sa kanila ang matamis at maayos na pagsasama.

Paano naman dapat palakihin ng mga magulang ang kanilang mga anak? Sa Efeso 6:4 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

Mga magulang, huwag ninyong ibuyo sa paghihimagsik laban sa inyo ang inyong anak dahil sa malabis ninyong kahigpitan; sa halip, palakihin sila sa tuntunin at aral ng Panginoon. (MB)

Malaki ang pananagutan ng mga magulang sa kanilang mga anak. Kailangang palakihin ang mga anak sa tuntunin at aral ng Diyos. Kailangang itatag ang relihiyoin sa tahanan. Kailanma'y hindi dapat ibuyo ang mga anak sa paghihimagsik dahil sa malabis na kahigpitan.

Sa anong pagkakataon dapat magturo ng relihiyon ang mga magulang sa mga anak? Kailan dapat mangaral ang magulang sa mga anak? Kung kailan lamang ba nagkasala dapat mangangaral at kaipala ay kasabay pa ang pagpaparusa? Sa Deuteronomio 6:2, 6-7 ay ganito ang pahayag:

Ang mga ito'y ibinigay sa inyo ni Yahweh at sa inyong magiging supling upang magkaroon kayo ng takot sa kanya. Kung ito'y susundin ninyo, hahaba ang inyong buhay... Ang mga utos niya'y itanim ninyo sa inyong isip. Ituro ninyo ito sa inyong mga anak; sa loob at labas ng inyong tahanan, sa oras ng paggawa at pamamahinga, sa lahat ng lugar at sa lahat ng panahon. (MB)

Ang pagtuturo ng mga aral ng Diyos sa anak ay dapat gawin sa loob at labas ng tahanan, sa lahat ng lugar at sa lahat ng panahon. Ituro nang buong kahinahunan at buong pag-ibig ang mga tuntunin ng Diyos upang ang mga ito'y kanilang pahalagahan.

Sino ang dapat sumubaybay na mainam sa mga anak? Sa Kawikaan 31:27 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

◀71

Tangi rito, ano pa ang sinasabi ng hula tungkol sa pagkasugo ni Kapatid na Manalo? Doon din sa Isaias 41:9 ay sinabi pa ng Diyos tungkol sa Kaniyang huling sugo: "Pinagsabihan kita, ikaw ay aking lingkod, aking pinili ka at hindi kita itinakuwil." Maliwanag na ito'y sugo ng Diyos, sapagkat siya'y tinawag, lingkod na pinili ng Diyos. Gaano katibay ang pagkakahalal sa sugo ng Diyos sa huling araw? Ang sabi ng Diyos: "Hindi kita

itinakuwil." Samakatuwid, maaaring siya'y itakwil ng lahat at itinakuwil nga siya. Itinakuwil siya ng kaniyang mga kamag-anak, ng mga pari, at ng mga pastor. Ngunit matibay ang pangako ng Diyos: "Hindi kita itinakuwil."

Ano ang tungkulin ng sugo ng Diyos sa Huling Araw? Sa Isaias 46:11 ay ganito ang sinasabi:

Na tumatawag ng ibong mandaragit mula sa silanganan, ng

Kanyang tinitingnang mabuti ang mga lakad ng kanyang sambahayan, At hindi kumakain ng tinapay ng katamaran.

Ang mabuting asawang babae o ina ay sumusubaybay sa lakad ng kanilang mga anak. Kung sakali mang tumutulong ang ina sa paghanap ng ikabubuhay, dapat lagi siyang may panahon sa pagsubaybay sa mga anak. Hindi marapat itiwala lamang sa ibang tao ang mga anak. Kailangan ang wastong "upbrining" ng mga bata. Ang mabuting ina, higit sa lahat, ang makagagawa nito.

Ating nakita ang mga pananagutan ng mag-asawa. Ano naman ang tungkulin ng mga anak sa kanilang mga magulang? Sa Efeso 6:1-3 ay ganito ang mababasa:

Mga anak, sundin ninyo ang inyong magulang, alang-alang sa Panginoon, sapagkat ito ang nararapat. Igalang mo ang inyong ama at ina. Ito ang unang utos na may kalakip na pangako; ganito ang pangako: ikaw ay giginhawa at lalawig ang inyong buhay rito sa lupa. (*Ibid.*)

Pananagutan ng mga anak na sumunod sa mga magulang, alang-alang sa Panginoon. Kailanma't ang kanilang ipinatutupad ay ang kalooban ng Panginoong Diyos ay tungkulin ng mga anak na sumunod. Iyan ang nararapat. Dapat igalang ng mga anak ang kanilang ama at ina sapagkat ito ang unang utos na may kalakip na pangako. Pinangangakuan ng kaginhawahan at mahabang buhay dito pa sa lupa ang mabuting mga anak. Ang mga lapastangang anak ay may sumpa ng Diyos dito pa sa lupa.

Ang mga aral ng Diyos sa bawat kaanib ng sambahayan ay siyang dapat tuparin sapagkat ito ang marapat sa mga tunay na Cristiano. Dapat maging tularan ng lalaki si Cristo sa pag-ibig at pagmamahal sa Iglesia sa kaniyang pagmamahal at pag-ibig sa kaniyang asawa. Ang pagmamahal ng Iglesia kay Cristo ay siya namang dapat tularan ng babae sa pag-ibig at paggalang sa kaniyang asawa. Ang mga anak ng Cristiano ay dapat laging gumalang at sumunod sa mga magulang habang ang mga ito'y nabubuhay. Sa ganito'y magiging matibay at matatag ang sambahayang Cristiano. **P**

taong gumagawa ng aking payo mula sa malayong lupain; oo, aking sinalita, akin namang papangyarihin; aking pinanukala, akin namang gagawin.

Itinulad sa ibong mandaragit ang gawain ng sugong ito. Hindi tunay na ibon ang tinutukoy. Ito ay tao na gumagawa ng payo ng Diyos. Ang ibon ay magmumula sa malayo. Samakatuwid, ang sugo ng Diyos na itinulad sa ibong mandaragit ay

mula sa Malayong Silangan. Ang Malayong Silangan na kinatuparan ng hula ay ang Pilipinas (*World History*, p. 445).

Bakit itinulad sa ibong mandaragit ang tungkulin ng sugo ng Diyos sa huling araw o ni Kapatid na Felix Manalo? Sapagkat sa paglitaw ng sugong ito, ang mga tao ay kupkop na o akay na ng dalawang malaking relihiyon dito sa Pilipinas — Katoliko at Protestante. Nakakulong na sa mga relihiyong ito ang mga kinikilala ng Diyos na Kaniyang mga anak na lalake at babae, gaya ng mababasa natin sa Isaias 43:5-6:

Huwag kang matakot, sapagka't ako'y sumasaiyo: aking dadalhin ang iyong lahi mula sa silanganan, at pipisanin kita mula sa kalunuran;

Aking sasabihin sa hilagaan, Bayaan mo, at sa timugan, Huwag mong pigilin; dalhin mo rito ang aking mga anak na lalake na mula sa malayo, at ang aking mga anak na babae na mula sa mga wakas ng lupa.

Ayon sa pahayag ng hula, ang mga anak ng Diyos ay nasa hilagaan at timugan, pinipigil at ayaw bayaang umalis. Ang kumakatawan sa Hilagaan ay ang Protestantismo na mula sa Amerika del Norte o Hilagang Amerika. Ang kumakatawan naman sa Timugan ay ang Katolisismo na mula sa Roma na nasa Timugan ng Europa. May mga anak ang Diyos na nakukulong sa mga relihiyong ito. Kailangang sila'y makuha ng Diyos sa pamamagitan ng sugo na itinulad sa ibong mandaragit. Ang sugong ito ang daragit sa mga anak ng Diyos sa pamamagitan ng payo ng Diyos o ng mga salita ng Diyos na kaniyang ipangangaral.

Ang pagkatupad kay Kapatid na Felix Y. Manalo ng lahat ng itinakda ng hula tungkol sa sugo ng Diyos sa huling araw ay siyang malinaw na katibayang siya nga ang hinuhulaan na sugo ng Diyos. **P**

Palatandaan

Nasa ibaba ang nilalaman ng palatandaang inilagay sa dakong sinilangan ni Kapatid na Felix Y. Manalo sa Taguig, Metro Manila bilang paggunita ng Iglesia ni Cristo sa ika-100 anibersaryo ng kaniyang kapanganakan.

FELIX YSAGUN MANALO
(1886-1963)

SUGO NG DIYOS

Si Kapatid na Felix Y. Manalo, unang nangaral ng Iglesia ni Cristo sa Pilipinas at unang Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan nito (1914-1963), ay isinilang sa pook na ito ng Barrio Calzada, Tipas, Taguig, Rizal noong Mayo 10, 1886.

Siya ang kinatuparan ng mga hula ng Banal na Kasulatan tungkol sa sugong inihalal ng Diyos upang mangaral ng Ebanghelyo ng kaligtasan sa mga huling araw, at upang maging kasangkapan sa pagbangong muli ng Iglesia ni Cristo (Apocalipsis 7:2-3; Isaias 41:9-16; 43:5-6; 46:11).

Mangangaral ng Ebanghelyo, Pastor ng mga tupa ng Diyos, Manunulat, Orador, Administrador, siya ay kinilala rin maging ng iba't ibang relihiyon bilang isang makapangyarihang lider ng relihiyon. Ang Iglesia ni Cristo na pinasimulan niyang ipangaral sa Punta, Sta. Ana, Maynila ay narehistro noong Hulyo 27, 1914 sa pamahalaan ng Pilipinas. Ito ay lumago at matagumpay niyang pinangasiwaan hanggang sa siya'y pinapagpahinga ng Diyos noong Abril 12, 1963.

Ang palatandaang ito ay inilagay dito sa dakong kaniyang sinilangan sa ika-100 taong anibersaryo ng kaniyang kapanganakan, sa isang pagtitipong pinangasiwaan ni Kapatid na Eraño G. Manalo, Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan ng Iglesia.

Onward To New Frontiers

*"From the far east will
I bring your offspring, and from
the far west I will gather you."
— Is. 43:5 (Moffatt)*

Alfred Boyer Jr.

THE WHOLE IDEA might have been considered impossible at first. Preposterously impossible.

Almost two decades ago, the idea was born of a desperate cry from afar. Very far, in fact; thousands of miles to be more exact. The voice originated from the islands of Hawaii. Eventually, it was heard in the Philippines by one with the souls of millions under his care. The message: "We're here."

The voices multiplied. San Francisco made its presence known, followed by Los Angeles and New York. The Church Administration pondered on these cries, seriously weighing what some would merely call wishful thinking and a manifestation of the *Iglesia's* sense of humor.

The idea: Perform the greatest feat of evangelical engineering by constructing a bridge of faith over the mighty Pacific so that the Church could migrate to the Far West. Had religious history ever been altered in such a fashion?

History has its rigid rules that are almost as strict as those of nature. They are based upon the usual and peculiar patterns of events that shape it and are created and ratified in the minds of everyone.

Ever since Christianity was introduced to the Philippines, religion always flowed inward from the western world. The Spanish brought in Catholicism in the 16th century. And, in the wake of the Spanish-American War, the victorious Americans shipped in just about every major Protestant denomination.

Religion was always imported. To imagine that such events could successfully take place in the opposite direction seemed absolutely illogical. The West-East pattern was already established. Who would dare oppose it?

In the summer of '68, the *Iglesia ni Cristo*, an indigenous Philippine religion, was preparing to deliver its

response to the anxious brethren scattered abroad who wanted to continue fulfilling their services to the Lord. The time was ripe because, in the Philippines, the Church was bursting at the seams with brethren. The INC's presence was manifest throughout the entire length of the archipelago. There were no more frontiers in the Islands. It was time to move onward.

This situation did not take the Church completely by surprise. Those with open minds and a little imagination could have seen it coming, even from the time of the late Brother Felix Y. Manalo, the man believed to be a messenger of divine calling. The organization was growing by leaps and bounds and never broke stride, even during the days of melancholy darkness following the messenger's passing in 1963. His death did not spell out curtain time for the *Iglesia* as many outsiders had predicted and expected. To their surprise, the show had just begun. And the next act was scheduled to open on a stage where no Philippine religion had gone before.

The new frontier would definitely be the Far West for the revealed presence of brethren within that region was no accident, but destiny in the making, according to the retrospective viewpoint of *Iglesia* devotees. It is their faith that their election as the exclusive children of God is the fulfillment of the ancient prophecy of Isaiah wherein God says, "From the far east will I bring your offspring, and from the far west I will gather you." Thus, as long as the Church remained in the Far Eastern country of the Philippines, the prophecy would remain half-complete.

On July 26, 1968, the eve of the Church's 54th anniversary, Brother Eraño G. Manalo, the Church's executive minister, along with old guards Cipriano Sandoval and Pedro Meimban II, departed the Philippines enroute to an appointment of divine making.

Upon arriving in Honolulu, they were met by misty-eyed brethren who had once sought the adventure and wealth that other lands could offer. Now, these brethren desired to return to that which is more precious than treasure—their cherished relationship with the One from above who had caused their very existence.

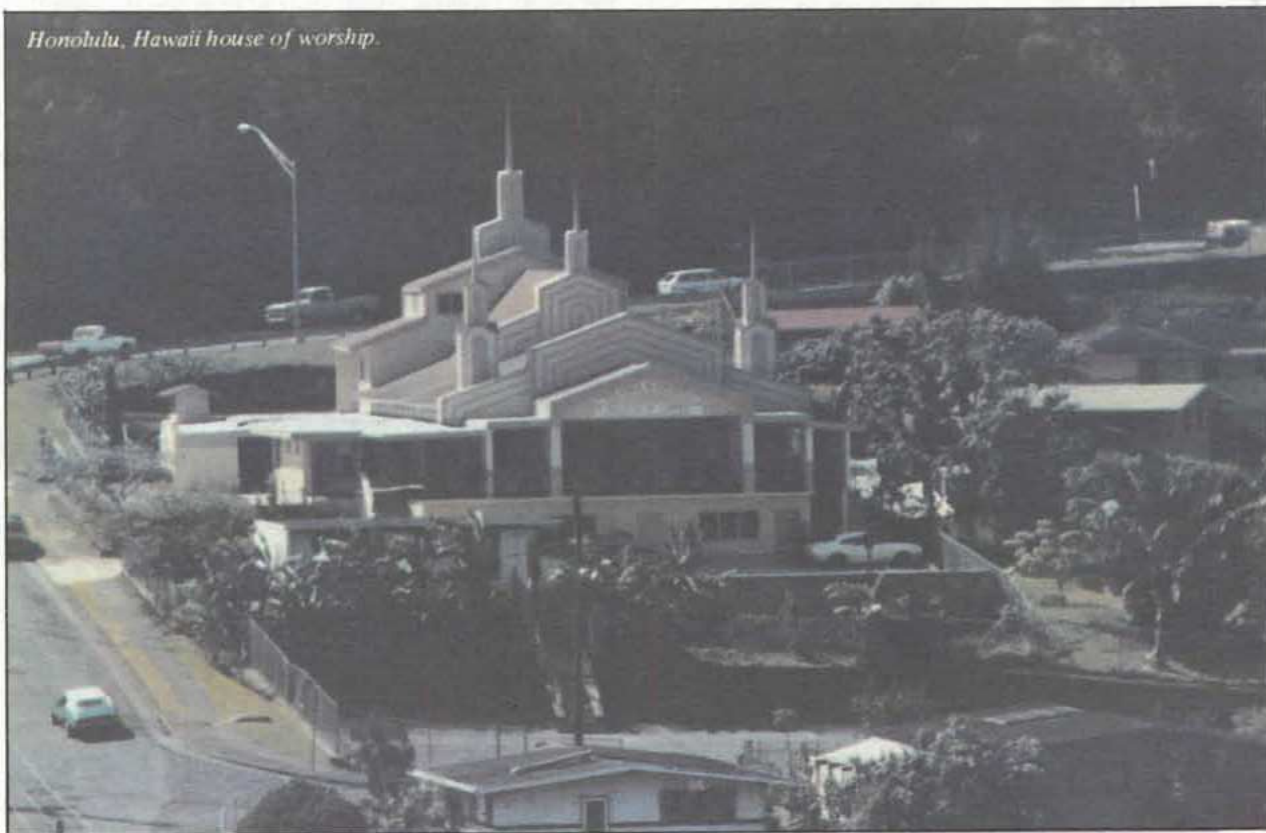
They welcomed the Administrator with open arms and hearts. His presence, which immediately filled them with hope, spoke for itself and provided their previous pleas with an eloquent reply: The Church had arrived and was here to stay.

With renewed courage, the INC's newborn foreign mission faced the future and their anticipated struggle

The unfurling of the scroll formally establishing the locale of Honolulu, Hawaii on July 27, 1968.



Honolulu, Hawaii house of worship.



***Progress occurred so swiftly
that it wasn't long before
the Church's presence reached
every inhabited continent
on the planet***

with the new world's giants who bore names like Adventist, Mormon, Lutheran and the like, and numbered as the sands of the sea.

Thus, the logic of mortals was rendered nonsense. And such is the proper way of things as Apostle Paul put it almost two millenia ago: "...the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

The *Iglesia* had dropped anchor and was disembarking on foreign shores. With the presence of the newcomer, the realm of Western Christendom would never be quite the same.

Today's Foreign Mission

Ever since those humble beginnings in 1968, the brethren abroad have had the pedal to the metal and were unaware of the speed that the foreign mission was developing. Progress occurred so swiftly that it wasn't long before the Church's presence reached every inhabited continent on the planet.

Progressiveness is not only measured geographically. It is also sized up in more "concrete" ways. Take, for instance, the acquisition of houses of worship. Once upon a time, especially during the 70's, the Church got its chapels usually by purchasing sizeable buildings from private owners. Later, these structures would be renovated into suitable places of worship. Sometimes, chapels were bought from other religions as what was done in 1970 for the congregation of San Francisco which received the first house of worship acquired for the overseas mission.

During the early years abroad, purchases such as these proved to be more economical for the *Iglesia* than having its own new structures erected. The Church had to get its feet on the ground first before attempting to continue what it had been practicing for decades in the Philippines—the construction of imposing houses of worship.

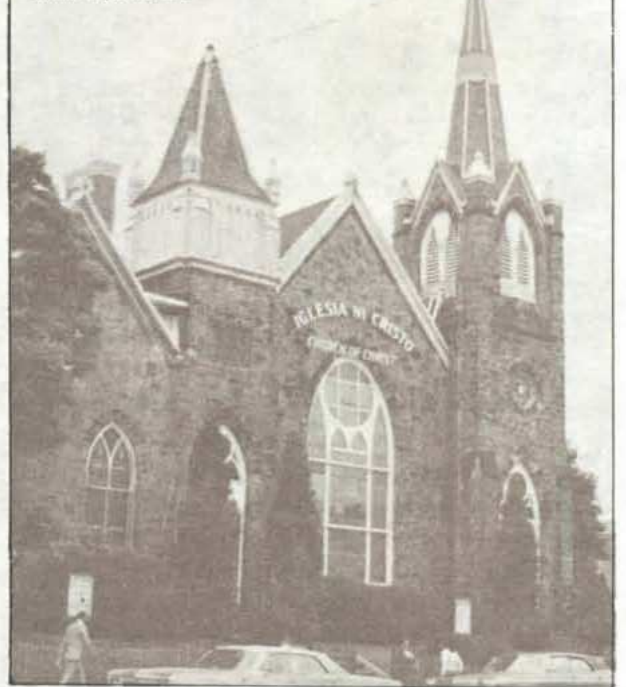
The first locale to attempt to reverse this trend was that of Jacksonville, Florida. In 1977, the locale dedicated a modest \$96,000 structure that had been built from scratch. Following close behind on Jacksonville's

heels was the congregation of Washington, D.C. Realizing that theirs would be erected in the midst of the United States' capital city, the brethren there wished their chapel to complement its environment. In time, the locale was able to construct one of the prettiest INC houses of worship in the nation that had a price tag of over \$700,000. Officiating the April 18, 1982 dedication service was no less than the late Brother Cipriano Sandoval, the former INC administrative secretary.

The Washington, D.C. congregation, however, did not immediately establish new trends. In the years that followed, locales continued to purchase real estate from other religions. This remained the norm until the congregation of National City, California (a suburb of San Diego) outgrew its chapel which it had purchased many years before. It could no longer accommodate the brethren's multiplying number, even if several worship services were held on Thursdays and Sundays. The solutions were obvious: either buy a bigger place or *build* a bigger place. National City went for the latter.

The Central Administration in the Philippines welcomed this idea with enthusiasm and appropriated the necessary funding. And, instead of going through the additional trouble of searching for a site on which to build, the Church thought it best to demolish the

Philadelphia, Pa.



San Francisco, Ca.



existing chapel and erect a new one in its place.

On June 29, 1985, the new house of worship was dedicated in a service officiated by Brother Edward M. Maranan, an instructor of evangelical studies at New Era College in Quezon City, Philippines.

National City Locale can be considered the actual trend setter for it had hardly finished dedicating its chapel when another California congregation, San Gabriel Valley, began construction on theirs. The circumstances leading to San Gabriel's decision to build were similar to National City's. The chapel had become too small and the locale just happened to have a lot on which to build. Of course, the existing chapel would have to disappear before the new one could be constructed but details, details—they could all be easily ironed out.

Before they knew it, the San Gabriel brethren had themselves a new home that was dedicated in a special service on January 18, 1986 which was officiated by Brother Adriel O. Meimban, dean of evangelical studies at NEC. The bandwagon was moving swiftly and more congregations were expected to hop on in the near future.

Another area in which progress is evident is evangelization. The conventional means of evangelization or propagation of the faith is the personal Bible study done by the minister of the Church worker with listeners who are interested in the Church's doctrines. Wishing to deliver the word of God in a fashion more typical of the present hi-tech era, the locale of Santa Maria, California has had its assigned regular worker, Brother Rick Tanghal, preaching on a radio program since February 10, 1985 every Sunday morning. The religious broadcasts have met with success as indicated by letters of praise from delighted listeners.

And, as if radio broadcasts weren't enough, the Administration appears quite eager to expand on the idea of television evangelism in the U.S. and is looking into the possibilities of establishing a regular show in the near future. The congregation of Stockton, California was the first to try television outside the Philippines when it aired a taped Bible exposition on cable television in 1983.

Evangelization in the foreign mission has its more dramatic side with roles being played by veteran ministers like Brothers Fernando Suarez and Lorenzo de

Who would have ever thought that the INC would someday end up practically right in the Vatican's backyard?

Vera. Brother Suarez, who is now the resident minister of Oakland, California, often finds himself involved with what is perhaps the most polemic and apologetic of missionary methods which is the religious debate. The number of public encounters he has had with preachers of other faiths—especially the organization which also calls itself Church of Christ that was known as the Disciples of Christ during its early history—certainly provides evidence that the *Iglesia* presence in the West is being taken seriously.

In contrast with these debates, the method made popular by Brother de Vera, resident minister of San Jose, California, is somewhat subdued. His technique is known as the Comparative Bible Study and is, reportedly, quite effective.

For this type of doctrinal study, the *Iglesia* minister invites a few clergymen from other religions to be guest speakers at a Bible study. Visitors, who are nonmembers of the Church, are also invited to attend. During the session, the visitors would be encouraged to direct any questions they have concerning religion to the preachers of various religious backgrounds, among whom is the INC representative. The ministers will then take turns addressing the questions, basing their answers, as much as they are capable, on the Scriptures. In this way, the visitors can compare the answers of each preacher and decide for himself which ones he considers true without the adulteration of opinion.

In the past, it was an accepted reality that INC ministers were Filipinos. After all, the organization had its origins in the Far East and one would be foolish to expect otherwise. Yet, the 1980's, certainly a decade of change, brought in ministers and student workers of other nationalities. In 1983, for example, three American citizen ministers—Brothers Salvador Cayabyab, Steven Kroll and Edward Maranan—were ordained. At present, Brother Cayabyab is a resident minister assigned to Lahaina Locale in Hawaii. Brother Kroll is of the same status and is assigned to the locale of St. Paul-Minneapolis, Minnesota while Brother Maranan, an instructor of ministerial subjects at NEC, is soon to proceed to the U.S. to begin an im-

portant assignment regarding the training of student ministers abroad.

Since the entrance of these brethren into the ministry, at least 17 other "foreigners" (non-Filipino citizens) have gone to the Islands to take up studies for this noble vocation. And, if events occur as planned, a centralized Evangelical College extension in the States will be established in the near future to bring in more workers to reap the fruits of the spiritual harvest in the Western world.

This decade of new trends has also inculcated an attitude within the members abroad that enables them to go beyond the usual ways of sharing love with their fellowmen. In an effort to emulate the Administration's *Lingap sa Mamamayan* (Concern for the Citizens) project, Washington, D.C. Locale has initiated a community service project on its own. In this endeavor headed by Brother Angel Casanova, supervising minister of the Eastern Seaboard, items like canned goods, used clothing, and second-hand shoes are shipped to the Central Office in the Philippines for distribution to the needy.

When thinking about the foreign mission, one shouldn't fall into the error of believing that it is confined merely to the U.S. Although it is true that the mission has progressed the farthest in the States, largely because it's been there the longest, it has also taken substantial strides in other places of the world.

North of the U.S., the Church has established congregations in half of Canada's 10 provinces. Elsewhere in North America, particularly in Mexico, the *Iglesia* has a committee prayer group in Mexico City.

In South America, the Church has only reached the country of Brazil where a committee prayer group has been established in Sao Paulo. In Europe, however, the *Iglesia* presence is more extensive. The membership is generally spread out among prayer groups in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Holland, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. In addition to these, there are established congregations in England and West Germany. The London locale has its own chapel and resident minister who, at present, is Brother Emiliano Magtuto Jr. West Germany's three full-fledged locales of Bonn, Hamburg, and Offenbach are under the care of Brother Felipe Naguit, a minister.

Perhaps the most impressive development on the European continent is taking place on the Italian

peninsula. Several committees have been started throughout the country. But the locale established in Rome on January 21, 1986 is of primary interest. Who would have ever thought that the *Iglesia ni Cristo* would someday end up practically right in the Vatican's backyard?

Africa and the Middle East have more than their fair share of prayer groups that are primarily composed of Filipino contract workers of various overseas corporations. Moving across to Asia, we find more committee groups in several nations including Indonesia, Korea, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam, and something more—a couple of locales in Hongkong with assigned ministers. Brother Rogelio Valdez is assigned to Kowloon Locale while Brother Celso Lao (who is not only a speaker of English and Pilipino, but Mandarin as well) is caring for the Hongkong site locale. Things also seem to be happening quite quickly amongst the prayer groups of Japan which were recently visited by an emissary from the Administration, Brother Ben Vital, a minister who officiated Holy Supper services.

Scattered throughout the islands of the Pacific like Micronesia, Nauru, New Guinea, New Zealand and the Caroline Islands are still more prayer groups. In this region, congregations that have reached locale status are found in the Marianas on the islands of Guam and Saipan which have their own ministers, Brothers Eddie San Gabriel and Elias Mercado, respectively.

At the western end of the Pacific lies the island continent of Australia. On it, we find some 11 prayer groups and two locales in the cities of Melbourne and Sydney, both under the care of Brother Adriano Delia, an INC minister.

Evidently, the Church's foreign mission, although still in its developing stages, is truly worldwide. The frontier is shrinking. And we are left with the impression that if the *Iglesia* will wish to expand further, it might someday be left with only possibilities from Cape Canaveral to consider.

Growth

Upon hearing the phrase "foreign mission," one may, at first, envision an organization that is overflowing with brethren of multi-racial origin. This impression is, at least at this time, something to aspire for in the future. The Church has truly been blessed with members throughout the world. However, the brethren are, more often than not, Filipinos. There are exceptions of course. Congregations like those of

Jacksonville, Florida and Riverside, California have strong American memberships.

Speaking of the future on the nationally televised *Iglesia ni Cristo* program in the Philippines, an American head deacon from a California congregation commented on the "possibility of American brethren outnumbering Filipino brethren in United States congregations." To some, this expectation might seem more like a dream than probable reality. But to others, such a vision would appear to be the future's logical conclusion of today's missionary drive abroad.

One member who shares this view is Brother Leversia Williams, a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy stationed at Subic Bay Naval Base, Philippines. At present, he is a deacon in the locale of Olongapo City, Zambales and has been a member of the INC for 21 years. Brother Williams does not believe that the organization's Filipino appearance will hinder Church growth if missionary efforts are sincere.

"You know, Americans are very religious people," Brother Williams says. "The main thing is to get them to sit and listen to something new. I think a person needs to sit down with an open mind. If he does, there is no way that he cannot see that he's been listening to false (doctrine) all his life."

Brother Williams' conviction about how easily foreigners can be converted is not without basis. He relates a story about a relative from Louisiana to whom he used to send doctrinal literature: "My uncle was a Baptist minister. He read the *Pasugo*. He believed that the Church of Christ (*Iglesia ni Cristo*) is the only true Church." Unfortunately, Brother Williams' uncle passed away before the Church and he could meet.

If ever Americans and Filipinos exchange places where the majority in the U.S. is concerned, one should hardly be surprised. Such an achievement would be a drop in the bucket, considering the reversed impossibilities of the past when the Church was just getting started in the Far West some 18 years ago. (The whole idea seemed impossible at first...) The *Iglesia's* ability to perform extraordinarily has been well noted, even by nonmembers. Editor Cielo Buenaventura of *Who* magazine writes: "In the size and speed of its growth, in the promises and visions it offers, the *Iglesia ni Cristo's* evangelical success continues to mystify scholars and Iglesia-watchers everywhere."

Just how swift is the INC growing abroad? Pretty fast, according to figures provided by the Central Office's Foreign Department, an office designated by the

All in all, the organization has reached 66 countries around the world

Administration to handle affairs and relations with overseas congregations. The department divides the foreign mission into four general regions. Three of these regions are in the United States and they are the Division of California, the Eastern Seaboard, and the state of Hawaii. (Locales in the continental U.S. and Canada that are neither in California nor on the east coast come under the jurisdiction of the nearest U.S. region.) The fourth classification, called the Independent group, is actually composed of all other foreign locales outside of the States.

Of these areas, the Eastern Seaboard—which is under the leadership of Brother Angel Casanova—is growing the fastest. The exact number of members of any region is only known in certain select circles and isn't really available for public knowledge. Nevertheless, percentage increases were available and the department's 1985 figures indicate an overall membership increase of 39 percent since 1982 for the eastern U.S. region.

Coming in second where growth rate is concerned is California where membership is approximately four times that of either the Eastern Seaboard or Hawaii and considerably larger than the Independent group. In the three years since 1982, this region's census jumped 35 percent.

Overall, the foreign mission has grown 38 percent in membership from 1982 to 1985. At this rate, the Church appears to be able to increase its overseas membership by at least 100 percent every decade.

In 1970, the San Francisco congregation purchased the very first INC chapel overseas. By the end of the decade, 31 houses of worship were acquired in foreign lands. Then the mission began to pick up the pace. In just five years, 1980-1985, the INC acquired 29 more chapels, just about doubling its chapel acquisition rate.

All in all, the organization has reached 66 countries around the world and, in the U.S., it is present in 26 of the 50 states. All of this has occurred in less than two decades and there are no signs of slowing down. Says Brother Felimon Bautista, head of Central's Foreign Department: "Evangelization abroad has progressed

by leaps and bounds. EVCO can't keep up." EVCO is the common acronym for the Church's evangelical college system which trains ministers, some of whom are eventually qualified for overseas assignments.

The Culture Clash

"Culture shock" is a term found in the glossaries of sociology books that appears quite superficial until one lives to experience it. When this occurs—when circumstances toss you into a totally alien environment—you feel really lost. Panic sets in. You start looking for an exit.

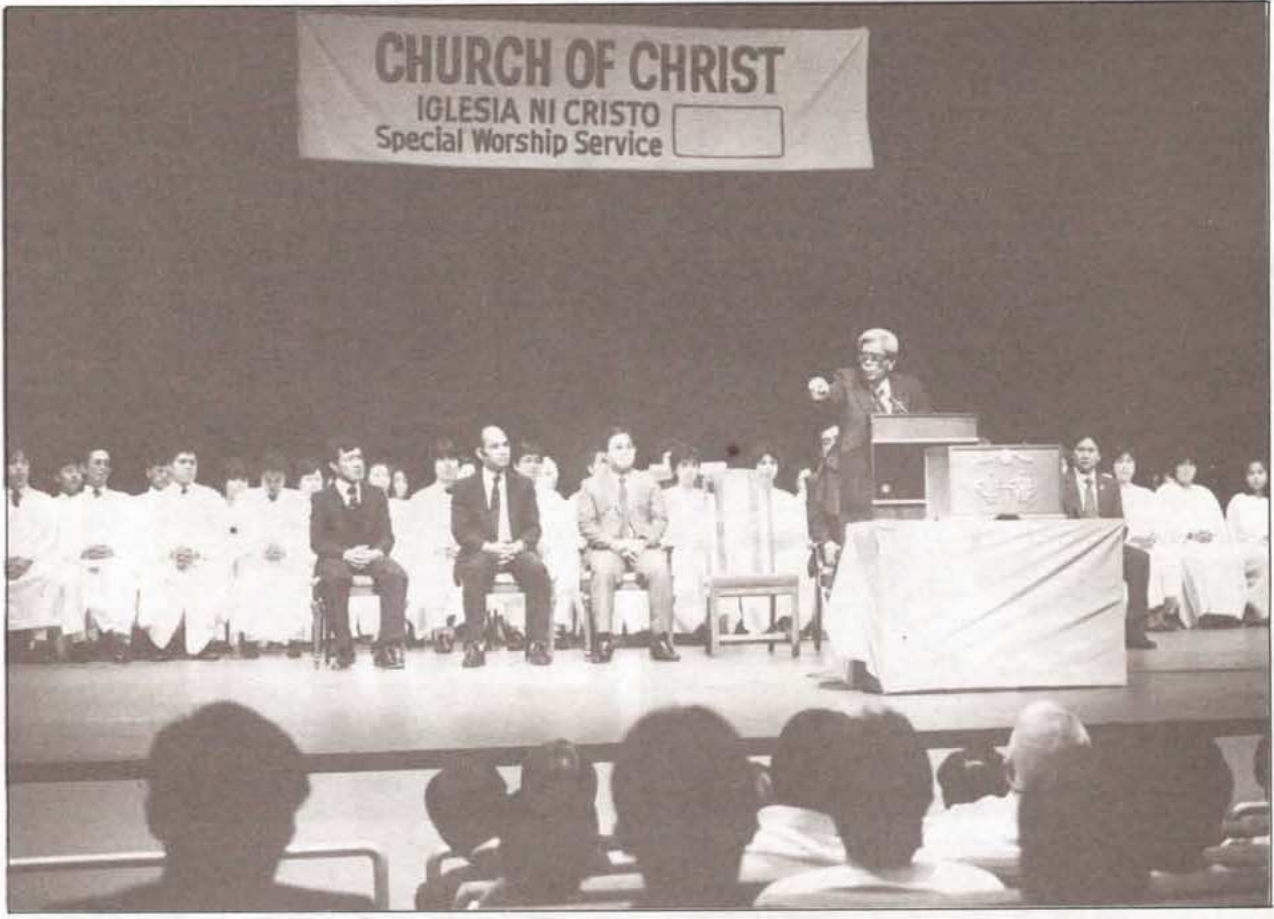
When the Church (originally Philippine religion, mind you) started unpacking in Hawaii and California in 1968, it would have been but natural to assume that it would suffer from culture shock for a season. Americans had their ways which, of course, would take some time getting used to. They appeared to be an outspoken lot that had a thing for making and keeping appointments, sometimes even when it came to visiting friends.

The Filipinos saw themselves as an amiable people who tried to get along with everyone. They went with the flow of things usually and didn't rock the boat or make waves. And their sense of camaraderie perceived everyone in the neighborhood as family, no appointments necessary.

Cultures seemed certain to conflict. The Church seemed certain to experience disorientation in the frontierlands.

But it wasn't that way at all, not at first, anyway. The organization flourished; new locales were continuously being opened up. The brethren were making it work. Americans (and, in time, Canadians, Australians, Japanese...) were missionized. They listened to the teachings of this strange new religion. The willing and the open-minded were convinced that the late Brother Felix Y. Manalo was a genuine messenger of God, that the Church of Christ which the messenger preached was the only true Church, and that the true Church is not for Filipinos only. With these teachings in mind and heart, they were converted.

Then the culture clash occurred. In the chapel after services, the "foreign" brother or sister would wander in the midst of little clusters of brethren who conversed in their native dialect instead of English. During special occasions, the foreigners discovered themselves surrounded by people who were eating *pansit* and dancing the *tinikling*. In meetings, these disillusioned brethren would find themselves—sometimes



Overleaf photos: *Brother Angel Casanova officiates a special worship service in Orlando, Florida (top); Brother Ruben Garcia preaches the Gospel during a Bible Exposition in the West (bottom). Below, clockwise: Brother Ric Tanghal uses the broadcast medium in spreading the message of salvation in Sta. Maria, Ca.; New Jersey Pastoral house; Brother Paulino Membere presides over a conference of ministers in California.*



only themselves — trying to freely voice their ideas on how something might be done better. They did not realize that when the person chairing the meeting asked for questions and suggestions, he was really saying “the meeting is adjourned.”



As members of the Church, non-Filipinos often became strangers in their own land. And this is no wonder. The organization, at first, had survived and prospered not exactly by adapting to other cultures, but by circumventing them. In other words, when the Church came from the Philippines to the West, the Filipino culture, naturally, came with it and stayed with it. Thus, when non-Filipinos entered, they were the ones, ironically, who were bound to receive a dose of culture shock.

Brother Romeo Maglaya, 36, an incoming fifth-year Canadian evangelical student at NEC, elaborates about differing cultures. He says that in his former locale of Winnipeg, there is a language barrier between the few Canadian brethren and the older Filipinos who are inclined to use their native tongue

instead of English. He adds sometimes that small problems arise in socializing amongst brethren because the entertainment programs held are deeply immersed in Philippine culture and non-Filipinos “often feel out of place.” “Socialization is important,” he admits. “It’s one way of winning the hearts of the brethren to cooperate.”

The Youth And Culture Synthesis

When confronted by a problem, the rational thing to do is search for a solution. Yet, the culture conflict seems to defy immediate solving. What do you do with a Church membership with an over-whelming majority of brethren that was born and raised in a nation on the other side of the world? Do you give 'em a couple of quick seminars on Brady Bunch living and hope that'll do the trick?

Actually, the Church need not search for a solution as much as wait for one. Time has a unique ability for creating miracles. It had allowed a new generation to rise to maturity that is, of course, perfectly familiar with the western environment. After being educated in western schools and maturing alongside native American or Canadian companions, the children of the first gathered fruits of the overseas mission are different from the previous generation. This does not mean that they are completely severed from their parents' Philippine culture. In fact, most are brought up in the “old ways,” are able to converse in their parents' first language, and are partaking of delicious native recipes for breakfast, lunch and dinner. But having experienced maximum exposure to North American culture, they are actually a synthesis of two cultures which has given them an advantage for doing amazing things.

On January 4, 1986, the Regional *KADIWA* Organization of Northern California (RKO-N) hosted a “get-together” of all the *KADIWA* and *Binhi* organizations of California in the town of Salinas at the Hartnell College auditorium. The occasion wasn't really a new thing. After being organized by Rizalie Alvarez, former RKO-N president, the *KADIWA* has been doing this annually for the past seven years. But, in contrast with the past, RKO-N President Nanette Abella described this year's event as “perhaps the most memorable of its kind ever.”

The primary reason for the specialness of this year's affair was the presence of Brother Adriel O. Meimban, dean of evangelical studies at New Era College in Quezon City, Philippines. The sermon he preached

The INC's phenomenal expansion defies any explanation that human logic can possibly offer.

during the special worship service was regarding the role of the youth in family solidarity and spirituality.

The auditorium wherein the activity was held was reported to have been filled to its capacity of 3000. As part of the day's program, an entertainment show was held that displayed the talent of the youth membership throughout the state and an awards ceremony was also conducted during which recognition was given for accomplishments in chapel beautification and excellence in team sports. Evidently, the *KADIWA* (a Church term which is used loosely to mean "youth" that is actually an acronym for *Kabataang May Diwang Wagas* or, in English, "Youth With Pure Intent") is fully capable of doing things on a grand scale.

An event which clearly illustrates how western culture has made the *KADIWA* so progressive is the *KADIWA-Binhi* Convention '86 held at the house of worship at San Gabriel Valley, California on January 25, 1986.

The convention began with opening remarks by Brother Julio Flores, resident minister of San Gabriel Valley Locale, and Arleen Gutierrez, president of the Regional *KADIWA* Organization of Southern California (RKO-S). Brother Flores advised the 150 *KADIWA* officers who attended the convention concerning the obligation of the youth to the family unit. Afterwards, Gutierrez reminded the attendees of the spiritual advice given to the youth during Brother Meimban's sermon in Salinas a few weeks earlier.

The next item on the convention's agenda was most significant. The officers broke up into groups and each group held small meetings of their own, each chaired by the following RKO department heads with their corresponding departments indicated: Grace Perez, missionary activities; Ricky Flores, Reactivation and Visitation; Catherine Boyer, Education and Children's Worship Service; Christine Boyer (RKO-S newsletter editor), Information; Cristina Fermin (RKO-S vice president), Social Activities; Arnel Cabañero, Sports; and Etien Mendoza, Treasury.

In each separate meeting, projects were planned and problems were tackled that were peculiar to each department. Ideas were exchanged in a relaxed

atmosphere. "You could feel how the speaker and the members were working together. It was the same feeling in all the meetings. Everyone was working together," Gutierrez recalls.

For once (as planned) the discussions were not personally guided by the organization's leader. "There certainly were different *KADIWA* members there that day," Gutierrez continues. "There was a difference—a different atmosphere... pleasing... ready for work (and) activity."

A new kind of involvement was taking place. The officers were not inhibited by the presence or opinions of authority but freely expressed themselves. "I didn't preside in the meetings.... All I did was sit and listen," Gutierrez says. The attitude of yesteryear of minimal participation (don't rock the boat or make waves...) by lower ranking officers in major decision making was disappearing. The western psyche, by nature, gets in on the action. In this way, the participants feel more than willing to implement their conceptualized projects because they themselves shared in the creative process. The *KADIWA* was beginning to make waves—beautiful waves wherein the thoughts of many were willingly incorporated into a unified idea in a very democratic fashion.

Is the youth membership—undoubtedly the Church's leaders of tomorrow—really the answer to the West's culture difficulties? Well, so far, this stumbled-upon solution has exhibited much promise. Among the faithful *KADIWA* officers abroad are many non-Filipino brethren who find themselves very much at home around Church members nowadays. This feeling of belonging can be attributed to the youths' instinctive use of English in conversation and their westernized way of carrying themselves and relating with others. *KADIWA* meetings are held in such a way that incorporates a democratic process and all feasible ideas are given fair and equal consideration.

Regarding the problem of infrequent worship service attendance due to trying to enhance the family livelihood, the youth, or rather, an opportunity of theirs, provides a solution. This problem, created largely by attempting to work two jobs at a time, can be eliminated because of the educational opportunities offered abroad. With adequate educational background, one can hope for rewarding employment which would eliminate the necessity for a second job.

Future prospects in propagation are also quite promising. Brother Maglaya explains that the

brethren who have grown up in countries where English is the principle language will be very effective in missionary work in places like Canada or the U.S. This is because they would be better equipped with the communication skills needed to missionize Canadians and Americans.

The Future Foreign Mission

The immediate concern of the Church Administration is to insure a promising tomorrow for the foreign mission which naturally involves giving the youth the utmost spiritual guidance. Without such care, the youth may be rendered vulnerable to the not-so-wonderful aspects of other cultures.

In a written message to the *KADIWA* organizations of California dated January 4, 1986, Brother Paul Membrere, supervising minister of the western congregations, described the societies of the part of the world as "permissive" and "dangerous" spiritually speaking. It is from this particular aspect of culture that the Administration wishes to protect the children who are often easily influenced. "You must be spiritually triumphant," Brother Membrere urges the youth. "Don't allow yourselves to be deceived and be crushed by the wiles of the devil."

The RKO officers are on to this reality and are taking preventive measures of their own. "Our main goal this year is for holiness, spirituality, and love for duty... for the future *KADIWA* members and for the Church as a whole," Gutierrez says. As an officer of the RKO, it is her responsibility to continue echoing this expectation of the Executive Minister, Brother Eraño G. Manalo, that was related to her and other RKO officers by Brother Meimban during his recent trip to the U.S. "It is the fervent desire of the Church Administration for you to lead the youngsters today towards a greater degree of valuing our faith in the Church of Christ. The world we live in is becoming more wicked and perverse. We should shine out as lights by means of our obedience to all the commandments of God," Brother Meimban says.

Brother Maglaya believes that staying in line with the wishes of the Administration "depends on the minister" in charge of each congregation. He would be in the best position to implement Church policy amongst the laity. If the ministers can effectively monitor the spiritual lives of the brethren, Brother Maglaya thinks that the youth "could be a benefit if brought up in the Christian way."

At present, events are really shaping up in favor of the foreign mission. Although the Administration is investing much time and sacrifice to train ministers for overseas assignments, it is taking strategic steps toward involving more foreigners in its seven-year training program.

The NEC evangelical school already has several extensions located in various locales throughout the U.S. These extensions are usually supervised by the resident ministers of those locales who take care of the chores of teaching ministerial subjects and keeping records. This summer, Brother Eraño Manalo is sending Brother Edward Maranan to the States for the purpose of establishing a more "centralized" evangelical school over which he will be the "officer-in-charge," according to the Foreign Department's head, Brother Bautista.

Originally, Brother Maranan was a Church worker based in Southern California during the 1970s. His ministerial career continued in the Philippines at NEC as a student. Eventually, he was ordained as one of the first American ministers of the Church. After his ordination, he was appointed by the Administration as a teacher of evangelical subjects at NEC.

The proposed location where Brother Maranan will be based for the establishment of the school is the locale of Oxnard, California. Church members in the U.S. who desire to enter the ministry will be encouraged to attend that institution. After completing two years of study at Oxnard, the students will be sent to Manila for the completion of their studies and, eventually, ordination.

The two-year program's curriculum will more than likely include only evangelical subjects like Doctrine, Ministerial Lessons (instructions regarding the proper execution of the ministerial office), Preaching, Bible History and Church History. The Bachelor's Degree in Evangelical Ministry program of the Quezon City, Philippine campus may not be immediately available at the Oxnard extension.

The overseas mission has truly come a long way since that historical trip of the Executive Minister in 1968 to the Hawaiian Islands which set off the chain reaction that created hundreds of congregations worldwide. This phenomenal expansion defies any explanation that human logic can possibly offer, that is, if humanity refuses to descend from its pedestal of pride and admit that what has taken place is nothing short of a miracle.

P

*Handling the delicate
and multifarious needs
of the whole organization.*

The Iglesia Ni Cristo Central Office

Feljun B. Fuentes



FORESEEING THE GROWTH and development of the Church, the late Brother Felix Y. Manalo, God's last messenger, established a centralized administration for the Church's management setup. He put up the Central Office of the *Iglesia ni Cristo*.

This office hopped from one place to another through the decades. In 1915, a year after the seeds of the faith were sown, the Central Office was located on Deodato St., Tondo, Manila. Two years later, it was transferred to the residence of Brother Felix Y. Manalo in Sande, Tondo, Manila. He later transferred the office to Azcarraga St. (now Claro M. Recto) due to the stuffiness of the former place. In the years 1921 and 1922, Brother Manalo held office at Juan Luna, Gagalangin, Tondo. From here, he transferred to Sampaloc District on Gov. Forbes Street. In 1923, the Central Office was transferred to 133 Riverside (now 154 F. Y. Manalo St.). Here, the Central Office operated for seven years. In 1930, the Central Office was moved to New Manila, Quezon City at the corner of Broadway and 10th Streets. Six years later, it was transferred to the Leyba Building in Manila at the corner of Dasmariñas and Nueva Streets. Here, it stayed for two years.

At the end of 1930, the Central Office was moved back to 42 Broadway, New Manila after the construction of an additional building which housed the office for the next 14 years.

In September 1944, after the Japanese took the office of the Church and the residence of Brother Felix Y. Manalo, the Church moved its Central Office to 1805 Apitong Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila behind the chapel of Tayuman Locale.

On October 6, 1948, the Central Office was transferred again to 133 Riverside, San Juan Rizal and remained here until the demise of Brother Felix Y. Manalo. The Central Office then housed the offices of the Treasury, Pasugo, Research, Legal Adviser, General Treasurer, and General Auditor.

In May of 1966, the Central Office was transferred to the F.G.R. Building on Buendia Avenue, Makati, Metro Manila. The Central Office stayed here until the proposed permanent site was erected. In 1971, the office was permanently housed in the magnificent edifice at the corner of



Central and Don M. Marcos Avenues, in Diliman, Quezon City.

Inside the Central Office building, we find various departments that were designated to handle the delicate and multifarious needs of the whole organization.

The Engineering and Construction Department takes charge mainly of the construction of houses of worship here and abroad. The departments of Research, Publications, and TV Production exert cooperative efforts for the propagation of the faith among the ministries of the Church. The Finance Department (which includes the office of the General Treasurer and General Auditor) oversees the collective offerings of the brethren and ensures wise allocation of Church funds. The Foreign Department monitors and coordinates the activities of the congregations outside the country. The Records Section keeps the records and chronicles the major events in the life of the Church. The Personnel Section takes care of the volunteer workers in the Church's Central Office. Enumerated here are but some of the offices housed in the INC Central Office.

On top of the administrative machinery is none other than Brother Eraño G. Manalo whose able leadership and dynamism as executive minister or administrator was successful for more than two decades of the Church.

Though Brother Felix Y. Manalo's hopes and visions for the Church outlived him, still they have become a reality under the present leadership.

The name Central Office not only denotes a place which is designated for attending to the affairs of the Church. It also connotes the very nature of the system of management. It requires an administrator from whom shall emanate the ultimate decisions.

This manner of Church management is not, however, alien to the Scriptures which depict James the Less to be the Administrator of the Church at Jerusalem. That was

after Christ ascended to heaven in the early years of the second quarter of the first century.

Prior to this period, that is, when Christ Himself was preaching in the synagogues, there was no Central Office. Administration of the little flock was not so complicated then as it is now. Wherever Christ was, there was the "administration." Disputes on doctrines and morals were resolved on the spot where Christ preached.

That was then.

Today, the ever-increasing number of faithfuls embracing the *Iglesia ni Cristo* faith is astounding as a fact. It has remained a puzzle to the observers of the religious scene. Yet, for those who know, this growth and development of the 72-year-old Church in the Philippines is discernibly a fulfillment of God's prophecies and promises.

This Church was not programmed to confine itself within the length and breadth of the archipelago. It was predetermined to resound the message in the Western part of the globe so that, today, we see the *Iglesia ni Cristo* present on every inhabitable continent of the world.

The Church which Christ founded in the Far East has become worldwide. It now faces the realities of the 20th century. It has to fight against the decline of man's morals. In short, it has to succeed in bringing salvation despite the odds.

With God's helping hand, through the Church's centralized administration, the Church has remained cohesive and steadfast, undaunted and prepared to face whatever conditions the future would bring. With the Central Office and an administrator, the *Iglesia ni Cristo* which recognizes no boundaries in its expansion program hopes to prepare the chosen ones for the coming of the Lord to meet His bride, the Church. **P**

◀ 38

"LEADER. Such a unity has been attributed to the dynamic leadership of Felix Manalo since 1914 and that of his son and successor, Eraño G. Manalo both of whom critics claim have 'demonstrated' unusual ability in influencing people and building up a strong organization."

— "One Voice, one vote," *Business Day*, February 27, 1984, p. 20.

"Factors Contributing to the Growth of the Movement.

"First has been the dynamic leadership of Felix Manalo who dominated the movement for a period of forty-nine years."

— Gerald H. Anderson, editor, *Studies in Philippine Church History*, p. 355.

"The Church of Christ (*Iglesia ni Cristo*) has de-

veloped from the proverbial mustard seed to a full-grown oak since its emergence in 1914 in Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila, under the leadership of Felix Y. Manalo."

— *Philippines Daily Express*, "*Iglesia ni Cristo: From mustard seed to full-grown oak.*"

"He exhibited a great quality for leadership and a sincere desire to know the truth. Deep in him was the aspiration to lead a religious life. And to lead others towards the religious life."

— Mac Fabian, *Felix Manalo (A Great Spiritual Leader)*, p. 5.

On His Personality

"The young Felix was active and restless in his undertakings. He was mischievous, too. However, already as a

boy, he showed positive signs of leadership and bravery which he always demonstrated in fights with boys belonging to other gangs. His great asset, however, was his natural persuasive eloquence which won for him not only high praise and admiration but also a large following of boys. These traits were not put away with his childhood but were further developed as he grew up to be a man.

"He was very efficient and skillful in every job he tried, but his love for action and novelty and his lack of perseverance made him a jack-of-all-trades, trying his luck as a barber, photographer, and a hatter. He found sufficient means of comfortable life in his hat enterprise. However,

this kind of life did not bring him peace and contentment because he 'aspired to lead a religious life'."

— *Rev. Manuel P. Alonzo Jr., A.B. Lic. S. Th., A Historico-Critical Study on the Iglesia ni Kristo, pp. 6-7.*

"Outsiders call the Iglesia the church of Manalo, and there can be no question that it bears his dynamic imprint. All who knew him bear witness to a vigorous, magnetic personality."

— *Quijano de Manila, Ronnie Poe and Other Silhouettes, p. 103.* P

More On Brother Felix Y. Manalo

Dr. Corazon C. Osorio

DR. CORAZON C. OSORIO, high school principal of the New Era College, interviewed some persons on what they thought of Brother Felix Y. Manalo.

The following were the results of such interviews:

"Brother Felix Ysagun Manalo is one of the Filipino religious leaders who endeavored to express religion in Filipino terms and concepts, such as the members calling each other 'kapatid'. The very title of the Church — 'Iglesia ni Cristo' is a combination of Spanish and Tagalog terms. In spite of his limited formal schooling, he was able to make his Church and religion attractive to poorer, less educated and working class.

"Judging from its tremendous growth since the time the *Iglesia ni Cristo* was founded at Punta, Santa Ana, we can say that Brother Felix

Manalo has very strong leadership and administrative know-how."

— *Dr. Tomas Q.D. Andres
President
Values and Technologies
Management Center
Manila*

"It can now be truly said that Brother Felix Y. Manalo was a Man-of-Destiny, with profound spiritual idealism, and who, till his death remained faithful to his calling. Indeed, he has brought honor to his people and succeeded in bringing them spiritual revival."

— *Atty. Levi B. Mariano*

"My first contact with Bishop Felix Y. Manalo happened at the Luneta. I was then a very impressionable young man. I saw him riding a tilbury drawn by a beautiful white horse. The *Iglesia ni Cristo* then was only little known outside the community in Galangin, Tondo. Even then, Brother Manalo was already attracting people by his friendly and unassuming ways.

"I watched from a distance Bishop Felix Manalo and his 'Church' grow over the years. Envious, more often angry, I watched helplessly at my own church unable to keep pace.

"I did not get a chance to view his remains when he died but I felt a genuine personal loss when I first heard of his demise.

"The man was gone and even the brief moments I shared with him and my late father at the Luneta are now things of the past.

"My official functions with Philamlife have been taking me all over the Philippines since 1954 and I have had the good fortune of travelling by air all these years. When I see the familiar outline of his churches growing from city to city and town to town, I cannot help but keep remembering that quiet and friendly man, one of the greatest organizers of resources of our times, who must have thought — "now Manila, then the provinces and finally, the world."

— *Mr. Rodrigo de los Reyes
President and
Chief Executive Officer
Philamlife Insurance Co.
Manila*

"The accomplishments of Brother Felix Manalo cannot be forgotten. The memory of the man will always be remembered. Brother Felix Y. Manalo has proven that with sincerity and strong belief, noble objectives can be attained.

"The residents of our barangay are all proud of him".

— *Eusebio E. Sta. Romana
Barangay Captain
Barangay Calzada 14,
Taguig, Metro Manila* P



ERAÑO G. MANALO
Executive Minister




TEOFILO C. RAMOS SR.
General Evangelist



ANICETO S. BUNAG SR.
Administrative Secretary



PABLO Q. DE LEON
General Treasurer



**The Church
Administrators**



GLICERIO B. SANTOS JR.
General Auditor



BENJAMIN J. SANTIAGO SR.
Coordinator, Metro Manila I



PEDRO D. ALMEDINA
Coordinator, Metro Manila II



EDUARDO V. MANALO
Coordinator, Metro Manila III

*Philippines
Region I*



**Division
Ministers**



ARTEMIO PILON
Abra



RICARDO ZARATE
Ilocos Norte



FELIPE AGUILAR
La Union



CESAR PEDROZO
Benguet



FORTUNATO FRANCISCO
Ilocos Sur



ISAIAS LLAVATA
Mountain Province



RAMON ADALLA
Pangasinan Central

Region II



MARTIN MANANGKIL
Isabela I



LEVIE GALAPON SR.
Pangasinan East



JOSE MACARAEG
Cagayan East



FELIPE BANGIS
Isabela II



HERMINIGILDO BELEN
Pangasinan West



BENJAMIN CAMPOS
Cagayan West



VIRGILIO JACOB
Nueva Vizcaya



FERMIN PABALATE
Quirino

Region III



FERNANDO SANTOS
Bataan



ANDRES TRINIDAD
Bulacan



ANGEL CANICOSA
Nueva Ecija I



DOMINGO JORGE
Nueva Ecija II



ANTONIO COLLANTES
Pampanga



RODOLFO DE VERA
Tarlac



MAMERTO GABRIEL
Zambales

Region IV



BONIFACIO ARCIOSA
Aurora



ARMANDO ANGELES
Batangas



MELCHOR PARCO
Cavite



LEONARDO SORIANO SR.
Laguna



MELANIO BAUTISTA
Marinduque



LUIS FERMA
Mindoro Occidental



MACARIO ANDANAR
Mindoro Oriental



SOTERO BAUTISTA
Palawan



BRYCE TUCKER
Quezon II



RUBEN SAN ESTEBAN
Romblon



DIONISIO MATEO
Polilio

Region V



RUSTICO CUNDANGAN
Quezon I



PEDRO BRIONES SR.
Rizal



MARCELINO PARINAS
Albay



ISAIAS CRUZ
Camarines Norte



VICTOR VELACRUZ
Catanduanes

Region VI



VICTOR ADRIANO SR.
Aklan



ANACLETO ERNIE
Camarines Sur I



DANIEL SOLANO
Masbate



PEDRO DELA CRUZ
Antique



FLAVIANO DALEON
Camarines Sur II



MARIANO FRANCISCO
Sorsogon



ARTEMIO TRINIDAD
Capiz



CATALINO CASTILLO SR.
Negros Occidental I

Region VII



SIXTO CARIGMA SR.
Bohol



RICARDO ABANILLA
Iloilo I



ROMEO CASILDO
Negros Occidental II



CARLOS VILLANUEVA
Cebu



TIRSO CORREA
Iloilo II



SERGIO REFUELA SR.
Negros del Norte



VIRGILIO BAÑEZ
Negros Oriental

Region VIII



ESTEBAN BAUTISTA
Samar I



ALFONSO JULIAN
Samar II



PABLO CASTRO
Leyte I



SATURNINO ESTUDILLO
Leyte II

Region IX



LORENZO GAMBOA
Zamboanga-Ipil



MATEO LIWANAG
Zamboanga-Pagadian

Region X



BENJAMIN DELOS REYES
Agusan del Norte



GODOFREDO GOMEZ JR.
Agusan del Sur



MOISES ESMUNDO
Bukidnon



ALFREDO MATOZA
Misamis Occidental



ALEJANDRO LEDESMA
Misamis Oriental



ROMEO FRANCISCO
Surigao del Norte

Region XI



JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL
Davao I



DAN OROSA
Davao del Sur



ZOZIMO ALICANTE
Davao Oriental



ANANIAS LAZARO
Cotabato Sur II



SIMEON REYES
Davao del Norte



ERNESTO PALERMO
Surigao Sur-Tandag



LOPITO AGUIRRE
Surigao Sur-Mangagoy



MARCELINO SARMIENTO
Cotabato Sur I

Region XII



MARCELINO PINEDA
Cotabato Norte



TANNY ACUT
Lanao



DAVID CRUZ Sr.
Maguindanao



ELIAS QUILATAN
Sultan Kudarat

USA



PAULINO B. MEMBRERE
Supervising Minister, West Coast



ANGEL E. CASANOVA
Supervising Minister, East Coast

I Am a Member of the Church

1

*I am a member of the Church,
The Church of Christ, God prophesied,
So written deep within my heart,
Her teachings, I do love.*

2

*I'll always follow Jesus Christ.
Happen what may, whate'er betide,
I am a member of the Church,
Till death should claim my life.*

Refrain:

*I'll always serve with all my heart,
My God and Jesus Christ;
Persecution, hardship and pain,
I'll suffer, I'll disdain.*

— *PILAR MANALO DANA O*

We remember
Brother Felix Y. Manalo
fondly as the one who tire-
lessly preached the true
and pure gospel to us until
we developed the true faith and
love of God, acquired the
right to worship God, and
were adopted as God's children
and therefore heirs to
God's promises.