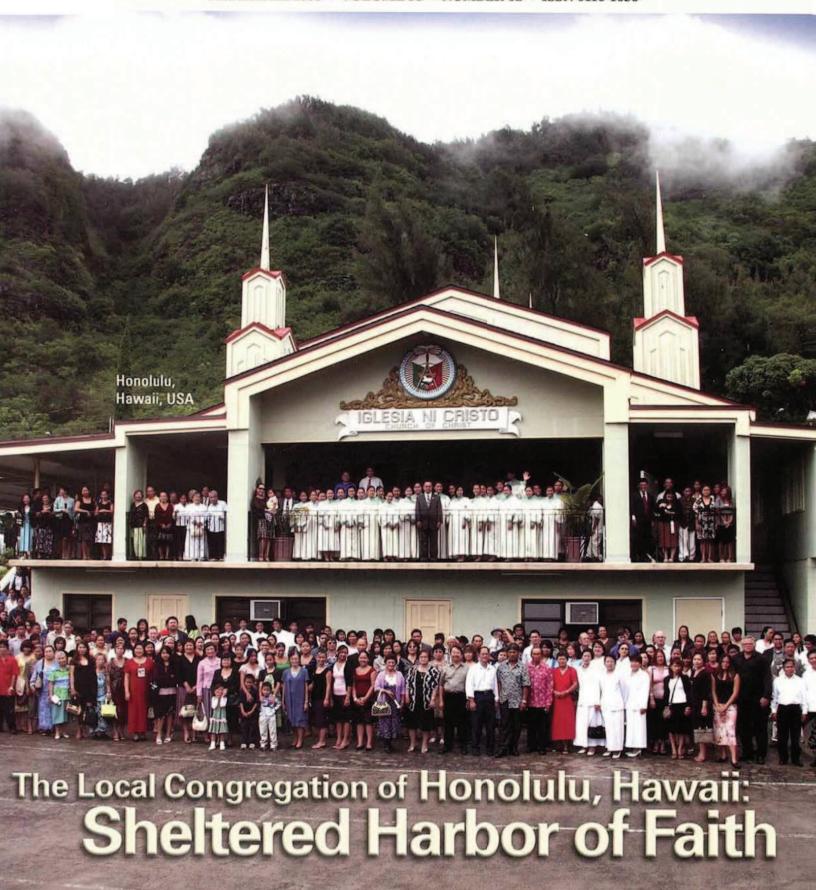
GOD'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 2006 • VOLUME 58 • NUMBER 12 • ISSN 0116-1636







To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:

A time to be born,

And a time to die;

A time to plant,

And a time to pluck

what is planted; ...

A time to break down,

And a time to build up;

A time to weep,

And a time to laugh; ...

A time to gain,

And a time to lose;

A time to keep,

And a time to throw away; ...

A time to keep silence,

And a time to speak;

A time to love,

And a time to hate;

A time of war,

And a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-4, 6-8, NKJV

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the MESSAGE

### GOD'SMESSAGE

The Magazine of the Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ)

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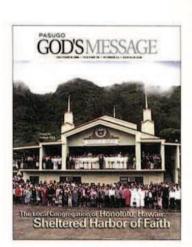
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Our Cover: Some of the brethren in the local congregation of Honolulu, Hawaii (Story on page 25)



### We have more reasons to thank God

NLY A FEW DAYS remain before the year is finally over. We have much to be thankful to God for. We praise and thank Him for all His kindness and all the blessings He poured on us, on our household, and on the whole Church in this passing year. We, members of the Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ), are grateful that despite the world's present economic condition and the various grave problems that we have experienced, we are still alive and able to discharge our sacred duties to God. We are grateful, that in spite of many adversities, the Church to which we were called by God continues to pursue the divine mission that was entrusted unto it under the dynamic leadership of our Executive Minister, Brother Eraño G. Manalo.

It is only right and proper that we give thanks to God because it is written: "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever" (Ps. 118:1, Revised Standard Version). We can never repay Him for His goodness to us. He provides all our daily needs. He keeps us safe from all things that could have caused us harm and heals us from illness. In time of trials and affliction, He is our refuge. It is to Him that we owe the peace and harmony that reign in our homes and the serenity that it has brought upon us in spite of the many troubles around. Most importantly, it is His mighty hand that

has done all the successes achieved by the *Iglesia ni Cristo*.

Thus, the same sentiment that moved the ancient servants of God to offer thanksgiving to Him also fills our hearts today. Says King David of Israel: "I will gladly offer you a sacrifice, O LORD; I will give you thanks because you are good. You have rescued me from all my troubles, and I have seen my enemies defeated" (Ps. 54:6-7, Today's English Version).

We, the members of the Iglesia ni Cristo, are overflowing with gladness as we offer thanksgiving to Him because we recognize that He is truly good to us. We acknowledge that He is the source of all greatness, power, glory and splendor because everything in heaven and on earth is His. As it is written in the Scriptures: "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name" (I Chr. 29:11-13, New International Version)

We have more reasons than the others to give thanks to God, because not only did He create us and give us strength, but also, as Apostle Paul says, He has qualified us "to share

in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light ... [and] rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:12-14, Ibid.). Apostle Paul clarifies that it was the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that has redeemed those who were qualified to share in the inheritance (Eph. 1:7) and that it is the Church of Christ that was purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28, Lamsa Translation). It is for our having been called by God in this Church, which is Christ's body, that we are especially thankful to Him: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful" (Col. 3:15, New King James Version).

But, although we are filled with gladness as we thank God for sustaining us throughout this year, the worsening condition of the world as hardship intensifies and evil and wickedness spread may make us anxious of what the future holds for us and our household. Guiding each one of us on how to properly deal with such condition, Christ advises us, "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day" (Matt. 6:34, RSV). We can only draw comfort from the exhortation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says: "Be on watch and pray always that you will have the strength to go safely through all those things that will happen and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36, TEV).

Let us, therefore, entreat God that He grant us the strength that we need to go on safely through all the things that will happen in this world so that we shall not be separated from Him but be certain of salvation on Judgment Day. We do need such strength because the Lord Jesus Christ forewarned that before the end of the world comes, there shall be wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes in various places, and hardships (Matt. 24:3, 33, 6-8, 11-12), which were precisely what had happened and are still happening today. The Lord prophesied also that many false prophets would appear and it has also been fulfilled in our time. So many preachers today are professing to be of God but far from being the true preachers that they claim to be, they are just fooling many people with their deceptive teachings. Christ also warned that during our time, near the end of the world, evil would spread and cause many people's love for God to grow cold.

Indeed, we need the strength to be able to carry on and finish our course, because our Lord and Savior says that only those among His chosen ones who endure or remain true until the end will certainly be saved (Matt. 24:13). Hence, we need to pray that God grant us the strength we need in order for us to endure until the very end.

The very act of praying shows that we entrust our life and our future to God, our merciful Father in heaven. If we so trust in Him we shall not be disappointed in our hope. The Psalmist says: "To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse" (Ps. 25:1-3, NIV). If we completely trust in God, according to the Bible, we will not be put to shame. We will not be disappointed in our hope. So, instead of being anxious of anything, let us entrust to God our future life.

How do we prove that we entrust our life to God? The Psalmist says: "Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day" (Ps. 25:4-5, NKJV). It is easy to distinguish those who entrust their life to God and those who do not. The plea to God of those who trust Him completely is to teach them His paths and to lead them in His truth. They implore God to teach them His ways and they are ready to obey His will.

Why is it important that we, especially during these times, entrust our life to God? Because He, as our light, will guide us in the dark paths. As it is written: "You, LORD, are my light; you dispel my darkness. You give me strength to attack my enemies and power to overcome their defenses" (II Sam. 22:29-30, TEV). Hence, we who trust in God completely will not be lost even though the world in which we journey is filled with darkness because we have a light that guides us. If God is always with us we can overcome whatever hardship and difficulty we may encounter.

Let us continue to trust in the great things that God can do for us.

BIENVENIDO C. SANTIAGO
 Editor-in-Chief

"Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.

He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow he does not endure.

Job 14:1-2, New International Version



### "... the glory that I had with you"

I STILL CAN'T understand why the Church of Christ utterly denies Christ's pre-existence when the Savior Himself taught that He existed with the Father even before the world was made. In one of His prayers to the Father, Christ said, "... glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made" (John 17:5, emphasis added), Kindly notice the verb used ("had") which is in the past tense form and the point in time referred to ("before the world was made"). Isn't it obvious that Jesus had pre-existence? Doesn't it prove also that Christ is indeed God?

### Leonard Woo

Seattle, Washington

Editor's reply:

If we were to agree with such line of reasoning, then we would be compelled to accept, too, that Apostle Paul and the Christians also had pre-existence and must also be Gods. In his letter to the Christians in Ephesus, the Apostle Paul wrote thus:

"Thus he chose us in Christ before the world was made to be holy and faultless before him in love," (Eph. 1:4, New Jerusalem Bible, emphasis ours)

Take note of the verb "chose" which is also in the past tense form and the very same phrase "before the world was made" as the point of reference. Would you say then that Paul and the Christians had pre-existence and are therefore Gods, too?

Is it true that Jesus had been corporeally existing even before the foundation of the world like the way you've interpreted the verse? Apostle Peter, one of Christ's true disciples, has this teaching regarding our Lord Jesus which would enlighten us in this issue thus:

"Foreknown, indeed, before the foundation of the world, he has been manifested in the last times for your sakes." (I Pet. 1:20, Confraternity Version, emphasis ours)

Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world. If Christ had already been existing before the foundation of the world, then there would not be any need to "foreknow" Him, so to speak. Thus, the fact that He was foreknown before the foundation of the world proves that during that time, He did not exist yet.

In what sense then did Christ have the glory from God "before the world was made" (John 17:5) if He was not yet existing then? To answer this, it would be helpful to address also the related question: In what sense did God choose the Christians "before the world was made" (Eph. 1:4) if they were not yet existing then? The answer to this is found just in the succeeding verse:

"God planned long ago that we become His own sons through Jesus Christ. This would please God; it is what He wanted." (Eph. 1:5, Simple English Bible, emphasis ours)

It is clear therefore that "God chose" His people "before the world was made" (Eph. 1:4) in the sense that He "planned long ago" or "destined" (Revised Standard Version) them to be His children. Take note that it does not in any way mean that those people pre-existed and are Gods.

In the same manner, Christ "had" the glory "before the world was made" (John 17:5) neither because He had pre-existence nor is He God but because it had been in God's plan or foreknowledge before the foundation of the world (I Pet. 1:20, CV) that "all things ... that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers ... [be] created through Him [Christ] and for Him" (Col. 1:16). "Before the world was made, God chose Christ" (I Pet. 1:20, SEB) and "He was destined" (I Pet. 1:20, RSV) to have

such glory, though He, like the Christians, was not yet existing during that time. In fact, the Bible proves that the plan of God concerning the sending forth of Jesus Christ found fulfillment only when Christ was born of a woman named Mary:

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law." (Gal. 4:4, New King James Version)

"This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 1:18, NJB)

This is the beginning of Christ's corporeal existence, in the same way that God's people started to exist only when they were born, though God already had a plan to adopt them as His children "even before the world was made."

For you to realize that you cannot validly use John 17:5 to prove your belief that Christ had pre-existence and that He is God, please consider the preceding verses in that chapter. In John 17:1 and 3, it is stated quite clearly how our Lord Jesus Christ Himself proved that the Father, not He, is the only true God:

"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

"'And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the **only true God**, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent'." (NKJV, emphasis ours)

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FAMILY MATTERS: The Church of Christ puts emphasis on the value of family unity and harmony as taught by the Holy Scriptures. Photos show family members in Virginia Beach taking some days out together in fun and excitement.

VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

### CWS activities foster parent-child relationship

TO STRENGTHEN THE bond among family members, the officers of the children's worship service (CWS) of the Virginia Beach Congregation in the ecclesiastical district of Southeastern Seaboard launched a series of activities from August 12 to 26, 2006. Children, their parents, and CWS officers participated in the events.

First of these activities was a field trip to the Children's Museum on August 12, 2006. The brethren enjoyed the educational shows and the hands-on exhibits. According to them, the trip was both informative and entertaining.

A week after, on August 19, a family kite-flying activity was held at Mount Trashmore Park in Virginia Beach. The parents assembled the kites while the children were reading the instructions on how to make a kite, in the process encouraging communication between parents and their children and promoting camaraderie among the participants.

The next Saturday, August 26, a family bowling activity was conducted at the AMF Indian River Bowling Lanes. This time, it was the children, with the supervision of the CWS officers, who played bowling together while their parents

were watching or playing bowling on other lanes.

Altogether, with the help of God and with the cooperation of the brethren, the said activities were a tremendous success. Not only did these create a good opportunity for the families of brethren to have fun and to spend time together but also enhanced unity among the brethren. (Eduardo D. Manzano, with reports from Analyn Nocelo)







VIRGINIA BEACH: As the Church's intensive missionary efforts continue, more people of diverse cultural lineages are heeding the Good News of salvation, such as the guests who attended a recent grand evangelical mission held at the house of worship of Virginia Beach Congregation, Southeastern Seaboard District, USA.





NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

### San Pablo rules district-wide Quiz Bee

THE SCOPE of the knowledge of the brethren on the Bible and the history of the Church of Christ was put to a test in a competition organized and conducted by the district leadership of the Christian family organizations Buklod, KADIWA, and Binhi. Dubbed as 2006 Bible History Quiz Bee and with over 250 brethren-participants, the contest was held at the function hall of the San Jose Congregation on August 19, 2006.

The activity started with a prayer that was led by Brother Johnny Martin, resident minister of Monterey. In the opening remarks, Brother Robert Pellien, district minister, explained that competition is healthy when done in the spirit of love, and that knowledge and understanding come from God who gives wisdom and insight to those who accept His words and keep His commandments in their hearts and minds.

After hours of written tests and brotherly competition, San Pablo Congregation emerged as the over-all champion, with most of its representatives winning in various divisions. The complete line-up of winners is as follows:

Children's category: Brother Justin Martin, Monterey Congregation, first; Sister Justine San Pedro (San Pablo), second; Brother Jomar Villagracia (Daly City) and Sister Nestlie Cavero (Lemoore), third. Binhi category: Fresno, first; San Pablo, second; and San Jose, third. KADIWA category: San Pablo, first; San Jose, second; and Salinas, third. Buklod category: San Pablo, first; Orosi, second; and Fresno, third.

The Bible History Quiz Bee not only enhanced the knowledge of the participants on the Bible and the history of the Church but also fostered a healthy competitive spirit among them and a warm fellowship and strong brotherhood in the district. (Gene Abella and Andrew Wynne Sr.)

ERRATUM: (November 2006)

Special Features

The article "Caring for the brethren in time of need" on page 17, first paragraph: "Sapang Biabas, Sta. Lucia, Model Community and Epza resettlements" should have been included in the Pampanga resettlements and not in Agusan del Sur.





### **SWITZERLAND**

### Geneva brethren's genuine show of concern

AS AN EXPRESSION of concern for other people's welfare, the brethren of the local congregation of Geneva, Switzerland participated in a blood donation drive on August 19, 2006. In preparation for this activity, the brethren first attended a medical seminar on the importance of donating blood. The medical staff of the city's university hospital, where the blood donation activity took place, were delighted and appreciative of the brethren's enthusiastic efforts. Motivated by the success of the blood donation campaign, the brethren are planning to hold more socio-civic events in the future.



### HONG KONG

### HK West families' socializing at Shek O beach

The officers of the Christian family organizations in the local congregation of Hong Kong West organized a gettogether at Shek O beach on October 2, 2006. In this fun-filled event, the brethren were joined by their guests, relatives, and friends in various activities

such as parlor and trivia games, relays, design contests, and even swimming competitions.

(With reports from Richard Benedicto, Khristine Benedicto, and Noel de Guzman) SPECIAL REPORT

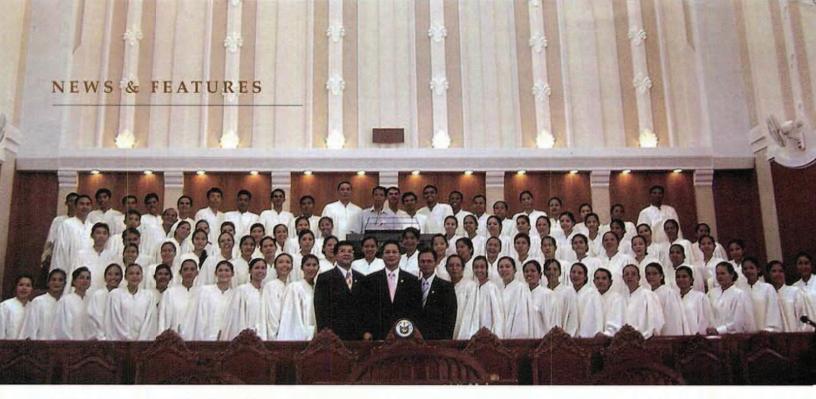
### Veterans Village takes on a victorious stand

By MARLEX C. CANTOR

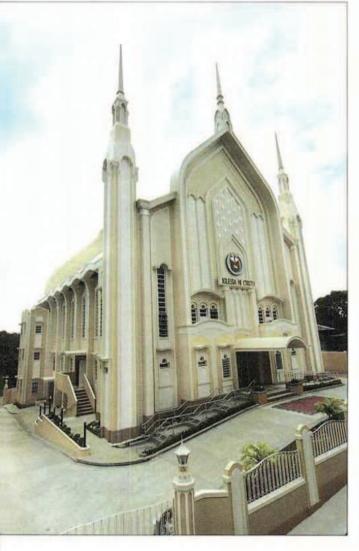
IT WAS A day of victory for the Veterans Village Congregation last October 21, 2006. On that bright Saturday morning, the brethren attended the dedication to God of their new house of worship through a special worship service at which Brother Arnel A. Tumanan, General Secretary of the Church, officiated. This event marked the congregation's triumphant relocation from the old semi-concrete house of worship along 4th Street, Area 4, where its worship services and other Church activities were held for the last quarter of a century.

Just a few blocks away from the congregation's erstwhile place of worship, the 1,600-square-meter lot where the new Veterans Village house of worship stands was purchased by the Church Administration in 1999 in response to the congregation's need for a bigger and more suitable center for worship and other Church activities. Since the congregation's establishment in February 1981, its population has steadily increased such that the old property became too small to suitably accommodate the worshipers.

Upon the approval of the Executive Minister, Brother Eraño G. Manalo, the construction of the new house of worship began in April 2005 under the supervision of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* Engineering and Construction Department.



VICTORIOUS 'VILLACERS': The officers of the Veterans Village Congregation are the first ones who are grateful to the Almighty God for granting their prayers to have a bigger and beautiful house of worship. Photo shows members of the choir with Brother Arnel Tumanan (center), Brother Israel Flores (left), and Brother Cesar Nuevo (right).



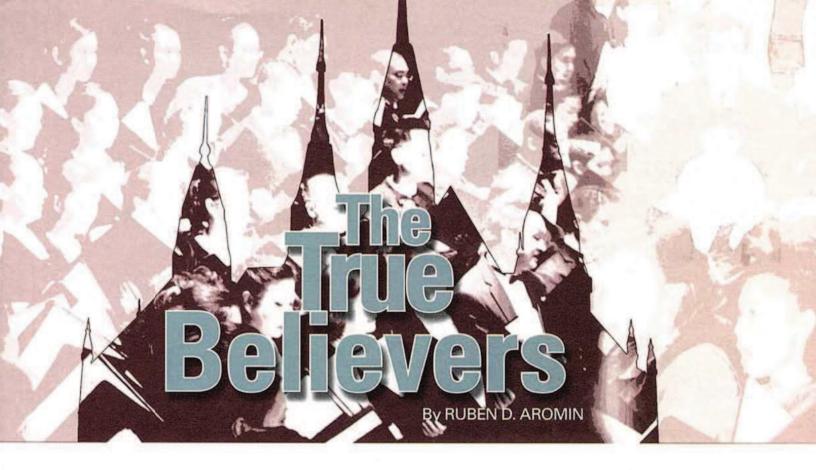
Delighted, the faithful of Veterans Village willingly helped out in every way they could, others even volunteered to do several construction chores.

"Our congregation is very thankful to God, above all, and to the Church Administration for having this beautiful edifice built for us", said Brother Cesar Nuevo, Veterans Village Congregation resident minister. "This gives us great inspiration in the performance of our sacred duties."

Approximately three kilometers east of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* Central Office Complex, the new and elegant house of worship of Veterans Village can be considered as "the next big thing" eastward of the Central Temple. And the brethren of Veterans Village are out to prove they deserve such distinction, as indicated by the impressive turnout of the first grand evangelical mission held in the newly built house of worship just a few days after its dedication day.

On October 30, a throng of curious guests and brethren overflowed the house of worship during the missionary gathering presided over by Brother Israel U. Flores, Metro Manila East district minister. According to Brother Nuevo, of the 800 guests who attended the GEM, 50 and still counting are now undergoing instruction in biblical doctrines.

Victorious, indeed, is the work of salvation in the local congregation of Veterans Village. But for all these triumphs, the brethren claim no credit for themselves; they humbly attribute all their successes to God's grace and mercy. As Sister Precy Santos, one of the "veterans" of the congregation, being among its first 48 members, said: "I remember what Brother Eraño Manalo, in one of his early visits to our congregation, once said: 'In this remote, secluded place in the heart of the city, God is very near'. He was right! These are all the work of God's hands." 9



URING THE TIME of early Christianity, to be branded as among the believers in Christ was a social stigma which would incur the ire and disgust of the world and would invite persecution and derision from the general populace. Today, however, "Christendom" offers a totally different picture. No longer are people ashamed to be called believers in Christ, but countless of them now claim and openly profess to be among their number. In fact, this expression has become so hackneyed and trite, each and every one who professes to be Christian appropriates this to himself, knowing fully well that no less than salvation is guaranteed by the Savior to those who truly believe in Him. There are even those who go so far as to use the expression to refer to all those belonging to different religious organizations or churches that allegedly make up the body of Christ, which is the Church of Christ. This view, which is usually found among the Protestants, has relegated membership to any particular church or re-

ligious organization as unimportant, for it holds that as long as an individual professes faith in Christ, accepts Him as Lord and Savior, he is a true believer and member of the Church of Christ and can share in Christ's promised salvation. For therefore, the expression "believers in Christ" refers to all professing Christians worldwide regardless of religious affiliation. What, indeed, is the biblical truth concerning the true believers? Who are they and what distinguishing qualities do they have which separate them from the rest of the Christian-professing people? Let us ask first, how does one become a true believer in Christ? The words of Christ clarify:

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44, New King James Version)

To be a true believer or follower of Christ, one must first be drawn by the Father to Christ and unless he is drawn by God to Him, he can not be a true believer or disciple. Apostle Paul explains that God draws people to Christ by calling them to have fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ:

"God is to be trusted, the God who called you to have fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord." (I Cor. 1:9, Today's English Version)

Those whom God has called to have fellowship with, or union with, Christ "were called in one body" (Col. 3:15, NKJV), which is the Church headed by our Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18). How fellowship was forged between Christ and the true believers in the Church headed by Him is explained further by the Apostle Paul thus:

"Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace." (Eph. 2:15, NKJV)

With the creation of the one new man out of the two, referring to Christ as head and the Church as His body, fellowship and union was forged between Christ and those whom God has called. To have this

## With the **creation** of the **one new man** out of the two, referring to **Christ as head** and the **Church as His body**, fellowship and union was forged between Christ and those whom God has called.

fellowship with Christ and to be among the true believers, one must be "baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13), which is the Church headed by Christ or the Church of Christ. Members of the Church of Christ are the true believers in Christ, for they are the ones drawn by the Father to Christ and have fellowship with Him.

### Many parts, one body

There is simply no truth to the allegation that all professing Christians, regardless of the church with which they are affiliated, are true believers and disciples of Christ. Neither is there truth to the allegation that the Church of Christ is composed of all the religious organizations or churches worldwide professing to be Christian. Apostle Paul dispels such allegations in pointing out that "Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts" (I Cor. 12:12, TEV).

It is the parts and not the body or Church which are many—Apostle Paul explicitly says that though it is made up of different parts, it is still "a single body, ... it is still one body." And these different parts are the individual members of that one religious body or Church of Christ as he clarifies further thus:

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." (Rom. 12:4-8, NKIV)

The individual members who make up the one body of Christ or true Church of Christ are the ones who are many and not the churches or religious organizations that allegedly composed the Church of Christ. These individual members are endowed with different gifts or duties to perform in the only one religious body or Church. This one body or Church is characterized by its unity in everything which could not possibly be found in the aggrupation of various religious organizations with different and even conflicting teachings, practices, and administrations. The Apostle Paul points this out thus:

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. 4:4-6, *Ibid*.)

In the one body or true Church, the members share one hope of their calling; recognize one Lord, Jesus Christ, whom God made as their Lord (Acts 2:36); serve and worship one God who is the Father; and have a uniform set of teachings and doctrines as they share one faith and one baptism. And "God composed the body," in such a way so "that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another" (I Cor. 12:24, 25, NKJV). This could not be possibly said of the various religious organizations professing to be Christians for they espouse varied and differing teachings, beliefs and practices, belying the claim that they compose the one body of Christ or the Church of Christ.

### Factionalism and denominationalism

Adherents of the Protestant faith claim that they are true believers in Christ and that they belong to Him. Although they do not subscribe to the importance of church membership as requisites to the attainment of salvation, surprisingly they are themselves affiliated with different Protestant



churches. In fact, as early as the mid-80's, it was reported by a Protestant writer that there were already "20,800 denominations in the world, supplemented by more than 15,000 distinct parachurch agencies" (Moody Monthly, Sept. 1984, p. 28). The same writer observed that this "division within the Church arose from unfaithfulness to Christ ... has marred the body of Christ," stating further that "today's churches bear little resemblance to the first-century model" (Ibid.). Indeed, the writer couldn't have put it better, for the true Church of Christ, of which the true believers are members, is not characterized by divisions and factions. The apostle James emphasized to the true believers in the first century:

"But if you have bitter envying among you or strife in your hearts, do not boast and do not lie against the truth. This wisdom does not come from above, but it is earthly, sensual, devilish. For wherever envy and strife are, there is confusion and every sort of evil." (James 3:14-16, Lamsa Translation)

Clearly, division or strife, which is so characteristic of the Protestant faith, does not belong to God and to Christ. The Protestant churches, with all these divisions and denominations in their midst, are a far cry from the first-century Church of Christ. As such they are not the true believers and they could not have made up the body of Christ or the true Church of Christ.

### The will of the Father

Why could not just people be true believers even if they serve Christ and recognize Him as their Lord and Savior, as we see many people are claiming to be doing nowadays and because of this, they think that they already belong to Christ and will attain salvation? The Lord Jesus explains the reason why when He testifies, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"" (Matt. 7:21-23, NKJV)

There is no doubt that the people being mentioned here by the Lord profess faith in Him and recognize Him as their Lord. They even have proofs of their vaunted faith in the Lord through the works of miracles that they have done in His name. Indeed, by their own standard, they could have easily passed themselves off as true believ-

ers in Christ and are entitled entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Sad to say, however, for Christ, they are not true believers, but false ones. In fact, instead of recognizing their efforts and even works of miracles in serving Him, Christ will reject them and will not save them. What is it that they didn't do, which is why they will be rejected and not be saved? Christ makes it very specific that only those who do the will of His Father will gain entrance into the kingdom of heaven, and those who did not, their services to Him will be in vain. What is this will of the Father concerning all men that if it is not done, profession of faith and the services rendered to Christ and to God will be useless? Apostle Paul enlightens us thus:

"And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to His good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." (Eph. 1:9-10, New International Version)

It is the will of the Father for all people to be brought together under one head who is Christ. How this is fulfilled, Apostle Paul further explains: "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (Eph. 1:22-23, *lbid.*).

The true believers in Christ have fulfilled the will of God, which is why they are members of Christ's body—the Church headed by Christ or the organization called the Church of Christ. Indeed, the importance of membership in this Church could not be overemphasized. Those who refuse to become members of this one religious body could not be the true believers and will not be allowed entrance into the kingdom of heaven because they have not done the will of the Father in heaven.

### They also follow Christ

Besides fulfilling the will of the Father, the true believers in Christ—the members of the Church of Christ—have also fulfilled or followed the words of Christ. The Lord Jesus emphasizes the importance of doing what He says to qualify as His true believers. The Bible relates this:

"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples'." (John 8:31, *lbid*.)

The true disciples and believers in Christ obey His teachings. They do not merely believe or profess faith in Christ, call on His name, and recognize Him as their Lord. Those who do just that without following what He says are rebuked by the Lord: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord', and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46, *lbid.*) And what has Christ said which all true believers ought to follow in order for them to be saved? The gospel according to John records:

"So Jesus spoke again: In very truth I tell you, I am the door of the sheepfold. ... I am the door; anyone who comes into the fold through me will be safe." (John 10:7, 9, Revised English Bible)

To be safe or saved, one should obey these words of our Lord Jesus Christ to come into the sheepfold and be among His sheep. The sheepfold or flock in which those who have obeyed this bidding are found is the Church of Christ as testified to by the Apostle Paul:

"Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers, to feed the church of Christ which he has purchased with his blood." (Acts 20:28, Lamsa Translation)

Hence, the true believers in Christ, His sheep, are in only one sheepfold or flock which is the Church of Christ. It is of this one religious organization that those who have done the will of the Father and have obeyed Christ's words are members. Those who are not in this flock have not followed Christ and are not among His sheep and therefore could not be true believers. Christ has this words for them to ponder on:

"But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:26-28, NKJV)

### The beauty of God's love

Tranquility, peace of mind and happiness—
Something this world can never have.
Unconditional love and endless mercy—
Something this world can't seem to offer
But when I come to worship You, Lord,
All of my worries fade
Sadness turns to contentment,
Defeat becomes victory.

When my faith weakens,
You always make it strong
When trials come my way,
You help me choose the right path.
When I lose hope,
You remind me of Your promises—
Promises that can never be broken.

Thank You for giving me this chance
To serve and praise Your Name
I promise to continue and carry my cross
But please, never leave my side.

Arianne Rizza Buban Burnaby, B.C., Canada

### The Acts of the Apostles

### The riot in Ephesus

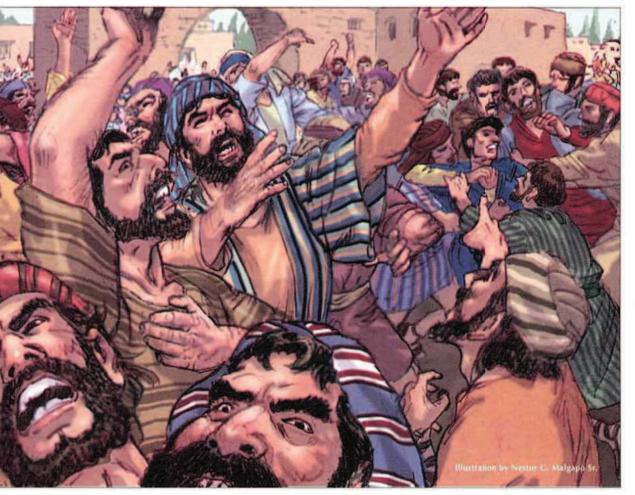
FTER THESE THINGS had happened, Paul made up his mind to travel through Macedonia and Achaia and go on to Jerusalem. "After I go there," he said, "I must also see Rome." So he sent Timothy and Erastus, two of his helpers, to Macedonia, while he spent more time in the province of Asia.

It was at this time that there was serious trouble in Ephesus because of the Way of the Lord. A certain silversmith named Demetrius made silver models of the temple of the goddess Artemis, and his business brought a great deal of profit to the workers. So he called them all together with others whose work was like theirs and said to them, "Men, you know that our prosperity comes from this work. Now, you can see and hear for yourselves what this fellow Paul is doing. He says that man-made gods are not gods at all, and he has succeeded in

convincing many people, both here in Ephesus and in nearly the whole province of Asia. There is the danger, then, that this business of ours will get a bad name. Not only that, but there is also the danger that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will come to mean nothing and that her greatness will be destroyed—the goddess worshiped by everyone in Asia and in all the world!"

As the crowd heard these words,

they became furistarted and shouting, "Great is Artemis of Ephesus!" The uproar spread throughout the whole city. The mob grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were traveling with Paul, and rushed with them to the theater. Paul himself wanted to go before the crowd, but the believers would not let him. Some of the provincial authorities, who were his friends, also sent him a message begging him not to show himself in the theater. Meanwhile the whole meeting was in an uproar: some



people were shouting one thing, others were shouting something else, because most of them did not even know why they had come together. Some of the people concluded that Alexander was responsible, since the Jews made him go up to the front. Then Alexander motioned with his hand for the people to be silent, and he tried to make a speech of defense. But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they all shouted together the same thing for two hours: "Great is Artemis of Ephesus!"

At last the city clerk was able to calm the crowd. "Fellow Ephesians!" he said. "Everyone knows that the city of Ephesus is the keeper of the temple of the great Artemis and of the sacred stone that fell down from heaven. Nobody can deny these things. So then, you must calm down and not do anything reckless. You have brought these men here even though they have not robbed temples or said evil things about our goddess. If Demetrius and his workers have an accusation against anyone, we have the authorities and the regular days for court; charges can be made there. But if there is something more that you want, it will have to be settled in a legal meeting of citizens. For after what has happened today, there is the danger that we will be accused of a riot. There is no excuse for all this uproar, and we would not be able to give a good reason for it." After saying this, he dismissed the meeting.

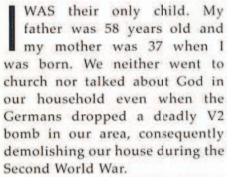
### To Macedonia and Achaia

After the uproar died down, Paul called together the believers and with words of encouragement said good-bye to them. Then he left and went on to Macedonia.

(Quoted from Acts 19:21-41; 20:1, Today's English Version)

## A life with direction, motivation, and inspiration

By MICHAEL GOLDSACK



I joined the Christchurch Boys' Choir in Gravesend, Kent when I was seven years old and sang in historical places from Canterbury Cathedral and Royal Albert Hall to Westminster Central Hall sponsored by the Church of England. After seven years of singing in the church choir, I could not say that I learned how to truly worship God. I went with the flow, as it was an opportunity for me to socialize with children of my age and to have an after-school activity through which I learned music and developed social skills.

As part of an English family tradition, I enlisted in the merchant navy when I was 17, which was for



**Brother Michael** 

me a great opportunity to see the world. At twenty-two, I joined the British Army. My father, grandfathers, and great grandfathers belonged to military regiments who fought in two world wars. I stayed with the British Royal Engineers for nine years, in Bielefeld, Berlin, and Hanover, Germany from 1961, and from 1967, my troop was sent to Aden.

My experience in the army gave me the discipline that I carried on throughout my life. I never had vices like drinking, smoking, or going to pubs and I preferred to be alone rather than get involved with the wrong company.

### A realization

I was introduced to the *Iglesia ni Cristo* in 1987 by Sister Pilipina Calma, who was from the local congregation of Concepcion in Tarlac, Philippines.

Brother Emiliano Magtuto Jr., then the resident minister of the local congregation of Battersea in London, England, was very patient in answering my questions during the Bible studies. The way he preached during the worship service was full of sincerity and dedication. He made sure that I understood every lesson of the fundamental beliefs of the Church before I was finally baptized on May 21, 1988.

Compared to my former religion, the *Iglesia ni Cristo* is unique in every way. The doctrines are purely based on the Holy Scriptures—nothing added, nothing subtracted. If only people outside of this Church will open their hearts and minds and give themselves the opportunity to attend the grand evangelical missions, instruction in biblical doctrines, and the worship services, they will truly benefit from God's eternal blessings.

I realized that this is the only true Church when I felt the Holy Spirit in the early weeks of regularly attending the worship services in the latter part of 1987, something I had not experienced before in my life.

### Emphasis on brotherhood and family

The brethren are extremely kind and always greet guests with enthusiasm, warmth, and affection. The brethren I've met in my travels abroad have exactly the same spirit regardless of their race, color, and nationality, as though we all came from the same womb. Indeed, there is true brother-hood among the members in all corners of the world.

Church members all over the world give their family extreme importance. Families in the *Iglesia ni Cristo* are guided to be intact, integrated, and disciplined. My wife and I respect wholeheartedly God's

words that bound us in marriage and remain as its very strong and solid foundation.

The kind of impact the *Iglesia ni* Cristo has had on my life is having peace each time I attend a worship service, enriching my spiritual life day after day, year after year.

If I had never been introduced to this Church, my life would have been without direction, motivation, and inspiration. To have found God feels like I have reached the highest accolades in life, more than all the laurels and material wealth anyone can gain from this world.

### He blazed a trail

Foresold as a bird of prey Concerning his function: He was to gather children of God From the claws of Great Babylon.

With prophecies equipped Undaunted he attacked, All the popish forms of worship Which cunning Satan packed.

Untiring he did seal
And worked he with great zeal.
He burned the midnight oil,
No matter, though he's ill.

Through him were called Christ's other sheep
Whether he's sick or well.
So once again God is worshiped
According to His will.

Divine mission was accomplished: Re-emergence of the CHURCH OF CHRIST! Thus, our Lord God opted him to rest, Then rise at the advent of Christ.

> Manuel F. Villapañe Sr. Quezon City, Philippines

# Preserving the Sanctity of Marriage

### By DONALD PINNOCK

NOUR TIMES, the institution of marriage is being severely challenged by the decaying standards of morals. For some, marriage has been reduced to just a piece of paper with no spiritual significance. Some consider that it is fine to just have a live-in relationship if they do meet someone whom they would like to share their life with. Among those who do get married, there are those who believe that at any time when one of the couple so desires, they could just divorce their supposed life-time partner and join with—as they believe-a more compatible

The table below shows just how rampant is divorce nowadays. The top 15 countries with the highest rate of divorce is shown in this chart from the Divorce Magazine.com:

| Country            | %  |
|--------------------|----|
| Belarus            | 68 |
| Russian Federation | 65 |
| Sweden             | 64 |
| Latvia             | 63 |
| Ukraine            | 63 |
| Czech Republic     | 61 |
| Belgium            | 56 |
| Finland            | 56 |
| Lithuania          | 55 |
| United Kingdom     | 53 |
| Moldova            | 52 |
| United States      | 49 |
| Hungary            | 46 |
| Canada             | 45 |
| Norway             | 43 |

In more than 15 countries, over 40 percent of marriages end up in divorce. What are some of the reasons divorce is so rampant? The same magazine gives as reasons, among others, adulterous affairs, physical and emotional violence, financial problems, and lack of communication.

While separation or divorce may be the sad ending of many marriages, members of the Church of Christ (Iglesia ni Cristo) do not allow marriage to lose its significance. They understand that God is the one who established this institution, as confirmed in Matthew 19:5-6:

"And said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (New International Version)

God does not permit man to separate those whom He has joined together. The Bible moreover teaches His stand regarding divorce. Malachi 2:16 teaches, thus:

"I hate divorce', says the LORD God of Israel, 'and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment', says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith." (Ibid.)

### True solution

What is needed in order for the issues mentioned not to cause undue problems to the married couples? The couples need to allow God's commandments to rule over them, as stated in Romans 7:2:

"Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband." (Revised Standard Version)

Married couples in the Church of Christ should make sure that the laws or statutes of God reign over their marriage. If only both husband and wife would allow the teachings of God to guide their marriage and submit themselves to obeying God's laws concerning marriage, then they will surely overcome all problems that concern the family. In view of this, let us examine in the light of God's instructions written in the Holy Bible some of the issues that have caused some people to put an end to their marital status.

### Honor your marriage

What is the teaching of God when it comes to extramarital sex, which is one of the reasons why married couples end up divorcing each other?

"Marriage is to be honored by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery." (Heb. 13:4, Today's English Version)

If one would only instill in his heart and mind that God will punish those who are unfaithful to their spouse, then he would think twice before committing such a sin, especially when he considers the severity of the punishment for those who commit sexual immorality:

"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (Rev. 21:8, NIV)

### Respect one another

What does the Bible teach concerning physical, emotional, and even verbal abuse, which is another cause for some marriages being dissolved? The Bible teaches how this can be avoided:

"However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband." (Eph. 5:33, *lbid*.)

Mutual respect between the married couple is an essential ingredient for a successful and lasting marriage. This teaching is taught to married members of the Church but in order to be respected, one should first be prepared to respect his or her spouse. One who does so will not mistreat her husband or his wife. The husband should heed this significant instruction of God, as made known through Apostle Peter:



"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, ... does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, ... hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. ... "— I Corinthians 13:4-8, New King James Version

"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." (I Pet. 3:7, *lbid.*)

The husband should not be venting out his frustrations from other aspects of his life upon his wife who is the weaker partner. A violent man is an abomination in the sight of God, as the following citation reveals:

"Don't envy violent men. Don't copy their ways. For such men are an abomination to the Lord, but he gives his friendship to the godly." (Prov. 3: 31-32, Living Bible)

### Be content

Another reason for others to consider divorcing their spouses is the economic or financial strains that they face. But, should married couples allow the lack of material possessions or wealth to cause undue stress or strain to their lives and harm their marriage? Hebrews 13:5 teaches this:

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'." (NIV)

Many times, those who experience financial problems are those who overspend, or spend beyond their reasonable ability. People who are not wise in spending money are "stupid" in the eyes of God, as proclaimed in Proverbs 21:20:

"Wise people live in wealth and luxury, but stupid people spend their money as fast as they get it." (TEV)

Not only should we live within our means, but we should also keep our lives free from the love of money. The members of the Church are always reminded to put their trust in God, since He promises unto them, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you."

### Be true to your promise

Another great stain for others when it comes to their marriage is the lack of communication. This leads some to think that they lack compatibility with their respective spouses. What, however, should married couples remember so that they will not allow such feelings or thoughts to dominate their thinking and especially their marriage? Malachi 2:14 states:

"You ask why he no longer accepts them. It is because he knows you have broken your promise to the wife you married when you were young. She was your partner, and you have broken your promise to her, although you promised before God that you would be faithful to her." (*Ibid.*)

Those who are joined in holy matrimony make a solemn vow before God that they will be faithful to their spouse until death. In order to fulfill this vow, one of the things that must be established in the couple's relationship is a good communication with each other. The couple should be able to spend quality time with each other, not just to discuss problems that may have arisen, but most especially to speak from the heart, consoling and encouraging one another, and reinforcing the bond between them, so that they can all the more overcome the problems of life.

Nevertheless, what will the married couples who give great importance to the commandments of God experience, especially in their homes? Psalms 128:1-4 states:

"How happy are those who fear the LORD—all who follow his ways! You will enjoy the fruit of your labor. How happy you will be! How rich your life! Your wife will be like a fruitful vine flourishing within your home. And look at all those children! There they sit around your table as vigorous and healthy as young olive trees. That is the LORD's reward for those who fear him." (New Living Translation)

Such is the blessed life of those who are prepared to deny and put away their personal wants or desires in order to obey completely the will of God—their personal lives are blessed, as well as their marriage and family.

### Ang may lalong malaking dahilan na magpasalamat sa Diyos

ILANG ARAW NA lamang ang nalalabi at matatapos na ang taong ito. Purihin at pasalamatan natin ang Diyos alang-alang sa lahat ng kabutihan at pagpapalang ipinagkaloob Niya sa atin, sa ating sambahayan, at sa buong Iglesia-sa loob ng isang taong singkad. Tayong mga kaanib sa Iglesia ni Cristo ay nagpapasalamat sapagkat sa kabila ng mabigat na kalagayang pangkabuhayan ng daigdig at ng matitinding suliraning ating naranasan, ay namamalagi tayong buhay at nakatutupad sa mga banal nating tungkulin sa Diyos. Nagpapasalamat tayo sapagkat sa kabila ng maraming mga hadlang, ang Iglesiang ito na pinagdalhan sa atin ng Diyos ay naitataguyod ang banal na gawaing itiniwala sa kaniya sa ilalim ng makapangyarihang pangunguna ng Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan, Kapatid na Eraño G. Manalo.

Makatuwiran lamang na pasalamatan natin ang Diyos sapagkat hindi natin kailanman matutumbasan ang mga kabutihan Niya sa atin. Ipinagkaloob Niya sa atin ang mga pangangailangan natin araw-araw. Iningatan Niya tayo at iniligtas sa mga kapahamakan at pinagaling sa ating mga karamdaman. Sa panahon ng pagsubok at kabagabagan ay Siya ang naging kanlungan natin. Utang natin sa Kaniya ang kapayapaan at mabuting pagtitinginan na pinapaghari ng Diyos sa ating tahanan na nagdulot ng galak at kapanatagan ng kalooban sa bawat isa sa gitna ng maraming kaligaligan sa ating paligid. Higit sa lahat, ang Kaniyang makapangyarihang kamay ang may gawa ng lahat ng tagumpay na natamo ng Iglesia ni Cristo.

Kaya, ang damdaming nag-udyok sa mga unang lingkod ng Diyos upang maghain ng pasasalamat sa Kaniya ang siya ring nag-uumapaw sa ating mga puso ngayon. Ang sabi ni David na Hari ng Israel: "Buong galak naman akong maghahandog Ng pasasalamat sa Panginoong

Diyos, Dahilan sa kanyang mabuting kaloob. Iniligtas ako sa kabagabagan, Iniligtas niya sa mga kaaway, At aking nakitang sila'y napipilan!" (Awit 54:6-7, Magandang Balita Biblia). Bilang mga kaanib sa Iglesia ni Cristo ay buong galak na nagpapasalamat tayo sa Kaniya sapagkat kinikilala nating Siya ay tunay na mabuti sa atin. Siya ang pinagmulan ng lahat ng kadakilaan, kapangyarihan, karangalan at kaningningan sapagkat lahat ng nasa langit at nasa lupa ay sa Panginoon. Gaya ng sinasabi ng Kasulatan: "Sa inyo, PANGINOON, ang kadakilaan at ang kapangyarihan. Inyo rin ang kaluwalhatian, karangalan at kaningningan, pagkat lahat ng nasa langit at nasa lupa ay sa inyo. PANGINOON, sa inyo ang kaharian; kayo ay dinadakila bilang pangulo ng lahat ng bagay. Kayamanan at karangalan ay mula sa inyo, kayo ang namamahala sa lahat ng bagay. Nasa kamay ninyo ang lakas at kapangyarihan upang itaas at bigyan-lakas ang lahat. Ngayon, aming Dios, pinasasalamatan namin kayo at pinupuri ang maluwalhati ninyo[ng] pangalan" (I Cron. 29:11-13, New Pilipino Version). Inihahayag ng ating pagpapasalamat sa Diyos na kinikilala nating sa Kaniya nagmula ang lahat ng kadakilaan, kapangyarihan, karangalan at pagtatagumpay sapagkat sa Kaniya ang lahat ng nasa langit at nasa lupa.

Tayo ang may lalong malaking dahilan upang magpasalamat sa Diyos, sapagkat hindi lamang nilalang Niya tayo at binigyan ng lakas, kundi, gaya ng sinabi ni Apostol Pablo, pinaging dapat pa Niya tayo "upang makabahagi sa mana ng mga banal sa kaliwanagan; Na siyang nagligtas sa atin sa kapangyarihan ng kadiliman, at naglipat sa atin sa kaharian ng Anak ng kaniyang pagibig; Na siyang kinaroroonan ng ating katubusan, na siyang kapatawaran ng ating mga kasalanan" (Col. 1:12-14). Nilinaw ni Apostol Pablo na ang mahalagang

dugo ni Cristo ang ipinantubos sa mga pinaging dapat na makabahagi sa mana (Efe. 1:7) at ang binili ng dugo ni Cristo ay ang Iglesia ni Cristo (Gawa 20:28, Lamsa Translation).

Bagaman lipos tayo ng kagalakan sa pagpapasalamat sa Diyos dahil iningatan Niya tayo sa taong ito na malapit nang matapos, gayunman ang lumulubhang kalagayan ng mundo dahil sa paglala ng mga kasamaan at kahirapan ay nagdudulot sa atin ng alalahanin tungkol sa hinaharap natin at ng ating sambahayan. Ang umaaliw lamang at nagpapalakas ng ating loob ay ang tagubilin ng Panginoong Jesucristo: "Kaya dapat kayong maging laging handa at manalangin, upang makaligtas kayo sa lahat ng mangyayari, at makaharap sa Anak ng Tao" (Lucas 21:36, NPV).

Kaya, hilingin natin sa Diyos na bigyan Niya tayo ng lakas na kailangan natin upang anuman ang mangyari sa mundong ito ay hindi tayo mahiwalay sa Kaniya kundi makatiyak tayo ng kaligtasan sa Araw ng Paghuhukom. Kailangan natin ang lakas sapagkat ibinabala ng ating Panginoong Jesucristo na bago dumating ang wakas ng sanlibutan ay magkakaroon ng mga digmaan, kagutom, lindol sa iba't ibang dako at mga kahirapan (Mat. 24:3, 33, 6-8, 11-12). At ito naman talaga ang nangyari at patuloy pang nagaganap sa kasalukuyan. Ibinabala rin ng Panginoon na babangon ang maraming bulaang propeta at natupad din ito sa ating panahon. Napakaraming lumitaw na mga tagapangaral na nagpapakilalang sila'y sa Diyos subalit sa katotohana'y mga nagpapanggap lamang at mga bulaan na nakapandaraya sa maraming mga tao sa pamamagitan ng kanilang mga hidwang aral. Ipinagpauna rin ng Panginoong Jesucristo na sa panahon natin, kapag malapit na ang wakas ng sanlibutan, ay lalago ang katampalasanan na dahil dito'y lalamig ang pag-ibig ng marami.

Kailangan natin ang lakas upang tayo'y makapagpatuloy at makatapos ng ating takbuhin, sapagkat ang ating Panginoon at Tagapagligtas ang may sabi na yaon lamang mga hinirang na makapagtitiis hanggang sa wakas ang tiyak na maliligtas (Mat. 24:13). Kaya kailangan nating manalanging lagi sa Diyos upang bigyan Niya tayo ng lakas na magawa ito.

Kapag tayo ay nananalangin ay inihahayag natin na sa Diyos natin itinitiwala ang ating buhay at kapalaran. Ang gayong pag-asa ay hindi Niya bibiguin, sapagkat sinasabi ng Banal na Kasulatan: "Sa iyo, O Yahweh, ako'y tumatawag; Ako'y may tiwalang iyong ililigtas. Tubusin mo ako sa kahihiyan, Upang di magtawa ang aking kaaway. Ang nagtitiwala sa iyo'y di bigo, Ang naghihimagsik ang nasisiphayo" (Awit 25:1-3, MB). Ayon sa Biblia, hindi mapapahiya ang mga nagtitiwala sa Panginoon. Hindi Niya bibiguin ang ating pag-asa. Kaya sa halip na tayo'y mabalisa sa anumang bagay ay itiwala natin ang ating kapalaran sa Diyos.

Paano natin patutunayan na sa Diyos natin itinitiwala ang ating buhay? Sa Awit 25:4-5 ay sinasabi ang ganito: "Ipakita mo sa akin ang iyong mga daan, O PANGINOON, ituro mo sa akin ang iyong mga landas; patnubayan mo ako sa 'yong katotohanan at turuan ako sapagkat ikaw ang Dios na aking Tagapagligtas, at ang pag-asa ko ay nasa iyo sa buong maghapon" (NPV). Madaling makilala ang taong itinitiwala ang kaniyang buhay sa Diyos. Ang kaniyang hinihiling sa Diyos ay patnubayan siya at turuan ng Kaniyang mga daan. Nais niyang ituro sa kaniya ng Diyos ang Kaniyang mga landas at handa siyang ito'y tahakin.

Bakit napakahalagang itiwala natin sa Diyos ang ating buhay lalo na sa panahong ito? Sapagkat Siya ang tanglaw na papatnubay sa atin sa daang madilim, gaya ng sinasabi sa Kasulatan: "Ikaw po, O Yahweh, ang tanglaw sa akin Tanging patnubay ko sa daang madilim. Kung ikaw, O Diyos ko ang aking kasama, Anuman ang hirap ay nasasalunga" (II Sam. 22:29-30, MB). Kaya tiyak na hindi tayo maliligaw samantalang naglalakbay tayo sa napakadilim na sanlibutang ito sapagkat ang Diyos ang papatnubay at tatanglaw sa ating daraanan. Kapag ang Diyos ang laging sumasaatin ay mapagtatagumpayan natin ang anumang kahirapan at mga suliraning ating masasagupa.

 BIENVENIDO C. SANTIAGO Editor-in-Chief

## Ang Hindi Dapat Malimutang Gawin ng mga Hinirang

Sinulat ni ROLAND A. AGUIRRE

Marami mang bagay ang gustong gawin at pagkaabalahan ng mga tao tuwing katapusan ng taon—pamimili o "shopping", handaan, pamamasyal, bakasyon, pagdalaw sa kamag-anak at kaibigan—**higit na dapat** nilang **matupad** ang kanilang **katutubong pananagutan** sa **Maylalang**.

San pupunta at sino ang mapagpipiliang gawin. Saan pupunta at sino ang pupuntahan. Ano ang bibilhin at ano ang isusuot. Ayon sa mga nagsasaliksik nahaharap ang bawat tao sa daan-daang pagpili araw-araw. Marami rito ay mahalaga at ang iba naman ay hindi. Gayunman, anuman ang ating piliing gawin ay nagpapahayag kung sino tayo at kung anong uring kinabukasan o buhay sa hinaharap ang nakalaan sa atin.

Kaya nga, sapagkat ang taong 2006 ay magtatapos na at ang huling buwan ng taon para sa marami ay isang panahon ng walang taros na pagsasaya at mararangyang pagdiriwang, hindi kakaunti ang totoong abala na anupa't punung-puno ang mga schedules ng marami sa mga binabalak nilang gawin. Sa loob ng isang buong taon ay nagpakahirap sila—napagod at halos naubos ang lakas sa paggawa—kaya ang pagtatapos ng taon ay ayaw nilang paraanin nang basta na lamang. Itinuturing nila na isang pananagutan sa kanilang sarili at sa kanilang sambahayan na ang piliin at gawin ay ang pagsasaya sa abot ng kanilang makakaya. Kaya, sa nakararami, ang taong 2006 ay dapat matapos, wika nga sa Ingles, with a bang, not with a whimper.

### Huwag makalilimot

Hindi masama ang magsaya at magdiwang kasama ng ating mga mahal sa buhay alang-alang sa mga tagumpay na natamo sa pag-aaral, paghahanapbuhay o anumang ating pinagpagalan. Ano nga naman ang ilang oras o araw ng pagsasaya kung ikukumpara sa isang taong pagsasakit at pagtitiis? Subalit, maaaring malimutan ng iba na mayroon tayong katutubong pananagutan sa Diyos na dapat tiyakin na ating naisasagawa lalo na nga kung isasaalang-alang ang mabubuting bagay na ginawa Niya sa atin. Ito ang isinasaad ng Biblia:

"Maglingkod sa PANGINOON na may kagalakan; lumapit sa harapan niya at awitan siyang may galak. Alaming ang PANGINOON ay Dios. Siya ang lumalang sa atin, at tayo'y kanya; tayo ang bayan n'ya, mga tupa ng kanyang pastulan. Pumasok sa kanyang mga pintuan na may pasasalamat, at sa mga patyo na may pagpupuri; pasalamatan natin siya at purihin ang kanyang pangalan." (Awit 100:2-4, New Pilipino Version)

Ang Diyos ang lumalang at nagbigay-anyo sa atin mula sa bahay-bata ng ating ina (Isa. 44:2). Ang Diyos na Lumalang din ang may hawak ng ating hininga at buhay (Job 12:9-10). Sa Kaniya rin tayo nangabubuhay at nagsisikilos (Gawa 17:28). Kaya, lahat ng tao ay may pananagutang maglingkod, pumuri, at magpasalamat sa Diyos.

Kung gayon, marami mang bagay ang gustong gawin at pagkaabalahan ng mga tao tuwing katapusan ng taon—pamimili o *shopping*, handaan, pamamasyal, bakasyon, pagdalaw sa kamag-anak at kaibigan—hindi siya dapat malibang ni magambala ng mga ito. Dapat na

### Hindi basta maisasagawa ng tao ang pagpapasalamat at pagpupuri sa Diyos. Ang magpapasalamat ay kailangan munang pumasok sa pintuang-daan —ang ating Panginoong Jesucristo.

matupad ng tao ang kaniyang katutubong pananagutan sa Maylalang sa kaniya.

### Ang dapat gawin ng magpapasalamat

Maaaring sabihin ng iba na kailanman ay hindi nila nalilimutang isagawa ang pananagutang maglingkod at magpasalamat sa Diyos. Subalit may itinuturo ang Biblia na dapat munang gawin ng mga magpapasalamat sa Kaniya. Ganito ang pahayag:

"Magsipasok kayo sa kaniyang mga pintuang-daan na may pagpapasalamat, At sa kaniyang looban na may pagpupuri: Mangagpasalamat kayo sa kaniya, at purihin ninyo ang kaniyang pangalan." (Awit 100:4)

Kaya hindi basta maisasagawa ng tao ang pagpapasalamat at pagpupuri sa Diyos. Ang magpapasalamat ay kailangan munang pumasok sa pintuang-daan. Sa panahong Cristiano, ang pintuan at daan na tinutukoy ay walang iba kundi ang ating Panginoong Jesucristo (Juan 10:9; 14:6). Kaya bago isagawa ng tao ang pananagutan niyang pumuri at magpasalamat sa Diyos, kailangan muna niyang pumasok o dumaan kay Cristo. Sinabi ng Panginoong Jesucristo na Siya "ang pintuang dinaraanan ng mga tupa" (Juan 10:7, Magandang Balita Biblia).

Ang pumasok o dumaan kay Cristo ay napaloob sa kawan:

"I am the door; any one who comes into the fold through me will be safe." [Ako ang pintuan; sinumang pumasok sa loob ng kawan sa pamamagitan ko ay magiging ligtas.] (John 10:9, Revised English Bible)

Ang kawang tinutukoy ay ang Iglesia ni Cristo:

"Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers, to feed the church of Christ which he has purchased with his blood." [Ingatan ninyo kung gayon ang inyong mga sarili at ang buong kawan na rito'y hinirang kayo ng Espiritu Santo na mga katiwala, upang pakanin ang iglesia ni Cristo na binili niya ng kaniyang dugo.] (Acts 20:28, Lamsa Translation)

Kaya para maisagawa ng tao nang karapat-dapat ang pananagutan niyang maglingkod, pumuri, at magpasalamat sa Diyos, kailangan munang pumaloob siya sa Iglesia ni Cristo.

### Ang piniling gawin at alalahanin ng mga hinirang

Bagaman abala ang mga tao sa sanlibutan sa pagsasaya at paggawa ng kanilang mga piniling gawin sa pagtatapos ng taon, ang piniling gawin ng mga kaanib sa *Iglesia ni Cristo* ay magpasalamat at alalahanin ang hindi masayod na kabutihan ng Diyos. Hindi nila malilimot kailanman ang tunay na dahilan kung bakit sila tinawag ng Diyos. Ganito ang pahayag ni Apostol Pablo:

"At maghari sa inyong puso ang kapayapaan ni Cristo, na diya'y tinawag din naman kayo sa isang katawan; at kayo'y maging mapagpasalamat." (Col. 3:15)

Ang katawan na tinutukoy ni Apostol Pablo ay ang Iglesia na pinangunguluhan ni Cristo (Col. 1:18). Kaya kung hindi man pinahahalagahan ng ibang tao ang maging mapagpasalamat, para sa mga *Iglesia ni Cristo*, ito ay katutubong pananagutan nila sa Diyos. Ito ang dahilan kaya bago matapos ang bawat taon ay isinasagawa ng mga hinirang ng Diyos sa mga huling araw ang taunang pagpapasalamat sa Kaniya.

Gayundin, sa okasyong ito inaalaala at ipinagpapasalamat ng mga kaanib sa *Iglesia ni Cristo* ang napakasaganang biyayang kanilang tinanggap mula sa Diyos:

"Na nagpapasalamat sa Ama, na nagpaging dapat sa atin upang makabahagi sa mana ng mga banal sa kaliwanagan; Na siyang nagligtas sa atin sa kapangyarihan ng kadiliman, at naglipat sa atin sa kaharian ng Anak ng kaniyang pagibig; Na siyang kinaroroonan ng ating katubusan, na siyang kapatawaran ng ating mga kasalanan." (Col. 1:12-14)

Marapat lamang na gawin ng mga lingkod ng Diyos ang pagpapasalamat sa Kaniya sapagkat pinapaging-dapat Niya sila na makabahagi sa mana ng mga banal sa paraang iniligtas sila sa kapangyarihan ng kadiliman at inilipat sa kaharian ng Anak o ni Cristo. Ang kahariang ito ay ang kinaroroonan ng katubusan at kapatawaran ng kasalanan, alalaong baga'y ang lglesia ni Cristo na tinubos ng dugo ni Cristo.

Kaya hindi nakagagambala sa mga hinirang ng Diyos ang anumang pagsasaya at pagdiriwang na nagaganap sa mundo. Nakaukit sa kanilang gunita ang napakadakilang biyayang ibinigay ng Diyos na hindi matutumbasan ng anuman: ang kapatawaran ng kanilang kasalanan na dahil dito ay nakatitiyak sila ng kaligtasan pagdating ng Araw ng Paghuhukom.

### Sa hinaharap na buhay

Kung papaanong dahil sa tulong at awa ng Diyos ay nalampasan ng mga hinirang ang mabibigat na pagsubok sa taong ito, muli, ganito rin ang kanilang hinihiling sa Diyos para sa taong darating—na huwag Niyang bayaang bumagsak ang Kaniyang mga hinirang:

"O Diyos, sinubok mo ang 'yong mga hirang, Sinubok mo kami upang dumalisay; At tulad ng pilak, kami'y idinarang. Iyong binayaang mahulog sa bitag, At pinagdala mo kami nang mabigat.

"Iningatan niya tayong pawang buhay, Di tayo bumagsak, di n'ya binayaan!" (Awit 66:10-11, 9, MB)

Ganito naman ang tugon ng Diyos sa mga hinirang Niya sa mga huling araw na lubos ang pagtitiwala sa Kaniya:

"Ako si Yahweh na inyong Diyos At siyang nagpapalakas sa inyo, Ako ang may sabing: 'Huwag kayong matatakot at tutulungan ko kayo'."

"Pag ang aking baya'y Inabot ng matinding uhaw, Na halos matuyo Ang kanilang lalamunan, Akong si Yahweh ang gagawa ng paraan; Akong Diyos ng Israel ay di magpapabaya." (Isa. 41:13, 17, *Ibid*.)

Kaya tumindi man ang kahirapan at paghihikahos, lumala man ang kaguluhan at kawalang-kapayapaan, magbanta man ang mga pagkakasakit, mga kalamidad at karahasan, hindi sila matatakot ni matitigatig. Ang kanilang tiwala at tanglaw ngayon at sa hinaharap na buhay ay ang Panginoong Diyos:

"Manalig ka, O puso ko, sa Diyos ka magtiwala, Pagkat siya ay mabuti't di marunong magpabaya.

"Mabuti ang Panginoon, siya'y mahabaging Diyos, Tunay siyang mahabagin at mapagpahinuhod. Si Yahweh ang nag-iingat sa wala nang sumaklolo, Noong ako ay manganib, iniligtas niya ako." (Awit 116:7, 5-6, *Ibid.*)

"Ikaw po, O Yahweh, ang tanglaw sa akin Tanging patnubay ko sa daang madilim. Kung ikaw, O Diyos ko ang aking kasama, Anuman ang hirap ay nasasalunga." (II Sam. 22:29-30, *lbid.*)

### Lubusang paglilinis ng buhay ay gawin

Nagsimulang isang binhi, inihasik at inalagaan Sumibol sa silanganan sa panahon ng digmaan, Laksang hirap sinagupa, pag-uusig, pang-uuyam, Ngunit nanghawak sa pangako, siya'y hindi babayaan.

Yumabong at lumaganap naging punong anong tatag!
Sumilong at napaampon ang mga nababagabag
Upang doo'y makasumpong ng kalinga at habag
Mga taong nakalugmok, nangaalis sa pagkabitag.

Buong lugod nagdiriwang sa kapayapaang nakamtan Nawala ang hatol sa malagim na kamatayan Sapagkat tinubos na sa madlang kasalanan Ang Cordero ang nagligtas sa tiyak na kapahamakan.

Walang sukat na salita na maaaring masambitla
Upang sa Diyos magpasalamat sa masaganang biyaya
Hinamak man at inaapi at madalas kinutya
Ngunit tayo ang mapalad pagkat mayro'ng gantimpala.

Ngayong tayo'y naghihintay sa kaligtasang dumarating Paglilinis ng buhay ay lubos na nating gawin Paglilingkod sa ating Diyos ay lalo pang pag-alabin Buong sikap na sumunod nang kaligtasan ay kamtin.

Mga payo at saway, buong lugod na ibuhay Pasakop sa Pamamahalang matiyagang gumagabay Sa lakad ng kasamaan huwag tayong patatangay Ganting mana'y abot tanaw, tiyak na natin ang tagumpay.

> Noel I. Ilan Quezon City, Philippines

### Ang tamang daan tungo sa kaligtasan

Sinulat ni CARMELINA LIM

KO AY LUMAKING Katoliko at naging masiglang kaanib sa Charismatic Renewal Movement Group at El Shaddai-Roxas City Chapter. Ipinanganak ako noong Hunyo 10, 1931 sa bayan ng Pontevedra, Capiz. Ang aking asawa ay isang Chinese citizen. Namatay siya sa sakit sa puso mahigit sampung taon nang nakararaan. Nagkaroon kami ng walong anak na ngayon ay mga propesyonal nang lahat at may mga sariling negosyo.

Hindi ako pumapalya sa pagdalo sa mga prayer meeting namin at pagpunta sa simbahan ng Mt. Carmel. Ngunit ang lahat ay nagsimulang magbago noong Hunyo 9, 1996 nang ako ay maanyayahan sa pagsamba ng Iglesia ni Cristo ng isang mang-aawit na nagkakasera sa akin, si Kapatid na Larry A. Egaran.

Nang kami ay nasa bahay-sambahan na, parang ayaw kong pumasok dahil ako ay nahihiya. Parang gusto kong umuwi, ngunit para ring may nagsasabi sa aking pumasok ako. Nasumpungan ko na lamang ang aking sarili na ako'y nasa loob na. Namangha ako sa kaayusan at solemnidad ng pagsamba, sa ministrong nangangasiwa dahil kapansinpansin na sa kaniyang pagtuturo ay Biblia ang kaniyang basehan, at ang napaka-espirituwal na pag-awit ng mga mang-aawit. Hindi ko alam kung bakit ako napaluha at kung ano

ang aking naramdaman. Ipinikit ko ang aking mga mata at nanalangin sa Diyos na ituro Niya sa akin ang tamang daan tungo sa kaligtasan. Pagkatapos noon, inasam-asam ko palagi na sana ay Huwebes o Linggo na para muli akong makabalik sa dakong iyon.

Nagpasiya akong makinig sa Iglesia ni Cristo sa pagtuturo ng ministrong nakadestino sa Roxas City noon na si Kapatid na Bert Rivera. Nang malaman ito ng aking mga anak, ako ay kanilang inusig. Paano na lang daw ang aming mga "santo" at ang Virgin Mary?

Minsan, isinama sa amin ng isa kong anak ang kanilang pastor sa Couples for Christ na buhat pa sa Iloilo City. Ako ay kanilang tinuruan tungkol sa kanilang relihiyon, at kami ay nagkaroon ng kaunting diskusyon. Sa bawat salita niya laban sa Iglesia ay ako ang nasasaktan. Nasumpungan ko ang aking sarili na ipinagtatanggol na ang Iglesia. Maliwanag ang aking isip at tiyak ang mga salitang aking binibitiwan. Walang nagawa ang kanilang pastor. Ang sabi niya ay para raw akong nakapag-aral ng Biblia at marami akong nalalaman. Kaya bumalik sila sa Iloilo na bigo ang kanilang pakay. Pinanindigan ko na totoo ang Iglesia ni Cristo dahil ito lamang ang nakasulat sa Banal na Kasulatan na kaparaanan sa pagliligtas sa Araw ng Paghuhukom.

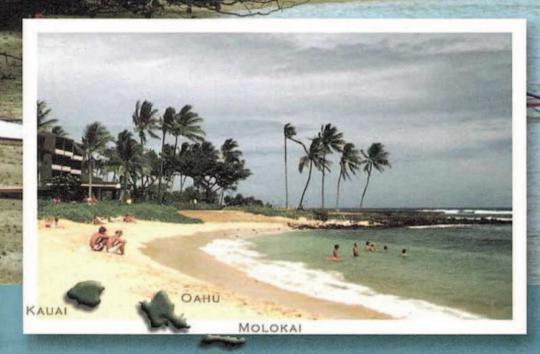


Si Kapatid na Carmelina

Hindi na ako sumama sa selebrasyon ng Ati-Atihan sa Kalibo at sa Dinagyang sa Iloilo dahil ang mga ito ay pista ng tinatawag na Sto. Niño na dating debosyon namin taun-taon. Naunawaan ko na ang mga ito ay gawaing pagano at labag sa kalooban ng Diyos.

Enero 31, 1997 ang siyang pinakamaligayang araw sa aking buhay sapagkat natanggap ko ang tunay na bautismo sa loob ng Iglesia ni Cristo. Ang okasyong iyon ay pinangasiwaan ni Kapatid na David M. Ciocon, ang tagapangasiwa noon ng distrito eklesiastiko ng Capiz. Ang aking walang hanggang pasasalamat ay para sa Diyos na tumawag sa akin sa banal na paglilingkod na ito at Siyang patuloy na nagpapala sa akin. Sumasampalataya ako na ang taimtim at maningas na panalangin ng taong may mapagpakumbabang puso ang siyang diringgin ng Diyos. @

## Honolulu, Hawaii: Sheltered Harbor of Faith





HAWAII'S BIG ISLAND

HE YEAR 1968 can be considered as a revolutionary year, especially in the field of science and of politics. It was in that year when scientists Abdus Salam and Steven Weinberg put forward the groundwork for the Electroweak Theory, which in a decade's time would merit a Nobel Prize for Physics. In the same year, too, the American spacecraft Apollo 8 made its mark as the first piloted mission to achieve lunar orbit, which served as preparation for what was yet another breakthrough—man's first landing on the moon. In the political

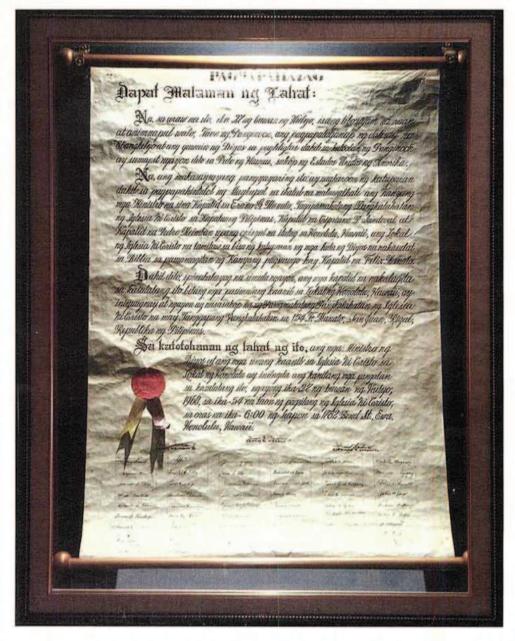




A PROMISE FULFILLED: As God foretold, His children in the last days would be gathered in the Far West. Photos show Brother Eraño G. Manalo while unveiling (above) and signing (above right) the scroll (right) declaring the official establishment of the local congregation of Honolulu, Hawaii.

front, 1968 was marked by the rise and fall of protest movements—the Students' Revolt in Paris, which targeted capitalist society and challenged government policies; the Warsaw Pact Nations' invasion of Czechoslovakia, which was triggered by the latter's reform movement known as the Prague Spring; the My Lai Massacre during the Vietnam War, which killed 500 civilians and fuelled protests against the United States; and the assassination of black American civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr. (Microsoft Encarta Premium Suite 2005).

Along with all these significant twists and turns in world history, there came also in that same year a breakthrough of a different kind. A new leaf was turned in the pages of the history of the Church of Christ (Iglesia ni Cristo) with the dawning of the global expansion of God's last mission of salvation.











NOW A HISTORIC PROPERTY: The plantation house where the first worship service of the Church of Christ outside the Philippines was held is now a site museum. Photos show the Executive Minister, Brother Eraño G. Manalo, together with some of the pioneer members in 1968 (top left) and the Deputy Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo (seen in above photo with some brethren) who led the unveiling of marker (top right) on July 23, 1998.

On July 27, 1968, Brother Eraño G. Manalo, the Executive Minister of the Church of Christ, along with two other ministers of the gospel, Brothers Cipriano Sandoval and Pedro Meimban II, officiated at the inaugural worship service of the Honolulu Congregation, which was held in 91-1782 Bond Street, Ewa Beach. This event marked the establishment of the first *Iglesia ni Cristo* local congregation outside Philippine shores,

the Church's historic crossover to the West, and the official start of its foreign mission.

### Hawaii: Far West

The setting couldn't have been more perfect. Hawaii, America's 50th state is also among its states in the Far West (*The World Almanac and Book of Facts*, 1976, p. 88). That it was in this island state where the Church would establish its pioneering mission for its

worldwide expansion was not a matter of coincidence, but of divine providence. Biblical prophecy decrees:

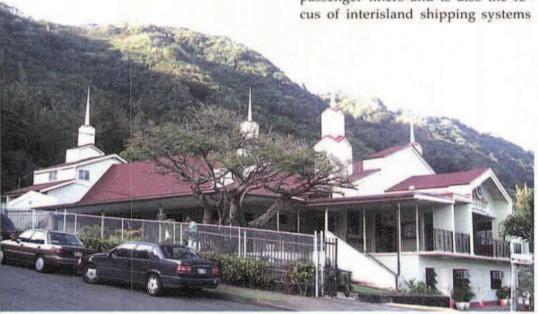
"From the far east will I bring your offspring, and from the far west I will gather you." (Isa. 43:5, Moffatt Translation)

And so, it came to pass that in this Aloha State in the Pacific, particularly in its capital and economic center, Honolulu, the Church of Christ that emerged in the Far East made its propitious entry into the Western hemisphere.

### Honolulu: Sheltered harbor

The name Honolulu is derived from a Hawaiian term for "sheltered harbor." And a harbor, indeed it is. A port with extensive shipping facilities, Honolulu is at the crossroads of cargo carrier routes and transpacific passenger liners and is also the focus of interisland shipping systems and transpacific airlines, which use the Honolulu International Airport. Also a popular resort, with its many renowned beaches like the Waikiki Beach and the famous extinct volcano, Diamond Head, as some of its favorite tourist attractions, Honolulu is also the site of US military installations, such as Tripler Army Medical Center, Hickam Air Force, and the US naval base in Pearl Harbor, as they are all within the island of Oahu.

With the notorious bombing of Pearl Harbor during World War II, others may find it ironic to refer to Honolulu as a "sheltered harbor" or "protected bay." Nevertheless, it was in this growing urban community—which has recovered greatly since that fateful attack in 1941—where the Church found its safe passage toward worldwide expansion, through the establishment of the Honolulu Congregation. This is where the groundwork for the Church's global



UNDYING FAITH AND LOYALTY:

Members and officers of the local congregation pose for a

commemorative photo in front of

their house of worship.



mission of bringing the Good News of salvation to all nations in these last days was laid.

### A fateful meeting

It was with a whistle of the tune of Ako'y Iglesia ni Cristo (I am a member of the Church of Christ) that the pioneering brethren of Honolulu Congregation first met and were brought together. Most of them were migrant workers from the Philippines who had sought and found greener pastures in that part of the United States.

Longing to uphold their faith in this foreign soil, the brethren unrelentingly searched one another. Some would look for their fellow Christians even after work hours and until the wee hours in the morning. Through God's help, their number grew quickly. They started conducting prayer group meetings and also kept a regular correspondence with the Church Administration in the Philippines, informing them of the brethren's activities and their thirst for the spiritually uplifting congregational worship services.

Brother Saturnino Ulep, one of the pioneers of the congregation, remembers how they felt during those times by saying, "Life without religiosity is not full," and Brother Melanio Bolosan recounted, "It was very difficult. It was hard. Because, though we had things needed in this life, we were still missing something. We were lacking something."

Knowing the great significance of the congregational worship services to their spiritual growth, the group held devotional prayers and wrote to the Church Administration requesting that a minister of the gospel be sent to their place to oversee the brethren and attend to their

spiritual needs. They were admonished by the Church Administration to continue praying to God, so that He may grant their request at the opportune time.

### Towards a global Church

The brethren's happiness could not be expressed by mere words when they heard the news that a minister would be sent to them. They were even more elated when they received a notice that the Executive Minister himself would be arriving in Hawaii.

On the 54th year after the Church of Christ's re-emergence in the Far East, Brother Manalo and his entourage set foot in Honolulu, Hawaii and officiated at the first ever worship service gathering of the children of God in these last days outside the Philippines which marked the fulfillment of God's prophetic pronouncement about the gathering of His sons and daughters in the Far West. On a warm afternoon on July 27, 1968, at the residence of Brother Jesus and Sister Marciana Agapay, a small sugar plantation house situated along Bond Street in Ewa Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii, more than 40 brethren gathered to worship the Lord God.

The pioneer members recall that stirring moment when Brother Eraño Manalo welcomed them at the foot of the stairs. "He did not go up until everyone was seated," they

CONTINUING THE WORLDWIDE EVANGELISM: (1) Brethen prepare religious tracts to be handed out to the guests before a GEM; (2-3) registration of guests; and (4) some of the attendees after the GEM.









said. A member of Brother Manalo's entourage, Brother Macario Tiu Jr., described the reaction of the brethren upon seeing Brother Manalo: "Some were speechless while some were crying upon seeing that their wish for a worship service was about to come true."

The congregation felt God's powerful words in Brother Manalo's inspiring homily. Brother Bolosan vividly remembers, "From the very start up to the very end, that worship service was very moving and spiritually uplifting." Brother Manalo also led the

Brother Manalo also led the brethren in making a solemn oath to rededicate their lives to serving God. Four children were also dedicated to God on that memorable day. After the worship service, the brethren signed the scroll declaring the official establishment of the local congregation of Ewa Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii.

### An embodiment of the Church's presence

As more and more brethren were eventually found and the work of propagation moved forward through the leadership of Brother Meimban, the minister assigned to oversee the congregation, the worship service had to be moved from one place to another several times to accommodate the growing number

of brethren. In April of 1972, the local congregation's permanent house of worship was dedicated to God in a special worship service officiated by Brother Sandoval. The sacred place of worship, built by faith in celebration of God's glory and greatness, is situated at 1021 Valley View Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Today, the humble plantation house amidst sugar cane fields where the first worship service of the children of God in the Far West took place stands as a symbol of the undying determination of the pioneer members to keep their faith and as a constant reminder to the next generations of the handiwork of God Almighty.

On July 23, 1998, in celebration of the 30th year of the Church of Christ in the West, that house in Ewa Beach was declared as an historical property and was established as a museum. That simple house was restored to its former simplicity after the Church had acquired it from the Hawaiian government. A team in Hawaii and another in the Philippines worked on its restoration. No less than the Deputy Executive Minister of the Church, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, led the unveiling of its marker.





Brethren in Honolulu Congregation also see to it that they keep a healthy body and mind. Photos show brethren during a blood donation campaign and sportsfest.









### Pondering upon the spiritual conquest in the Far West

With continued blessings from God, the Honolulu Local Congregation has steadily grown. Since its establishment in 1968, Honolulu became the "mother" of other local congregations throughout Oahu and the rest of the Hawaiian Islands. These congregations, along with those in Guam, Palau, and other islands in the Pacific, now form part of the ecclesiastical district of Hawaii-Pacific.

Time swiftly passes by but God steadfastly sustains His guidance to the members of the Honolulu Congregation. The brethren are truly



Officers and members of Honolulu Congregation (top); Hawaii-Pacific district minister Brother Dyland Ramos, Honolulu resident minister Brother Wilfredo Santos, and the local congregation leadership (above)



grateful to God for the unceasing blessings that He continues to shower upon them. The triumphs and successes of the congregation through the years since its establishment clearly send the message that the hand of God is continuously and invincibly at work. With one heart and mind, the members of this congregation unceasingly thank and praise God for all His magnificent works.

### PLACES OF WORSHIP SERVICE AROUND THE GLOBE

\*This directory does not include places of worship service in the Philippines Source: INC Secretariat-Overseas Mission Section (Current As of November 2006)

### AMERICAN SAMOA

Pago Pago Group Worship Service clo American Samoa Communiy College Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799 Tel. Nos. 1664) 699-4343; 252-0471 E-mail; meustaquio@yahoo.com

### ANGOLA

Viana Group Worship Service c/o Alex Malgapo Estrada De Calumbo, Jembas Camp III Viana, Republic of Angola Tel. No. (244) 263-8269 Mobile No. (244-923) 500-830 E-mait alex.malgapo@jembas.com

### ARURA

Aruha Group Worship Service c/o Teodorico R. Marcelo Washington Street 43-C Aruba, Dutch Carribean Tel. No. (011-297) 586-6049 Fax No. (011-297) 586-7888

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Adelaide Congregation c/o Nolly P. Esperanza 501 The Parade, Magill South Austrolia 5072 Australia Tel. No. (08) 8333-1433 Eas No. (08) 8332-1756

Ayr Group Worship Service 8 Anne Street, Ayr Queensland 4807 Australia Jel. No. (97) 4783-4037 E-mail: gmoxham2003®yahoo.com

Bathurst, NSW GWS c/o Peter Charles Brown z 14 Bonnoc St, Nelso NSW 2795 Australia IeL/Fax No. (02) 6334-3675 E-mail: emeral53@tpg.com.au

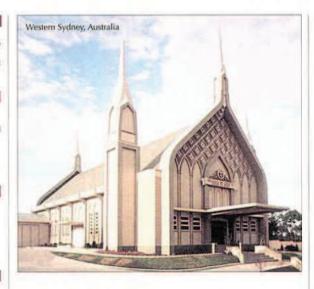
Brimbank Congregation e/o Rivie F. Lagasa Sr. Keilor Downs Community Center # 70 Taylors Rd., Keilor Downs Victoria 3038 Australia Tel. No. (03) 9307-0372 Fax No. (03) 939-81866 Mobile No. 0421-819-989 E-mail: ignicris2000@yahoe.com.au

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Toronto Congregation 310 Burnhamthorpe Rd., Etobicoke Ontario, Canada M9B 2A1 Canada H9W 2X6 Tel. Nos. (514) 694-9256; 694-1917 Fax No. (514) 694-9974

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Tel. Nos. (416) 231-6006; 622-2946 Fax Nos. (416) 231-0174; 621-8947

Windsor Group Worship Service Detroit Days Inn, 675 Goyeau St. Windsor, Ontario N8R 166 Tel. No. (519) 735-4728 E-mail: f\_michelena@hotmail.com

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Horsens Group Worship Service 10 Thernebakkevej Horsens 8700 Denmark Tel. No. (0045) 7564-1070

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Sta. Ana Group Worship Service c/o Juan J. Fisher Lote #276 La Primavera Sta. Ana, El Salvador Tel, No. (502) 2384-1396 E-mail: gelifisher@hotmail.com

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c/o Marlo Fabroa
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Nice Group Worship Service 5 Blvd. Parc, Imperial Le Toison D'Or Nice, France Tel/Fax No. (0033) 49-397-0963

Fáris Congregation 71-73 Rue La Briche Quai De Seine St., Paris 93200 France Tel. No. (0033) 146-21-2291 Fax No. (0033) 1414-9456 E-mail: samlp7@msa.com

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Bielefeld (Dortmund Extension) c/o Martin Hadasch Sauerland Strasse 3 33647 Bielefeld, Germany

Bonn Congregation Baumschulallee 33 a, Bonn 53115 Germany Tel. Nos. (0049) 228-690036; (0049) 1732606235 Fax Nos. (0049) 228-6089689; (0049) 228-608689

Bremen Group Worship Service Sank-Juergen-Strasse Zentralkrankenhaus-Pfarramt Bremen 28205 Germany Tel. No. (49) 4793-2885 Fax No. (49) 4793-8136 L-mail: nftransfer@aol.com

Dortmund Congregation Leuthardstrasse 10 Dortmund 44135 Germany Tel./Fax No. (0231) 986-8858

Frankfurt Congregation 2 Grossgasse, Karben 61184 Germany Tel. No. (49) 6039-3933 Fax No. (49) 6039-938-950

Gressen (Frankfurt Extension) 52 Schwarzlachweg Giessen 35390 Germany Tel. No. (049-641) 38919 Hamburg Congregation Ojendorfer Hone 65 Hamburg 22119 Germany Tel. No. (49-40) 733-7539

Heidelberg Congregation c/o Jerry C. Bartolome Kranichweg 51, SRH Gruppe GMBH Room E-04 69123 Heidelberg/Pfaffengrund Germany Mailing: Joh.-Hoffart Str. 21 68163 Mannheim, Germany Tel. No. (49) 621-401-4843 Mobile Nos. (49) 176-221-69153; 149) 176-221-69154 E-mail: kajerrych@yahoo.com

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Munich Group Worship Service c/o Michael G. Martinez Schlüsselbergstraße 11 816/33 München, Germany 16/33 München, Germany Fax No. (049) 89 6655-5320 Fax No. (049) 89 6720-8653 E-mail: mbyke\_roselle@t-online.de

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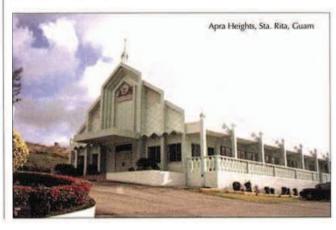
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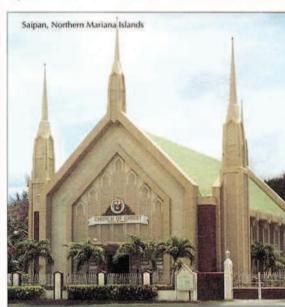
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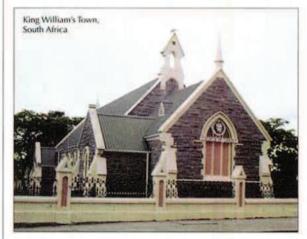
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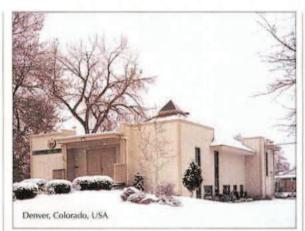
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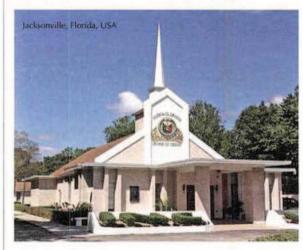
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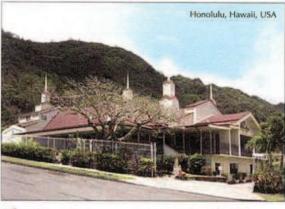
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Worship services for brethren in Nebraska and Iowa are jointly held at: Nebraska Congregation (formerly Omaha-Council Bluffs) c/o Ernest Valenzuela 2111 Kimberly Street Bellevue, NE 68005 USA Tel. No. (402) 733-3475 Fax No. (402) 738-8059

### NEVADA

Henderson Congregation 201 Taylor St., Henderson Nevada 89015 USA Tel. Nos. (702) 565-1908; 897-2191 Fax Nos. (702) 565-1908; 897-2191 C-mail: bobnlucys@msn.com

tas Vegas Congregation 953-358 E. Sahara Avenue Suite 103 Las Vegas Nevada 89104 USA Tel. No. (702) 733-6863 Fax No. (702) 733-6807 F-mail rodelfosantos wyahoo.com

Reno Congregation 651 Field St., Sparks Nevada 89431 USA Tel. No. (775) 358-9699 Fax No. (775) 356-1914 E-mail: carsoll 5@batmail.com

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Epping (Boston, Massachusetts Ext.) c/o Rodrigo Jose American Legion Hall, Post 251 232 Calef Highway, Route 125 Epping, New Hampshire 03042 USA Tel. Nos. (603) 432-1541; (781) 340-1536 Mobile No. (781) 831-5317 Fax No. (781) 331-6818

### NEW JERSEY

Elizabeth Congregation 1374 North Ave., Elizabeth New Jersey 0.7208 USA Tel. No. (908) 965-1704 Fax No. (908) 355-8005

Jersey City Congregation 888 Avenue C, Bayonne New Jersey 07002 USA Tel. No. (201) 437-3312 Fax No. (201) 437-3398 Frnail: Jomes@netzero.com

Southern New Jersey Congregation 117 Cedarbrook Road Cedarbrook Winslow Township New Jersey 08081 USA Tel. Nos. (856) 482-8903; (609) 704-1970 Fax Nos. (856) 482-8941 (609) 704-1971 E-mail: inc.snj.@gmail.com

Toms River Congregation STR Recreation Commission 1 Drake Lane, S Toms River New Jersey 08757 USA L-mail: tomsriverinc@yahoo.com

### NEW MEXICO

Alfuquerque Group Worship Service c/o Cresencio Pagador Quality Suites 5251 San Antonio Drive NE Albuquerque, NM 87109 Tel. No. (505) 856-6525 Fax No. (505) 828-3941 Lanail: pithruno@aol.com

### NEW YORK

Affiany (Rockland Extension) c/o Bryan Fuller 12 Liberty Place, Hudson Falls New York 12839 USA Tel. No. (518) 747-3968

Bellmore Congregation (formerly Long Beach) Corner #1 Square Place & Bedford Avenue Bellmore NY 11710 USA Tel. Nos. (516) 432-0061; 679-7450 Fax Nos. (516) 432-4192; 679-7451 Forest Hills Congregation 70-05 112th St., Forest Hills New York 11375 USA E-mail: THICO@aol.com

Cong Island City Congregation 45-33 21st St., Long Island City NY 11101 USA Tel. Nos. (718) 786-2320; 361-7572 Fax Nos. (718) 361-0057; 729-7382 E-mail: 1144COm advectors

\*Rochester Congregation 2555 Brighton-Henrietta Town Line Road, Rochestet NY 14623 USA Tel. Nos. (585) 427-9270; 272-1642 Fax No. (585) 427-2895 L-mail: gman.cosmiano@hotmail.com

Rockland County Congregation 96 Strawtown Road Nyack, NY 10994 USA Tel. Nos. (845) 348-6309; 268-5960 Fax Nos. (845) 348-3234; 267-0248 E-mail: strawnin@vaboo.com.

Syracuse (Rochester Extension) 7652 Autumnal Lane Liverpool, New York, 13088-3647 USA Tel. No. (315) 451-9036 E-mail Syracusenesheyahoo, curh

### NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte Congregation 6101 Idlewild Road Charlotte, NC 28212 USA Tel./Fax No. (828) 657-9990

Payetteville Congregation 1120 Camden Road Fayetteville, NC 28306 USA Tel. No. (910) 323-3894 Fax No. (910) 323-2468 C-mail: jmjoson429@yahoo.com

Jacksonville (Fayetteville Extension) 200 E Yaupon Drive Jacksonville, NC 28546 USA Tel. No. (910) 546-8673 Fax No. (910) 455-8836 E-mail: george-coureffyahoo.com

Winston-Salem (Charlotte Ext.) c/o Vicente Ancheta Ir. 1649 Ethel Drive Winston-Salem, NC Tel. No. (704) 636-6715 Usaraii: juniocyste juno com

### OHIO

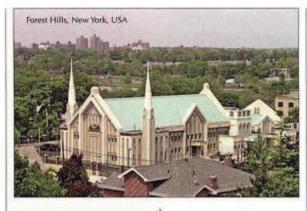
Cleveland Group Worship Service c/o Robert Commons 3342 Van Buren Dr. Brunswick Ohio 44212 USA Tel. No. (330) 220-0898 Place of Worship: Sleep Inn. 1435 S. Carpenter Rd. Brunswick, Ohio 44212 USA Tel. No. (330) 273-1112

Dayton Congregation 36 W. Franklin Street Centerville, Ohio 45459 USA Tel. No. (937) 778-4021 F-mail: Geno31150 yahoo com

### OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma City Congregation Heartland Hall, 1345 SW 30th St. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73109 USA Tel. No. (405) 741-1375 Fax No. (403) 741-2187

Tulsa Group Worship Service 14060 S. Poplar St., Glenpool Oklahoma 74033 USA Tel. No. (918) 291-7305 Fax No. (918) 291-2534



### OREGON

Albany Group Worship Service 35938 Santiam Highway SE Albany, Oregon 97322 USA Tel. No. (541) 928-8119

Portland Congregation 6019 SE 87th Ave., Portland Oregon 97266 USA Tel./Fax No. (503) 771-1216

### PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia Congregation 2148 Bridgewater Road Aston, Pennsylvania 19014 USA Tel. Nos. (610) 859-9898, 497-3730 Fax No. (610) 859-9922 E-mail: nerpalamonte@netzero net

### SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston Congregation 4018 Dorsey Ave., Charleston SC 29405 USA Tel. No. (843) 744-2682 Fax No. (843) 797-5629 Frinail: noarmacasero@netzero.net

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Kapid City Group Worship Service c/o William Muir 229 E. Anamosa St., Rapid City 57701 South Dakota Tel. No. (605) 721-8746

### TENNESSEE

Memphis Group Worship Service c/o Antonio A. Bengco

701 Greencliff Drive Southaven, MS 38671 USA Tel. No. (662) 342 6830

### TEXAS

Austin Congregation 9205 North Drive, Austin TX 78753 USA Tel. Nos. (512) 339-6701; 244-0762 Fax No. (512) 238-7079 -mail: bbgeguera@yahoo.com

Brownsville-Mc Allen Congregation c/o Reynaldo Opune Comiort Inn 4001 Closner/Business 281 Edinburg, TX 785.19 USA Tel. No. (956) 541-2717; 371-1765

Copperas Cove Congregation c/o Thomas M. Conroy 1908 Henry Street Copperas Cove, TX 76522 USA Tel. No. (254) 547-0880 Place of Worship: 531 B Veterans Mem. Blvd. Killeen, TX 76541 USA Corpus Christi GWS

c/o Rene T. Lucero 2627 Poinsetta Place Ingleside, Texas 78362 USA Tel. No. (361) 776-7261

Dallas Congregation 2310 College Avenue Garland, TX 75042-6600 USA Tel. No. (972) 485-9172 Fax. No. (972) 272-8236 Tel./Fax No. (972) 494-0753

Fort Worth Congregation 7200 John T. White Rd. Fort Worth, Texas 76120 USA Tel. No. (817) 429-0736 E-mail: Jer05254@juno.com

Houston Congregation 402 Frazer Drive Houston, Texas 77037 USA Tel. Nos. (281) 820-6593; 447-3586 Fax No. (281) 820-2487 E-mail: a\_febre@hotmail.com

Lubbock Group Worship Service c/o Mauro Fontanilla Jr. 6526 7th St., Lubbock Texas 79416 USA Tel. Nos. (806) 791-0642; (325) 695-2971 Fax No. (817) 429-3165

San Antonio Congregation 7815 Piper's Creek San Antonio, Texas 78251 USA Tel. No. (210) 684-2525 Southwest Houston Congregation Jennie's Banquet Hall 5812 Hwy 6N, Houston, Texas, USA Tel./Fax No. (281) 858-7253

### UTAH

Salt Lake City Congregation Best Western Landmark Inn 6560 North Landmark Drive Park City, UT 84098 USA Tel. No. (435) 654-1428; 654-9002 Fax No. (435) 654-1787 E-mail: bascooemor@yahoo.com

### VIRGINIA

Newport News Congregation c/o Fredo Calinato The Mulberry Inn 16890A Warwick Boulevard Newport News, Virginia 23603 USA Tel. No. (757) 887-3000 Fax No. (757) 546-8294 E-mail: fgalinato@hotmail.com

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Virginia Beach Congregation 1108 Thompkins Lane Virginia Beach, VA 23464 USA Tel. No. (757) 424-2232 Fax No. (757) 424-2461

### WASHINGTON

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Bremerton Congregation 801 Pennsylvania Ave. Bremerton, Washington 98337 USA Tel. Nos. (360) 373-6411; 373-1616 Fax No. (360) 373-3860 E-mail: tumbaga\_jb@yahoo.com

Burien Congregation 207 S.W. 150th Street Burien, Washington 98166 USA Tel. No. (206) 241-7420 Fax No. (206) 241-7400 E-mail: ra0514@aol.com Everett, Washington Congregation 6110 Colby Ave., Everett Washington 98203 USA Tel. Nos. (425) 265-1914; 290-6710 Fax No. (425) 355-1371 E-mail: cm\_ak@msn.com E-mail: afcastro531@yaboo.com

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Port Angeles Group Worship Service 535 E. 9th St., Port Angeles Washington 92362 USA Tel. No. (360) 417-1314 E-mail: roniesecondez®aol.com

Seattle Congregation 6002 Rainier Ave., South Seattle, Washington 98118 USA Tel. No. (206) 723-0346 Fax No. (206) 760-1616

Shoreline Congregation c/o Aniceto Navasca Harvest Christian Center 15211 15th Ave., NE Shoreline, WA 98155 USA Tel. No. (206) 542-5663 E-mail: inavasca@hotmail.com

Spokane Congregation 3405 W. Bismark Avenue Spokane, Washington 99205 USA Tel. No. (509) 323-0331 Fax No. (509) 329-1120 E-mail: ed\_prosteel@msn.com

### WISCONSIN

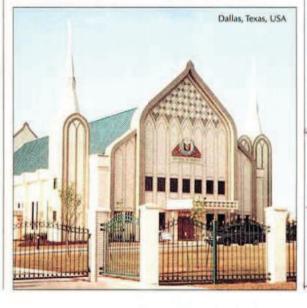
Madison Group Worship Service c/o Daniel Kahl 765 Aspen Avenue, Verona Wisconsin 53593 USA Tel. No. (608) 848-2490 Fax No. (608) 848-2491 E-mail: bryno@logondubuque.net

Milwaukee Congregation 18281 West Hill Crest Drive New Berlin, WI 53151 Tel. Nos. (262) 679-9450; (414) 481-0224 E-mail: andy.martin1@med.ge.com

### VIETNAM

Hanoi Group Worship Service c/o Arnold Cruz 38a/33 Tran Phu St. To 6 Phuong Dien Bien Q. Ba Dinh Hanoi, Vietnam 70000 Tel. Nos. (84-9) 03925280; 908181403 E-mail: jtabiang2004@yahoo.com

Ho Chi Minh Group Worship Service c/o Robert Agpay 6/11/13 Phan Xich Long St. Phu Nhuan District, Ho Chi Minh City Tel. Nos. (+84) 90-3385415; 90-8209838 Mobile No. (+84) 90-9028236 (c/o Liberty Santos) €-mail: rbagpay@yahoo.com





Veterans Village House of Worship

Profile:

Place of Worship: #100 Veterans Avenue, Brgy. Holy Spirit Veterans Village, Quezon City, Philippines

Schedule of Worship Services: Thursday 5:45 a.m.; 6:45 p.m.

Sunday 6:45 a.m.; 10:45 a.m.

Date of Dedication: October 21, 2006

