


PASUGO

JUNE 2020

# GOD'S MESSAGE

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

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a brown leather-bound Holy Bible. The Bible is the central focus, with the words "Holy Bible" embossed in gold on its cover. The background is a blurred library with bookshelves filled with books. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the leather and the skin of the hand.

Holy Bible

## On the Pursuit of Wisdom

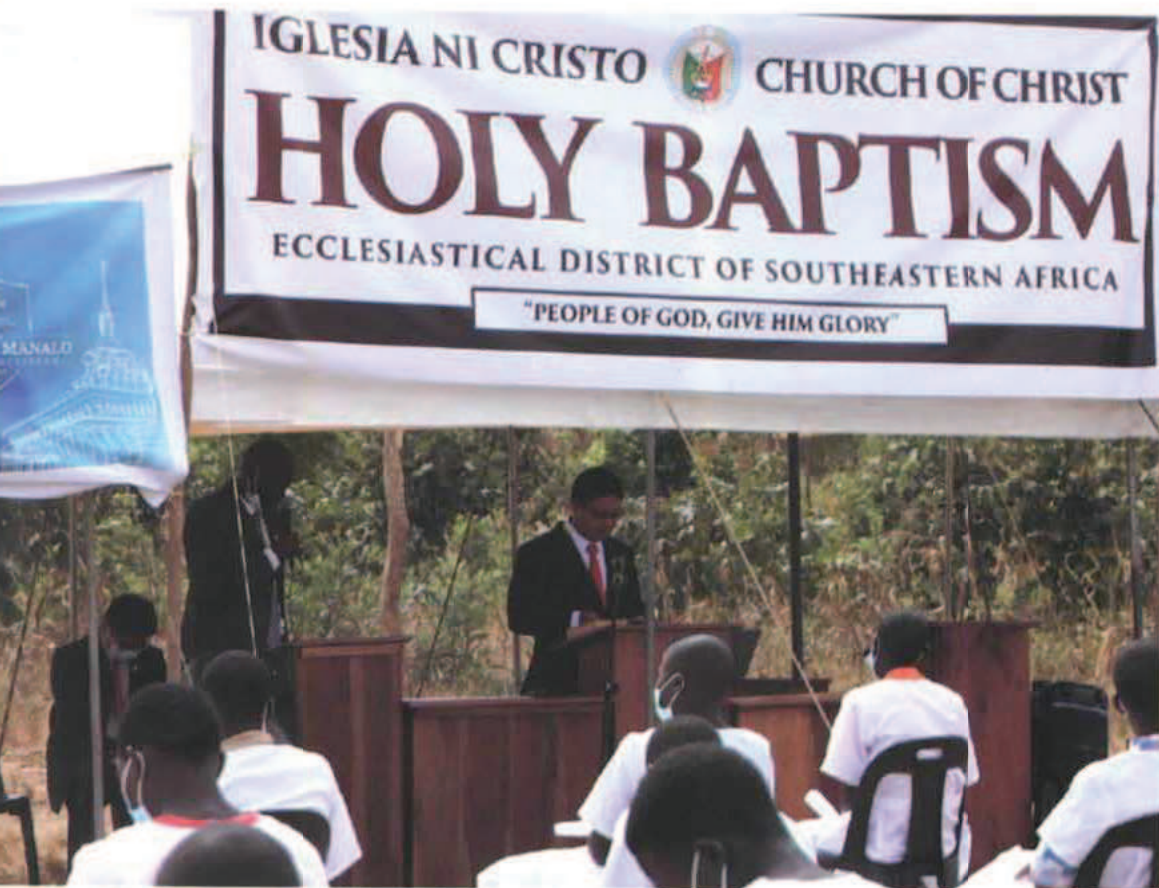
"Wisdom is supreme—so get wisdom."

PROVERBS 4:7 HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE









IN THIS ISSUE

June  
2020

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**OUR COVER**  
God's wisdom is enshrined in the Holy Scriptures



**FAST GROWTH.** Brethren from the newly established ecclesiastical district of Southeastern Africa conducted a series of baptisms in various locations (Story on page 4).

	<b>FAQs</b>
2	What does it mean that the gospel is hidden in mystery?
	<b>EDITORIAL</b>
3	The limits of human wisdom
	<b>CHURCH BULLETIN</b>
	<b>EXECUTIVE NEWS</b>
10	LIVESTREAMING WORSHIP SERVICE: Witnessing the fulfillment of God's promise
	LIVESTREAMING WORSHIP SERVICE: PMD MULTIMEDIA CENTER
17	Serving God earnestly amid troubles
	INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS AND MINISTERIAL WORKERS
21	Caring for the Church at all times

	<b>RELIGIOUS ARTICLES</b>
22	Those who are truly wise BY SIEGFRED T. GOLLAYAN
26	Looking at and coping with today's moral crisis BY CELERINO G. BACLAAN
30	Against Origen's 'Contra Celsum' BY JENSEN DG. MAÑEBOG
	<b>PANGULONG TUDLING</b>
33	May hangganan ang karunungan ng tao
35	Ang lalong mahalaga para sa isang tunay na Iglesia Ni Cristo BY EUGENE G. LISING
38	Ang karunungan hindi dapat ipagwalang-bahala BY ANTONIO G. CAÑAVERAL JR.
40	Not in words only BY MANDY A. NEPOMUCENO

42	What distinguishes the Church Of Christ from the rest BY SIEGFRED T. GOLLAYAN
45	Doing the best we can to live as God's chosen BY ALEJANDRO R. SINO CRUZ JR.
47	The Church Of Christ's emergence in the ends of the earth BY KENNETH A. OUANO
	<b>IN FOCUS</b>
51	Looking back: New Era University at 45



# FAQs

## What does it mean that the gospel is hidden in mystery?

THE GOSPEL IS described by the apostles as a “mystery kept secret” (Rom. 16:25 New King James Version). Usually, something that is intended to be a secret cannot easily be known unless the one who made it reveals it—how much more when the Almighty God Himself is the One Who wants something hidden or be kept unknown. Thus, His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, taught that the mystery of the gospel cannot be deciphered or understood by just anyone who knows how to read unless he is among those given the knowledge to understand it:

“But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, ‘To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that “Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.”’” (Mark 4:10–12 NKJV)

Christ told His apostles whom He sent to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15–16) that they had been given the knowledge of the mystery of the kingdom

of God. As for “those who are outside,” Christ said that “they may see and not perceive.”

The apostles and the others who received gifts from God are inside the Church Of Christ (I Cor. 12:28). It is the Church that will make known the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10). So, to learn the wisdom that leads to salvation, as inscribed in the Holy Scriptures (II Tim. 3:15), one needs to receive it from the messengers of God and of Christ, who are in the true Church Of Christ.

Such was the case of the Ethiopian eunuch who had been reading the Scriptures by himself, but was enlightened only when Philip, a messenger of God in the Church Of Christ, explained it to him:

“The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah. The Holy Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go over and walk along beside the carriage.’ Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ The man replied, ‘How can I, unless someone instructs me?’

*Turn to page 25*

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## The limits of human wisdom

THE CURRENT PANDEMIC is a stark reminder of the limits of human wisdom. Yes, man has come a long way since his discovery of fire. He has landed on the moon, sent exploratory missions to nearby planets, and made giant strides in improving his living conditions. Ironically, though, the outbreak of a deadly virus has forced more than half of humanity—some 4.2 billion people—into lockdown, fearful of an invisible enemy.

Interestingly, most of the countries hardest hit by Covid-19—in terms of number of people infected and lives lost—are highly industrialized, with high literacy rate, and boast of the best health care systems in the world. Despite their vaunted edge in dealing with contagions, they fared no better—in most cases, even worse—than less-developed nations in tamping down the number of casualties.

While it is true that a vaccine against the disease may be developed in the foreseeable future, man must not dismiss the fact that relying on his own knowledge alone will not make him impervious to the vicissitudes of life.

Make no mistake about it, knowledge is good and beneficial when used judiciously. In fact, the Bible describes its inestimable worth: “Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding. For wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her wages are better than gold. Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her” (Prov. 3:13–15 New Living Translation).

God Himself is not averse to man’s acquisition of knowledge and understanding. He is, after all, the wellspring of wisdom: “For the LORD gives

wisdom; From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding” (Prov. 2:6 New King James Version).

But man should be wary of misusing wisdom and guard himself against having the delusion that with the arsenal of knowledge at his disposal, he is the “master of his own destiny”, oblivious to God:

“You have trusted in your wickedness and have said, ‘No one sees me.’ Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me.’” (Isa. 47:10 New International Version)

Human knowledge, it must be stressed, is not the be-all and end-all of life as it could bring destruction to man when misused. The case of Adam and Eve is a classic example of how man’s desire for and pursuit of wisdom can lead to his ruin. When the couple was tempted by the devil disguised as a serpent to eat the fruit God has forbidden, they easily fell into the trap. It’s not merely because of their craving for literal food, for they had all the sustenance they needed in the garden of Eden. Rather, it was because they “saw that the tree was to be desired to make one wise” (Gen. 3:6 New Revised Standard Version), thus, their fundamental appetite for wisdom caused their downfall.

Thus, God cautions man against totally relying on and boasting of his wisdom:

“The LORD says, ‘The wise should not boast of their wisdom, nor the strong of their strength, nor the rich of their wealth. If any want to boast, they should boast that they know and understand me, because my love is constant, and I do what is just and right. These are the things that please me.



# Church Bulletin

I, the LORD, have spoken.'" (Jer. 9:23-24 Good News Bible)

The most valuable wisdom that man should strive to attain, above anything else, is that which leads to salvation from perdition on Judgment Day (II Pet. 3:7, 10) and eternal damnation in the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8). He can gain such wisdom from God's words enshrined in the Holy Scriptures or the Bible (II Tim. 3:15-17). One principal knowledge that the Bible imparts is about the true God—something man cannot learn solely by means of his wisdom:

"God has shown that this world's wisdom is foolishness! For God in his wisdom made it impossible for people to know him by means of their own wisdom. Instead, by means of the so-called 'foolish' message we preach, God decided to save those who believe." (I Cor. 1:20-21 GNB)

The manifold wisdom of God can be known through the Church (Eph. 3:10 NIV), that is, the Church Of Christ (Eph. 3:20-21 Acts 20:28 Lamsa Translation).

The Covid-19 pandemic should serve as an eye-opener to everyone—that man cannot completely rely on his wisdom to achieve his long-term good. It is God's wisdom that all should endeavor to obtain inasmuch as it will bring about benefits not only for this life but, more importantly, for that which is to come. ●

*Donnie C. Lovoncin*  
Editor-in-Chief



## Southeastern Africa adds hundreds of people into the fold

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Church Of Christ members all over the world do not cease to propagate the true Christian faith. In the Ecclesiastical District of Southeastern Africa, the intensified work of

propagation continues to be fruitful. As a manifestation of such victory, the newly established ecclesiastical district conducted a series of baptisms in various locations in May.



## Ilonggo, Cebuano brethren share the true faith online

*Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) members from two ecclesiastical districts in Visayas, Philippines continue to share the true faith with

their fellowmen amid the community quarantine due to the coronavirus pandemic.

For eight consecutive days from May 10 to 17, 2020,



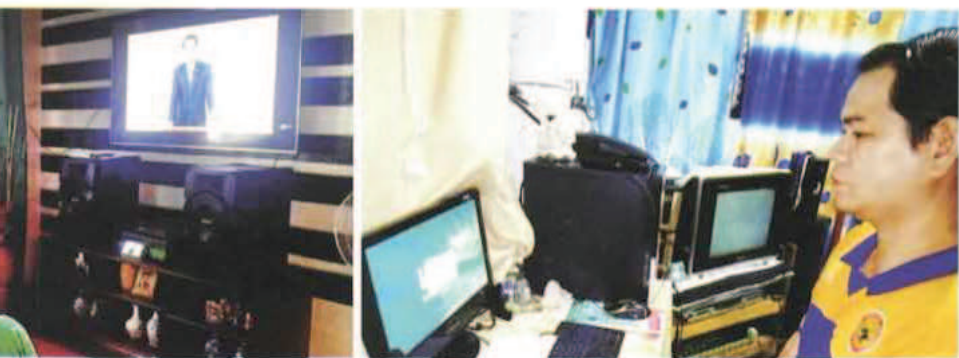


On May 25, 2020, the district Light of Salvation overseer, Brother Ramon Verzosa, led the baptism in Mwanza City, Tanzania. Brother Danny Lovino, district supervising minister, officiated the baptismal services in Mvugo, Lilongwe, Malawi on May 26 and 27, and in

Blantyre, Malawi on May 29. During the preaching of God's words at their respective venues, Brothers Lovino and Verzosa reminded the baptismal candidates about the fulfillment of biblical prophecies that prove the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* is the one true Church that is of Christ

in these last days. Brothers Robert Elias Makawi and Joseph Mpulanya served as interpreters in their respective native languages. "Through the help of God and the unity of the brethren and the Church officers in propagating the words of God, the district was able to add more people to the true Church. We promise to continue actively participating in all the activities of the Church," Brother Danny Lovino said.

Brother Makawi expressed his gratitude to the Church Administration: "We would like to thank Brother Eduardo V. Manalo for his leadership in the Church. Ever since the Church Of Christ reached our place, many people have improved in their living conditions while others are curious to learn more about the Church." (L. Ignacio, A. Gorospe, T. Ignacio, N. Jimenez, and W. Gorospe)



brethren from the Ecclesiastical District of Valladolid, Negros Occidental participated in an online evangelical mission. They shared with their friends a video in which their district supervising minister, Brother

Ronaldo Canlas, expounded on what the Bible teaches as the true way to salvation. The Church members sent to their loved ones, friends, and acquaintances the link to the video streaming of the preaching

of God's words. Many of them gladly reported that several of their guests gave positive feedback, while others posed questions regarding the topic and other biblical teachings upheld by the Church Of Christ.

Meanwhile, in the Ecclesiastical District of Bogo City, Cebu, the brethren, on May 7, used their social media accounts and other platforms to reach out even to their friends in other countries. They said that sharing the true faith with their fellowmen made their time in quarantine worthwhile especially that these were all for the glory of the Almighty God. (M. Milan)





**Washington, D.C. Ecclesiastical District conducts Aid to Humanity**

From May 9 to 10, 2020, the Ecclesiastical District of Washington, D.C., in cooperation with the FYM Foundation, Inc., the Church Of Christ’s charitable arm, conducted Aid to Humanity for the benefit of Church members and nonmembers alike.

The socio-civic activity was held in commemoration of the 134th birth anniversary of Brother Felix Y. Manalo (1886–1963), whom the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* recognizes as God’s Messenger in these last days and its first Executive Minister.

The Church officers brought the relief packages which

included several essential items, from toiletries to canned goods, to the beneficiaries’ respective houses. The district leadership ensured that safety guidelines being implemented by the government were strictly observed.

The beneficiaries, in return, expressed their thanks to the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* and the Church Administration. (A. Ayhon and M. Milan)



**Davao West CMDPS teaches disinfectant and face shield making**

The Christian Medical Dental and Paramedical Society (CMDPS) in the Ecclesiastical District of Davao West in the Philippines taught the brethren how to make disinfectant and face shields through an online seminar on May 28, 2020.

Dr. Kim Enriquez, district CMDPS president, led the seminar.

“This activity is a great help for us to further take care of ourselves,” Sister Jezamae Majocon, from Panacan Congregation, stated.

In any situation, even with the current pandemic, the brethren always find ways to be active in their faith through the

activities being launched in the Church.

Jonathan Cabrera, from Catalunan Grande Congregation, said, “I am thankful for the knowledge and skills that we receive in seminars like this. We also get answers to our questions that we can share with other people.” (L. Engay and V. Basco)



STRESS MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

# REST

- BREATHE
- TAKE A BREAK
- PROPER & ENOUGH SLEEP

# EAT HEALTHY

- DARK CHOCOLATE
- LEMON



BULACAN, PHILIPPINES – A stress management seminar online was conducted for CFO officers to cope with anxiety due to adverse changes in life posed by Covid-19 crisis.



KING WILLIAM'S TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA - A project launched by the Church Administration, the *Gulayan sa Bakuran* (backyard gardening) is a motivation for the brethren to be more productive while staying at home and became a steady source of income for some families.





ONTARIO, CANADA - As a way of commemorating Brother Felix Y. Manalo's 134th birth anniversary, brethren donated blood that benefited the Canadian Blood Services, an independent non-profit charitable organization, and helped lessen pressure on the national blood supply due to the pandemic.



MARYLAND, USA - Indian Queen Elementary School and Panorama Elementary School benefited from the INC Giving Activity where free face masks, and relief goods were provided to them.



CABANATUAN CITY, NUEVA ECUJA, PHILIPPINES - Youth brethren showcased their creativity and artistic skills in their artworks depicting their appreciation to the frontliners.





METRO MANILA, PHILIPPINES - Employees' rights and preventive health measures were some of the topics discussed in an online seminar facilitated by the Christian Employees Association (CEA).



PAMPANGA, PHILIPPINES - Keeping healthy and boosting body's resistance, families participated in a physical fitness activity in their respective households.



WASHINGTON, USA - Under the auspices of Felix Y. Manalo Foundation Inc., brethren donated a total 9,309 pounds of food packages to the Northwest Harvest hub, a non-profit organization in the state of Washington.

For more Church news around the globe,  
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**T**HROUGH A WORSHIP SERVICE officiated by Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the Executive Minister, the Church Of Christ commemorated two special occasions on May 10, 2020—the 134th birth anniversary of Brother Felix Y. Manalo and the 40th anniversary of Brother Eduardo Manalo’s ordination.

Brethren in different countries and time zones were able to listen to the preaching of God’s words through video streaming technology. Through the Bible, the Executive Minister taught the importance of remaining steadfast and immovably firm in their divine election as Church Of Christ members even in the worst of times. He reminded the brethren how the Lord

God fulfilled His promise to His Messenger in these last days, how He upheld Brother Felix Manalo with His righteousness, and how God blessed the Church Of Christ with many victories. Emphasizing the great importance and power of prayer, he exhorted them to completely place their trust and hope in the Lord God.

Ministers, ministerial workers, and their respective families in various ecclesiastical districts around the world also witnessed the preaching of God’s words. Here are insights shared by some of the ministers who have dedicated many years in serving in the ministry and have witnessed how the Almighty God helped and upheld the Church Of Christ throughout these years:





**WITNESSING**  
*the*  
**fulfillment**  
**OF**  
**GOD'S PROMISE**

MAY  
**10**  
2020

COMMEMORATION OF THE  
134TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF  
BROTHER FELIX Y. MANALO  
AND THE  
40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORDINATION  
OF BROTHER EDUARDO V. MANALO

• LIVESTREAMING WORSHIP SERVICE •



# ROMEO BELTRAN

District Supervising Minister  
Australia West

The Church Of Christ is thankful to God for the 40th anniversary of Brother Eduardo Manalo's ordination. We have witnessed how much he loves the Church. He values the Church Of Christ more than everyone else and even more than his own life. Also manifest in him is a quality similar to Apostle Paul: he does not count his life dear to himself, so that he may finish the ministry he received from Christ.

That is why we must firmly hold on to our election and to God's promises because the Church Of Christ in these last days has the sure word of prophecy. This assures us that God will never forsake us, His people, until we receive our salvation.

May all the brethren continue to uphold the intensive renewal of life and participate in the propagation works by sharing our faith to many people because Judgment Day is truly near. May we hold on firmly to God's words by obeying them all without hesitation. All of us should actively uphold our worship service to God because, during our worship services, the Lord God grants all the blessings we need in our life, especially in serving Him.



# ARNEL CANICOSA

President  
INC School For Ministers

What was taught by God's Messenger, which was also taught by Brother Eraño G. Manalo, is also what Brother Eduardo Manalo continues to faithfully teach today—nothing was changed.

That is why the biblical lessons taught during the worship services every month of May are the lessons by the *Sugo* and every month of January are the lessons by Brother Eraño Manalo, which they prepared when they were still living.

We feel the guidance of the Holy Spirit on our beloved Executive Minister. Under

his leadership, we continue to obey God's commands and uphold our worship of Him, our propagation works, and other activities.





# JOSELINO CASTILLONES

Supervising Minister

US East Office

The Church is so blessed because even if God has laid His Messenger to rest and Brother Eraño Manalo, God showed His love for the Church by placing a leader who is truly one in heart with them in caring for the welfare of the Church Of Christ. Because of the virtuous and dynamic leadership of the Executive Minister of the Church, the Lord God is glorified and, in turn, the entire Church Of Christ is blessed with a parade of victories in its different endeavors.

That is why we should never doubt God's promises because He will surely fulfill all of them. We have already witnessed the fulfillment of God's promises to His Messenger and to the whole Church Of Christ, even up to now, under the leadership of Brother Eduardo Manalo.



# ANTONIO DEL MUNDO

Instructor

INC School For Ministers

It is indeed important for the words of God taught by our Executive Minister to reach every brother and sister in the Church Of Christ. We should all the more prove that we understand the importance of remaining faithful and having integrity by being obedient to all of God's laws and commandments. Church members ought to be spiritually mature and firm in their conviction, especially when they face troubles in life.

We should all the more rely on the promises of our Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ, that They will give us the strength that we need and that we will feel in our hearts Their immense power. We should never back down or lose hope because we are never alone in facing life's trials and worries since we have God on our side. Let us hold on firmly to the divine election we received through the commissioning of God's Messenger in these last days.





# ANTONIO DUEÑAS

District Supervising Minister  
Latin America

The current Executive Minister firmly upholds God's teachings that we received through God's Messenger such as holding on to our Church membership until the end to be assured of salvation, as well as the giving of voluntary offerings—which glorifies God, for these are used for the propagation of His words, the building of houses of worship, and the edification of the Church.

The Church continues to faithfully obey God's commandments: being united with the Church Administration; renewing one's life completely; keeping the love of the brotherhood; the Church's unity; accepting a Church duty; maintaining the cleanliness,

orderliness, and safety of the house of worship; actively participating in the work of propagation; and being prayerful.



# ARMANDO ERNIE

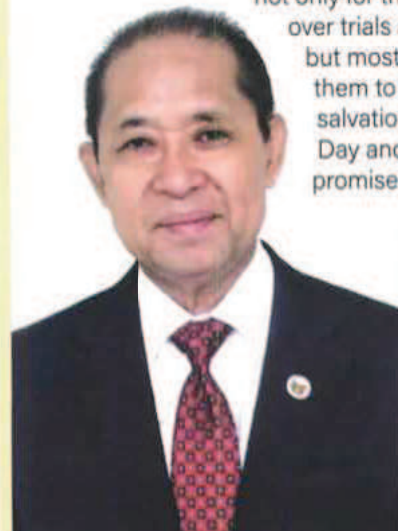
Instructor  
INC School For Ministers

What the Executive Minister always teaches the ministers and ministerial workers, even the Church members, is to be strong in our faith in what the Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ can do for Their true servants. Our faith should be without doubt and should be proven through obedience to all of God's commandments written in the Bible, which were preached by God's Messenger and are continued to be preached by the Church Administration.

The Executive Minister reminded us not to be afraid, but instead to take courage in facing problems in life. The courageous ones will never be troubled nor be distracted in serving God and in obeying His commandments even amid hardships and sufferings. They are the ones who walk in the newness of life and do not think of doing evil, even during difficult times. The Executive Minister always teaches us to love God, Christ, and the Church fervently. He also teaches that ministers, ministerial workers, and Church officers should always care for the welfare of the Church.

To do so, it is not enough to simply teach the brethren. We can show much care for them by ensuring that the message of the lessons taught by the Church Administration is fully understood by the brethren and that they firmly believe and fulfill them since it is for their own benefit,

not only for them to triumph over trials and difficulties, but most importantly, for them to be assured of salvation on Judgment Day and to receive God's promise of everlasting life.





# CLEMENTE ESTRELLA

Finance Department  
INC Central Office

The efforts of the previous leaders of the Church Of Christ were not in vain. The 40th anniversary of Brother Eduardo Manalo's ordination attests that the Lord God upholds and guides him, that is why he is victorious in his ministry, especially when God chose him to become the Executive Minister. This further gives me inspiration and fervor to all the more be dedicated to fulfilling my Church duties.

We should always look to God and hope for His help because He is Almighty and is always ready to help us. Nothing is impossible with Him. That is why, as God's true servants in these last days, we ought to fully trust in Him. We should all the more devote ourselves to our worship services to Him because it is during the worship services when we can cast our cares to the Lord God and tell Him all our worries, burdens, and everything else that comes in our life.



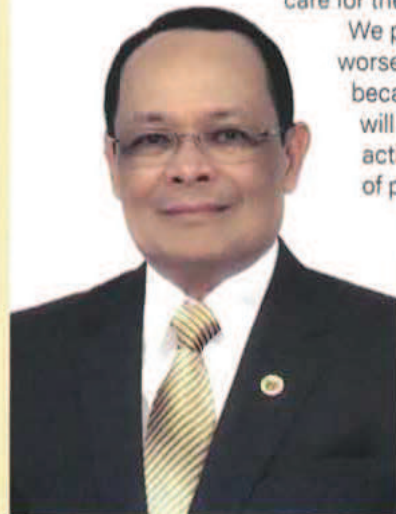
# ARMANDO ORTIZ

District Supervising Minister

During the historic occasion, many Church Of Christ members were able to witness the preaching of Brother Eduardo Manalo through modern technology. It brought great joy and fervor to the brethren. Once again, their faith and hope were rejuvenated, which is what they truly need now that the world is facing problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am thankful to Brother Eduardo Manalo for his love for the Church. We will always remain united with him and we, along with my fellow ministers, will continue to fervently fulfill our Church duties by leading, reminding, and teaching the words of God to all the Church officers and members in our care. We will continue to love and care for the brethren in the Church.

We promise that even with the worsening condition of this world because of the recent events, we will continue to uphold all the activities of the Church, the works of propagation and edification, and especially the worship services.



King William's Town,  
South Africa



Midland,  
Australia



# TEODORICO SAMSON JR.

Assistant District Supervising Minister  
Alaska

Commemorating these two occasions gives me strength and inspiration as a minister because we are part of the result of the hard work and dedication of God's Messenger and the Church Administration. Without them, we would not be here at all.

God's Messenger in these last days was the one who first experienced severe trials. As the one who began this work, he frequently faced persecutions. He barely had anything when he started his mission. But God fulfilled His promise to His Messenger, that He will not forsake him, which is why he was not afraid. He did not give up despite the trials and persecutions. When World War II broke out, the Church members remained steadfast in the faith. Despite fierce persecutions, they did not give up their faith, and most importantly, their hope for salvation.

The kind of trials we experience these days may be different from what they experienced before: persecutions through social media, dangerous and deadly illnesses. But we continue all the more fervently in our worship services to God, in our voluntary offerings, in propagation activities and in the activities of the Christian Family Organizations.



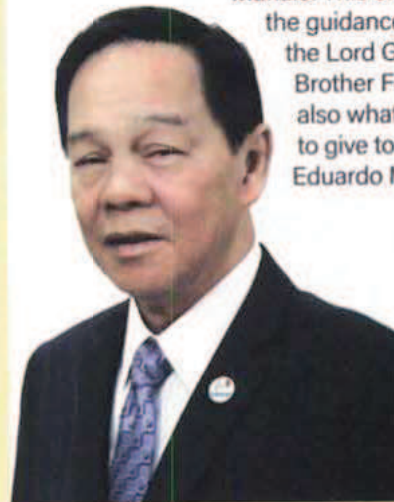
# BENDITO SANDOVAL

Instructor  
INC School For Ministers

Our ongoing fight with this pandemic can be likened to a world war. However, this is not a war among nations but a war wherein almost all nations are fighting a single enemy, which is Covid-19. Similar to what happened during the Second World War, this pandemic has caused massive losses in life, ravaged the economy of many countries, and ruined the livelihood of many people.

Just like what God's Messenger did in his time, the current Executive Minister's dynamic leadership can clearly be seen in our time. He aims to help not only the members of the Church but also nonmembers. Far greater than giving material aid, he preaches the words of God and exhorts us to be obedient to His commandments.

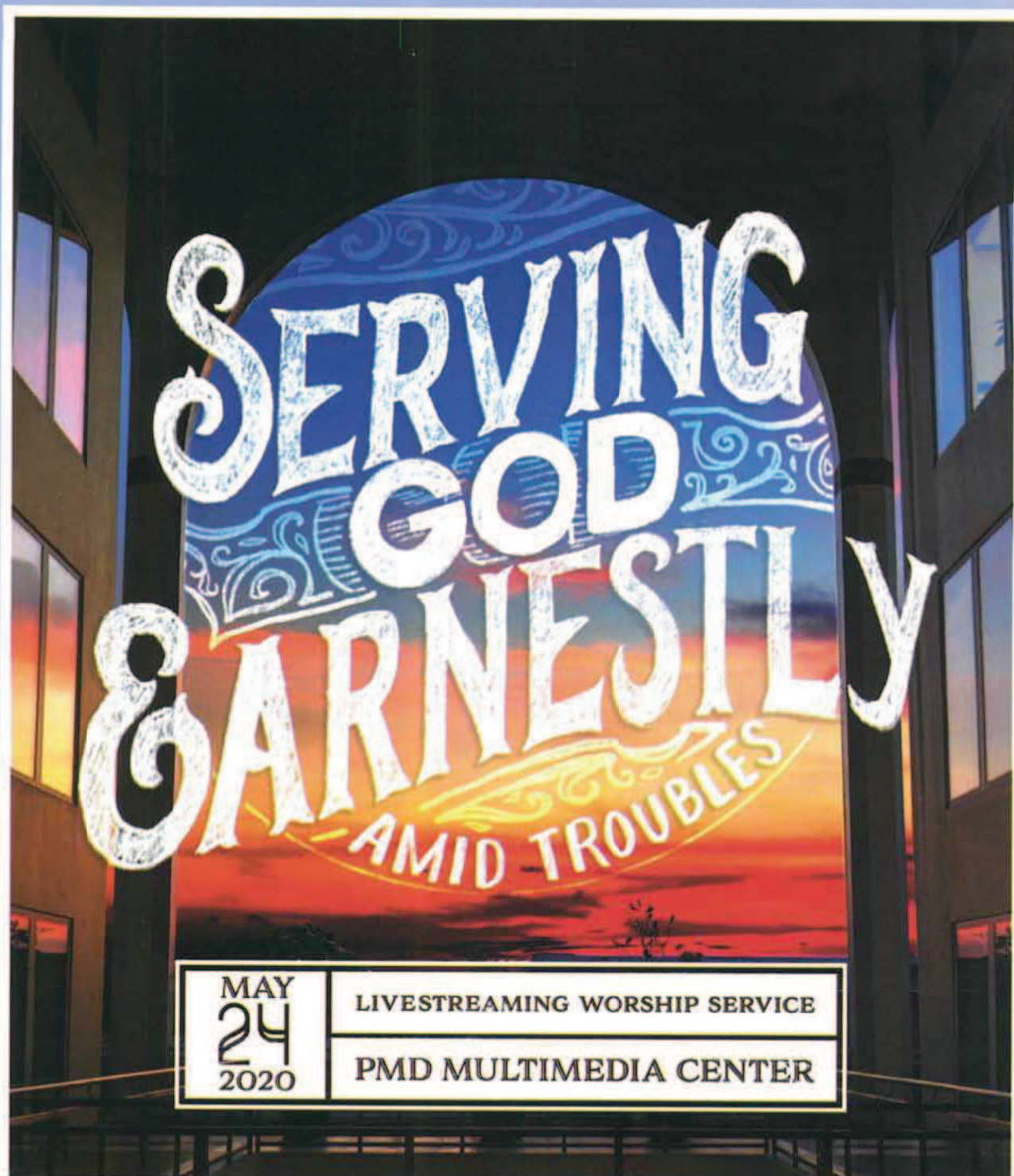
In the same way that the brethren remained steadfast and the Church Of Christ grew during the Second World War under the leadership of the Messenger, the Church Of Christ continues to grow now under the leadership of Brother Eduardo Manalo. This only proves that the guidance and help that the Lord God gave to Brother Felix Manalo are also what He continues to give to Brother Eduardo Manalo. 🙏



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**T**HE 2019 coronavirus disease or Covid-19 has affected in many ways the lives of people around the world, including members of the Church Of Christ. “The fact that the pandemic is spreading at an alarming rate with no known cure (as of this writing) makes us all restless and terrified. That may be more than enough to preoccupy our minds,” said Sister Desiree Acenas, a *Buklod* officer in the Local Congregation of Wahiawa, Ecclesiastical District of Hawaii-Pacific.



With millions afflicted and with fatalities now reaching hundreds of thousands, parents worry for the safety of their household.

"The current pandemic brings fear, stress, and anxiety to many people as the virus is rapidly spreading. As parents, we want ourselves and our children to be safe from the disease," said Brother Ron David Valencia, a head deacon in the Local Congregation of Markham, Ecclesiastical District of Greater Toronto, Canada.

"It does bring anxiety. I am especially worried for my children who are living miles away from me," said Sister Rachel Quiambao, head secretary of the Local Congregation of Glendale, Ecclesiastical District of Los Angeles County, California.

Children also worry for their parents, especially those who work as frontliners in battling the disease. "My mom works [as a nurse] in a hospital and she is in high risk to contracting the virus," said Sister Jeanee Alyza Ching, a choir member, Children's Worship Service officer, and *KADIWA* president in the Local Congregation of Houston, Ecclesiastical District of Texas. "I am afraid and I worry for my mom."

Another thing that people are worried about is their source of income. Due to the pandemic and the safety protocols implemented by governments, establishments were forced to temporarily stop operating and many have even closed down. As a result, many people could not go to work, or lost their jobs entirely.

Some may not have been dismissed from their jobs, but they do not have any income because of the "no work, no pay" policy.

Concerned about the future, Sister Airry Rose Ann Soriano said, "My family and I are worried. I ask myself the question: 'How can I continue studying if I cannot continue working?' This is because I also work to help my parents pay for my studies as they work to pay for our daily expenses. But we all lost our stable jobs because of the pandemic."

It is normal for people to feel troubled during these times. Even Church Of Christ members feel the same. However, they are fully aware that facing such things is inevitable in this world.

"As members of the Church Of Christ, we know that we will face troubles and worries in life. But what makes us different is that we know that we have our Almighty God Whom we can always turn to. We firmly believe, as Church members, that He is always with us and will not abandon us in trying times," Sister Rachel said.

Church members were once again reminded by the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, in a worship service he officiated, that great troubles will come to all people, even to the righteous or to the ones who were redeemed and made righteous by Christ through His blood—the members of the Church Of Christ. The preaching was streamed live



to various sites in North and South America on May 24, 2020. In his Bible-based preaching, the Executive Minister taught the Church members that they should earnestly continue in their services and in praying to God amid troubles.

Following quarantine measures for their own safety, Church members conducted their worship services at home. "The worship service is important to us members in dealing with life's problems, for it helps and strengthens us spiritually. The lessons help in guiding us towards the right path in life, so that we may continue to remain in the Church Of Christ and fight for our faith. We are taught to trust in our Almighty God and believe in His words," said Sister Jeaneen, a choir member, Children's Worship Service officer, and the *KADIWA* vice president of the Local Congregation of Houston, Ecclesiastical District of Texas.

Receiving the words of God and praying to Him in the worship service, the Church members find encouragement and peace of mind.

"The worship service is where we experience peace, even amid all the problems happening around us. It gives us renewed strength of faith to be able to face whatever that may come our way. When we call on God to bring to Him all our thoughts, worries, and anxieties, we know that He listens to our prayers and gives us the peace of mind to be able to continue on,"





said Sister Rachel, who is the head secretary in the Local Congregation of Glendale, Ecclesiastical District of Los Angeles County, California.

Church members also continue to conduct their prayers at home, putting their complete trust in God. Together with his family, Brother Ron, firmly holds on to what God can do for them.

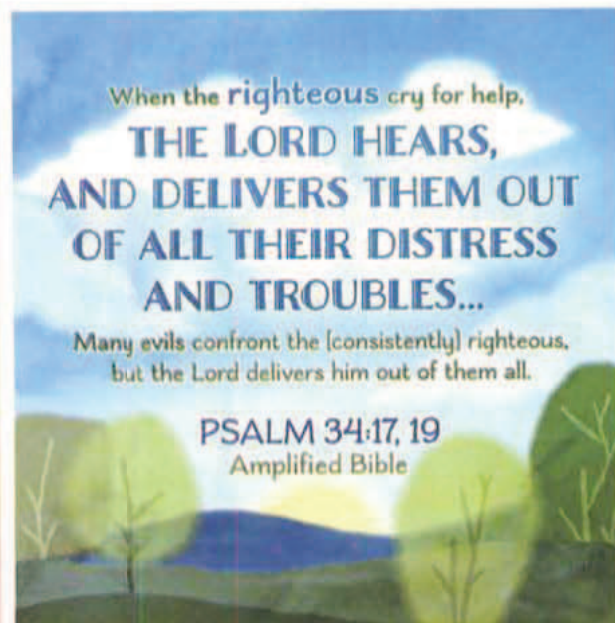
"We, as members of the Church Of Christ, have the protection and safekeeping of our Almighty God which gives us hope and inspiration to uphold our faith during these trying times. When we encounter difficulties, the first thing we do is pray," he said.

Likewise, Sister Desiree said, "In the worship service led by the Executive Minister, he emphasized that doubt is the enemy of faith. I will not doubt, but I will pray earnestly and fully place my trust in God. As human beings we are prone to self-doubt or mistakes, and we are always wary of things that make it really hard for us to trust anyone. God is our only

hope. Truly believing that He will hear our prayers will give us the comfort that we need."

God's servants who earnestly continue to obey His commandments and pray to Him will surely not be disappointed. Sister Airry, a choir member and local congregation secretary in the Local Congregation of Villa Grecia, Panama, Ecclesiastical District of Latin America, said, "If God sees that we are running out of strength, He will make us stronger. If we ask Him from the heart, with faith and works, without a doubt, our Father will bless us with what we need. God has blessed me with a job that I can do at home, enough to meet the needs of our day-to-day lives and, most importantly, we are able to continue to set aside our offerings for Him, which is also our obligation to Him."

Whatever may happen in this world, true Christians and their families, will never cease to fulfill their obligations to God, for they understand that these are their priorities in life. With firm faith, Brother Ron said, "No matter what happens in our life, we will continue our services to our Almighty God. Our parents taught us at an early age that our duties in the Church are the most important and we pass this on to our young children." ●



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# CARING FOR THE CHURCH

## AT ALL TIMES

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS AND MINISTERIAL WORKERS  
MAY 12, 2020 | QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES

**T**HE EXECUTIVE MINISTER, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, led the International Conference of Ministers and Ministerial Workers on May 12, 2020 via livestreaming, calling on all his co-workers in the Church to be vigilant in keeping the brethren's hope up, especially when needed most.

He highlighted that, now more than ever, all brethren—especially ministers, ministerial workers—should be strong in the faith, courageous, and compassionate. Just like those who were sent to deliver God's message to the people of ancient Israel, he taught, ministers and ministerial workers are expected to constantly remind the brethren that

they should not lose courage, be troubled, be upset, nor be afraid because God will always help them. Propagating the true faith is one of God's commands that should be upheld even at this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Executive Minister also emphasized.

"Using modern technology, the Executive Minister does not relent in reminding the brethren the words of God despite the hindrances due to the current pandemic," Brother Raul Adalla, district supervising minister of Southern Ontario Ecclesiastical District, said. "On our part, we make sure that the heads of the families are able to lead their worship services in their respective households."

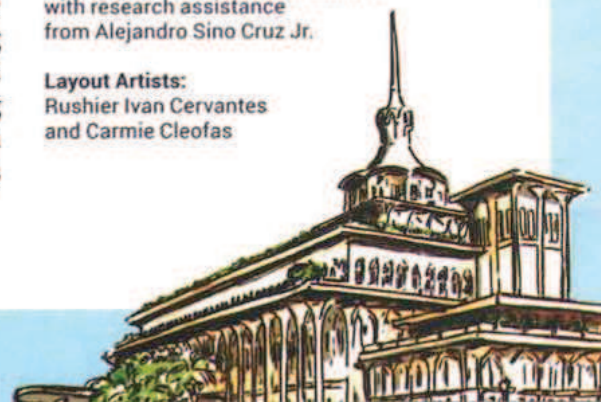
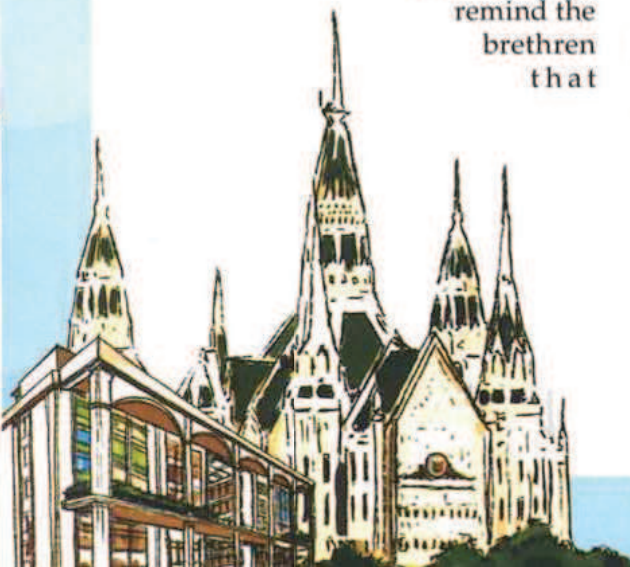
Brother Danny J. Perez, the district Light of Salvation overseer of Eastern Samar Ecclesiastical District, said that he is all the more inspired to continue leading the brethren in sharing the true faith. He further said, "Instead of being hindered, the brethren proved to be more active in sharing their faith. Taking part in our evangelical missions

on-air and online, they use their social media accounts to share web links of propagational videos prepared by the Church Administration. They even get in touch with their guests after every Bible study to help them know more about the Church."

With determination and promise, Brother Adalla said, "Together with my fellow ministers, we promise the Lord God that we will remain in the qualities that He is seeking from us. We will continue to be one with the Church Administration in leading the brethren towards complete renewal of life, intensive propagation of His words, and being strong in the faith, one way of which is by being prayerful." ●

Written by Mark Andro Milan  
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## Those who are truly wise

By SIEGFRED T. GOLLAYAN

**G**AINING THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE and wisdom is important in preparing for the future. For children who want to have a rewarding career, they try hard to do well in school. Understanding the value of education, most parents work even harder in order to support their children's schooling, hoping to set them on the path to a bright tomorrow.

PHOTO BY ANGELITA ESPARAR





**“Happy is anyone who becomes wise—who comes to have understanding. There is more profit in it than there is in silver; it is worth more to you than gold. Wisdom is more valuable than jewels; nothing you could want can compare with it.”**

**Proverbs 3:13-15  
Good News Bible**

### **The value of education and wisdom**

The Holy Scriptures state in no uncertain terms the value of wisdom:

“Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do. Whatever else you get, get insight. Love wisdom, and she will make you great. Embrace her, and she will bring you honor.” (Prov. 4:7-8 Good News Bible)

Proper wisdom applied correctly will make one great and will bring him honor. So precious is wisdom that the Bible states, “Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do. Whatever else you get, get insight.”

### **The evil way of using wisdom**

A person may spend around two decades in order to finish studying until college. For parents who are minimum wage earners, sending their children to school would be daunting. Still, they do everything just to send them to school.

Consider also how hard it is to find work nowadays. Surely, a considerable level of skill and knowledge would greatly help to win over stiff competitions in

the so-called labor market. The advantages of being wise were described by the Bible, thus:

“Happy is anyone who becomes wise—who comes to have understanding. There is more profit in it than there is in silver; it is worth more to you than gold. Wisdom is more valuable than jewels; nothing you could want can compare with it.” (Prov. 3:13-15 GNB)

If one is responsible enough to consider these, he would not let himself be deprived of a good education. He will study hard and thus, not waste but reciprocate the sacrifices of his parents. However, one should also know where not to use the wisdom that he has gained. Apostle Paul explained:

“And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Cor. 2:4-5 New King James Version)

Human wisdom should not be used as the basis of faith. Such wisdom has its benefits when used accordingly. Faith in God should never be based on human wisdom, nor



**“And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”**

**1 Corinthians 2:4-5  
New King James Version**

should such wisdom be used to go against Him or His will. One should then be prudent and discerning of any idea, knowledge, wisdom, and information he comes across even from school. There is no gainsaying the importance of knowing up to what extent one can use human wisdom. Unfortunately, there are those who relied too much on human wisdom that they lost their way to God. One should not follow their lead.

**True wisdom: knowing God**

No one should boast of his wisdom because true glory is having the knowledge of God:

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might, Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the LORD.” (Jer. 9:23-24 NKJV)

No matter how great human knowledge a person has, he cannot be considered truly wise in the sight of God if he lacks the knowledge about Him. Even the wise King Solomon said that although his wisdom did not fail him in his earthly endeavors, he

realized that, in the end, all of them did not mean a thing—“of no use at all” (Eccles. 2:9-11 GNB). Having the correct knowledge and understanding of God is what truly matters.

However, one should examine the “knowledge of God” he purports to have, because there are those who merely profess or claim to know God but their actions deny it (Titus 1:16). The Bible gives an example of such people in a vivid description:

“They know God, but they do not give him the honor that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. Instead, their thoughts have become complete nonsense, and their empty minds are filled with darkness. They say they are wise, but they are fools; instead of worshiping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortals or birds or animals or reptiles.” (Rom. 1:21-23 GNB)

The people being mentioned here believe that they know God. However, they are not among those who truly know God because they neither glorified nor gave thanks to Him. Instead, they honored and worshiped graven images made to look like men, birds, animals, and reptiles. Such people who worship idols think that what they do



# FAQs

... from page 2

is based on true wisdom, but, as the Bible says, they are fools because they chose to follow their own reasoning, instead of God's will.

## Gaining true wisdom

How then can one acquire true wisdom and insight about God? Apostle Paul enlightens us:

"For by the blood of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, which he gave to us in such large measure! In all his wisdom and insight God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head." (Eph. 1:7-10 GNB)

The ones redeemed by Christ have been bestowed with the wisdom and insight of God. The Church that was redeemed or purchased by Christ with His blood is the Church Of Christ:

"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)

The wisdom and insight given to the Church include understanding of the "manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10 NKJV). As such, the members of the Church Of Christ have gained true wisdom. What the people of this world failed to understand was revealed to them by God.

The wisdom of God which He has made known to the members of the Church Of Christ can never be understood by man through the wisdom of this world. This is because God willed that man be able to know Him not through worldly wisdom (I Cor. 1:21; Mark 4:11).

The great importance of true wisdom about God can never be overstated because it leads man to eternal life (John 17:3, 1). This is the future that members of the Church Of Christ all the more prepares for which is why they devote themselves to complete obedience to His commands for "by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (I John 2:3 NKJV).

Dear readers, know more about the true God and His will through the biblical teachings upheld by the Church Of Christ. In doing so, be included among those who have truly become wise. ●

And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him." (Acts 8:27-31 New Living Translation)

No matter how highly educated, people cannot understand on their own God's words that are hidden in mystery (I Cor. 2:6-8). Even if they try to learn it by themselves, they will "never [be] able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:7 NKJV). The Bible is not an "open book" as others perceive it to be. It is not for private interpretation (II Pet. 1:20). Only those who are sent by God and Christ have the gift and authority to preach the gospel (Rom. 10:15). Others can only try to interpret and preach God's words, but because they are not commissioned by God and do not have the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they would only explain it falsely, to their own destruction:

"This is what he says in all his letters when he writes on the subject. There are some difficult things in his letters which ignorant and unstable people explain falsely, as they do with other passages of the Scriptures. So they bring on their own destruction." (II Pet. 3:16 Good News Bible). ●



# Looking at and coping with today's moral crisis

***With the moral decay so prevalent in today's world, what is the only solution that everyone must look for?***

By CELERINO G. BACLAAN

**G**OD THE CREATOR, at the very beginning, put all things in place. In His own image and great plan for man, He created him for a distinct purpose—to know that He, the Lord, is the only one true God, to fear Him, to worship and serve Him, and to obey His commandments—hence, in the end he will be judged on this (Gen. 1:26-27; Eph. 1:9-10; John 17:1, 3; Ps. 100:2-3; Eccles. 12:13). Being so loved, man has been blessed with a life-sustaining habitat (Gen. 2:7-9, 15-19). Much more important than his biological necessities, he was given the divine laws to teach him what is right for the preservation of the order God set for the welfare of all.

Man has also been given the free will to choose between good and evil, but he is accountable for the decision he makes

(Deut. 30:19). If he chooses to obey the will of God, he will be blessed; if he chooses to disobey, he will be cursed. Perfectly just and fair, God rewards even in this life those who live righteously and, ultimately, in the life to come with eternal life, but judges those who live wickedly, to suffer eternal punishment in the lake of fire (John 5:28-29; II Pet. 3:7, 10; Rev. 20:14). Despite God's warning, the first couple, Adam and Eve, chose not to obey what God commanded them but obeyed, instead, the tempter who corrupted their hearts leaving a lesson for all to remember.

## **What the ungodly have been choosing**

Since time immemorial, only a few have been choosing to recognize and worship the only one true God, be God-fearing,

do what pleases Him, and live righteously. Many, on the other hand, have been violating God's order and establishing their own. Because of their filthiness, the ancient world was destroyed by God by means of the great flood, with only eight persons spared; and later, except for Lot and his household, God condemned and burned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the immoral, making them an example for all the ungodly to look back upon and fear (II Pet. 2:5-7).

In the early part of the Christian era, the Lord Jesus Christ was sent by God to establish the Church Of Christ and make known the message for man's salvation (Matt. 16:18; Luke 4:18-19). He sent Apostle Paul to preach the gospel and be the light to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6) whom the Bible describes as



ungodly: “You are to open their eyes and turn them from the darkness to the light and from the power of Satan to God, so that through their faith in me they will have their sins forgiven and receive their place among God’s chosen people” (Acts 26:18 Good News Bible).

How severely the Gentiles had been blinded through the past centuries by the sower of disobedience—dragging them into ignorance, cravings, perversions, and all other sorts of sinful ways—was vividly pictured by Apostle Paul:

“God’s anger is revealed from heaven against all the sin and evil of the people ... They know God, but they do not give him the honor that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. Instead, their thoughts have become complete nonsense, and their empty minds are filled with darkness. They say they are wise, but they are fools; instead of worshiping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortals or birds or animals or reptiles.

“And so God has given those people over to do the filthy things their hearts desire, and they do shameful things with each other. In the same way the men give up natural sexual relations with women and burn with passion for each other. Men do

shameful things with each other, and as a result they bring upon themselves the punishment they deserve for their wrongdoing.

“Because those people refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about God, he has given them over to corrupted minds, so that they do the things that they should not do. They are filled with all kinds of wickedness, evil, greed, and vice; they are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, deceit, and malice. They gossip and speak evil of one another; they are hateful to God, insolent, proud, and boastful; they think of more ways to do evil; they disobey their parents; they have no conscience; they do not keep their promises, and they show no kindness or pity for others. They know that God’s law says that people who live in this way deserve death. Yet,

**“Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”**

Romans 12:2 The Message

not only do they continue to do these very things, but they even approve of others who do them.” (Rom. 1:18, 21-24, 27-32 GNB)

Profoundly knowledgeable about the socio-cultural landscape of his time, Apostle Paul witnessed how society and its culture and intimately connected instruments could be manipulated to enslave the blinded to idolatry, arrogance, and immorality. That’s why he cautioned the true Christians:

“Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings



the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” (Rom. 12:2 The Message)

And fully aware of Satan’s scheme and deception in using his instruments to continue blinding his victims by corrupting their hearts and implanting into their minds the seed of disobedience, Apostle Paul, in one of his letters to Timothy, forewarned the Christians in the last days:

“You may as well know this too, Timothy, that in the last days it is going to be very difficult to be a Christian. For people will love only themselves and their money; they will be proud and boastful, sneering at God, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful to them, and thoroughly bad. They will be hardheaded and never give in to others; they will be constant liars and troublemakers and will think nothing of immorality. They will be rough and cruel, and sneer at those who try to be good. They will betray their friends; they will be hotheaded, puffed up with pride, and prefer good times to worshiping God.” (II Tim. 3:1-4 Living Bible)

Indeed, Paul did foresee how the sower of disobedience to God would, like a roaring lion

(I Pet. 5:8), drag down to spiritual immaturity and immorality the world in the last days as its culture would make it extremely difficult for the people of God to live as Christians.

#### **Deeply embedded in man’s consciousness**

Through centuries the scheming sower has been at work to continuously oppose God. The apostatized church that superseded the first-century Church Of Christ, not only has been strikingly different but also deviated from Christ’s teachings. This turned universal church has been instrumental in perpetuating the seed of idolatry or image worship, and so have been the culture and philosophies left by the idolatrous civilizations known for their glory and grandeur and transmitted by conquest and cultural invasion. The succeeding centuries after the death of the apostles saw the seeds of idolatry and of arrogant philosophical thoughts being deeply embedded in the consciousness of the captives worldwide, across races and cultures.

Continuously, evil seeds creep into institutions such as schools, media, and the like that are being used pervasively to

debase what God commands all to follow as standard for morality or righteous living. The Holy Scriptures have been treated as mere literary work of man open to any interpretation. The deceiver’s cunning made another leap with the advent of modernity. Hiding in the guise of so-called relativism, the deceiver capitalizes on the intellectual and academic sophistications attached to it in sugarcoating his spirit of disobedience while strategically trivializing, through media, technology, academe, and several others, God’s laws written in the Bible.

Without or lacking sound biblical orientation, the undiscerning and overwhelmed by scientific and technological advancements would easily embrace the modern society’s principle of change and its many applications to man’s life even if they violate God’s will. This permissive society—being highly relativistic, too liberal and compromising, and individualistic—places a high premium on personal lifestyles and preferences. It labels Christian values not only as conservative but also as obsolete and obstacles to progress while assertively promoting secular



values concerning life, man, sexuality, marriage, and family.

These unchristian values articulated and popularized by rich and famous personalities or influencers in various platforms like films, television, and advocacies give greater importance to personal convenience, comfort, and gratification than obeying the will of God. However, religious leaders and experts in behavioral science and social science note the spiritual and moral decline besetting the world today as shown in their studies: on persisting violations against human life and dignity and against sanctity of marriage; on sex-related epidemic, and on widespread marital breakdown or family disintegration. The findings signify that both crises are worsening, in fact, reaching to an alarming level.

### **The indispensable solution**

Critical thinkers and those substantially knowledgeable about biblical events would find that the spiritual crisis and immorality plaguing the world today have many parallels with those of the world before and during the time of Christ and His apostles. Indeed so shameful also to describe are

the world's spiritual immaturity and immorality today.

Showing His mercy and love for all, God sent His Son to fulfill His great plan for man's salvation in the Christian era and proclaim the importance of living righteously. Christ established His Church, the Church Of Christ, in Jerusalem with the apostles and Jewish converts as its first members. From being separated from God and outside His covenant, the first group of Christ's sheep became among the heirs of God. Then Christ sent Paul to the Gentiles to preach the Good News or God's message for man's salvation. From being without God and without hope (Eph. 2:11-12), being blinded by Satan and in darkness and slaves to spiritual immaturity and immorality, the Gentile converts—the second group of Christ's sheep, became forgiven and among those to be saved on the Day of Judgment (Phil. 3:20-21).

Christ's other sheep (John 10:16)—the third group (Acts 2:39)—the Church Of Christ in these last days that emerged in the Far East (Isa. 43:5 Moffatt Translation) continuously spreads worldwide proclaiming God's words written in the

Bible. Preserving His order, this last work of God for man's salvation undauntedly upholds the fundamental teachings of Christ without compromise—knowing and serving the Father as the only one true God, exalting the Bible as the only basis of faith and standard for morality and righteous living (II Tim. 3:15-17) without blending in with the world and accepting its values and lifestyles that are unbiblical, the indispensability of the Church founded by Christ the Savior for man's salvation (John 10:9; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23), the divine election and authority of God's Messenger (Isa. 41:9-10) and the authority given to the Church Administration whom He placed in His nation (Col. 1:25).

Thus, by joining the Church Of Christ and faithfully obeying God's laws, people will overcome being tainted by the moral corruption so prevalent in the world today. More importantly, they will also be spared from the eternal damnation reserved for those whose life falls short of what the Creator expects of man whom He created in His own image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24 Amplified Bible). ●



# Against Origen's 'Contra Celsum'

By JENSEN DG. MAÑEBOG

HE MIGHT HAVE had the noblest intention to defend Christianity, but his reply to a detractor proved detrimental—not so much to the critic's beliefs but to the faith itself he wished to champion.

Considered as "one of the greatest Christian theologians" after the time of the apostles, Origen of Alexandria (184–254) is a "church father" who lived through "a turbulent period of the Christian Church, when persecution was wide-spread."<sup>1</sup> Celsus, on the other hand, was a second-century opponent of early Christianity whose work, "The True Word" (or "The True Discourse") is deemed "the earliest known comprehensive criticism of Christianity."<sup>2</sup>

About the year 240 AD, a copy of Celsus' work was sent to Origen by his friend Ambrosius, requesting him to rebut its claims. Having qualms at first, Origen later consented to answer Celsus, thereby producing his treatise *Contra Celsum* (Against Celsus).<sup>3</sup>

## Celsus versus Origen

Taunting the Christians, the pagan philosopher Celsus argued that Christians had no right to

ridicule paganism because their own worship of Christ shows that they worship a dead man:

"'The Christians,' he declared, 'worshiped no God, not even a demon, but only a dead man ... If they do not wish to worship the pagan gods,' he said, 'why should they not rather pay their devotions to some of their own prophets than to a man who had been crucified by the Jews?'"<sup>4</sup>

As a matter of biblical doctrine, Christians do worship the Lord Jesus Christ. But here is how Origen defended this Christian practice against Celsus:

"Origen, the greatest of the early Christian writers, defended the Christians from the attacks of Celsus. This he did, not by denying the charge that they worshipped Christ, but by showing that the Savior was worthy of such adoration because He was God."<sup>5</sup>

## The ramifications of Origen's answer

Origen's reply to Celsus that Jesus is God has engendered many other unbiblical doctrines now embraced by the Catholic Church. For instance, Catholics believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is "the Mother of God because Jesus, her Son, is



God.”<sup>5</sup> However, acknowledging Mary as the “Mother of God” is against the biblical doctrine that teaches that God is not a son of any human being (Num. 23:19).

Believing that Christ is God, Catholic authorities further teach that “Christ possesses two natures: divine nature and human nature. He is both God and man.”<sup>6</sup> This, nonetheless, openly contradicts God’s own words: “you are a man, and not God” (Ezek. 28:2 King James Version 2000) and “I am God, and not man” (Hos. 11:9 New King James Version)—expressing that He does not allow (a) man to be both man and God, and (b) Himself to be both God and man.

The Catholic Church had to proclaim also that God died, explaining that “[Jesus] suffered and died in His human nature, and He is God, and so we may say that God suffered and died.”<sup>7</sup> This however, is, in direct contrast to what the Bible teaches: “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen” (I Tim. 1:17 NKJV).

### **The Bible’s answer to Celsus’ criticism**

The fact that Christ died (John 19:30, 33) proves that He is man (John 8:40) and not God—for God, unlike man, is immortal (Heb. 9:27; I Tim. 1:17). Thus, Origen, in his reply to Celsus, obviously erred in “showing that the Savior [Christ] was worthy of adoration because He was God.”

So, what should have been the correct counter against Celsus? That which the Bible teaches:

**“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

**Philippians 2:9–11  
New King James Version**

Christians worship Christ not because He is God but because God, the Father, commanded His servants to worship Jesus:

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9–11 NKJV)

Take note that “every knee should bow at His name,” or that Christ must be worshiped, not because He is God but because doing so is “to the glory of God the Father.” To follow God’s will—like worshiping His Son—is to “do what is good and right” in His sight (Deut. 12:28 NKJV).

### **Origen’s Christology**

From what did Origen adopt the idea that Christ is God? The *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* informs us, thus:

“[Origen’s] thought is ... informed by his Greek philosophical education, specifically that of the Middle Platonic

tradition, notably the works of ... philosopher Numenius of Apamea (fl. 150–176 C.E.) ... From Numenius, Origen likely adopted the conception of a ‘second god’ proceeding from a first, ineffable being called the One, ‘First God,’ or Father. Numenius referred to this ‘second god’ as Demiurge or craftsman, and taught that he created the cosmos by imitating the intellectual



content of the 'First God.' Origen applied this basic notion to his doctrine of Christ, whom he also called Demiurge ..."<sup>9</sup>

Origen's Platonism-based conception of Christ is part of his larger doctrine on the Trinity which is relatedly "based upon standard Middle Platonic triadic emanation schemas"<sup>8</sup>:

"Origen begins his treatise *On First Principles* by establishing, in typical Platonic fashion, a divine hierarchical triad; but instead of calling these principles by typical Platonic terms like monad, dyad, and world-soul, he calls them 'Father,' 'Christ,' and 'Holy Spirit,' though he does describe these principles using Platonic language ... there existed with [the Father], always, an entity upon which to exercise His intellectual activity. This entity is Christ the Son, the Logos, or Wisdom (Sophia), of God, the first emanation of the Father, corresponding to Numenius' 'second god'..."<sup>8</sup>

Clearly, Origen's Christology and Trinitarian theology were adopted from Platonist philosophy and are downright unscriptural. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Whom the Trinitarians consider as "God the Son," clearly taught that there is only one God, the Father:

"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.'" (John 17:1, 3 NKJV)

Notice that Christ Himself proved that the Father—not He—is the only true God. For, the Father explicitly said, "I, and I alone, am God; no other god is real" (Deut. 32:39 Good News Bible) and "Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me" (Isa. 43:10 NKJV). These lucidly prove that God is not triune and any concept of God that includes Jesus Christ—or any other—as also god is unbiblical.

### The irony

Celsus "shows himself a Platonist" as he "is generally described as a Platonist in philosophy."<sup>9</sup> It is just remarkably ironic that Origen, in refuting the anti-Christian criticism of a pagan Platonist, used concepts that he drew, too, from Platonism.

What lessons can be learned from Origen's doctrinal error revealed in *Contra Celsum*? One pertains to the admonitions of Apostle Paul to "see to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy" (Col. 2:8 New International Version) and not to go beyond what is written in the Holy Scriptures (I Cor. 4:6; II Tim. 3:15).

Another relates to the warnings Apostle Paul penned for Christians before he died:

"For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!" (II Cor. 11:4 NKJV)

"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8 NKJV)

Apparently, the Catholic Church and others did not learn from these and stuck to the unbiblical doctrine of the Trinity. ☹

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## May hangganan ang karunungan ng tao

ANG KASALUKUYANG PANDEMYA ay nagsilbing paalaala tungkol sa limitasyon ng karunungan ng tao. Totoong ang paglago ng kaalaman ay nagdulot ng napakaraming benepisyo sa tao. Nakarating siya sa buwan, nasuri ang mga karatig na planeta, at nakaimbento ng mga kasangkapan at pamamaraan na nagdulot ng malaking kaginhawahan sa kaniyang buhay rito sa mundo. Ngunit dahil sa isang nakamamatay na sakit, mahigit kalahati ng populasyon ng daigdig—humigit-kumulang 4.2 bilyong katao—ang napilitang mag-*lockdown* dahil sa “di-nakikitang kaaway.”

Kapansin-pansin na ang karamihan sa mga bansang may pinakamaraming nahawahan at namatay sa Covid-19 ay mauunlad, may mataas na *literacy rate*, at may pinakamahusay na sistema ng pangangalaga sa kalusugan. Sa kabila nito, lumilitaw na hindi sila nakahihigit kaysa ibang bansa sa pagsugpo sa pagkalat ng sakit.

Bagama't maaaring sa di-kalaunan ay may matuklasang bakuna laban sa Covid-19, hindi dapat ipagwalang-bahala ng tao ang katotohanang hindi sapat ang kaniyang sariling karunungan upang ganap na mapabuti ang kaniyang buhay.

Walang pagtatalo na mahalaga at kapakinabang ang karunungan kapag ginamit nang tama. Sa katunayan, ganito inilarawan ng Biblia ang kaunawaan: “Mapalad ang tao na nakakasumpong ng karunungan, At ang tao na nagtatamo ng kaunawaan. Sapagka't ang kalakal niya ay maigi kay sa kalakal na pilak, At ang pakinabang niyaon kay sa dalisay na ginto. Mahalaga nga kay sa mga rubi; At wala sa mga bagay na mananasa mo sa maihalalintulad sa kaniya” (Kaw. 3:13–15).

Ang Diyos ay hindi kalaban ng pagtuklas ng karunungan. Ang totoo'y Siya pa nga ang pinagmumulan nito: “Sapagka't ang Panginoon ay nagbibigay ng karunungan, Sa kaniyang bibig *nanggagaling* ang kaalaman at kaunawaan” (Kaw. 2:6).

Ngunit dapat tiyakin ng tao na hindi niya gagamitin sa masama ang karunungan ni ipagpalagay man na siya at hindi ang Diyos ang dapat makapangyari sa kaniyang buhay:

“Sapagka't ikaw ay tumiwala sa iyong kasamaan; iyong sinabi, Walang nakakakita sa akin; ang iyong karunungan at ang iyong kaalaman, nagpaligaw sa iyo: at iyong sinabi sa iyong puso, Ako nga, at walang iba liban sa akin.” (Isa. 47:10)



Dapat maunawaan, kung gayon, na ang karunungan ng tao ay hindi absoluto manapa'y maaaring maghatid sa tao sa kapahamakan kapag nagamit nang hindi wasto. Ang sinapit nina Adan at Eba ay isang halimbawa kung paanong ang masamang paghahangad at pagtuklas ng karunungan ay nagsadlak sa tao sa kasawian. Nadaya sila ng diablo na kainin ang bunga ng punongkahoy na ipinagbawal ng Diyos, hindi dahil sila ay nagugutom sa literal na pagkain—sagana sila sa pagkain noon sa halamanan ng Eden. Bagkus, ang sanhi ng kanilang paglabag sa kabawalan ng Diyos ay dahil napaniwala silang ang bunga ng kahoy ay “nagdudulot ng karunungan” (Gen. 3:6 New Pilipino Version).

Kaya, nagbabala ang Diyos na hindi dapat ipagmalaki ang karunungan:

“Ito ang sinasabi ng PANGINOON: “Huwag ipaghambog ng matalino ang kanyang karunungan o ipagmalaki ng malakas na tao ang kanyang kalakasan o ng mayamang tao ang kanyang mga kayamanan; sa halip, siya na naghahambog ay ito ang ipaghambog: na nauunawaan niya ako at nakikilala, na ako ang PANGINOON na nagpapairal ng kabaitan, katarungan at katuwiran sa daigdig pagkat ang mga ito ang aking kinalulugdan,” pahayag ng PANGINOON.” (Jer. 9:23–24 NPV)

Ang pinakamahalagang karunungan na dapat pagsikapang matamo ng tao ay ang karunungang maghahatid sa kaligtasan mula sa pagkalipol sa Araw ng Paghuhukom (II Ped. 3:7, 10) at sa walang hanggang kaparusahan sa dagat-dagatang apoy (Apoc. 21:8). Matatamo niya ang karunungang ito mula sa mga salita ng Diyos na nakasulat sa mga

Banal na Kasulatan o Biblia (II Tim. 3:15–17). Ang isang mahalagang kaalamang itinuturo ng Biblia ay ang tungkol sa tunay na Diyos—na hindi makikilala ng tao sa pamamagitan lamang ng kaniyang sariling pang-unawa:

“Ano ang kabuluhan ngayon ng marurunong, ng mga eskriba, ng mahuhusay na dibatista sa daigdig na ito? Ipinakilala ng Diyos na ang karunungan ng sanlibutang ito ay kamangmangan. Sa pagkat ayon sa karunungan ng Diyos, hindi niya itinulot na siya'y makilala ng tao sa pamamagitan ng karunungan ng sanlibutang ito. Sa halip, minarapat niyang ang mga nananalig sa kanya'y iligtas sa pamamagitan ng Mabuting Balita na aming ipinangangaral ngunit ipinalalagay naman ng sanlibutan na isang kahangalan.” (I Cor. 1:20–21 Magandang Balita Biblia)

Ang walang hanggang karunungan ng Diyos ay nahahayag sa pamamagitan ng Iglesia (Efe. 3:10 MB)—ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Efe. 3:20–21 Gawa 20:28 Lamsa Translation)

Ang pandemyang nagaganap ay magpamulat nawa sa lahat sa katotohanang hindi maaaring panghawakan ng tao ang kaniyang sariling karunungan tungo sa kaniyang ikabubuti. Ang higit na dapat niyang pagsikapang matamo ay ang karunungan ng Diyos yayamang nagdudulot ito ng pakinabang hindi lamang sa buhay na ito kundi, ang lalong mahalaga, sa buhay na darating. ●

*Donnu C. Lovendin*  
**Editor-in-Chief**



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# Ang lalong mahalaga para sa isang tunay na Iglesia Ni Cristo

NI EUGENE G. LISING

**A**NUMAN ANG SITWASYON ng kanilang buhay, dedikado ang mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* sa pagdalo sa mga pagsamba at pakikipagkaisa sa mga gawain ng Iglesia sa pangunguna ng Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan, ang Kapatid na Eduardo V. Manalo. Ano ang nagbubunsod sa kanila na gawin iyon sukdulang sila’y magtiis at magsakripisyo? Ito ay nakasalalay sa kung ano ang pinakamahalaga sa kanila bilang mga tunay na Cristiano na tulad ni Apostol Pablo.

## Ang lalong mahalaga

Ayon kay Apostol Pablo, siya ay nagpakalugi sa lahat ng bagay dahil sa lalong mahalaga—ang pagkakilala sa Panginoong Jesucristo:

“Oo, inari kong kalugihan ang lahat ng bagay bilang kapalit ng lalong mahalaga, ang pagkakilala kay Cristo Jesus na aking Panginoon. Ang lahat ng bagay ay ipinalagay kong walang kabuluhan makamtan ko lamang si Cristo.” (Filip. 3:8 Magandang Balita Biblia)

Pinatunayan ni Apostol Pablo ang malaking pagpapahalaga at pagkilala niya kay Cristo sa pamamagitan ng pagbabata o pagtitiis:

“Nagagalak ako sa aking pagbabata ngayon alang-alang sa inyo sapagkat sa pamamagitan nito’y naipagpapatuloy ko ang paghihirap na kailangan pang gawin ni Cristo para sa iglesya na kanyang katawan.” (Col. 1:24 MB)

Alang-alang sa Iglesia na katawan ni Cristo, ang *Iglesia*

*Ni Cristo* (Col. 1:18; Roma 16:16), nagtiis at nagsakripisyo si Apostol Pablo. Gayundin, ang pagkakilala niya kay Cristo ay hindi niya kailanman ikinompromiso:

“Ngunit dahil kay Cristo, ang mga bagay na maaari kong ibilang na pakinabang ay inari kong kalugihan.” (Filip. 3:7 MB)

Ang totoo, ginugol niya ang kaniyang buhay sa paglilingkod kay Cristo, dahil para sa kaniya, “ang mabuhay ay si Cristo, at ang mamatay ay pakinabang” (Filip. 1:21).

Ganito rin ang mga tunay na kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ngayon. Taglay ang napakadakilang pagkakilala sa Panginoong Jesucristo, inaari nilang lalong mahalaga kaysa anupamang bagay sa mundo ang kanilang



pagiging sangkap ng katawan Niya o kaanib sa Kaniyang Iglesia. Matitiis nilang mawala ang lahat ng bagay sa kanila huwag lamang ang kanilang pagka-*Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Isang kapanatikuhan ba ito, katulad ng iniisip ng iba? Ano ang saligan ng gayong pagpapahalaga?

**Kung bakit pinakamahalaga ang pagka-Iglesia Ni Cristo**

Si Cristo ang Tagapagligtas at ang Iglesia na katawan Niya ang ililigtas Niya:

“Sapagkat ang lalaki ang ulo ng kanyang asawa, tulad ni Cristo na siyang ulo ng iglesya, na kanyang katawan, at siyang Tagapagligtas nito.” (Efe. 5:23 MB)

Kung inaakala ng sinuman na hindi mahalaga ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, iyon ay isang malaking pagkakamali sapagkat ang Iglesiang ito ang ililigtas ni Cristo. Sa katunayan, ang mga sangkap ng katawan ni Cristo o kaanib ng Kaniyang Iglesia (Col. 1:18) ang mga tagapagmana at may bahagi sa pangako:

“Na ang mga Gentil ay mga tagapagmana, at mga kasangkap ng katawan, at mga may bahagi sa pangako na kay Cristo Jesus sa pamamagitan ng evangelio.” (Efe. 3:6)

Paano ang mga taong hindi nagpapahalaga sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* katulad ng ayaw umanib dito o kung naging kaanib

**“Oo, inari kong kalugihan ang lahat ng bagay bilang kapalit ng lalong mahalaga, ang pagkakilala kay Cristo Jesus na aking Panginoon. Ang lahat ng bagay ay ipinalagay kong walang kabuluhan makamtan ko lamang si Cristo.”**

**Filipos 3:8  
Magandang Balita Biblia**

man ay nahiwalay rin dito? Magmamana rin ba sila ng pangako at maliligtas? Ganito ang pahayag ng Biblia:

“Ano ang karapatan kong humatol sa mga taga-labas ng iglesya? Hindi ba kayo ang hahatol sa mga nasa loob? Ang Dios ang hahatol sa mga nasa labas. ‘Itiwalag ninyo ang masama ninyong kasamahan.’” (I Cor. 5:12–13 New Pilipino Version)

Ayon sa Biblia, hahatulan ang mga nasa labas ng

Iglesia—wala silang kaligtasan. Samakatuwid, kailangan na ang tao’y sangkap ng katawan ni Cristo o nasa loob ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* upang maligtas. Kaya, hindi nakapagtataka kung bakit napakahalaga sa mga kaanib ng Iglesia na manatili sila rito na masiglang naglilingkod sa Panginoon.

**Ang tunay na sumasampalataya**

Hinding-hindi papayag na mahiwalay o humiwalay kay Cristo o sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang tunay na sumasampalataya:

“Sinabi nga ni Jesus sa labingdalawa, Ibig baga nin-yong magsialis din naman? Sinagot siya ni Simon Pedro, Panginoon, kanino kami magsisiparoon? ikaw ang may mga salita ng buhay na walang hanggan. At kami’y nagsisampalataya at nakikilala namin na ikaw ang Banal ng Dios.” (Juan 6:67–69)

Bakit hindi humiwalay ang mga apostol kay Cristo? Sapagkat, gaya ng isinagot ni Apostol Pedro, “Panginoon, kanino kami magsisiparoon?”—sumasampalataya sila na wala silang ibang mapupuntahan na kanilang ikaliligtas kundi kay Cristo lamang sapagkat nasa Kaniya ang salita ng buhay na walang hanggan. Kaya hindi sila humiwalay, bagkus ay tumalima sila kay Cristo.



**“Sapagka’t ako’y naniniwalang lubos, na kahit ang kamatayan man, kahit ang buhay, kahit ang mga anghel, kahit ang mga pamunuan, kahit ang mga bagay na kasalukuyan, kahit ang mga bagay na darating, kahit ang mga kapangyarihan, Kahit ang kataasan, kahit ang kababaan, kahit ang alin mang ibang nilalang, ay hindi makapaghihiwalay sa atin sa pagibig ng Dios, na nasa kay Cristo Jesus na Panginoon natin.”**

Roma 8:38-39

Nanindigan sila at hindi guma-wa ng anumang ikahihiwalay sa kanilang pagka-*Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Sila’y nagtangga ng sarili at namuhunan ng buhay maliban sa isang nagtaksil at nagkanulo sa Panginoon.

May ilang nahiwalay at tumalikod kay Cristo noon sapagkat hindi sila sumasampalataya (Juan 6:64, 66). Paano ba makikilala ang tunay na sumasampalataya? Gaano ang paninindigan nila? Sinuman at anuman ay hindi makapaghihiwalay sa kanila sa pag-ibig ng Diyos at ni Cristo:

“Sino ang maghihiwalay sa atin sa pagibig ni Cristo? ang kapighatian, o ang kahapisan, o ang paguusig, o ang kagutum, o ang kahubaran, o ang pang-anib, o ang tabak? ... Sapagka’t ako’y naniniwalang lubos, na kahit ang kamatayan man, kahit ang buhay, kahit ang mga anghel, kahit ang mga pamunuan, kahit ang mga bagay na kasalukuyan, kahit ang mga bagay na darating, kahit ang mga kapangyarihan, Kahit ang kataasan, kahit ang kababaan, kahit ang alin mang ibang nilalang, ay hindi makapaghihiwalay sa atin sa pagibig ng Dios, na nasa kay Cristo Jesus na Panginoon natin.” (Roma 8:35, 38-39)

Bakit may ganitong kumbiksiyon o paninindigan ang tunay na sumasampala-

taya? Sapagkat ang gayon ay matibay at nababaon at hindi nakikilos sa pananalig at pag-asa sa ebanghelyo na kaniyang narinig (Col. 1:23). Kaya, ang isang mananampalataya ay hindi na gaya ng bata na pahapay-hapay o madaling madaya at mapaniwala ng mga kasinungalingan at mga maling aral (Efe. 4:14).

Anumang pag-uusig at paninirang-puri laban sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay hindi nakapagpapatinag sa kaniya sapagkat ang kaniyang pananampalataya ay nakasandig sa mga aral ng Diyos na itinuro sa kaniya. Ang ilan sa mga ito ay ang tungkol sa pag-ibig ni Cristo sa Kaniyang Iglesia (Efe. 5:23, 25), at ang saligan ng kahalalan ng Sugo ng Diyos (Juan 6:29; 13:20), at ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* sa mga huling araw (Isa. 41:9-10; 43:5-6; Apoc. 7:2-3; Juan 10:16; Gawa 20:28 Lamsa Translation; Gawa 2:39).

Kaya, ang dapat gawin ng mga lingkod ng Diyos ay magtiwala sa Kaniya:

“Silang nagsisitiwala sa Panginoon Ay parang bundok ng Sion, na hindi maaaring makilos, kundi nananatili magpakailan man.” (Awit 125:1)

Ang nagtitiwala sa Diyos ang magiging matatag at hindi makikilos sa pananampalataya. Ang gayon ay naninindigan sa panig ng lalong mahalaga—ang tunay na *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. ●



# Ang karunungan hindi dapat ipagwalang-bahala

NI ANTONIO G. CAÑAVERAL JR.

**M**AY ISANG URI ng karunungan na hindi matututuhan sa mga paaralan, ni matutuklasan sa ganang sarili ng sinumang tao kahit pa ng itinuturing na matalino sa mundo.

Mahalagang taglayin ang karunungan ito, sa ibabaw ng alin pa mang iba, sapagkat napakalaki ng mapapakinabang dito hindi lamang para sa buhay na ito kundi, higit sa lahat, sa ikapagtatamo ng buhay na walang hanggan. Kaya, hindi ito dapat ipagwalang-bahala, manapa'y dapat itong pagsikapang matamo.

## Ang karunungan dapat matutuhan

Itinuro ng Panginoong Jesucristo ang karunungan o kaalamang dapat matutuhan ng tao:

"At sinabi niya sa kanila, Sa inyo ay ipinagkaloob ang *makaalam* ng hiwaga ng kaharian ng Dios: datapuwa't sa kanilang

nangasa labas, ang lahat ng mga bagay ay ginagawa sa *pamamagitan* ng mga talinghaga: Upang kung magsitingin sila'y mangakakita, at huwag mamasalas; at kung mangakinig sila'y mangakarinig, at huwag mangakaunawa; baka sakaling sila'y mangagbalikloob, at patawarin sila." (Mar. 4:11-12)

Ang kaalamang itinuro ni Cristo ay ang tungkol sa hiwaga ng kaharian ng Diyos. Ang hiwagang ito ay ang ebanghelyo o ang mga salita ng Diyos:

"At ngayon sa kaniya na makapangyarihan na sa inyo'y makapagpapatibay ayon sa aking evangelio at sa pangangaral ni Jesucristo, ayon sa pahayag ng hiwaga na natago sa katahimikan nang panahong walang hanggan." (Roma 16:25)

Dahil ang ebanghelyo ay nakalihim sa hiwaga, hindi matutuklasan ng kahit sino na lamang sa ganang kaniyang sarili ang tunay na kahulugan nito (I Cor. 2:7-8). Itinuro

ni Cristo na may pinagkalooban lamang na makaalam nito. At ang mga hindi naman pinagkalooban na makaalam, kahit pa pag-aralan ang ebanghelyo "ay hindi nakararating sa pagkaalam ng katotohanan" (II Tim. 3:7).

Ikapapahamak ang pakikinig sa mga tagapangaral na hindi pinagkaloobang makaunawa ng ebanghelyo sapagkat isinisinsay (II Ped. 3:16) o pinipilipit nila ang kahulugan ng mga salita ng Diyos. Ang tanging maituturo nila ay salig lamang sa palapalagay, opinyon, haka-haka, at aral o utos ng mga tao. Ang gayon ay "ibang ebanghelyo" o hindi tunay na mga salita ng Diyos (Gal. 1:6-7) kaya nawawalang-kabuluhan ang pagsamba ng sinumang doon nagsasalig ng kaniyang paglilingkod (Mat. 15:9).

Kung gayon, ang dapat tanggapin at taglayin ay ang "karunungan ng Diyos" o ebanghelyo sa pagkasangkapan sa mga pinagkaloobang makaunawa nito.



### **Ang pinagkaloobang makaunawa**

Ang pinagkatiwalaang mangaral ng mga salita ng Diyos, dahil sila ang pinagkaloobang makaunawa, ay ang Kaniyang mga sugo:

“Kami nga’y mga sugo sa pangalan ni Cristo, na waring namamanhik ang Dios sa pamamagitan namin: *kayo’y* pinamamanhikan namin sa pangalan ni Cristo, na *kayo’y* makipagkasundo sa Dios.” (II Cor. 5:20)

Walang karapatang mangaral ng dalisay na ebanghelyo ang hindi sugo ng Diyos:

“At paano silang magsisipangaral, kung hindi sila mga sinugo?” (Roma 10:15)

“Kundi sinasalita namin ang karunungan ng Dios sa hiwaga, *yaong karunungan* na itinalaga ng Dios, bago nilalang ang mga sanglibutan sa ikaluluwalhati natin.” (I Cor. 2:7)

“Na ako’y ginawang ministro nito, ayon sa pamamahala na mula sa Dios na ibinigay sa akin para sa inyo upang maipahayag ang salita ng Dios, Maging ang hiwaga na inilihim sa lahat ng panahon at lahi: datapuwa’t ngayo’y ipinahayag sa kaniyang mga banal.” (Col. 1:25-26)

### **Ang kalooban ng Diyos**

Binigyang-diin ni Apostol Pablo na dapat unawain ng tao “kung ano ang kalooban ng Panginoon” (Efe. 5:17 Magandang Balita Biblia). Ipinahayag niya kung ano ito:

“At ipinakilala niya sa atin ang hiwaga ng kanyang kalooban ayon sa kanyang kaluguran na kanyang itinakda kay Cristo, upang isakatuparan sa takdang panahon upang tipunin ang lahat ng bagay sa langit at sa lupa at ipailalim sa isang pangulo, na walang iba kundi si Cristo.” (Efe. 1:9-10 New Pilipino Version)

Ang kalooban ng Diyos ukol sa lahat ay tipunin sila sa ilalim ng isang pangulo, ang Cristo. Upang maisakatuparan ito, kailangang “pag-isahin kay Cristo ang lahat ng nasa langit at nasa lupa” (Efe. 1:10 MB). Ayon kay Apostol Pablo, ang mga taong pinag-isa kay Cristo o tinipon sa ilalim Niya ay nasa Iglesiang pinangunguluhan Niya:

“Ang lahat ng bagay ay ilalagay ng Dios sa ilalim ng kanyang mga paa at siya’y itinalagang ulo ng lahat ng bagay para sa iglesya, na kanyang katawan” (Efe. 1:22-23 NPV)

Katawan ni Cristo ang Iglesia at Siya ang ulo nito (Col. 1:18). Ito ang nasasakop at inibig Niya, at pinaghandugan Niya ng Kaniyang sarili (Efe. 5:24-25). Ito ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* na binili o tinubos Niya ng Kaniyang dugo:

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

Hangad ng Diyos na ang lahat ng tao ay maligtas sa araw ng Kaniyang kapootan (I Tim. 2:3-4; Zef. 1:18) o Araw ng Paghuhukom (Gawa 17:31; Heb. 9:27). Subalit, dapat muna nilang malaman ang katotohanan o mga salita ng Diyos (Juan 17:17) tungkol sa kaligtasan. Ang isa sa mga katotohanang ipinaunawa Niya at itinuro ng Kaniyang mga sugo ay kailangang maging kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang tao upang mapabilang siya sa mga tinubos, napatawad, at nakatitiyak ng kaligtasan:

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

**“At ipinakilala niya sa atin ang hiwaga ng kanyang kalooban ayon sa kanyang kaluguran na kanyang itinakda kay Cristo, upang isakatuparan sa takdang panahon upang tipunin ang lahat ng bagay sa langit at sa lupa at ipailalim sa isang pangulo, na walang iba kundi si Cristo.”**

Efeso 1:9-10  
New Pilipino Version

Tanging ang mga sugo ng Diyos lamang ang makauunawa at makapagtuturo ng Kaniyang kalooban. Ang isang halimbawa ay si Apostol Pablo na tinawag ng Diyos upang mangaral sa dako ng mga Gentil (Gawa 9:17-19; 13:47). Ganito ang pahayag niya:



# Not in words only

By MANDY A. NEPOMUCENO

A PERSON USUALLY VALUES multiple things but there is always that one thing that is greater than anything else that it absorbs every ounce of his attention and lasting enough to inspire him to his last breath. It is something that no one or nothing else in this world even comes close to it for him.

For *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) members, it is their membership in the Church. That may sound extreme to some. And others might ask if that is pragmatic. How can Church Of Christ members sustain that kind of conviction amid the evident worsening condition of the world they live in? What motivates them for being so? Is it still based on the teachings of the Bible?

## Love through action

How valuable is it to be a member of the Church Of Christ? The answer lies on how valuable the Church Of Christ is, according to what the apostles taught in Acts 20:28:

“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.” (Lamsa Translation)

The apostles proclaimed that the Lord Jesus Christ purchased or redeemed the Church Of Christ with His blood. Only through the blood of Christ can one receive forgiveness of sins and the right to serve God

**“All of this proves that God’s judgment is just and as a result you will become worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering. God will do what is right: he will bring suffering on those who make you suffer, and he will give relief to you who suffer and to us as well. He will do this when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven with his mighty angels.”**

II Thessalonians 1:5-7 Good News Bible



(Heb. 9:22, 14), and the Lord Jesus Christ made such a supreme sacrifice for His Church, the Church Of Christ. That clearly proves that, for Christ, the Church Of Christ is special. If it were not, then why had Christ done so?

When Christ purchased the Church Of Christ with His blood, it means that He gave His life to redeem His Church. This shows His great love for the Church, for He taught that the greatest love is shown when one lays down his life (John 15:13). He Himself showed it through His sacrifice. In Ephesians 5:25-29, Apostle Paul testified, thus:

“Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. He did this to dedicate the church to God by his word ... in order to present the church to himself in all its beauty—pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any other imperfection.” (Good News Bible)

As it is clear that the Lord Jesus Christ loves and values the Church Of Christ, its members willingly follow His example. Church members love Christ immensely so they accord His Church and their membership in it with great love, and are even ready to lay down their lives for it, if necessary. This is their firm conviction.

If one loves the Lord Jesus Christ, then shouldn't he agree that the way to show it is not only by merely saying “I love you, Jesus” but by also loving what He loves—the Church Of Christ? And one can do so by becoming a member of it.

### **Enduring relationship**

What else should one do to show that he truly loves the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church? Christ Himself teaches as recorded in John 15:4, thus:

“Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it can do so only if it remains in the vine. In the same way you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me.” (GNB)

Christ teaches that one should remain united to Him as branches that are connected to the vine. That is equivalent to remaining as parts of His body or members of His Church. A person who is truly convinced that he must love and value what Christ loves will remain in the Church whatever he encounters in his life. He will never

leave the Church or do anything that will result in his expulsion because he fully knows that if he would be separated from the Church, he would be like a branch cut-off from the vine and unable to bear fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1:11) or give glory and praise to God. Therefore, one's services to God, his labors and sacrifices, will only have value in His sight if he is inside the Church Of Christ and remain in it until the end.

### **Unchanging love**

Even if true members of Church Of Christ face troubles and afflictions, their love for Christ and God will never change:

“I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.” (Col. 1:24 NKJV)

Encountering troubles and sufferings is inevitable; however, those who truly love Christ have a firm resolve and do not allow their zeal in serving Him wane. And they do not stand to lose.

What is in store for those who endure sufferings because of their love for Christ and His Church? The apostles reassured them, thus:

“All of this proves that God's judgment is just and as a result you will become worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering. God will do what is right: he will bring suffering on those who make you suffer, and he will give relief to you who suffer and to us as well. He will do this when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven with his mighty angels.” (II Thess. 1:5-7 GNB)

The Lord God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, is just and He will do what is right. He promised that He will give solace when His Son returns. And what the Lord God will give is none other than the eternal life in the Holy City.

That is the reason members of the Church Of Christ are taught to stand firm and be unmoved in their faith despite what they encounter in this life. Loving the Church Of Christ, which God and Christ love, entails patiently enduring sufferings and troubles. But one who chooses to do so should not be perplexed and anxious because what he will receive is a far greater blessing. ●



# What distinguishes the Church Of Christ from the rest

By SIEGFRED T. GOLLAYAN

AS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST commemorates the 134th birth anniversary of Brother Felix Y. Manalo, its members are reminded of the great love that they received from the Almighty God for calling them into the true Church through the preaching of the gospel by His Messenger in these last days.

While the present crisis that the entire world is facing due to the Covid-19 pandemic brings fear to the hearts of many, Church Of Christ members find peace and solace in the enduring words of God taught by His Messenger, which affirm how fortunate they are.

## Having the sure word of prophecy

Amid the preponderance of people nowadays who practice religion and claim to be Christians, the Bible tells of a unique quality that distinguishes the Church Of

Christ from all other religions. This was emphasized in Apostle Peter's letter to the first-century Christians, when he said:

"We have the more sure word of prophecy; and you do well that you heed it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the morning star arises in your hearts." (II Pet. 1:19 World English Bible)

Apostle Peter, a messenger of God, said that Church Of Christ members "have the more sure word of prophecy." Their being servants of God is not something that they just claimed for themselves; rather, God's prophecy in the Holy Scriptures proved that they are His elect or chosen ones. This is a very important truth because it shows that any group of people who serve God but without a sure word of prophecy is not of God. The true servants of God—then and now—have the sure word of prophecy, which

greatly distinguishes them from the people of the world.

The divine election of Brother Felix Manalo and the mission he started in the 20th century is proven by God's prophecies written in the Bible. One of such prophecies was recorded by the Prophet Isaiah, thus:

"You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its farthest regions, And said to you, 'You *are* My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away; Fear not, for I *am* with you; Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'" (Isa. 41:9-10 New King James Version)

God speaks of His servant or messenger whom He has chosen from the "ends of the earth." Ends of the earth is the period that comes before the end of the world, the time when the Second Advent of our Lord



Jesus Christ is near (Matt. 24:3, 33). It would be heralded by wars between nations, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and sorrows (Matt. 24:6-7). Bible scholars attest that the first time in world history when all these phenomena were in evidence at the same time was during the years of World War I (footnote, Matt. 24:6-8 Last Days Bible).

The Church Of Christ that Brother Felix Manalo preached was registered with the government in the Philippines on July 27, 1914, concurrent with the outbreak of World War I. No other church emerged on the same date.

Hence, the divine election of Brother Felix Manalo as God's Messenger in these last days and the fruits of his mission cannot be denied. This is the great distinction of the members of the Church Of Christ. They may also be going through the same hardship and problems the people of this world go through, however, they find reassurance and encouragement from the promises of God to His Messenger and his mission that says, "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Moreover, the holy people of God in these last days for

**"Behold, the LORD has proclaimed unto the ends of the earth, Say you to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and you shall be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken."**

Isaiah 62:11-12  
King James Version 2000

whom He has accorded His salvation and reward is the "redeemed of the Lord:"

"Behold, the LORD has proclaimed unto the ends of the earth, Say you to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and you shall be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." (Isa. 62:11-12 King James Version 2000)

Apostle Paul testified that it is the Church Of Christ that was redeemed with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28 Lamsa Translation).

#### **Called and chosen**

Because the members of the Church Of Christ are the ones God called and chose to be His, they are expected to "Do [their] best to live in a way that shows

[they] really are God's called and chosen people" (II Pet. 1:10-11 Easy-to-Read Version). Only by doing so will they not fall away but remain in their divine election. As such, they always live in obedience.

Although Brother Felix Manalo has already passed away, Church Of Christ members continue to receive the commands of God that they must heed through the minister whom God has given the administration in the Church (Col. 1:25). One command of God that the Messenger taught and has been constantly echoed by the present Church Administration is that the members be holy and without blame in God's sight:

"Even before the world was made, God chose us for Himself because of His love. He planned that we should be holy and with-



out blame as He sees us." (Eph. 1:4 New Life Version)

This is the reason the entire Church is also thankful to God for placing Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, who reached the 40th anniversary of his ordination as a minister of the gospel, as the present Executive Minister of the Church Of Christ. He labors day and night for the sake of the entire Church, always reminding every member to lead a new way of life.

**God's own people who have the truth**

As God's "own special people," members of the Church Of Christ are also zealous in fulfilling their duty to "tell people how great [He] is" (I Pet. 2:9 Easy-English Bible). They do this by sharing the truth or true gospel to the people of this world. They uphold this duty of theirs with much fervor because it is God's earnest desire that people learn the truth and be saved:

"It is only right that we pray in this way, and God our Savior is pleased when we do. Because it is His earnest desire that everyone should come to know what the truth really is, and be saved. Put briefly, the truth is this: There is only one God, and there is only one Person who can act as a go-between between God and man. That Person is the

Man whom we know as Christ Jesus. He's the One who gave Himself in suffering and death as a ransom to rescue all of us. And this news will be given to all mankind at the proper times. It's for this purpose that I've been appointed by God to be a preacher and missionary. Christ is my witness that I'm telling the truth and not lying when I state that I have been sent to tell the Gentiles that they too can be saved by believing this truth." (I Tim. 2:3-7 LDB)

God Himself wants all men to be saved by knowing the truth. Members of the Church happily fulfill this responsibility of theirs by sharing to all and sundry the truth about the one true God, the Father; the one Mediator, Jesus Christ; and the redemptive act of Jesus for the salvation of the Church Of Christ. They use every means possible to share their faith. Even while staying at home due to the pandemic, they use the available media such as TV, radio, and the internet to share the message of God with many more people.

That is another thing that differentiates the Church Of Christ from other religions today. While many religions are suffering from recession, the Church Of Christ continues to grow. As of this writing, the Church has already set foot in 158 countries and territories around the world.

**Recipients of the glory**

Undeniably, the members of the Church received so great a blessing because of their divine election. So, they "continue to stand firm in [their] determination to live only to please God. And continue to hold on to all the truths [they] were taught ... so that [they] might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:15, 14 LDB).

No wonder, despite the present situation of this world, members of the Church Of Christ follow the will of our Lord God, which they receive especially when they worship Him (Isa. 2:3). That is why they yearn to worship God (Ps. 63:1-4, 7-8) in the temple or house of worship or even during household worship services.

Despite the dangers lurking around, especially in this time of pandemic, members of the Church Of Christ remain loyal to God (Isa. 63:7-8), wait patiently for Him, and entrust everything to Him because, as His people whom He set apart from this world, they are certain that He will act on their behalf and grant the desires of their heart (Ps. 37:3-7 God's Word). ●

Based on the lesson taught by Brother Eduardo V. Manalo on May 10, 2020 during the worship service that was streamed live from Pilar Manalo-Danao Multimedia Center



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# Doing the best we can to live as God's chosen

By ALEJANDRO R. SINO CRUZ JR.

IT IS ONLY RIGHT and necessary for people to do their best to achieve their goals. Spending much of their time and pouring their energy into their work, preparing hard for a promising career, and sharpening their abilities, among others, will stand them in good stead in life.

However, it is not only for this life that we should exert all our efforts preparing. Apostle Paul taught that we should not “get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all [our] day-by-day obligations that [we] lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God” (Rom. 13:11–14 The Message). This is because “God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began” (Rom. 13:12 MSG). Thus, now that Judgment Day is very near and fast approaching, people should make sure that they are included in God’s salvation work or among those whom God has called or chosen.

## God's chosen ones

The apostles identified who God’s chosen people are: God loves you and has chosen you and made you his holy people. ... Let the peace that Christ gives [of Christ] control [rule; arbitrate] your thinking [hearts], because you were all called together in one body [the church as the body of Christ] to have peace. Always be thankful.” (Col. 3:12, 15 Expanded Bible)

Apostle Paul taught that those whom God loves and has chosen “were all called together in one body”—“the church as the body of Christ.” He likened this Church to a human body:

“The church of Christ is like the human body. It is composed of different parts, but it is a single body.” (I Cor. 12:12 Traducción en Lenguaje Actual, translated from Spanish)

Thus, people should strive, now that Judgment Day is very near, to become members of the Church Of Christ.

## What God expects from His chosen

Becoming members of the Church Of Christ is essential, but it is not the only thing to strive for. Apostle Peter taught what it really means to be among God’s chosen thus:

“My brothers and sisters, God called you and chose you to be his. Do your best to live in a way that shows you really are God’s called and chosen people. If you do all this, you will never fall.” (II Pet. 1:10 Easy-to-Read Version)

Members of the Church are required to do their “best to live in a way that shows” that they really “are God’s called and chosen people.” By fulfilling this, they ensure that they “will never fall.” They “will never abandon” the true faith (II Pet. 1:10 Good News Bible), hence, they will remain in their divine election until the very end to receive salvation.



Therefore, just as Church Of Christ members do their best to fulfill their daily obligations—provide the needs of their family, prepare for a bright future, meet the requirements of their job—then all the more they should do so in serving and worshiping God and in upholding the kind of life expected of them.

**The kind of life of God's chosen ones**

God's chosen ones accept what His messengers preach as His very word. Firmly believing God's word, "it changed" their lives (I Thess. 2:13 Living Bible).

Apostle Paul, one of God's messengers, taught that Christians "must get rid" of their old way of life, that is, their worldly ways in the past. Such kind of life "has been made impure by the desire for things" that leads people astray. Church Of Christ members should have been "made new" in their thinking—"to start living a new life ... created to be truly good and holy" (Eph. 4:22-24 New International Reader's Version). The apostle further expounded how true Christians will be able to uphold this:

"Beloved friends, what should be our proper response to God's marvelous mercies? I encourage you to surrender yourselves to God to be his sacred, living sacrifices. And live in holiness, experiencing all that delights his heart. For this becomes your genuine expression of worship." (Rom. 12:1 The Passion Translation)

**"My brothers and sisters, God called you and chose you to be his. Do your best to live in a way that shows you really are God's called and chosen people. If you do all this, you will never fall."**

II Peter 1:10 Easy-to-Read Version

True Christians should "surrender" or submit themselves to God Who showed them His mercy and love. They are able to fulfill this when they "live in holiness" or obey God's commands and submit to those Whom He placed to lead the Church. Church Of Christ members are taught to uphold this as their "genuine expression of worship" to God.

**Obedience to God's commands**

It is never a loss, but a great advantage to be completely obedient to God's commands. The Almighty God Himself said, "Obey me and I will be your God, and you will be my people. Do all that I command, and good things will happen to you" (Jer. 7:23 ETRV). The Lord God further stated:

"I am the LORD your God. I will teach you what the best thing is for you. I will send you in the way that you should go. I told you what you should do. You should have listened to what I said. Then your peace would be like a river. Also, the good things that you do would be like the waves in the sea." (Isa. 48:17-18 EasyEnglish Bible)

The omniscient God teaches His servants the best thing for them. Listening to His teachings and fulfilling them is key for His servants to achieve peace that is like a river—continuous all days of their lives. To those who obey God, good things will come like the waves in the sea—coming up one after another.

No wonder Church Of Christ members are very dedicated to their services to the Lord God. Despite their taxing schedule to take care of their daily needs, they still spend much time for the various Church activities—worship services, sharing the true faith, Christian Family Organizations activities, extending help to the needy, and many others. In the face of troubles and hardships, they place worshipping and serving God as their top priority.

From the time of God's Messenger in these last days, Brother Felix Y. Manalo, up to the time of the current Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, members of the Church Of Christ are taught God's commands and are inspired by their Church leader to be zealous in their membership. This is because the Lord God requires of His chosen ones nothing less than their very best in obeying all of His commands—for by doing so, God's faithful servants are assured of endless blessings, especially salvation on Judgment Day. ●

Based on the lesson taught by the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, during the pastoral visit to the Local Congregation of Taguig, Ecclesiastical District of Metro Manila South on January 24, 2020



# Fulfillment of a biblical prophecy: The Church Of Christ's emergence in the ends of the earth

By KENNETH A. OUANO

“THE WAR TO END all wars” was the phrase used by Allied generals and political leaders to describe the war that broke out on July 27, 1914. It was also known as the Great War or World War I. Some think that although the catastrophe was of biblical proportions, there was nothing “biblical” about it at all. Others say it was nothing more than a great human blunder that we should all learn from so that, as a civilization, we can really aim to “end all wars.”

While this war did not end all wars, it did however change the way wars are waged throughout the world. Unbeknownst to

many, it also marked the beginning of an important time period mentioned in the Bible. This war is given emphasis in this writing not only because of its historical relevance but, most importantly, because of its significance to the biblical pronouncement concerning the emergence of the Church Of Christ in these last days. Long before it happened, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had already foretold of the Great War that would signal the beginning of the end-times or the time period called the “ends of the earth” and the calling of his other sheep “in the future” into His fold (John 10:16 Easy-to-Read Version).

## **Biblical prophecy fulfilled**

More than two millenia before the Great War, God, through the Prophet Isaiah, foretold the calling of His children from the Far East at this specific period of time, that is, the ends of the earth:

“Fear not, for I *am* with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not keep them back!’ Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth.” (Isa. 43:5-6 New King James Version)

*Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) members firmly believe



that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Church Of Christ was registered with the government in the Philippines on July 27, 1914, concurrent with the outbreak of the Great War.

In Isaiah's prophecy, the time period referred to as "ends of the earth" cannot be mistaken for any other time period in history. One should note its difference from the "end of the earth," which is a single point in time when this world will come to its end or when Judgment Day will come (Acts 17:31, II Pet. 3:7, 10). Pertaining to the period "ends of the earth," Christ's disciples asked Him when it will be and what signs will indicate that the end is coming. The Lord Jesus Christ foretold:

"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows." (Matt. 24:6-8 NKJV)

This is what translators of *The Last Days Bible* say concerning the prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ in the above-mentioned verses:

"Jesus now tells His followers how they could discern when the world was actually entering into the beginning of the birth pangs ... The approach of the

**"Come near,  
you nations,  
to hear; And  
heed, you  
people! Let the  
earth hear,  
and all that is  
in it, The world  
and all things  
that come forth  
from it. For the  
indignation  
of the LORD  
is against all  
nations, And  
His fury against  
all their armies;  
He has utterly  
destroyed them,  
He has given  
them over to the  
slaughter."**

Isaiah 34:1-2  
New King James Version

end of the age would see several phenomena on the earth occurring at the same time. Those phenomena, would be: 1. Many nations rising up against many other nations 2. Kingdoms rising against kingdoms 3. Famines 4. Disease epidemics 5. Earthquakes in various places. In Mark 13 the word troubles is used by our Lord instead of disease epidemics. ...

"Wars between nations, or even between kingdoms, is and has been a common occurrence. History has recorded famines at various times. There have been times of great disease epidemics. There have been earthquakes in the past, but increasingly so in the present day. Jesus tells His disciples, however, to be awaiting a specific time during which all of these phenomena would be in evidence at the same time. The first such time in world history occurred during the years of World War I (1914-1918) and immediately following." (footnote, Matt. 24:6-8 *The Last Days Bible*)

Bible scholars who wrote this commentary concur that what the Bible calls the "ends of the earth" (Isa. 43:5-6 NKJV) or when Christ's return is near (Matt. 24:3, 33) is a time period in history that began when World War I broke out. However, long before the *Last Days Bible* was published, the Messenger of God in these last days, Brother Felix Y. Manalo, had already been teaching that a biblical prophecy had



been fulfilled on the day the Great War broke out.

### **A war foretold in detail**

The prophecies in the Bible describe in detail the events of the First World War. It was a war prophesied to involve the nations of the world and their armies given over to destruction and slaughter, as written in Isaiah 34:1-2, thus:

“Come near, you nations, to hear; And heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, The world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the LORD *is* against all nations, And *His* fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter.” (New King James Version)

The kind of war that was foretold to be was fulfilled in a manner described by the Bible, when at the alarm of war, “chariots like a whirlwind” and “horses ... swifter than eagles” would be used (Jer. 4:13, 19 NKJV). The Holy Scriptures also describe this prophesied war to be so terrifying that even the great men—kings, commanders, the brave, the rich—will hide themselves in caves and rocks of the mountains (Rev. 6:15). The fulfillment of these is found in the records of history, as written in *World History*, Vol. II:

“The First World War was unlike any war in the past. ... This was the first war ‘in three

dimensions,’ the first war in which cities were bombed from the air and winged warriors fought among the clouds. Of course the airplanes of 1914 were not so fast, so formidable, nor so numerous as those of today. They were really more important as scouts (a kind of aerial ‘cavalry’), photographing enemy movements from above ... the soldiers had to turn themselves into beavers and moles and dig deep trenches” (p. 479)

“British had invented the tank, or land battleship—an armored automobile which could move on rough ground because it was built like a tractor.” (p. 478)

The tanks, being the fulfillment of the prophesied “chariots” that carved their way through battle like the wake of a whirlwind’s destruction, were used for the first time in World War I. The airplanes, at the verge of modification to be refit for war, began their role as scouts, then as bombers and fighters—a kind of aerial cavalry that, as the Prophet Jeremiah described, were “horses swifter than eagles.” This new war tactic caused people to hide in air raid shelters and bunkers to avoid air bombardment. Soldiers at the battlefield dug deep trenches to hide their movement from the planes.

Indeed, the prophesied war was fulfilled.

### **A war etched in modern history**

The war sparked by an incident in the Balkans was thought to end in just a few weeks. Ironically, it raged on for years and their so-called war for glory turned into a war of attrition. From 1914 to 1918, the casualties numbered in millions for both sides, showing people that in war, the only side that wins is that of death and destruction.

Atrocities and casualties are proof of the fulfillment of God’s prophecy regarding the nations of the world and their armies given over to slaughter:

“Those who were killed in battle or who died of wounds numbered 7,800,000; other deaths caused by war (starvation, exposure, and massacre) reached 9,000,000, making a total of 16,800,000 deaths caused by the war. In addition, six million wounded men were permanently disabled.” (*Modern Times and the Living Past*, p. 687)

Assigning blame after the Great War did not help in resolving the miserable condition of the victimized populace. Although leaders and countries responsible for the atrocities were punished by international law, no amount of punishment can take back what was lost in the war. It already made its disgraceful smear in modern history. One author, Norman Stone, wrote this about the war:



“Great wars develop a momentum of its own. As German historians have pointed out, the statesmen in 1914 had thought in terms of a ‘cabinet war’, that is, one that could be turned on and off at the will of a few leaders. But with mass conscription, and the enormous loss of life and limb, sheer hatred of the enemy, and the emergence of a monster of public opinion that no politician could ignore, the war could not simply be ended with some recognition that it had all been a gigantic mistake.” (*World War One: A Short History*, p. 117)

The Great War, indeed, was the fulfillment of biblical prophecy written thousands of years ago. More significantly, as it broke out, God’s sons and daughters from the Far East emerged, as foretold in the Bible. This proves that what is written in the Bible is true for it has indeed been fulfilled. What God had willed, He made it happen, as stated in Isaiah 46:11, thus: “Indeed I have spoken *it*; I will also bring *it* to pass. I have purposed *it*; I will also do *it*” (NKJV). ☉

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- Elson, Henry W., *Modern Times and the Living Past*: A.M., Litt. D. American Book Company, New York, Boston, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Chicago, Copyright 1945, p. 687.
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## ‘Object of a Sensational Deception’

The following is an excerpt of the article *Archbishop Viganò to Phil Lawler: Council Fathers “Were the Object of a Sensational Deception”* by Dr. Maike Hickson, as published online on June 26, 2020 in *catholicfamilynews.com*, based on the interview with Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò by Phil Lawler, book author and news director of *CatholicCulture.org*:

“In response to questions from Phil Lawler, book author and news director of CatholicCulture.org, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò has issued yet another statement clarifying his position concerning the Second Vatican Council, some of whose teachings have recently been critically examined—especially in light of Pope Francis’ February 4, 2019 Abu Dhabi statement—by Bishop Athanasius Schneider.

“Archbishop Viganò, who says publicly he has been inspired by Bishop Schneider’s critique of certain aspects of the teachings of Vatican II (1962-1965), now describes to Phil Lawler how it could have happened that an entire Council could have been led to accept certain changes that would later be used in order to increase heterodoxy and confusion within the Church. ...

“In answer to Lawler’s questions, Archbishop Viganò describes how the Council came to contain some erroneous statements that contributed to the confusion in the Church. ... ‘The Council Fathers were the object of a sensational deception, of a fraud that was cleverly perpetrated by having recourse to the most subtle means,’ he writes to Lawler ...

“On June 9 ... the former apostolic nuncio pointed out that the false teaching as found in the Abu Dhabi statement—which claims that the ‘diversity of religions’ is ‘willed by God’—is going back to the errors in Vatican II documents. ...

“Archbishop Viganò also called upon Catholic thinkers to open their eyes in his June 9 intervention. He ... observed, ‘This operation of intellectual honesty requires a great humility, first of all in recognizing that for decades we have been led into error, in good faith, by people who, established in authority, have not known how to watch over and guard the flock of Christ: some for the sake of living quietly, some because of having too many commitments, some out of convenience, and finally some in bad faith or even malicious intent.’”

(Source: <https://catholicfamilynews.com/blog/2020/06/26/archbishop-vigano-to-phil-lawler-council-fathers-were-the-object-of-a-sensational-deception/>)






InFocus



LOOKING BACK:

# NEW ERA UNIVERSITY AT 45

By ARNEL M. ARMENIA and ERWIN S. BRIONES



**F**IVE YEARS SHY of its golden anniversary, the New Era University (NEU) shines all the brighter as a valuable partner of the Filipino community and the world at large in bringing quality education grounded in Christian values. With new challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant changes in people's way of

life, NEU is even more committed to ensuring that what it offers is responsive to the needs of a world in upheaval. What propels it determinedly forward with its mission through these tumultuous times is a sense of genuine love and concern for the betterment not just of individuals but of families—in essence, humanity. It is imbued with such dedication to be of service to humanity for, ultimately, it brings glory to God.



## Beginnings

The idea of a school for Church members first emerged during the time of God's Messenger in these last days, Brother Felix Y. Manalo. It came into fruition during the administration of Brother Eraño G. Manalo, Executive Minister of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* from 1963 to 2009. He instituted the New Era Training Center (NETC) to handle livelihood skills learning programs of the *Kapisanang Maligayang Pagtatagumpay* (KMP)—forerunner of the Church's organization for single adult members—in the Local Congregation of Tayuman, Manila.

Before 1975, the Church Administration held meetings with a group of academicians regarding planning for a formal educational institution, after which the necessary papers and requirements were filed with the then Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECS) for accreditation. The Ministry then issued GPR No. 232, Series of 1975, granting approval for the formal opening of the New Era Educational Institute (NEEI) on June 17, 1975.

The Institute initially offered secondary education at a building in 499 Carlos Palanca Street (formerly known as Echague), Quiapo, Manila. In 1977, NEEI incorporated the New Era Training Center, signifying the start of the Institute's Non-Formal Education Department.



INTEGRATED SCHOOL READING CENTER



CMAHS LAB



MULTIMEDIA ROOM



EMBRACE CAFÉ

Professional Schools Building



School of Management





### Growth and expansion

The year 1978 saw the opening of NEEI's collegiate course offerings. It occupied the third and fourth floors of a new building that came to be known as the Evangelical College (EVCO), which is along Don Mariano Marcos (now Commonwealth) Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. In 1981, the year it conferred degrees to its 12 first college graduates, the school upgraded to the New Era College (NEC).

NEC opened the Preschool and Elementary Department in the school year 1984-85. On May 10, 1986, Brother Eraño Manalo inaugurated the permanent building for NEC, situated in a wide expanse of land along St. Joseph Street, Milton Hills Subdivision, Diliman, (now No. 9 Central Avenue, New Era) Quezon City. In 1994, NEC opened its first branches outside Metro Manila, one in San Fernando City in Pampanga on June 20, 1994 and another in General Santos City in South Cotabato on July 11, 1994.

The college was granted university status by the Commission on Higher Education on June 30, 1995; it was now known as the New Era University. Five years after, NEU established its third branch in Brgy. Marawoy, Lipa City, Batangas on May 2, 2000. That same year, the University opened its College of Law.

The year 2003 saw the establishment of the College of Nursing and the special education (SPED) programs. To help the many out-of-school youth and adults in the Philippines, the University launched the NEU-Alternative Learning Systems in 2005, which eventually reached out to many provinces and regions of the archipelago.

### Recent milestones

In 2010, the University launched its distant learning program, the Vantage Education Management (VEM), which offers classes online. The following year, the NEU-College of Music opened its doors to students interested in the musical and performing arts.

Under the stewardship of Dr. Nilo L. Rosas, President of the University since 2013, NEU has reach further milestones. One year into his presidency, the colleges of Criminology, Communication, Accountancy, and Computer Sciences were established. The Professional Schools Building (PSB) located in the main campus was inaugurated in June 2014, in time for the opening in August of the NEU-College of Medicine.

The college is one of the academic offerings of the Center of Medical and Allied Health Sciences, founded in 2014, which



PAMPANGA

SOUTH COTABATO



BATANGAS



RIZAL

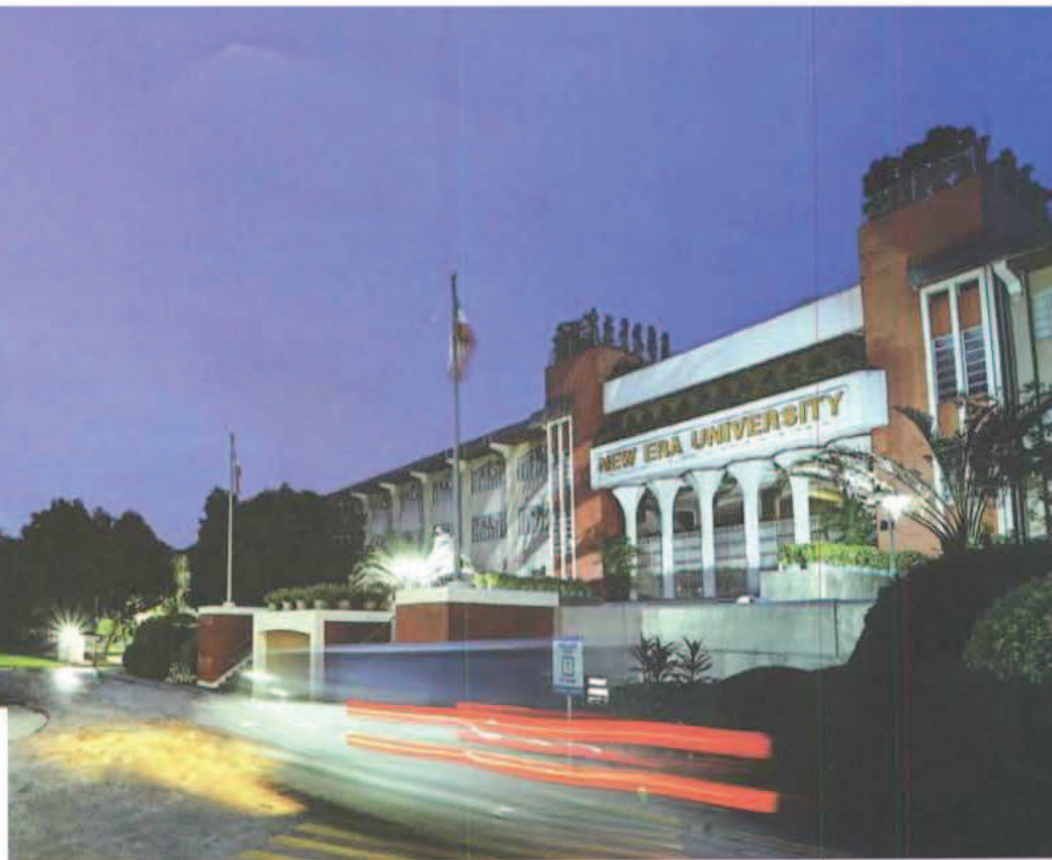


## EXTENSIONS

- San Fernando City, Pampanga  
June 20, 1994
- General Santos City, South Cotabato  
July 11, 1994
- Lipa City, Batangas  
May 2, 2000
- Pinugay, Baras, Rizal  
June 30, 2017







## OF NOTE: 2019 ACHIEVEMENTS OF NEU FOR GOD'S GLORY!

2019 saw New Era University (NEU) reaping honor among medical and allied sciences institutions in the Philippines. Not only one college under its Center for Medical and Allied Health Services (CMAHS) achieve a 100 percent passing rate in various board examinations that year. All of the board examination takers under the following colleges passed:

- College of Medicine (CMD)-pioneer batch
- College of Nursing (CON)
- College of Medical Technology (CMT) Batch 3
- College of Respiratory Therapy (CRT)
- College of Midwifery (CMW)

occupies the PSB. In 2015, the center expanded with four new degree courses, namely, Medical Technology, Respiratory Therapy, Midwifery, and Physical Therapy. On May 19, 2015, the university held its 40th Commencement Exercises at the Philippine Arena, awarding diplomas to more than 3,000 students from secondary to graduate levels as well as conferring for the first time an *Honoris Causa*. That year NEU was granted Level III Institutional Accreditation,

by the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA).

In February of 2016, the university inaugurated the ASEAN Studies Center devoted to Southeast Asian cultural and political learning and research. The Special Education Testing Center opened in October, signifying the university's intensified effort to help children with special needs. Before the year ended, the

VARIOUS EVENTS: Nursing students taking oath during the 2019 Cap and Pin Ceremony (A); The NEU Hunters Dance Group, winners in the Dance Craze championships (B); Representatives from the NEU-General Santos City Branch win in the Imake.Wemake; create innovative collaborate Science Competition (C); Some of the students taking BS Agriculture at NEU-Rizal (D); NEU pupil participating in the Jamboree on the Air/ Jamboree over the internet (E); Culminating Activity of the NEU Fair 2019 (F); Student of NEU College of Computer Studies wins an award in the QC Animation and IT Fair on March 2019 (G); and Russian Ambassador H.E. Igor Anatolyevich Khovaev visits New Era University (H).





University Chapel (also known as the house of worship of the Local Congregation of New Era University) was dedicated to God in a special worship service led by no less than the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo on December 23, 2016.

On January 30, 2017, the Executive Minister inaugurated the first-ever Embrace Café at New Era University; this project of the NEU-Special Education program employs differently-abled persons and now has branches in numerous locations. The NEU community witnessed the groundbreaking ceremonies of the NEU-College of Agriculture building in Brgy. Pinugay, Baras, Rizal on June 30, 2017, also led

by Brother Eduardo Manalo. One of that year's highlights, it also marked the foundation of its fourth branch. The newly established college represents the Church's and the University's continuing efforts to help address the concerns of food security and hunger incidence.

Likewise, the Executive Minister of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* led the inauguration of the Simulation House for Vocational and Transition Skills Training under the Special Education Program of the NEU on March 27, 2018. On May 14, 2018, the university signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for academic collaboration with the Moscow State Institute

for International Relations (MGIMO) that hopes to "enrich the intellectual environment of both institutions." The MOU with NEU is the first agreement with a private educational institution from the Philippines for MGIMO.

The University also became one of the testing centers for the Philippine Law School Admission Test (PhiLSAT) on September 23, 2018, marking the first time that the main campus has been used as a venue for such a national examination. Before the year 2018 ended, NEU made it to the top three winners of the year's "IMake, WeMake: Create, Innovate, Collaborate" project of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST)





# CARE TO KNOW ABOUT THE *IGLESIA NI CRISTO* (CHURCH OF CHRIST)



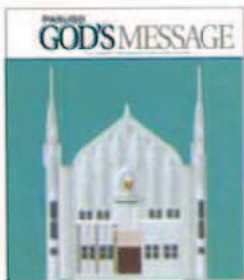
## WORSHIP SERVICES

You are welcome to attend the worship services of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ). You may inquire about the schedule of worship services through our congregation near your place or visit our website at [www.iglesianicristo.net](http://www.iglesianicristo.net).



## BIBLE STUDIES AND EVANGELICAL MISSIONS

Feel free to attend our Bible studies on doctrines and evangelical missions held regularly in every congregation. They help you examine the teachings of the Bible upheld by the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*.



## INC PUBLICATIONS

Read our magazine, *Pasugo: God's Message*, and our pamphlets. For inquiries, visit the official website of the *Pasugo: God's Message* at [www.pasugo.com.ph](http://www.pasugo.com.ph) or email us at [pasugo@iglesianicristo.org.ph](mailto:pasugo@iglesianicristo.org.ph) or [pasugo@inc.org.ph](mailto:pasugo@inc.org.ph).

## MOBILE APPLICATIONS

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## INC RADIO - DZEM 954 KHz

Tune in to DZEM 954 KHz (Philippines) or stream us live at [iglesianicristo.net/incradio](http://iglesianicristo.net/incradio) and catch round-the-clock interviews, live features, and Christian family programs. The station also airs *Iglesia Ni Cristo* original music.



## IGLESIA NI CRISTO OFFICIAL WEBSITES

Visit our official websites [www.iglesianicristo.net](http://www.iglesianicristo.net), [www.incmedia.org](http://www.incmedia.org), and [www.pasugo.com.ph](http://www.pasugo.com.ph).

To be updated of the recent activities of the Church, follow us in our Facebook page, *Iglesia Ni Cristo* News and Updates.



This is good, and it pleases God our Savior.  
He wants all people to be saved.  
He wants them to come to know the truth.