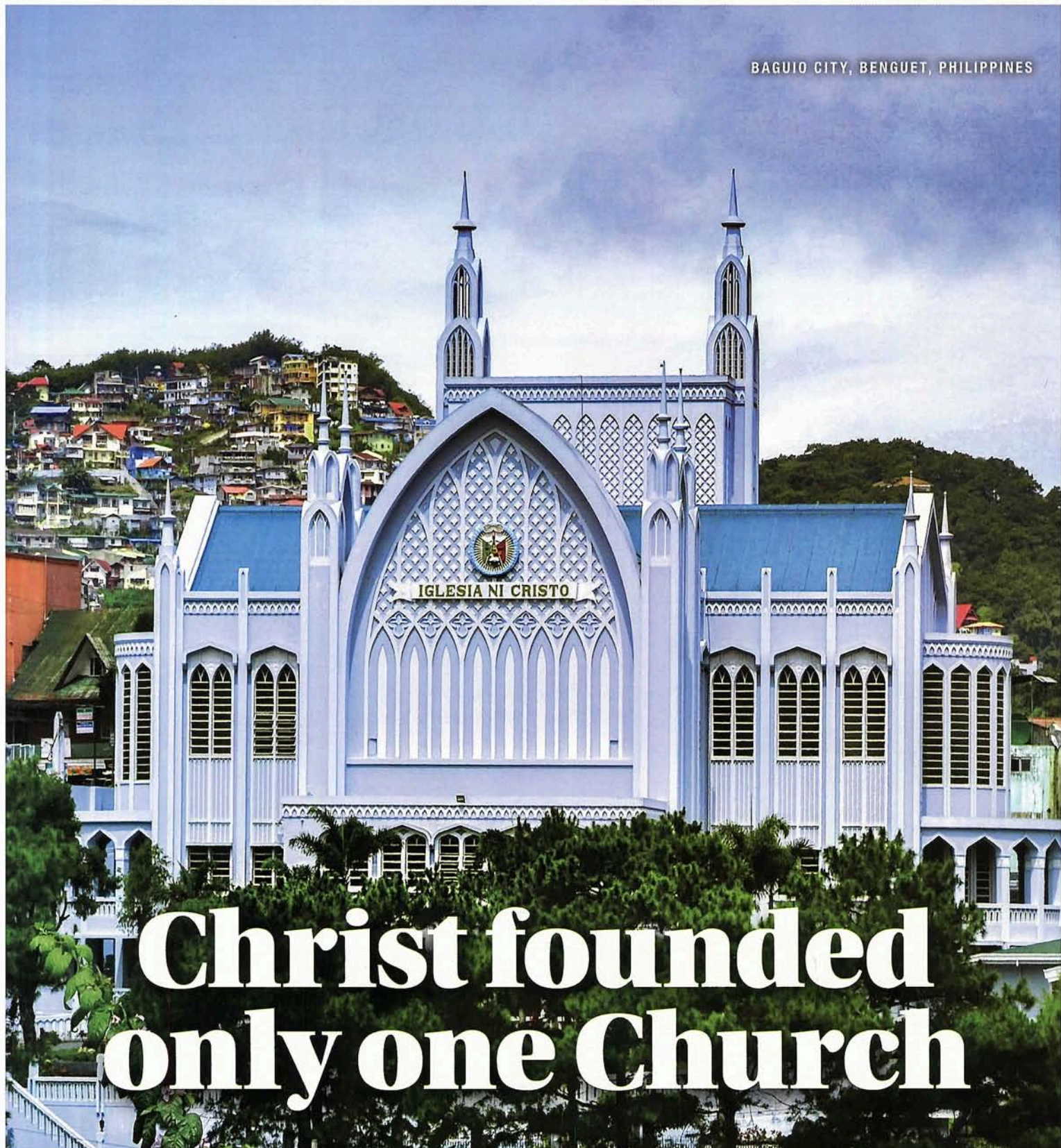


# PASUGO GOD'S MESSAGE

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

BAGUIO CITY, BENGUET, PHILIPPINES



**Christ founded  
only one Church**

# Believe in, trust in, and rely on God

Bravely, we face woes and worries.  
Every single day, we struggle—  
Getting hurt and failing at times;  
From despair, we try to be free.

Even though the battle is tough,  
Valiantly, we stand our ground and fight;  
For in our hearts, hope is aflame:  
In this life's journey we are never alone.

The rest of the road may be rough,  
Filled with danger and uncertainty.  
Still, we go on for our home beckons  
And there we shall rest from our labors.

Let us then heed the call for us  
To believe in, trust in, and rely on  
Not on what we or our peers can do,  
But in what God promises for me and you.

BERNADETTE FIDELIA G. ALAGAO  
QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES

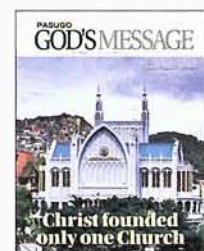


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IGLESIA NI CRISTO (Church of Christ)

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 Sacramento, CA 95824

# FAQs

## Won't it be unfair that God will save only the Church Of Christ members and condemn nonmembers?

THE ALMIGHTY FATHER is the Creator of all humankind (Mal. 2:10). However, because of sins, people have been separated from God, considered by Him as His enemies, and sentenced to die as payment for sin (Isa. 59:2; Col. 1:21; Rom. 6:23). The full payment of sin is the second death, which is in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14).

Concerning the sinners, God has decreed that “a person shall be put to death for his own sin” (Deut. 24:16 New King James Version). Hence, the one who has sinned must pay for his own sins. And because all people have sinned (Rom. 3:23), everyone, except the Lord Jesus Christ Who has not sinned (I Pet. 2:21–22), is in danger of being punished on the Day of Judgment.

Nonetheless, the Almighty Father, the gracious and compassionate God (Ps. 145:8), “wants everyone to be saved and to come to know the truth” (I Tim. 2:3–4 Good News Bible). This demonstrates that God shows no partiality towards anyone (Deut. 10:17) for He is “just in all his ways” and “does what is right and fair” (Deut. 32:4 GNB). But for people to be saved, they ought to know the “truth”—the words of God (John 17:17) or His will that they need to obey.

It is God's will that all people be gathered in the Lord Jesus Christ

(Eph. 1:9–10). People can fulfill this by becoming members of Christ's body or the Church (Col. 1:18). And so, Christ invites everyone, thus:

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

Notice that the Lord God gives all people equal opportunity to receive salvation, as His Son Christ stated that “anyone”—regardless of gender, race, nationality, and socio-economic status—who comes into the fold will be saved. The fold or flock, which is also Christ's body where those who enter Him belong, is the Church Of Christ that He has purchased or redeemed with His blood (Acts 20:28 Lamsa Translation). By virtue of being redeemed, members of the Church have received the forgiveness of sins and the hope of being saved from God's wrath (Col. 1:12–14; Rom. 5:8–9).

It is necessary for people to enter the Church Of Christ to be saved because the Church is God's righteousness concerning salvation. According to Apostle Paul, “God made [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”

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## The only Church that belongs to Christ according to the Bible

**I**T IS A WIDESPREAD belief that all Christian-professing churches belong to Christ and will be saved by Him. For those who subscribe to such a belief, it is not an issue whichever of these churches people join because, allegedly, they all belong to Christ.

But, how could the churches in the world today all belong to Christ when not only they are distinct from one another but also subscribe to differing teachings? According to a study by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity in 2022, there were around 45,000 churches claiming to be Christians. Included in this staggering number are the denominations or religious organizations that follow and uphold their own beliefs and teachings.

These religious groups hold varied and opposing beliefs about God, the Bible, faith, salvation, good works, worship, baptism, church administration, and so on. Historians cite such doctrinal disagreements and disputes as one of the main reasons for the proliferation of so-called “Christian” religions. It happened to the Catholic Church when the Eastern Orthodox Church first split from it. Meanwhile, the Protestants, who in the early years of the Reformation were scattered across only a few churches, are now divided into thousands of different churches and denominations—also as a result of conflicts and disagreements.

So, it cannot be that those churches all belong to Christ because they are different from one another and have different teachings and beliefs. Those who adhere to such a belief are placing their souls in grave danger.

The salvation of our soul is too important to be left to chance. We should make every effort to ascertain that we will be saved on Judgment Day. But such certainty must be solidly based on the words of God written in the Bible (John 20:30–31; II Tim. 3:15). For, if we would hold on to a belief that is not based on the Bible, we would be putting our

salvation at considerable risk (I Cor. 4:6; II Pet. 3:16). Thus, it is of utmost importance that the Bible be the sole basis of our faith and service to God.

According to the Bible, the Church that belongs to Christ is not many but only one; and its members are united in what they firmly believe in and are not divided unlike the many established other churches today.

**“My Church.”** In Matthew 16:18, the Church’s founder Himself proves there is only one Church that belongs to Him. Christ said, “I will build my church, and not even death will ever be able to overcome it” (Good News Bible). He did not say He will build “My churches,” as though He founded many churches. He built only one Church and that is what He recognizes as truly His. He guarantees that death shall not prevail against His Church. Even if death comes to its members, however, they will be resurrected first on the day of His return; and those members who are alive on that day will never die (I Thess. 4:16–17). Because of that, the second death has no power over them (Rev. 20:6). They will be with the Lord forever in the Holy City and will enjoy the eternal life there (Rev. 21:1–4).

**One body and one head.** According to Colossians 1:18, the Church founded by Christ is His body and He is its head. Apostle Paul stated in no uncertain terms, in Ephesians 4:4, that the Church is “one body” (New King James Version). Christ could not be the head of many bodies but only one body or one Church.

**The true believers are baptized into one body.** Christ’s body, which is His Church, does not refer to His physical body that died on the cross. Rather, according to I Corinthians 12:12–13, this refers to the body or the organization composed of those who believe in Christ. It is only into that body that they were baptized. Apostle Paul said, “We were all baptized into one body” (NKJV).

**One body but with many members.** Could it be that all those who were baptized into the one body, as Apostle Paul mentioned, refer to all the diverse Christian-professing churches (or religions) that, as others believe, compose the Church built by Christ? We are certain that that is not the case because Apostle Paul himself clarified in Romans 12:4–5 that all those who compose Christ’s Church are the people who have become members of the body of Christ—and not the different churches or denominations.

**The members of the body are united in the faith.** The people who belong to the one body or Christ’s Church, were instructed and reminded by the apostles to be united in their belief. Thus, Ephesians 4:4–6 and 12–13 state:

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. ... for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (NKJV)

**Those inside the body are united.** Members of the Church, which is the body of Christ, should not have any division because that is against God’s will: “But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ... so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other” (I Cor. 12:18, 25 New International Version 2011). God does not want division within the Church because strife or divisiveness is not of God but of the devil (I Cor. 3:3–4 Revised Standard Version; Rom. 8:9 RSV; James 3:14–15 Lamsa Translation).

**Christ redeemed and will save only one body.** As the head of the body or the Church, Christ assumed the responsibility for the sins of its members (Eph. 5:23, 25). He did this because God’s law requires that whoever sinned shall be put to death (Rom. 8:3–4; Deut. 24:16). In order not to violate that law, Christ created in Himself the one new man composed of Him, as the head, and the Church, as the body (Eph. 2:15–16; Col. 1:18). In that sense, He and the members of His body are no longer different from each other. Thus, He was able to redeem them from their sins thereby, justifying them and saving them from God’s wrath on Judgment Day (Rom. 5:8–9; Zeph. 1:18; II Pet. 3:7, 10). Therefore, according to the testimonies of the Bible, the sins that Christ answered for were only those of the members of His body. And so, their hope for salvation is certain.

**The Church, which is the body of Christ, is also the fold or the flock that people should join.** Christ taught

what people who are not yet members of His body or are still outside His Church should fulfill in order for them to be saved. He said, in John 10:9: “I am the door; anyone who comes into the fold through me will be safe” (Revised English Bible). The fold or flock the Lord was referring to is the Church that Christ purchased or redeemed with His blood, based on Acts 20:28 (Lamsa). That is the same Church He built which death shall not prevail against. That is the Church that people who want to be saved must become members of.

That is how the Bible introduces the one true Church that belongs to Christ. This is the only body that has the true relationship with Christ and its members are united in the faith. The apostles called it the Church Of Christ after the name of its Founder, Head, Redeemer, and Savior (Acts 20:28 Lamsa).

For those who do not want to risk the salvation of their souls, they should become members of this Church—the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) that emerged in the Philippines on July 27, 1914. Its members are the ones whom Christ recognizes as His other sheep that He said will also be included to His Church. This is His testimony about them, in John 10:16:

“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.” (NKJV)

Although these other sheep of Christ were not yet in the fold then during the time of the Jewish and Gentile Christians, that is, during the time of Christ and His apostles, nevertheless, they would also become members of the Church Of Christ.

Christ’s other sheep would come from “distant times and places” (Acts 2:39 Rieu Translation). They are also the ones whom God considers as His sons and daughters from the “far east” (Isa. 43:5 Moffatt Translation). And the distant time from which they will come is “the ends of the earth” (Isa. 43:6 King James Version). That is the time when the end of the world and the day of Christ’s return is near (Matt. 24:3, 33). One of the signs that that time has already commenced is the prophesied war, news of which would be heard throughout the world (Matt. 24:6). World War I (1914–1918) was the fulfillment of that war. Concurrent with its outbreak, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* was registered on July 27, 1914 with the government in the Philippines, a country in the Far East.

Therefore, anyone who wants to be certain of the salvation of his or her soul on Judgment Day must heed the voice of Christ: enter the flock—join the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ)—to be saved. 🙏

**Bienvenido A. Santiago Jr.**  
Associate Editor

# Church Bulletin



## **New GWS established in Fijian town of Tavua**

"Another group worship service [GWS] has been established, as proof of the continuous propagation of God's words here in Fiji through which, with God's help, many more people in this part of the world will join the one true Church Of Christ," shared Brother Edgar Hernandez, district Christian Family Organizations (CFO) overseer. He was referring to the newly established Tavua GWS, named after the town of its namesake in Ba Province, Fiji.

The inaugural worship service for the new GWS was held at the place of worship in Mahesh Kumar's residence in Masimasi, Tavua, Fiji on January 8, 2023. The sacred occasion was officiated at by Brother Dennis S. Dahunan, the supervising minister of the Ecclesiastical District of New Zealand. In his Scripture-inspired homily, he encouraged the

congregants to always prioritize their worship services over anything else, since God promised to never abandon His faithful servants.

With this recent development, the district leadership expressed optimism that more congregations will rise in this island as the brethren's efforts in propagation works continue to reap success.

Conveying their complete unity with the Church Administration in all Church works, Brother Daniel Diaz, district secretary, on the brethren's behalf, said, "Our dearest Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, continuously cares for the spiritual welfare of the brethren. His desire is that all members be strengthened in the faith for them to be sure of receiving salvation on Judgment Day. That's why the Church continues to expand and establishes new congregations and GWS." *(Roxanne Rosquita and Ronnie Mutya)*

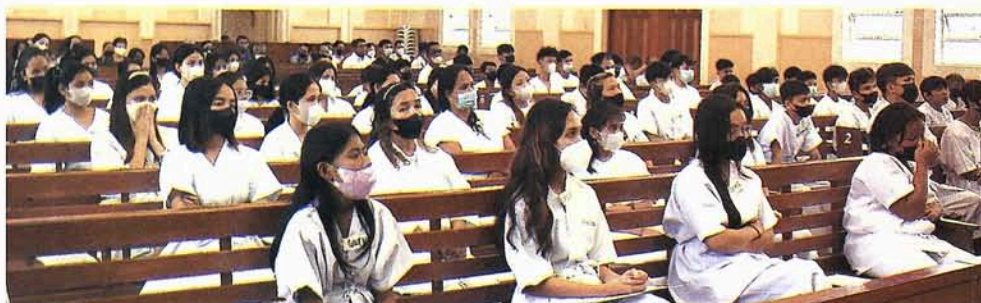
## **Quezon baptizes more converts as 2022 wraps up**

A few days before 2022 came to a close, on December 23, the Ecclesiastical District of Quezon conducted the last baptism for the year at the house of worship of the Local Congregation of Lucban.

During the study of God's words, the district supervising minister, Brother Criselio C. De Lazo, reminded the candidates for baptism that God requires Church Of Christ members to be obedient to His commandments. One of the commandments that Brother De Lazo pointed out is the intensive renewal of life.

One of those who received the true baptism that day was Sister Argeane Hit. She expressed, "I'm truly grateful that God called me inside the true Church. I now have the hope of receiving the promised salvation. I will wholeheartedly love and value my membership." Currently, she is registered in the Local Congregation of Lucena City.

"The newly baptized members were the fruits of the joint efforts of the brethren in helping out in the works of propagation. It's their firm faith that sharing the pure gospel is a commandment of the Lord being taught by the Church Administration," explained Brother De Lazo as to why the brethren are dedicated in upholding such a holy endeavor. *(John Irvin Eballa)*





### **QCPD officers and trainees benefit from Care for Humanity**

As approved by the Church Administration, four local congregations—New Era University, Doña Faustina Housing, Visayas Avenue, and Green Condo—from the Ecclesiastical District of Central, pooled their efforts for a Care for Humanity event for police officers and trainees at Campo (Camp) Heneral Tomas B. Karingal, the headquarters of the Quezon City Police Department (QCPD) on January 17, 2023.

Around 300 law enforcement officers and trainees benefited from the occasion, majority of whom enlisted as doctrinal instructees.

“This activity was made possible by the Lord God,” said Brother Herandy Manalo, resident minister of the Visayas Avenue Congregation. He added that “through the valuable support from the QCPD director, Brother Nicolas Deloso Torre III, police brigadier general, an active member of the Church Of Christ, we were able to establish a missionary center within the camp. With this collaboration, we were able to extend material help to their department and more importantly, share with their personnel the importance of joining the true Church Of Christ.”

“They serve and protect our safety. As our appreciation of their efforts, and more than that, in fulfillment of God’s will, we help them reach true safety—salvation on Judgment Day,” enthused Brother Reynaldo Meneses, resident minister of the Doña Faustina Congregation.

Since November 2022, hundreds of trainees and officers have been enlisted as doctrinal instructees in Camp Karingal, also through the assistance of Brother Eric Alinio, police major. Now, almost a hundred have become candidates for baptism. God willing, this April, the first fruits will be baptized. Instructions in biblical doctrines are conducted in the said camp before dawn. They are then led to attend the morning worship service schedules in the houses of worship in the Central District.

“We are fortunate to be involved in this work of propagation. It’s so delightful to go to the camp even before dawn to lead the doctrinal instructees,” said Brother Adrian Cruz, head deacon in the Visayas Avenue Congregation. With the same conviction, Brother Jay Hebrew, a head deacon in the New Era University Congregation, expressed, “We will remain diligent in upholding this work of the Lord. Tired we may become, we will

continue on knowing that the Almighty won’t forget our sacrifices for His Church.” (*Jensen Mañebog and Jose Primo Rivera Jr.*)

### **Pampanga North celebrates 99th anniversary of Church's first district**

Pampanga North commemorated the 99th founding anniversary of the first ever ecclesiastical district of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, commemorated its founding anniversary through intensive propagation efforts.

On January 22, 2023, all local congregations within the district simultaneously held an evangelical mission, each officiated at by assigned ministers and ministerial workers. Brother Bright A. Ballesteros, district supervising minister, officiated at the Local Congregation of Calulut.

In his preaching, Brother Ballesteros emphasized that not all who perform religious services would be accepted, much more be saved, by the Lord Jesus Christ. The only ones whom the Savior recognizes as His and will save are those who obeyed His command to enter the flock or the Church Of Christ.

“Holding this district-wide evangelical mission is in obedience





to God's will that all people come to know the truth and be saved come Judgment Day," conveyed Brother Ballesteros. "We owe the great success of this propagational effort to the help and guidance of the Almighty God. We also appreciate the efforts of the Church officers and members who were united in inviting their loved ones, friends, and acquaintances who are nonmembers," he added.

The following week, on January 31, the district hosted a "Welcome, My Brethren" activity at the SMX Convention Center, Clark, Pampanga, which was livestreamed to each house of worship in the district. Through a video presentation, the guests, doctrinal instructees, and candidates for baptism who were

present in the event, glimpsed back at the history of Pampanga as the Church's first district. Also, part of the activity were the performances of brethren who sang their rendition of songs from the INC Original Music albums.

Speaking on behalf of the district, Brother Ballesteros shared, "The brethren, especially the Church officers, in the Ecclesiastical District of Pampanga North will remain active in the works of propagation and united with the Church Administration in all endeavors. With God's help, may it be that all of those who attended the propagational events in our district would decide to become members of the Church Of Christ." (*Marck Angelo Delos Reyes and Benjamin Delos Reyes II*)

### **Congregations in Israel meet for first Unity Games for 2023**

On January 16, 2023, three local congregations, four group worship services (GWS), and an extension in Israel met for their first INC Unity Games for this year. Brethren from the Haifa, Jerusalem, and Tel-Aviv local congregations, Akko Extension; and Be'er Sheva, Red Sea, Dead Sea, and Nazareth GWS joined up for the sports event they held at the Community Sports Center, Kiryat Eliezer, Haifa, Israel.

"Unity Games benefit the brethren, not only physically but also spiritually as they are able to fulfill one of the commandments of God, which is to promote the love of brotherhood," explained Brother Ramil S. Regino, district supervising minister. "We're joyful because from various congregations here in Israel, we gathered in one place so that we can have fun and enjoy time with one another through sports activities."

Teams from every congregation vied in basketball and volleyball games, both in men and women categories. Individual players competed in scrabble, checkers, chess, and darts.

The Local Congregation of Tel-Aviv emerged as the over-all champion, winning most of the group games—women's basketball and men's/women's volleyball—and individual games. The Jerusalem and Haifa congregations landed second and third places, respectively. (*Cleofa Ariola and Vince Basco*)



For more Church news around the globe, visit [www.pasugo.com.ph](http://www.pasugo.com.ph)

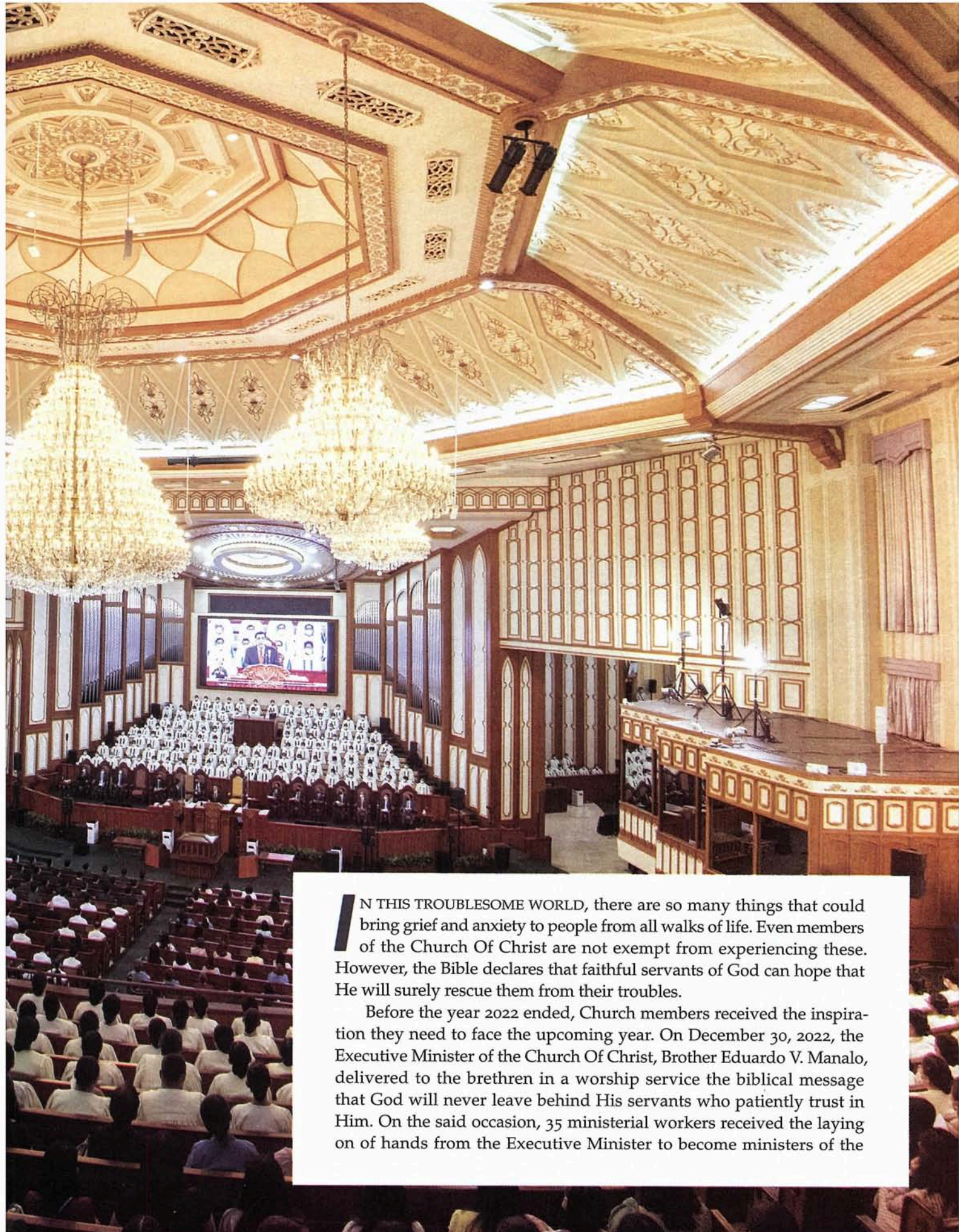


# GOD WILL SURELY RESCUE HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS

DECEMBER  
**30**  
2022

**TEMPLO CENTRAL, QUEZON CITY**  
ORDINATION OF MINISTERS AND COMMEMORATION OF MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES





**I**N THIS TROUBLESOME WORLD, there are so many things that could bring grief and anxiety to people from all walks of life. Even members of the Church Of Christ are not exempt from experiencing these. However, the Bible declares that faithful servants of God can hope that He will surely rescue them from their troubles.

Before the year 2022 ended, Church members received the inspiration they need to face the upcoming year. On December 30, 2022, the Executive Minister of the Church Of Christ, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, delivered to the brethren in a worship service the biblical message that God will never leave behind His servants who patiently trust in Him. On the said occasion, 35 ministerial workers received the laying on of hands from the Executive Minister to become ministers of the

# MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

- 10  
years **Ecclesiastical District of Hong Kong**
- 102  
years **San Antonio, Lubao Pampanga West**
- 95  
years **Navotas CAMANAVA**
- 90  
years **San Marcos Bulacan West**
- 80  
years **Sual Alaminos City, Pangasinan**
- 75  
years **Baco Mindoro Oriental**  
**Mabini Bohol**
- 70  
years **Bais City Negros Oriental**
- 65  
years **B. Del Mundo Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro**  
**Balion Leyte West**  
**Cabuyao Calamba City, Laguna**  
**Caradikid Alaminos City, Pangasinan**  
**Dadalaquiten Ilocos Sur**  
**Hagan Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro**
- 60  
years **Dinagsaan Davao Oriental**
- 20  
years **Brimbank Australia West**

gospel. Brethren in local congregations in various parts of the world that commemorated their milestone anniversaries within December were able to be part of the worship service through livestreaming.

Brother Rene J. Panoncillo led the congregation in a heartfelt prayer before the preaching of God’s words. After the Executive Minister delivered the Bible-based lesson, Brother Arnel A. Tumanan led the brethren in asking for God’s blessings and strength. Brother Bienvenido C. Santiago administered the oath-taking of the candidates for ordination, followed by the laying on of hands from the Executive Minister. Another prayer was led by Brother Arnel R. Canicosa to thank God for adding more ministers as helpers of the Church Administration. Brother Rolando A. Esguerra led the prayer for the voluntary offerings. Brother Santiago said the benediction.

Reflecting on the homily, some brethren who witnessed the sacred occasion shared how God rescued them from the difficult situations they were in. Here are their stories:

## DEVOTED TO ONE’S SACRED DUTY

**E**ven those in the ministry cannot avoid facing trials in this life. As Brother Modesto Guaro Jr. recalls, “There was a time when I experienced severe pain in a swollen part of my chest and also had fevers as a side effect.” Despite his condition, Brother Modesto did not waver in fulfilling his ministerial obligations. “I continued in performing my duties, such as visiting the brethren and praying for them, to make sure that they remain strong in the faith.”

So that his condition would not hinder him from fulfilling his ministerial tasks, he included his affliction in his prayers and also sought for medical assistance. “I was worried that I might not be able to fulfill my duty to the utmost. So I decided to undergo a surgical operation. After the operation, the doctors found out more



Brother Modesto Guaro Jr. and his family



about my condition and I was diagnosed with TB adenitis. I took medication for several months for this illness.”

Knowing that this was way beyond his capabilities, Brother Modesto entrusted his situation to the Almighty. “My wife and I continued our devotional prayers to the Lord God to ask for His help. He listened to us and I got well. After my operation, I stayed in the hospital for about a week to recover. When I returned to the local congregation, I continued with my ministerial functions.”

Although he went through a difficult situation in life, he saw the positive result it had in his ministry. “My experience all the more helped me when giving advice to brethren, should they go through a similar situation, to hold on to the promises of God. As members of the Church Of Christ, God will give us the strength that we need to endure the hardships we encounter.”

Brother Modesto was one of those who received the laying on of hands from the Executive Minister during the worship service. As he looked back, he firmly believes it is only through God’s mercy and kindness that he was able to surpass the trials and receive the laying on of hands from the Executive Minister. “I will devote my life and energy in fulfilling my sacred duty and all the more love and care for the members of the Church,” vowed Brother Modesto.

He contemplated the lesson taught during the worship service: “It is important to patiently wait for God to fulfill His promises to us. I firmly believe that God is ready to bestow on us His blessings for this life, and all the more His promised salvation. This gives me the courage to also fulfill my promises to Him and to continue striving to perform my duty in the ministry.”

*Written by Maniel Angeline Soriano*



# KALIGTASANG NAPAKALAPIT NA

MABINI, BOHOL

“**M**ay dalawang lalakeng nakisilong sa aming bahay habang hinihintay ang pagtigil ng ulan. Sila ay nagpakilalang mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, sina Kapatid na Andrew Quillo at Rogelio Amoguis, Sr.,” pagalaala ni Kapatid na Miguela Bucio, 62 taong gulang, diakonesa sa Lokal ng Mabini.

Dahil sa kanilang dalawa, nakilala nina Kapatid na Miguela at ng kaniyang pamilya ang tungkol sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Sa pagkakataong iyon, nasa matinding karamdaman si Kapatid na Miguela sapagkat

siya ay nakunan at hindi pa tumitigil ang pagdurugo noon. Kaya naitanong niya sa mga panauhin nila, “Kapag mamamatay ang isang tao na nasa labas ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, maliligtas ba siya?”

Binasa ni Kapatid na Andrew Quillo, ministro ng ebanghelyo at siyang destinado noon ng Lokal ng Mabini, mula sa Biblia, na sa mga nasa labas ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, ang Diyos ang humahatol. Dahil sa narinig niyang katotohanang iyon, napaisip noon si Kapatid na Miguela, “Ayaw kong mahatulan.”

Iyon ang nag-udyok sa kaniya na magpasiyang umanib sa tunay na *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Siya at ang kaniyang asawa, si Kapatid na Ananias Bucio, 67 taong gulang, ay tumanggap ng bautismo noong Mayo 14, 1988 sa Tagbilaran City. Sa paglipas ng panahon, naihandog ang kanilang naunang mga anak, nang lumaon ay nabautismuhan, at sa awa ng Panginoong Diyos ay tumanggap ng tungkulin sa loob ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*.

Napansin ni Kapatid na Miguela ang mga pagbabago sa buhay nila pagkatapos nilang tanggapin ang tunay na bautismo. “Unti-unting bumuti ang kalagayan ng aking pangangatawan at gumaan ang pagdadala ng buhay. Dumating



Kapatid na Miguela Bucio (ikatlo mula sa kaliwa) at ang kaniyang pamilya

man ang pagkakataon na nagkaroon ng karam-daman ang aking asawa, subalit patuloy kaming pinatatag ng Diyos sa tuwing kami ay sumasamba," wika niya.

Tunay na napakabuti ng Diyos. Naglagay Siya ng mga ministro at manggagawa upang patatagin ang pananampalataya ng bawat kaanib ng Iglesia. Higit sa lahat, naglagay Siya ng Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan na inihahanda ang buong Iglesia upang harapin ang darating pang matitinding kahirapan. "Maagap na nagpapayo ang Namamahala sa mga kaanib na kami ay manatiling masigla, matatag, mananampalataya, matiisin sa lahat ng mga pagsubok, at makasunod sa lahat ng kalooban ng Diyos upang

sa Araw ng Paghuhukom, kami ay makatatagap ng ganting pangako: ang buhay na walang hanggan," pahayag ni Kapatid na Miguela.

Dagdag pa niya, "Kaya, ipinapangako ko sa Panginoong Diyos na lalo akong magtatataga sa aking tungkulin—ang pagka-diakonesa, at maging sa pananalapi. Ang aming buong sambayanan ay mananatiling masigla, matatag na tumutupad sa aming tinanggap na tungkulin. Iyan ang kayamanang aking ipamamana sa aking mga anak, na huwag silang bibitiw sa kanilang mga tungkulin at sa pagka-Iglesia Ni Cristo."

Sinulat ni Arlene Fostanes

## 35 NEW MINISTERS

- |                               |                             |                              |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 01 Alegria, Arjay P.          | 13 Juanite, Vincent P.      | 25 Pangilinan, Rogelio Jr. A |
| 02 Aragon, Ronald P.          | 14 Lamson, Jefrelle F.      | 26 Puzon, Kimjay L.          |
| 03 Berdin, Kelvin Dave S.     | 15 Legaspi, John Owen M.    | 27 Quinto, Glen Leo D.       |
| 04 Cerna, Larrel B.           | 16 Lerios, Ceazar L.        | 28 Simeon, Isaias Jr. L.     |
| 05 Domingo, Vhal Joeffrey C.  | 17 Macapulay, Peter, Jr. D. | 29 Tamayo, Erman M.          |
| 06 Ducusin, Rowell C.         | 18 Manigbas, Jimmy P.       | 30 Torres, Mech D.           |
| 07 Fortaleza, Mark Erikson M. | 19 Marquez, Paulo Dr.       | 31 Tugay, Rexon B.           |
| 08 Godoy, Mark Anthony D.     | 20 Melgar, Eric D.          | 32 Untalan, Franky R.        |
| 09 Gono, Blumar T.            | 21 Miguel, Michael D.       | 33 Velasco, Edmark O.        |
| 10 Guaro, Modesto Jr. C.      | 22 Millado, Ceasar P.       | 34 Villanueva, Larry Jr. G.  |
| 11 Guiwa, Julius Nikko C.     | 23 Ocampo, Adrian Keith M.  | 35 Viloría, Jayson E.        |
| 12 Hombrebueno, El F.         | 24 Pagulayan, Armel B.      |                              |



# PANATA AT PAGTITIWALA

NAVOTAS, METRO MANILA

**H**abang papalapit ang muling pagparito ng Panginoong Jesucristo, patindi nang patindi naman ang hirap na mararanasan ng mga tao. Marami ang tiisin, hapis, at pagkabalisa na nagdudulot ng kawalan ng pag-asa. Ngunit, ang mga kaanib at maytungkulin sa loob ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ay hindi napahahadlang sa pagtupad ng kanilang mga tungkulin at paglilingkod sa Panginoong Diyos. Ang isang halimbawa ay si Kapatid na Sherry Mae Santiago, mula sa Lokal ng Navotas, Distrito ng CAMANAVA. Siya ay isang mang-aawit, kalihim, Guro sa Pagsamba ng Kabataan, at kabilang sa *Technical Support for Videostreaming* (TSV).

“Mabigat ang mga pagsubok na pinagdaanan namin. Kung iisipin, masakit, malungkot, iiyak ka talaga sa sobrang bigat. Sobrang hirap kapag inisip,” wika ni Kapatid na Sherry Mae. Subalit, dahil sa pagtitiwala niya sa magagawa ng Diyos, napapawi ang bigat ng dalahin niya sa araw-araw. “Gumagaan dalhin dahil lagi naman tayong tinuturuan na magtiwala sa Diyos at alam kong may tumutulong sa akin na magbuhay ng mabigat na dalahin. Panatag ako dahil may nakaalalay sa buhay ko at nagtitiwala ako na kahit ano pa ang mangyari ay mapagtatagumpayan ko dahil sa tulong at awa ng Panginoong Diyos,” dagdag pa niya.

Maraming pagsubok ang pinagdaanan ni Kapatid na Sherry Mae at ng kaniyang pamilya. Naranasan nila na mapaalis sa kanilang inuupahang bahay sa tindi ng kahirapan sa buhay. Nagkaroon ng malubhang karamdaman ang kaniyang ina kasabay ng kakapusan nila sa buhay. Bagaman halos gumuho na ang kaniyang mundo dahil sa sunud-sunod na pagsubok, ay hindi siya nawalan ng pag-asa at sumuko, siya ay nagpatuloy pa rin sa pagtupad ng kaniyang tungkulin at ang kanilang buong sambahayan ay sama-samang nagsasagawa ng pananalangin.



Kapatid na Sherry Mae Santiago

Ang mga pagsubok na pinagdaanan ni Kapatid na Sherry Mae sa buhay ang lalong nagpatatag ng pagtitiwala niya sa magagawa ng Diyos. Kaya, sabi niya, “Ang tumatak sa isip namin, may mga dumaaan mang pagsubok sa buhay namin, kung paanong hindi Niya kami pinabayaan noon, hindi rin Niya kami pababayaan ngayon.”

Ipinahayag ni Kapatid na Sherry Mae ang kaniyang natutuhan mula sa kaniyang mga pinagdaanan: “Maaaring umiyak at masaktan tayo. Minsan pa nga ay nakararamdam din tayo ng pagod sa lahat ng nangyayari sa ating buhay na halos hindi na natin alam ang gagawin at halos igupo na tayo ng kalungkutan, pero hindi ko inisip na wala kaming kakampi. Lagi kong naaalala na bilang mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, may Diyos tayo na kahit kailan ay hindi tayo pababayaan.” ●

Sinulat ni Jona Mae Damian

With research assistance from Alejandro Sino Cruz Jr.

Layout Artists: Jerald Azares and Carmie Cleofas  
Contributing Photographers: Joey Almodovar and Jearub John Real





# Believe In, Trust In, and Rely on God

GUAGUA, PAMPANGA | JANUARY 13, 2023  
ORDINATION OF NEW MINISTERS

**I**N FACING the coming challenges of the new year, which will surely be even more daunting than they have ever faced before, the members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) are reassured by the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, of God's promise to His chosen people. Since those who are inside the true Church are God's chosen people in the last days,

they can feel safe and secure, and they can confidently expect that God will protect them.

This was part of the Scripture-inspired homily of Brother Eduardo Manalo during the worship service he officiated at on January 13, 2023 in the Local Congregation of Guagua, Ecclesiastical District of Pampanga West, during which 30 new ministers were ordained. The Ecclesiastical

District of Lanao, together with 16 local congregations in the Philippines and a number of local congregations, extensions, and group worship services (GWS) outside the country, also celebrated their milestone anniversaries.

A newly ordained minister, Brother Allen Rae Felipe shared, "I have faced many problems and difficulties on performing my duties inside the ministry but God has never forsaken me. Just like what Brother Eduardo V. Manalo taught, blessed are the ones who have faith, hope, and trust in God. Whatever challenges and hardships we may experience in this life, God will never abandon us." "I know that upon returning to my local assign-

ment, I will face new challenges and trials but I faithfully believe that these situations will all the more strengthen me especially in performing my duties so that I can effectively help the Church Administration on whatever task that will be entrusted to me."

Before Brother Eduardo Manalo began the lecture, Brother Randy M. Samson, Pampanga West District supervising minister, led the opening prayer. Brother Romer D. Galang led the closing prayer after the homily, and Brother Bienvenido C. Santiago led the benediction.

Here are more accounts of the brethren who also attended the pastoral visitation of the Executive Minister:

## PAMPANGA

# Guagua

osing a loved one may be one of the most devastating events in anyone's life. Brother Cedrick Jomero, a newly ordained minister, considers the death of his father, while he was studying in the ministry, a difficult test of faith. He received the laying on of hands from the Executive Minister in the recent pastoral visitation in the Local Congregation of Guagua, Ecclesiastical District of Pampanga West on January 13, 2023.

"It was in 2018 when I received the news that my father had passed away. I was a ministerial student back then," Brother Cedrick recalled. They were five siblings, all students then. Like him, his two other brothers, were also ministerial students in their respective local congregation assignments. The only ones left in their home to attend to their father when he was ill, before his demise, were his mother and two sisters. "I was assigned back then in the Local Congregation of Pinugay, Rizal. I just came from a Church activity when I read the messages from my sisters that they had to rush our father to the hospital. I went to the hospital, too, but when I arrived, my father has already passed away," he continued.



Brother Cedrick Jomero and his family

Even with a broken heart and confused, his trust and faith in God remained. "Trusting our Lord God, having faith in what He can do, and praying fervently were how we were able to surmount that test. Without a doubt, it was only through God's

help that we were able to survive. God did not abandon us.”

Brother Cedrick is now assigned in the Local Congregation of Calawis, Ecclesiastical District of Rizal. He now has his own family, as he is married now to Sister Ree-An, and they now have a daughter, Cadey Felisse. He is still certain that amidst all the trials and problems that he will experience, he will always look up to our Lord God. “He will help, guide, and support us whatever challenge we will encounter. In performing our Church duties, challenges and hindrances are inevitable. Nevertheless, if

we have faith, trust, and hope in our God, He will protect and support us,” he shared.

Remembering the lesson he just received in the worship service, he contemplated the miracles God had worked in him and his family’s life. Truly grateful to the Father, the Almighty God, Brother Cedrick said, “Like what our Executive Minister taught us, we must always put our hope in our Lord God. Nothing is impossible for our Lord God.”

Written by Francis Rowen Yusi

## Milestone Anniversaries

10  
Years

IGLESIA NI CRISTO IN  
*Isle of Man (UK)*

ECCLESIASTICAL  
DISTRICT OF  
*Lanao*

70  
Years

70  
Years

*Bangko*  
Lanao

*Kinatakutan*  
Quezon East

*Liyang*  
Bataan

*Padada*  
Davao del Sur

*Sta. Fe*  
Bogo City, Cebu

*Toledo City*  
Carcar City, Cebu

65  
Years

*Aliwas*  
Capiz

*Altavas*  
Aklan

*Pangolingán*  
Zambales North

*San Juan*  
Capiz

*Sulipát*  
Misamis Occidental

# Bangko

## LANAO DEL NORTE

**K**abilang sa mga *pioneer members* ng Lokal ng Bangko ang mag-asawang sina kapatid na Fructoso Tautho at Antonia Pilones. Si Kapatid na Fructoso, 87 taong gulang, ay isang diakono at misyonero noong nagsisimula pa lamang ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* sa Distrito ng Lanao samantalang si Kapatid na Antonia, 88 taong gulang naman, ay isang diakonesa.

Bilang misyonero, hindi naging madali ang pagtupad ni Kapatid na Fructoso ng kaniyang tungkulin. Nakaranas siya ng mga pagsubok, sa kabila ng mga ito ay lalong tumatag ang kaniyang pananampalataya at paninindigan. “Sa aming pagmimisyon ay nakaranas kami na nanganib ang aming

buhay. May isang pagkakataon bago kami umalis sa tahanan ng aming minimisyon matapos ang pagtuturo ng mga salita ng Diyos ukol sa kung sino ang tunay na Diyos at alin ang Iglesiang iligtas ay bigla siyang nagalit, at naglabas ng karit, at ipinilit niya na si Santa Maria lamang daw ang kanyang sasambahin,” kwento ni Kapatid na Fructoso.

Sa pagkakataong iyon ay napatayo siya. Mabilis at tahimik siyang nanalangin na

iligtas nawa sila ng Panginoong Diyos sa kapahamakan. Sa awa at tulong ng Ama ay ligtas at payapa silang nakauwi. Ang pangyayaring ito ang isa sa mga lalong nagpatatag kay Kapatid na Fructoso sa pagtupad ng kaniyang tungkulin. "Kahit ano pa ang aking maranasan, lagi kong

pinanghahawakan ang pangako ng Diyos. Kahit madalas, mabigat ang pagdadala ng buhay, lagi akong nakatingin sa biyayang matatamo sa Araw ng Paghuhukom."

Ganito rin ang paninindigan ni Kapatid na Antonia. "Maraming mga pagsubok at pag-uusig



# 33 New Ministers



- |                                 |                               |                                 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Abayon, Hardy L.             | 12. Ebuena, Cham T.           | 23. Pareja, Christopher John M. |
| 2. Banghal, Wendyl Von B.       | 13. Espinosa, Anthony DL.     | 24. Pascual, Armando S.         |
| 3. Bantillo, Mamerto Jr. L.     | 14. Faraon, Em Theodore A.    | 25. Quindoza, Jayvee B.         |
| 4. Barsarsa, Manley V.          | 15. Felipe, Allen Rae R.      | 26. Rafanan, Jerome A.          |
| 5. Borongan, Neil Marion L.     | 16. Gallego, Alvin G.         | 27. Red, John Bryan M.          |
| 6. Cabrera, Joel G.             | 17. Gonzales, Alexis Lloyd P. | 28. Regencia, Danilo P.         |
| 7. Davis, Nick B.               | 18. Jomero, Cedrick R.        | 29. Rosal, Henry P.             |
| 8. Dela Cruz, Philippe Franz T. | 19. Lot, Kristian M.          | 30. Sarto, Amado Amiel L.       |
| 9. Dela Cruz, Sofronio Jr. D.   | 20. Mayo, Christopher John M. | 31. Seran, Restituto III L.     |
| 10. Domingo, George B.          | 21. Mergas, Glenn B.          | 32. Vargas, Romer D.            |
| 11. Dora, Johnyver B.           | 22. Parco, Julius P.          | 33. Vergara, Deo Marco N.       |



Si Kapatid na Fructoso Tautho (nasa gitna) at ang kaniyang dalawang anak

akong naranasan, mahirap man ang buhay pero masaya akong tumutupad ng aking tungkulin dahil alam kong may Diyos na tutulong sa akin,” pahayag niya.

Bukod sa pag-uusig ay naging hamon din sa kaniyang pagtupad ng tungkulin ang isabay ang pangangalaga sa kaniyang mga anak noong maliliit pa sila. Sinikap niya na huwag makapag-pabaya sa tungkulin sa Diyos kaalinsabay ng pagganap niya ng mga responsibilidad sa kaniyang mga anak. Naisalin ni Kapatid na Antonia sa kaniyang mga anak at mga apo ang mataas na pagkakilala sa tungkulin; dahil dito, sila man ay mga masisiglang maytungkulin sa kanilang lokal.

Bagaman mahina na ang katawan at halos hindi na makalakad, sinisikap ni Kapatid na Antonia na huwag makaliban sa pagsamba. Sa tulong ng kaniyang mga mahal sa buhay, isinasakay siya sa *wheelchair* upang makapunta sa kapilya.

Kabilang sina Kapatid na Fructoso at Antonia sa mga mapalad na nakasaksi sa pagsambang pinangasiwaan ng Kapatid na Eduardo V. Manalo sa pamamagitan ng *livestreaming* noong Enero 13, 2023, kasabay ng paggunita sa mga *milestone anniversary* ng mga lokal kasama na ang Lokal ng Bangko, Distrito ng Lanao na sumapit sa kaniyang ika-70 anibersaryo. Masayang-masaya rin ang kanilang kalooban dahil sa nasaksihan nila ang paglago at pag-unlad ng Iglesia sa kanilang bayan, kasama

na rito ang pagkakaloob sa kanilang lokal ng isang maganda at bagong gusaling sambahan na itinalaga sa Diyos noong Hunyo 25, 2022, na ito ay ipinagpapasalamat nila sa Diyos. 🙏

Sinulat ni Gina Taping



Si Kapatid na Antonia Pilonas (nasa *wheelchair*) at ang kaniyang mga anak at apo, kasama ang kanilang dating destinado ng lokal (nakasuot ng amerikana)

With research assistance from Mandy Nepomuceno

Layout Artists: Ramfel Serreno and Carmie Cleofas  
Contributing Photographers: Jaimar Dan Orosa and Christian Barrera

55  
Years

Monterico  
Misamis Occidental

50  
Years

Campsite  
San Jose City,  
Nueva Ecija

Gamao  
Mindoro Oriental

Long Beach  
Orange County

Ma-a  
Davao City

Simora  
Northern Samar

15  
Years

Medford  
GWS  
Oregon

Tijuana,  
Mexico  
Latin America

10  
Years

Exeter  
United Kingdom

North London  
United Kingdom

5  
Years

Neepawa  
Manitoba

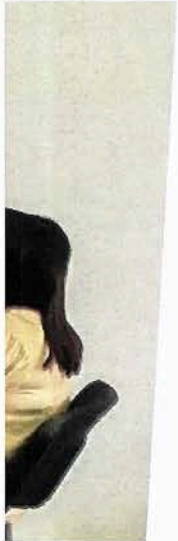
Townsville,  
Queensland  
Australia East



# Be Hardworking

⤴ in the Work of Salvation ⤵





**B**efore the year 2022 ended, ministers and ministerial workers and their respective wives gathered for the “Ministers’ Night” at the Philippine Arena in Ciudad de Victoria, Bulacan, Philippines on December 26. On this occasion, they received a timely and inspiring message from Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the Executive Minister of the Church Of Christ. He reminded the ministers and ministerial workers to all the more be diligent and focused on fulfilling their duties, so that more people will know the truth about salvation and thus be saved on Judgment Day.

Those assigned in the eight ecclesiastical districts in Metro Manila attended at the Philippine Arena, while those assigned in various places around the world were also gathered at their respective venues led by their respective district supervising ministers.

The program in the Philippine Arena commenced with the opening prayer led by Brother Wilson R. Cayago, the supervising minister of the Ecclesiastical District of Maynila. In his message, Brother Eduardo Manalo emphasized to all in attendance that they must remain loyal and submissive to the words of the Lord God, which is proved by being hardworking in the works of salvation. After his biblical lecture, the Executive Minister himself prayed for all the ministers, ministerial workers, and their respective families.

A video presentation followed, showing the Minister’s

Night events in the previous years and the recent Heritage Tour—a tour of *Iglesia Ni Cristo* museums in Metro Manila and other novel Church-owned edifices, such as the Philippine Arena and the EVM Convention Center for select seasoned ministers and their spouses assigned in remote districts. Then, the program proceeded with the recognition of those who excelled in the work of propagation and a singing competition for ministers and ministers’ wives. The gathering concluded with a closing prayer led by Brother Senen C. Capuno, the supervising minister of the Ecclesiastical District of CAMANAVA.

“We truly felt the Executive Minister’s concern and love towards all ministers, ministerial workers, and their families,” enthused Brother Joven Sepillo, the assistant district supervising minister of CAMANAVA, who attended the Ministers’ Night in the Philippines for the first time.

“The Executive Minister reminded all the ministers and ministerial workers to avoid doing things that will hinder them from fulfilling their duties. As the Bible pointed out, coworkers of God must be loyal and zealous in performing their duties for them to be saved on Judgment Day and for the salvation as well of the brethren under their care. Truly, this activity served as an inspiration to all of us and encouraged us to be even more hardworking in fulfilling our sacred duties,” he added. ●

Written by Noel V. Deligero Jr.

With research assistance from Alejandro Sino Cruz Jr.

**Layout Artist:** Kim Noel Palasan  
**Contributing Photographer:** Arichzel Estrella

## Christ and His Church are inseparable

By GERSON S. NONATO



“**W**HY SHOULD I?” might be the response of some people, whom members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) invite to Bible studies and persuade to join this Church. Such reaction could be because of their belief that membership in any particular church is unnecessary for the attainment of salvation. What is important, they would argue, is to have a relationship with Christ since Christ is the Savior, not the Church.



“

**That's why a man will leave his father and mother  
and be united with his wife, and the two will be one.  
This is a great mystery. (I'm talking about  
Christ's relationship to the church.)**

”

Ephesians 5:31–32 God's Word

What such people fail to understand is the truth that the Bible itself attests that the Church Of Christ is indispensable to having a relationship with Christ for the attainment of salvation. It follows that rejecting the true Church Of Christ is tantamount to refusing to have a relationship with Christ the Savior.

### **Christ owns the Church**

In Matthew 16:18, it is undeniably clear that there is a Church established by Christ, thus:

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church ...” (New King James Version)

Christ's statement, “I will build My church,” reveals His relationship with the Church that He established—Christ is the owner of the Church. Thus, one thing is sure: the people who are in the said Church are of Christ—they belong to Him.

The Church, whose members certainly belong to Christ, is called after His name—“the Church of Christ” (Eph. 4:12 Norlie's Simplified New Testament).

### **Vine and branches**

In John 15:5, Christ says to His disciples, “I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (New American Standard Bible 2020).

In this analogy, Christ shows His relationship with the Church that He established by describing Himself as the vine and the members of the Church Of Christ as the branches. Notice that Christ also emphasizes, “apart from Me you can do nothing.” So if a person is not among His branches, that person—no matter what he does—cannot bear fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1:11). To be counted among Christ's branches is, therefore, imperative and that can be realized only by joining the Church Of Christ.

### **Head and body**

In Ephesians 2:15, it is stated that Christ created in Himself “one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace” (NKJV). The two refer to the head and the body, which refer to Christ and to His Church, respec-

tively (Col. 1:18). In the sight of God, Christ and His Church, which is composed of many parts or members (Rom. 12:4–5; I Cor. 12:27), are joined together as “one new man.” In this way, “peace” was made. Apostle Paul made clear what peace is being referred to, thus:

“[Therefore,] Since we have been made right with God [declared righteous; justified] by our faith, we have peace with God. This happened through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1 Expanded Bible)

Because of its relationship with Christ, the Church Of Christ has “peace with God.” This means that its members will be delivered from God's wrath or punishment on the Day of Judgment. Apostle Paul attested to this truth, thus:

“*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus ...” (Rom. 8:1 NKJV)

Notice that the people who will no longer be condemned on Judgment Day are the ones referred to by the Bible as “in Christ.” They are in Christ because they are parts of His body and that body is

“  
**There is  
therefore now  
no condemnation  
to those who are  
in Christ Jesus ...**  
”

Romans 8:1  
New King James Version

His Church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23). Hence, people cannot have peace with God or will not be saved from God's wrath on the Day of Judgment unless they are in Christ or are members of the Church Of Christ.

### **Husband and wife**

The relationship of Christ and His Church was also likened to that of a married couple, thus:

“That's why a man will leave his father and mother and be united

with his wife, and the two will be one. This is a great mystery. (I'm talking about Christ's relationship to the church.)” (Eph. 5:31–32 God's Word)

Christ loves His Church such that He gave His life for it because He is its Savior (Eph. 5:25, 23).

Therefore, just as how a husband and his wife joined together by God should not be separated by anyone (Matt. 19:6), Christ and His Church should not also be separated by anyone. This is because the union between Christ and His Church is, definitely, in accordance with the will of God. The Bible teaches, thus:

“God is to be trusted, the God who called you to have fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.” (I Cor. 1:9 Good News Bible)

It is God Who calls people to have fellowship or “relationship” (EXB) with Christ. People, then, cannot just simply claim or declare relationship with Christ; they must be called by God. And those who are called, as the Bible teaches, become parts of the one body, with Christ as its head (Col. 3:15; I Cor. 12:13)—the Church Of Christ.

### **The importance of having union with Christ through His Church**

According to Romans 5:12, because of Adam, “sin came into the world, and death came through sin, so death has come to everyone, since

everyone has sinned” (Common English Bible). However, it is not only the physical death that people would experience because of their sins, but, worse, the second death, which is the everlasting punishment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14). The only solution to this inevitable consequence of man's transgression is for him to have union with Christ:

“For just as all people die because of their union with Adam, in the same way all will be raised to life because of their union with Christ.” (I Cor. 15:22 GNB)

Just as a branch is connected to the vine, and a body to its head, and the husband to his wife, we should have union with Christ by joining the Church Of Christ.

People should realize that Christ did not build His Church for nothing. It is where people should be found on the day when Christ returns in order for them to be saved. In fact, Christ Himself commands, “Those who enter the sheep pen through me will be saved” (John 10:9 GW); and this “sheep pen” or “flock” (John 10:16 GNB and Easy-to-Read Version) being referred to is the Church Of Christ (Acts 20:28 Lamsa Translation).

Dear readers, with all these truths presented to you from the Bible, we would like to leave you with a question: Why shouldn't you join the Church Of Christ? ●

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# The ‘angel’ ascending from the east

By MANDY A. NEPOMUCENO

**O**NLY THE MESSENGERS of God have the divine right to proclaim His words (Rom. 10:15). Therefore, if one wants to determine if a given religion or faith group is the true one and that the teaching it upholds is the pure gospel, then he must first ascertain if the one who preaches it has the calling and authority from God as His messenger, which are backed by the Holy Scriptures. For, if that religion and its preachers do not have such characteristics, then that preacher, his teaching, and his religion are all false.

We in the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) have firm faith that Brother Felix Y. Manalo is God’s Messenger in the last days, because biblical passages themselves prove his calling from

God. One of these passages is Revelation 7:2–3, which reads:

“Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’” (New King James Version)

We firmly believe that Brother Felix Manalo is the fulfillment of the prophesied “angel ascending from the east” who has “the seal of the living God” and whose work would be to seal the “servants of God on their foreheads.”

## **Preaching angel**

People who disagree with the Church Of Christ’s teaching about

the aforementioned Bible passage assert that Brother Felix Manalo could not be the fulfillment of the prophecy because he is not an angel. This is because to them, an “angel” is a spiritual being who resides in heaven.

However, the term “angel” is but a Latinized form of the Greek word “ἄγγελος” (aggelos [ang’el-os]). The *Strong’s Dictionary of Greek Testament* entry about “aggelos” states:

“... From *aggello* ... (to bring tidings); a messenger ... by implication, a pastor. (NT:32)

Indeed, according to the Bible itself, angels are “messengers” sent by God (Luke 1:19 NKJV). Of course, the Bible mentions spirit beings called angels (Heb. 1:13–14), such as those who sang praises to the Lord God and

His Lamb (Rev. 5:11–12 GNB). An angel is mentioned in the Bible (Luke 1:26–33 NKJV) who was sent to deliver a brief message—so, a messenger—to Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the term “angel” is never used in a way that suggests it only refers to the heavenly hosts. In the Bible, there are also those who are human in nature, but are called angels because they are sent also by God. Hence, the term does not denote the nature, but the duty or function that being called “angel” holds. As the Bible dictionary cited above states: “by implication, a pastor.”

One of the prominent characters in the New Testament, John the Baptist, was explicitly called an “angel” (Matt. 11:7–10 Douay-Rheims). Moreover, Revelation 14:6–7 mentions of an angel proclaiming to people to turn to God Who made the heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them. That “angel” was Apostle Paul (Acts 14:14–15 NKJV), who undoubtedly was human.

Clearly, the term “angel” may refer to spiritual beings or to human beings sent by God. And so, in *Young’s Literal Translation*, the term “angel” in Revelation 7:2–3 is rendered “messenger.”

“And I saw another messenger going up from the rising of the sun, having a seal of the living God, and he did cry with a great voice to the four messengers, to whom it was given to injure the land and the sea, saying, ‘Do not injure the land, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we may seal the servants of our God upon their foreheads.’”

The messenger in the prophecy has the seal of the living God.

“  
**Then I saw  
 another angel  
 ascending from the  
 east, having the seal  
 of the living God.**  
 ”

Revelation 7:2  
 New King James Version

The seal is the Holy Spirit, which is sealed on those who listen to and believe the truth or the gospel (Eph. 1:13–14). Thus, sealing refers to the preaching of the gospel, accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. Angels that are spirit in nature do not preach the gospel. So, the preaching angel or messenger mentioned in the prophecy has to be a human being.

#### From the east

The angel or messenger, according to the prophecy, would be “going up” or “ascending from the east.” In the Hebrew text of the Bible, the term used in that particular prophecy is *mizrach*, which refers to the Far East (*Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 637). Therefore, the angel or messenger mentioned in Revelation

7:2–3 who would preach God’s words would come from the Far East.

According to a related biblical prophecy, God’s sending of the messenger from the east is during the period of time called “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 NKJV)

This messenger from “the ends of the earth” would come from the “east”—specifically from the “Far East” (Isa. 43:5 Moffatt Translation)—in a country composed of “islands of the sea” (Isa. 24:15 New International Version).

Brother Felix Manalo began to preach God’s words in the Philippines, “an archipelago of 7,107 islands” and “the only Christian nation in the Far East” (*International Security and the United States: An Encyclopedia*, p. 614). Those who believed in the pristine gospel he taught were baptized into the one body—the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* or Church Of Christ—in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures (Mark 16:15–16; I Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18; Acts 20:28 Lamsa Translation).

#### From the ends of the earth

When would this messenger begin his mission? In Isaiah 43:5–6, the prophecy mentions of the time period “ends of the earth.” Meanwhile, in the verse preceding Revelation 7:2–3, in verse 1, it states, thus:

“After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of

the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree." (NKJV)

In the Bible, the term "wind" symbolically refers to war (Jer. 4:11–13, 19). The expression "four corners" refers to the four directions of the world, which are east, west, north, and south (I Chr. 9:24). Therefore, a war, the wind in the prophecy, that is of global proportions would happen while the messenger would be "ascending" or fulfilling his mission.

The time period "ends of the earth" when there would be a war of global proportions was also foretold by the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 24:3, 6–7, it is recorded, thus:

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'"

"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." (NKJV)

The "ends of the earth" is the time period when the end of the age or end of the world (King James Version)—the second coming of Christ—is near. The Lord Jesus Christ describes such time as "at the very doors" (Matt. 24:33 NKJV). He gave the signs when such a time would be, the first of which are "wars and rumors of wars." Happening with such dreadful event would be a list of terrifying catastrophes, such

as earthquakes, famines, and pestilences or disease epidemics:

"The approach of the end of the age would see several phenomena on the earth occurring at the same time. ... 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 Last Days Bible)

On July 27, 1914, when World War I broke out, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) was registered in the Philippines by Brother Felix Manalo who preached about it based on the Bible.

Thus was fulfilled the prophecy about the "angel" or messenger of God (Brother Felix Manalo) "from the east" (the Philippines) at the time "ends of the earth" (these last days which began in 1914) whose divine mission is to "seal" God's servants (the preaching of the gospel that led those who believed inside the Church Of Christ).

The work of God's salvation that was initiated by Brother Felix Manalo in the Philippines demonstrates that God is in complete control—He is sovereign. Moreover, it also definitively proves that the Church Of Christ is the true religion in our time where we should all be found serving the Lord God. ●

(II Cor. 5:21 New International Version). Hence, Christ is the One Who answered for the sins of people whom He will save—the ones who are in Him or in His Church (II Cor. 5:17; Matt. 16:18).

Christ has made those whom He will save His body (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). In the sight of God, Christ, as the head, and the Church, as His body, stand as one new man (Eph. 2:15). Being the head, Christ is responsible for the sins of His body. That is why He was able to pay for the sins of the members of His Church without violating God's law concerning sinners. It would be unjust if Christ would also pay for the sins of those who do not belong to His body.

Hence, it is only fair and just that the ones who will be saved are those who comply with the condition set by the Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ—enter the Church Of Christ. On the other hand, those who are outside the Church will receive judgment from God:

"For I have no obligation to judge those who are outside the church of Christ. ... God is the one who will judge those who are outside the church. The scriptures command us, 'You must take away the evil person who is among you!'" (I Cor. 5:12–13 Unlocked Dynamic Bible)

What is unfair, therefore, is if people who refuse to heed Christ's command to enter His Church will also receive salvation. ●

# The blessings and expectations divine election brings

By ARNEL M. ARMENIA

**L**IFE FOR MANY has been more difficult these days. But as *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) members, we will never turn our backs on serving God. This is because we fully understand that the people at present who have every reason to be always thankful to God are those who belong to His chosen nation in these last days, we, the members of this Church (Col. 2:7 Expanded Bible).

## Why we are thankful

The Bible tells us why we ought to be thankful to the Almighty:

“We pray that you will be rejoicing and thanking God our Father, because he has declared you worthy to be with the others whom he has set apart for himself; this is so he can give you all the things that he is keeping for you when you are with him in the light of his presence. God our Father has rescued us from the evil that controlled us; he has made his Son, whom he loves, to rule over us now. By means of his Son he has set us free from that evil; that is, he has forgiven our sins.” (Col. 1:12–14 Unlocked Dynamic Bible)

From this world, we have been set apart by God for Himself or have

become His holy people (Col. 1:12–14 Amplified Bible). By virtue of this election from God, we can expect to receive the blessings that He has intended for us. We are certain of this grace because, according to Apostle Paul, we have been set free from evil or have been forgiven from our sins by means of the Son or the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, having been redeemed, we have been counted worthy of receiving God’s blessings.

That we are the ones who have been redeemed and, therefore, ought to be thankful to God is irrefutable because the Bible makes it clear as to who have been cleansed with the blood of the Lord Jesus 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)

This is gospel truth. Not all people and all churches have been purchased or redeemed with the blood of Christ, but only His Church.

Blessed, indeed, are the members of the Church Of Christ. The Bible guarantees that we have received redemption and are, therefore, eligible for the inheritance that the Almighty

Father has reserved for us in heaven. What this is, the Apostle Peter told us:

“Thank God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in his great mercy we men have been born again into a life full of hope, through Christ’s rising again from the dead! You can now hope for a perfect inheritance beyond the reach of change and decay, ‘reserved’ in Heaven for you. And in the meantime you are guarded by the power of God operating through your faith, till you enter fully into the salvation which is all ready for the denouement of the last day.” (I Pet. 1:3–5 Phillips New Testament in Modern English)

No wonder true members of the Church Of Christ never tire of offering thanksgiving to God. We understand and have firm faith that the “perfect inheritance” or salvation awaits us.

## Undeniably of God

There is no reason for us to doubt, even for a moment, that we truly are God’s people. Not only do we have proofs that come direct from the Bible, we can also point out tangible evidences that God, indeed, is with the Church Of Christ. This is what the Apostle Paul said:

“But I thank God, who always leads us in victory because of Christ. Wherever we go, God uses us to make clear what it means to know Christ. It’s like a fragrance that fills the air.” (II Cor. 2:14 God’s Word)

Victory is assured of God’s people. After all, it is He, the Almighty, Who leads them. A closer look at the various endeavors of the Church Of Christ that we are members of, just in the past year, reveals success after success. And this is no accident or happenstance but is the handiwork of God as our strength “comes only from God” (II Cor. 4:7 UDB). Consider the following figures against a backdrop dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic and its ripple effects:

### INC FAST FACTS

**498** Houses of worship constructed/renovated during pandemic

**513** Ministers ordained during pandemic

**14** Bishops ordained during pandemic

God’s abiding presence extends even to the personal lives of His individual servants. Apostle Paul testified:

“But he said to me, ‘No, I will not take this away from you. Instead, I will kindly help you, and that will be all that you need, because it is *when you are weak* that I can best work powerfully to help you.’ So, because of *what the Lord said to me*, I will very gladly boast about *the things that make me seem weak*, so that *people may realize* that it is Christ who gives me power to serve him. For that reason, *whenever I am weak*, or *when people insult me*,

or *when I have to endure hardships*, or *when I am persecuted* {people cause me to suffer}, or *when I am in situations that distress me*, I am content because *I am serving Christ*. I can say that because at any time when I myself am weak, that is the *very time* when *Christ powerfully helps me*.” (II Cor. 12:9–10 Translation for Translators)

We, members of the Church Of Christ in these last days, can say that we have similar experiences as those of Apostle Paul’s. We, too, have weaknesses. We endure hardships. We are insulted and persecuted because of our faith or membership in the true Church. We face distressing circumstances. Yet, here we are, still active in our services to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Almighty Father. We know why. In all humility we profess, “Christ powerfully helps me.”

### What is expected of us

Cognizant of the great blessings that come along with our divine election, we ought to fully comprehend as well that with it also comes a sacred obligation, thus:

“Do not imitate/adopt the customs of the people of the land from which I will expel them as you advance. I hated them because they did

“

**But I thank God, who always leads us in victory because of Christ. Wherever we go, God uses us to make clear what it means to know Christ. It’s like a fragrance that fills the air.**

”

II Corinthians 2:14 God’s Word

all those things. ... You must behave in ways that I consider to be holy, because I, Yahweh, am holy, and I have set you apart from the *ungodly people of other nations* to belong to me.” (Lev. 20:23, 26 T4T)

Customs or ways of life and living that are unholy by the standards that the Almighty has set for His nation, even if such are accepted and tolerated by the people around them, should not be copied or adopted by them. This admonition of God stands even at present. Apostle Paul said:

“Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think. This will empower you to discern God’s will as you live a beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes.” (Rom. 12:2 The Passion Translation)

It stands to reason then that we, members of the Church Of Christ, should practice due caution so as not to end up being influenced by the people of this world into undermining, disregarding, or disobeying the commandments of God. To be influenced by the ungodly culture is anathema to having been gifted with the divine election and the pre-

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**Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think. This will empower you to discern God’s will as you live a beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes.**

”

Romans 12:2 The Passion Translation

We ought to do the same. For us, this is the right course of action because the teachings we are diligently taught by the Church Administration, led by Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, our beloved Executive Minister, are the pristine words of God written in the Bible; and God’s words demand nothing less than absolute faith.

**What to complement faith with**

Faith in God’s words—in its truthfulness and power—is vital in our fight against the corrupting forces of this world. When we have faith, we will not stop in simply believing but rather strive in complementing our faith with the virtues that God expects to see in us:

“For this very reason, then, you must do your utmost to add virtue to your faith, and knowledge to your virtue. Next, supplement your knowledge with self-control, and your self-control with steadfastness, and your steadfastness with piety. Then you should add brotherly kindness to piety, and Christian love to brotherliness. If you possess such virtues and you let them develop within you, they will not let you remain inactive and unfruitful in the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, if one lacks these qualities he is blind or shortsighted, and he forgets that he had once been cleansed from his former sinful ways.” (II Pet. 1:5-9 Norlie’s Simplified New Testament)

Faithful members of the Church Of Christ are also virtuous, wise, self-controlled, steadfast, kind, and pious, among others. One who has these qualities is active and fruitful in his services to the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, even if one has faith but neglects to have and grow in

these virtues, such has lapsed into forgetfulness that he has “once been cleansed from his former sinful ways.” Considering these truths, let us keep in mind God’s call to us through the Church Administration: God’s elect must strive to live in holiness.

The world we live in is increasingly antagonistic to the kind of life that God wants us to lead. Be that as it may, let us soldier on towards that eternal inheritance that we have been promised. As we do so, especially when we are beset by troubles and woes, let us take courage from these words of the Almighty:

“Fear not [there is nothing to fear], for I am with you; do not look around you in terror *and* be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen *and* harden you to difficulties, yes, I will help you; yes, I will hold you up *and* retain you with My [victorious] right hand of rightness *and* justice ... The poor and needy are seeking water when there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.” (Isa. 41:10, 17 AMP)

What God promised to His Messenger, Brother Felix Y. Manalo, and the fruit of his work, the Church Of Christ in these last days, we have seen Him fulfill convincingly; and He continues doing so. Let us place our hope completely not only in His promise that He will not forsake us but also in the grace that will be ours. ☺

*Based on the worship service lesson taught by Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, Executive Minister of the Church Of Christ, during his pastoral visit on July 22, 2022 in Luzon Avenue Local Congregation, Central Ecclesiastical District*

scious blessings it brings. It behooves us then to choose as our life coach God Himself. So that we can live a “beautiful life, satisfying and perfect in his eyes,” we ought to copy instead what our first-century brethren in Thessalonica did:

“And now we look back on all this and thank God, an artesian well of thanks! When you got the Message of God we preached, you didn’t pass it off as just one more human opinion, but you took it to heart as God’s true word to you, which it is, God himself at work in you believers!” (I Thess. 2:13 The Message)

Apostle Paul commended those faithful Christians for not dismissing his message as mere “human opinion” but took it as “God’s true word.”



# Do you want to be ‘most blessed’?

By JENSEN DG. MAÑEBOG

**W**HAT WILL THE WORLD look like after Covid-19? Experts give various answers to this, including the projection that the problems people will encounter in the next decade will just be more extreme versions of those that they have been confronting during the pandemic. Surely, global economy will take time to recover and even when the pandemic is totally gone, the world after Covid-19 is not likely to revert to the world that was.

Making the situation worse is the brewing new cold war mainly brought about by one country’s invasion of another. This has led to the global prices for oil, gas, and coal skyrocketing, sending inflation to levels not seen in decades in the affected region (*worldbank.org*). Indeed, a pandemic and war in tandem is a sure formula for turbulent times.

But amidst these chaos and unrests, are there people who are assured of good fortune?

## ‘I have good plans for you’

God always has good plans for His chosen people so they are assured of good fortune despite the troubles

happening around them. This was proved in the experience of ancient Israel, God’s nation of old.

Chapter 29 of Jeremiah records a letter that God’s prophet sent to the Jews who were taken as captives from Jerusalem to Babylon (Jer. 29:1). Surely, they were in misery and hardship—living under the rule of their enemies, having been forced to leave their homes and stay in a foreign land. But amidst this dreadful condition, God, through His prophet, promised to them the following:

“I say this because I know what [the plans] I am planning for you,” says the LORD. “I have good plans for you [plans for your peace/security], not plans to hurt you [for your harm]. I will give you hope and a good future. Then you will call my name [me]. You will come to me and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will search for me. And when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me.” (Jer. 29:11–13 Expanded Bible)

What can be more reassuring than these promises of none other than the Almighty to His people—that He has a plan to prosper them in the midst of their woeful situation? This underscores the advantage

of being inside God’s nation, and the need for His people not to allow themselves to be separated from their divine election. They ought to trust and faithfully obey the Lord, like what His servant Abraham did.

The Bible narrates that God told Abraham to leave his home, and though he did not know where he was going, he unhesitatingly went to live in a foreign country that God had promised to him. And all along, “Abraham was waiting to live in the city that will always be there ... in God’s city” (Heb. 11:8–10 EasyEnglish Bible), which is the Holy City, the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1–4). “God made the plans for that city, and God built it” (Heb. 11:10 EE). So, Abraham, in his faithful obedience, firmly believed that God does have good plans for His devoted servants.

## ‘I totally trust you to rescue me’

Truth is, even in this life, God’s loyal servants can trust Him to rescue them, and so they must never give up but rather remain entwined as one with Him:

“Yet I totally trust you to rescue me one more time, so that I can see

“

**‘I say this because I know what [the plans] I am planning for you,’ says the LORD. ‘I have good plans for you [plans for your peace/security], not plans to hurt you [for your harm]. I will give you hope and a good future.’**

”

Jeremiah 29:11 Expanded Bible

once again how good you are while I’m still alive! Here’s what I’ve learned through it all: *Don’t give up; don’t be impatient; be entwined as one with the Lord. Be brave and courageous, and never lose hope. Yes, keep on waiting—for he will never disappoint you!*” (Ps. 27:13–14 The Passion Translation)

They can trust Him to be good to them as long as they live, and so they must be strong and courageous and wait expectantly for His help (Ps. 27:13–14 Unlocked Dynamic Bible).

**‘Most blessed’**

However, who among God’s people can depend on His good plans and promises? The Bible answers, thus:

“[Most] blessed is the man who believes in, trusts in, *and* relies on

the Lord, and whose hope *and* confidence the Lord is. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters that spreads out its roots by the river; and it shall not see *and* fear when heat comes; but its leaf shall be green. It shall not be anxious *and* full of care in the year of drought, nor shall it cease yielding fruit.” (Jer. 17:7–8 Amplified Bible)

God’s people whose confidence is the Lord also have great respect for Him, inasmuch as for them, the Lord has “stored up many great and good things to do” (Ps. 31:19 UDB). Great respect for God is manifested by revering (Ps 31:19 Unlocked Literal Bible) or worshiping Him. Therefore, most blessed are God’s people who reverently put their hope in Him, devotedly praising and serving Him, for they “shall be like a tree planted by the waters ... shall not be anxious *and* full of care in the year of drought.”

**‘Eligible to share in the marvelous things He prepared’**

In the Christian era, there are people eligible to share in the inheritance of all the marvelous things God has prepared:

“Likewise, continually thank the Father with joy, as you think of the fact that He has made us eligible to share in the inheritance of all the marvelous things He has prepared in His Kingdom of Light for those who are truly dedicated to Him! He rescued us from the gloom and darkness of Satan’s power over us, and transported us into the Kingdom of the Son whom He loves so dearly. By means of His suffering, bleeding, and dying for us, we have been rescued from sin and its terrifying consequences. By His sacrifice, He made it possible

for God to offer us forgiveness for our sins.” (Col. 1:12–14 Last Days Bible)

It is for the one true Church that God’s Son died (Eph. 5:25)—the Church Of Christ that He purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28 Lamsa Translation) and that which He will save (Eph. 5:23). No wonder, therefore, that this Church, being God’s nation in these last days, has surpassed all the trials, even those brought about by the pandemic.

By God’s grace, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) in these last days continues spreading practically all over the world (now having more than 8,000 congregations in 164 countries, with membership comprising 150 nationalities as of Jan. 2023); the number of its church officers, ministerial students, and ordained ministers continues to increase; and it upholds the uninterrupted construction of magnificent houses of worship in various parts of the globe.

Various crises have not been able to cripple God’s nation, much less stop it from its services to Him. Indeed, this Church has been like “a tree planted by the waters ... it shall not see *and* fear when heat comes; but its leaf shall be green. It shall not be anxious *and* full of care in the year of drought, nor shall it cease yielding fruit” (Jer. 17:7–8 AMP).

**‘Diligence in living for the Lord’**

God’s caring promises are intended not only to His nation as a whole; they are meant for its individual members as well. Being eligible to share in God’s good plans, Church Of Christ members, nevertheless, are expected by the Lord to be truly dedicated to Him, “continuing in the faith,

deeply rooted, unflinching, fixed in [their] direction, and are not allowing [themselves] to be seduced and led away from the hope that came to [them] when [they] heard and accepted the Great News" (Col. 1:23 LDB).

They must continue in their "diligence in living for the Lord" (Heb. 6:11 LDB), "stay inspired and keep doing visible acts of love to the end of [their] life" to be certain that they will receive what they hope for in heaven (Heb. 6:11 Plain English Translation).

And this is indeed lived by the brethren who accept and perform Church duties, especially those that involve taking care of fellow brethren. Doing visible acts of love is also manifested by those who selflessly contribute in providing aid to those in dire need, members and nonmembers alike, like the victims of severe calamities. These things they passionately do amidst trying times.

“  
[Most] blessed  
is the man who  
believes in, trusts in,  
and relies on  
the Lord, and whose  
hope and confidence  
the Lord is.  
”

Jeremiah 17:7 Amplified Bible

### **'We do not give up'**

Because it is we who can trust in God's faithful promises, we ought never to give up even in the face of great sufferings, persecutions, and pains. As Apostle Paul said:

"We have troubles all around us, but we are not defeated. We do not know what to do, but we do not give up the hope of living. We are persecuted, but God does not leave us. We are hurt sometimes, but we are not destroyed." (II Cor. 4:8-9 New Century Version)

Yes, we, too, may encounter grief, but by God's power, we will not be totally defeated. He may allow us to be hard pressed on every side, perplexed, and even struck down at times, but He will always offer His grace for us to rise, providing us strength to persevere and continue moving forward.

And even when our physical body becomes old and weak, let us allow our spirit to be renewed day by day—never giving up, but rather setting our eyes on the eternal glory that we will soon attain:

"So we do not give up. Our physical body is becoming older and weaker, but our spirit inside us is made new every day. We have small troubles for a while now, but they are helping us gain an eternal glory that is much greater than the troubles. We set our eyes not on what we see but on what we cannot see. What we see will last only a short time, but what we cannot see will last forever." (II Cor. 4:16-18 NCV)

### **'He cares about you with deepest affection'**

No amount of worry should make us desert our divine calling. As we

face disheartening situations, we can take comfort in God's promise that He has good plans for us, and regardless of our predicament, He can work through it to prosper us and give us hope and a good future (Jer. 29:11-13), thereby making us the "most blessed."

When beset by fears and concerns, instead of thinking to abandon our faith, let us follow the loving advice of the apostles, thus:

"Casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully]." (I Pet. 5:7 Amplified Bible 2015)

As we are still bound to live through troubles and distress, let us humbly approach and implore through earnest prayers Him Who cares about us with deepest affection. Let us take delight in the truth that the sufferings we face today are very small and trivial compared to the eternity awaiting us in heaven, where we will attain the blissful endless life:

"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace [Who imparts all blessing and favor], Who has called you to His [own] eternal glory in Christ *Jesus*, will Himself complete *and* make you what you ought to be, establish *and* ground you securely, and strengthen, and settle you." (I Pet. 5:10 AMP) 📖

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*Based on the lesson taught by the Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, during his pastoral visit in the Local Congregation of Abucay, Ecclesiastical District of Bataan on September 30, 2022*



## 3rd INC International Piano Competition:

## SHOWCASING MUSICAL GIFTS FOR GOD'S GLORY

By JEROME ADONIS P. COMAOAY

**L**EARNING HOW TO PLAY the piano is one thing. Playing a classical composition of renowned artists with skill and style before a huge audience is quite another. This requires a certain degree of love for classical music, dexterity, composure, and patience for long periods of practice.

About three years after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, classical music filled the Eraño G. Manalo Hall of the EVM Convention Center in Quezon City, Philippines on January 21, 2023. The finalists of the third *Iglesia Ni Cristo* International Piano Competition showcased their skills and capabilities in playing the piano.

More than 70 entries of filmed performances were sent by brethren from various ecclesiastical districts worldwide to the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Music Department in Quezon City. After a screening by a panel of judges affiliated with the New Era University (NEU)-College of Music, eight pianists were selected to perform live in the finals.

At the opening of the program, Brother Roderick Ramos, dean of the NEU-College of Music, read the message of Brother Eduardo V. Manalo, the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* Executive Minister, to the finalists. Part of the message reads: "Your enthusiasm as you participate in this musical competition is truly admirable. I am aware that taking part in this event

does not only require talent and skill in playing the piano but also dedication and perseverance in doing long hours of practice and preparation. ... You exerted much effort and a load of patience to polish the rendition of your respective musical pieces. But most importantly, I believe that you play your instrument not merely for the ears of your audience, but for the One Who gave you the musical gift that you have—our Lord God."

There were four finalists each in the two age brackets: the lower age (12 to 17 years old) and the upper age (18 years old and above). Adding to their excitement was the rare opportunity to play the keys on the Bösendorfer 280VC concert grand piano, which is sought after for having



a certain warmth, diversity of sonic colors, and distinct and clear sound.

Each performance was evaluated by a jury composed of three judges, namely, Ms. Richelle Rivera of the Philippine Women's University-School of Music; Ms. Geraldine Marie Gonzales of the University of the Philippines-College of Music; and Mr. Jose Miguel Aspiras. The presentations were rated based on each performer's interpretation, musicianship, accuracy, technique, and overall performance.

After the finalists delivered their pieces and a meticulous evaluation of the judges, the results were turned in.

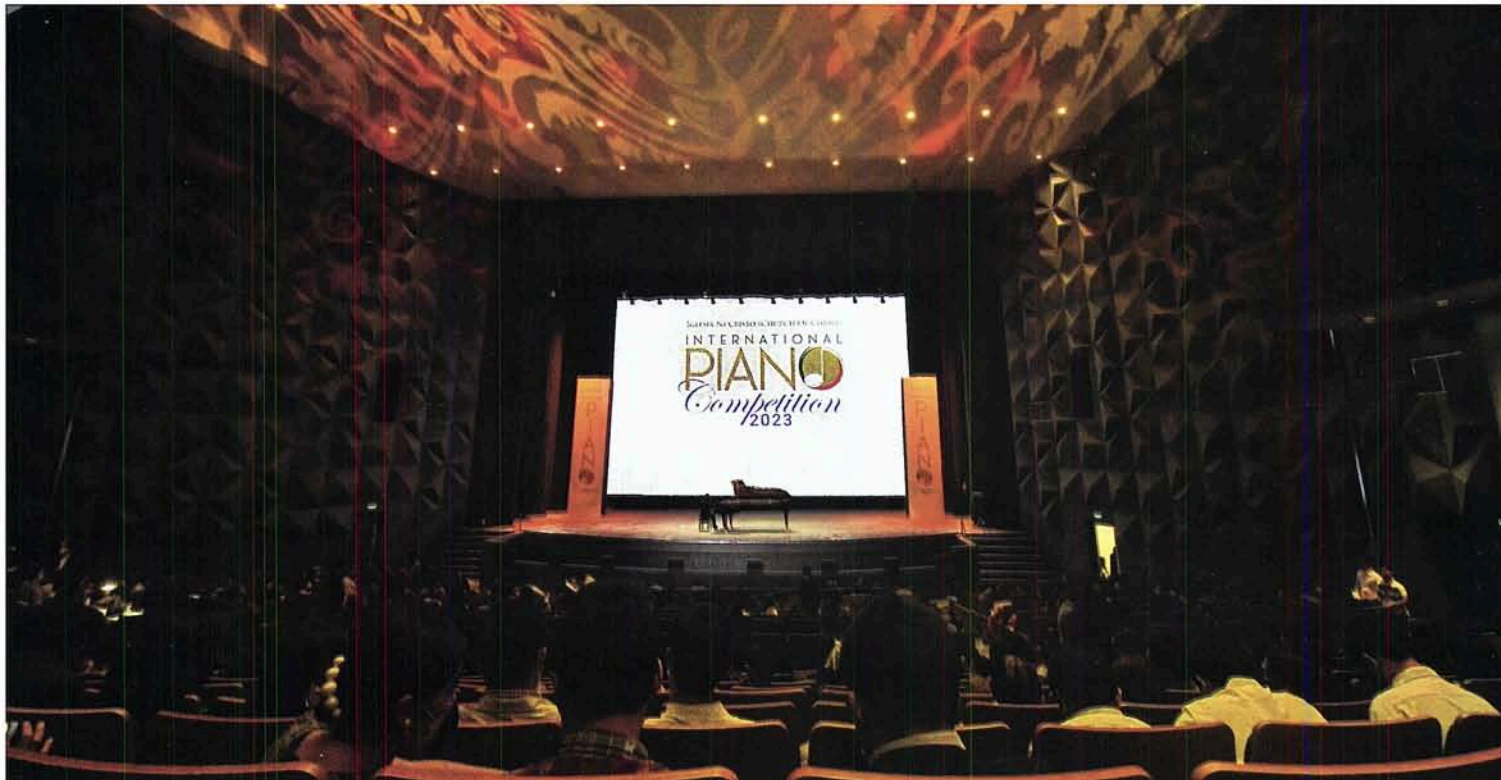
In the lower age category, named first place was Brother Jacq Daniel Francisco, an organist and group

secretary from Nagkaisang Nayon, Quezon City. He played "Heroic" *Polonaise in Ab Major no. 6, Op. 53* by Frédéric Chopin. With joy, he exclaimed, "I felt I was only dreaming, but it is actually real! Our prayers for years have been answered! I am very grateful and glad for the blessing God gave our family."

Second placer Brother Gio Angelo Tamondong, a choir member from Central London, United Kingdom, played *Impromptu No. 3 in Gb Major, Op. 90* by Franz Schubert, while his twin brother, third placer Brother Gio Andre Tamondong, a choir member from North Shields Congregation, United Kingdom District, played *Sonata No. 8 in C-minor, Op. 13 "Pathétique" (I. Grave –*

*Allegro di molto e con brio)* by Ludwig van Beethoven. Fourth placer Sister Karina Nicelita Wehr, a Children's Worship Service (CWS) choir member from Kansas City, Northern Midwest, played *Lyric Piece, Op. 65, No. 6* by Edvard Grieg.

In the upper age category, Brother Cзад Fered Gilhang from Bacoor, Cavite, landed first place. He played Claude Debussy's *Pour le piano*, and Chopin's "Heroic" *Polonaise in Ab Major no. 6, Op. 53*. "I have been waiting for this competition for years since it was postponed [due to the pandemic]. After the second INC International Piano Competition ended in 2018, I hurried to find a new piece that is not only technical but also has a grandiose sound. I would like to thank the



Church Administration led by Ka Eduardo Manalo for organizing these musical events to showcase the talents of our fellow brethren around the world,” Brother Gilhang said.

Taking second place was Brother Aldrich Angeles, an organist, KADIWA district officer, and Christian Brotherhood International (CBI) officer from Rodriguez, Rizal, who played *Sonata No. 10 in C major, K.330* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; third

place was Brother Jhune Dominique Galang, an organist from Riverside, Quezon City, who played *Sonata No. 8 in A minor, K.310* by Mozart; and Brother Cris Anthony Peñaranda, organist from Tipas, Metro Manila East, placed fourth with Beethoven’s *Sonata No. 8 in C-minor, Op. 13 “Pathétique.”*

“The aim of the INC International Piano Competition is to provide a venue for brethren in the Church to express and showcase their mu-

sical talents in a large-scale, high profile, singular event. Such events give glory to God, edify the soul, and serve to build up the Church through music. Through God’s grace, as evidenced in this memorable competition, these objectives were indelibly fulfilled,” expressed Brother Ramos.

The finalists received medals, certificates of recognition, and other prizes. 🌟

## Transforming pain into perseverance

By RONNIE H. MUTYA



Sister Cathleen Kaye

IN 2015, while in high school, Sister Cathlene Kaye C. Quizon, or simply 'CK,' was diagnosed with end-stage kidney failure. She underwent kidney transplant the following year, but her body showed signs of rejection in 2019. With her symptoms worsening, in 2021, the transplanted kidney had to be removed.

Despite her medical condition and seemingly endless hospital visits, this *KADIWA* and choir member from the Local Congregation of Mobile, Alabama, under the supervision of the Ecclesiastical District of Virginia, persevered in her studies and managed to finish her Associate Degree in Computer Information Systems as *summa cum laude* in 2020. As of this writing, she is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Information Systems at the University of South Alabama.

Growing up, Sister CK's parents have always instilled in her the importance of studying hard, of never settling for mediocrity. "I value education immensely because of the stories my parents would tell me back then; how they grew up with just the bare necessities, and how they had to work at a young age. So, those things factored in as to why I was and am motivated to really make the most of the opportunities I've been blessed with," she said.

She owes it to her parents for molding her to become the kind of person that she is today.

"Since in my youth and until now that I'm 24, they never fail to remind me of the importance of my membership in the Church. On top of that, they remind me that if I work hard and pray for the things I want, nothing is too hard or impossible to achieve."

When asked what motivates her to pursue her studies in spite of her struggles, she shared, "It's my medical condition itself. It requires a lot of medical attention and so, I have to ensure I have a good career so I can provide for whatever medical needs I may have in the future." Aiming also to be of help to her parents, she said, "I wouldn't want to keep on relying on my parents. They continuously provide me with all the things I need and so I want to be able to do the same for them when the time comes."

This is the reason Sister CK persevered in completing her associate degree, while enduring her painful struggles. "I had about eight surgeries in 2021. I pretty much spent the majority of the year at the hospital," she recalled. As of now, she undergoes home hemodialysis for about three hours five times a week. She said, "It's definitely better than having to go to the clinic thrice a week because I have a little more freedom when it comes to my fluid intake."

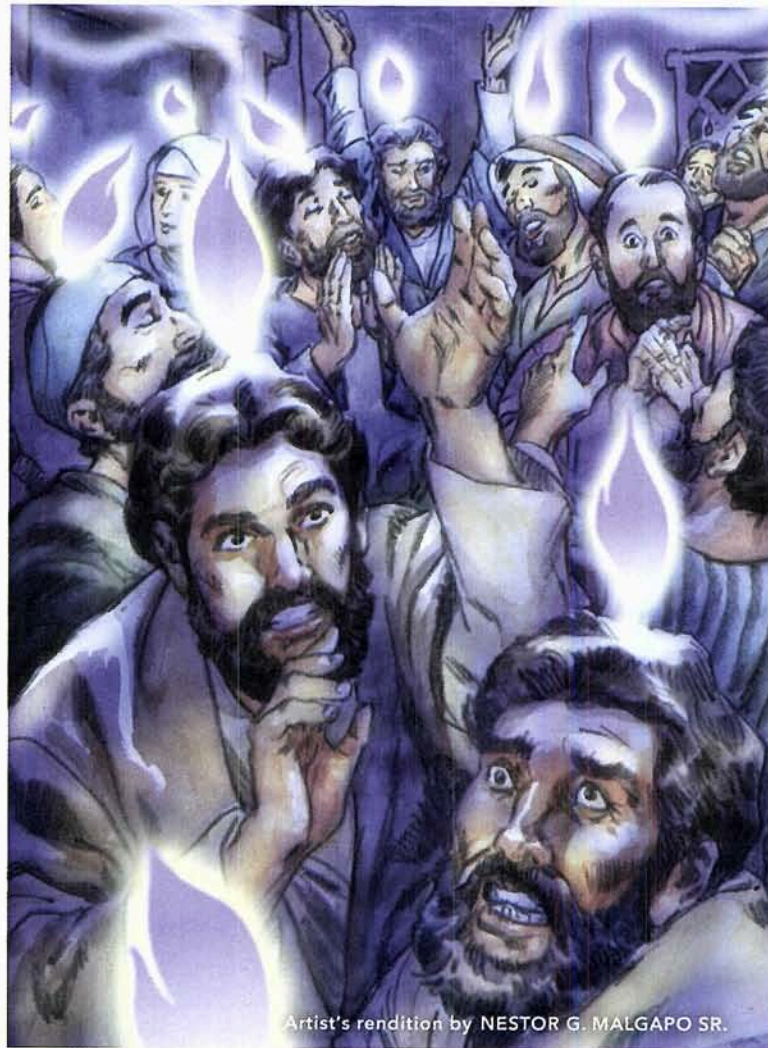
An important factor that Sister CK believes the reason she is able to stay focused on her goals is her membership in the true Church: "My life has been such a whirlwind; it definitely has not been easy. And honestly, there have been instances when I wanted to give up, but the biblical lessons from the Church Administration always help in reminding me that the struggles I'm going through are not permanent and that these are miniscule compared to what is ahead."

To her fellow young brethren who are struggling yet have dreams they aspire to fulfill, Sister CK conveyed, "Trust in what God can do. The path to our dreams may not always be smooth-sailing, but God can do far more than we could ever imagine. Have faith that if it's His will, it will be done. Don't get knocked down by failures or hardships. Just keep on doing your part and let God take care of the rest." 🙏

## The disciples receive the Holy Spirit

As promised, God sent the Holy Spirit to Christ's disciples on the day of Pentecost.

Forty days after His resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven. His apostles then immediately returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. They, together with about 120 believers, prayed for God's guidance as they had to choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot to be among the apostles. Ten days after Christ ascended to heaven, which is the 50th day since God resurrected Him, the Feast of Weeks or the Pentecost happened (Acts 1:1–26; Deut. 16:16).



Artist's rendition by NESTOR G. MALGAPO SR.

**W**HEN THE DAY of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a noise like a strong, blowing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw something like flames of fire that were separated and stood over each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak different languages by the power the Holy Spirit was giving them.

There were some religious Jews staying in Jerusalem who were from every country in the world. When they heard this noise, a crowd came together. They were all surprised, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were completely amazed at this. They said, "Look! Aren't all these people that we hear speaking from Galilee?"

Then how is it possible that we each hear them in our own languages? We are from different places: Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the areas of Libya near Cyrene, Rome (both Jews and those who had become Jews), Crete, and Arabia. But we hear them telling in our own languages about the great things God has done!" They were all amazed and confused, asking each other, "What does this mean?" 🗣️

(Acts 2:1–12 New Century Version)



## Ang iisang Iglesiang kay Cristo na ipinakilala ng Biblia

**M**ALAGANAP ANG PANINIWALA na lahat ng iglesiang nagpapakilalang Cristiano ay tunay ngang kay Cristo at ililigtas Niya. Para sa mga naniniwala rito, hindi isyu kung alin man sa maraming iglesiang nakatatag ngayon ang aniban ng tao dahil lahat naman daw ng mga ito ay pawang kay Cristo.

Subalit, papaano mangyayaring ang lahat ng iglesia sa mundo ay kay Cristo, gayong hindi lamang magkakaibang pangkatin ng relihiyon ang mga iyon kundi hindi rin parepareho ang kanilang aral? Ayon sa isang pag-aaral ng Center for the Study of Global Christianity, noong 2022, humigit-kumulang sa 45,000 na mga iglesiang nag-aangking sila'y Cristiano ang nakatatag. Kasama sa napakalaking bilang na ito ang mga denominasyon o mga organisasyong panrelihiyon na may kani-kaniyang aral at paniniwala.

Magkakaiba at magkakasalungat ang mga paniniwala nila tungkol sa Diyos, Biblia, pananampalataya, kaligtasan, mabubuting gawa, pagsamba, bautismo, pamamahala, at iba pa. Ang gayong mga di-pagkakasundo at pagtatalo dahil sa magkakaiba nilang paniniwala ang sinasabi ng mga historyador na isa sa mga sanhi ng pagdami ng mga relihiyong nagpapakilalang "Cristiano." Nangyari iyon sa Iglesia Katolika, na nahati nang kumalas dito ang Eastern Orthodox. Gayundin sa panig ng mga Protestante, na noong mga unang taon ng Repormasyon ay iilang grupo lamang ngunit kinalaunan, dahil din sa pagtatalo at di-pagkakasundo, ay nagkabaha-bahagi na sa iba't ibang iglesia at denominasyon, at ngayon ay umaabot na sa laksa-laksa ang bilang.

Kaya, hindi maaari na pare-parehong kay Cristo at pare-parehong ililigtas Niya ang lahat ng magkakaibang iglesiang iyan na magkakaiba ang mga aral at paniniwala. Sinumang nagtataglay ng gayong paniniwala ay inilalagay sa panganib ang kapakanan ng kaniyang kaluluwa.

Palibhasa'y napakahalaga ng kaligtasan ng ating kaluluwa, ito'y hindi dapat ipakipagsapalaran. Dapat ay tiyak na tiyak ang pagtatamo natin ng kaligtasan sa Araw ng Paghuhukom. Ang katiyakang iyon ay dapat nakasalig sa mga salita ng Diyos na nakasulat sa Biblia (Juan 20:30-31; II Tim. 3:15). Sapagkat kapag nagtaglay tayo ng paniniwalang hindi salig sa Biblia ay nasasapanganib ang pagtatamo natin ng kaligtasan (I Cor. 4:6; II Ped. 3:16). Kaya, napakahalaga na ang maging saligan ng pananampalataya at paglilingkod ng tao sa Diyos ay tanging ang Biblia.

Alinsunod sa turo ng Biblia, ang Iglesiang kay Cristo ay hindi marami kundi iisa lamang, at ang mga miyembro nito ay nagkakaisa sa sinasampalatayanan at hindi nagkakabaha-bahagi na tulad ng ibang mga iglesiang nakatatag ngayon.

**"Aking Iglesia."** Sa Mateo 16:18, pinatutunayan mismo ng tagapagtatag ng Iglesia na iisa lamang ang Iglesiang sa Kaniya. Ang sabi ni Cristo, "At sinasabi ko naman sa iyo, ikaw ay Pedro, at sa ibabaw ng batong ito ay itatayo ko ang aking iglesya, at hindi makapananaig sa kanya kahit ang kapangyarihan ng kamatayan" (Magandang Balita Biblia). Hindi Niya sinabing "Aking iglesia," na wari'y marami ang iglesiang itinatag Niya. Iisa lamang ang Iglesiang itinayo Niya at iyon ang tunay at kinikilala Niyang sa Kaniya. Ginagarantiyahan Niya na ang Kaniyang Iglesia ay hindi pananaigan ng kamatayan. Abutan man ng kamatayan ang mga kaanib nito, gayunman sila ang unang bubuhaying mag-uli sa araw ng pagbabalik Niya; at ang mga aabutang buhay sa araw na iyon ay hindi na mamamatay (I Tes. 4:16-17). Dahil doon ay wala nang kapangyarihan sa kanila ang ikalawang kamatayan (Apoc. 20:6). Manapa, sasa-Panginoon sila magpakailanman sa Bayang Banal at tatamasahin doon ang walang hanggang buhay (Apoc. 21:1-4).

**Isang katawan at isang ulo.** Alinsunod sa Colosas 1:18, ang Iglesiang itinatag ni Cristo ay katawan Niya at Siya ang ulo nito. Tiniyak ni Apostol Pablo, sa Efeso 4:4, na ang Iglesia ay “isang katawan” lamang. Hindi maaaring si Cristo ay ulo ng maraming katawan kundi ng iisa lamang na katawan o Iglesia.

**Sa iisang katawan binabaustimuhan ang mga mananampalataya.** Ang katawan ni Cristo, na siyang Iglesia Niya, ay hindi ang Kaniyang katawang pisikal na namatay nang ipako Siya sa krus. Bagkus, ayon sa I Corinto 12:12–13, ito ang katawan o organisasyong binubuo ng mga sumasampalataya kay Cristo. Dito sila nabautismuhan. Ang sabi ni Apostol Pablo, “Binabautismuhan tayong lahat sa isang katawan.”

**Isang katawan ngunit maraming miyembro.** Hindi kaya ang binabanggit ni Apostol Pablo na “Binabautismuhan tayong lahat sa isang katawan” ay tumutukoy sa iba’t ibang iglesia (mga relihiyon) na nagpapakilalang Cristiano, na ayon sa paniniwala ng iba ay sila diumanong bumubuo sa Iglesiang itinayo ni Cristo? Natitiyak nating hindi gayon, dahil nilinaw ni Apostol Pablo mismo, sa Roma 12:4–5, na ang marami na siyang bumubuo sa Iglesiang kay Cristo ay ang mga tao na naging sangkap o miyembro ng katawan ni Cristo—hindi iba’t ibang iglesia o denominasyon.

**Nagkakaisa ang mga miyembro ng katawan sa kanilang sinasampalatayanan.** Ang mga taong kaanib ng iisang katawan o Iglesiang kay Cristo ay tinagubilinan at pinaalalahanan ng mga apostol na magkaisa sa kanilang mga sinasampalatayanan. Ang sabi sa Efeso 4:4–6 at 12–13:

“Iisa lamang ang katawan at iisa rin ang Espiritu; gayon din naman, iisa lamang ang pag-asa ninyong lahat, dulot ng pagkatawag sa inyo ng Diyos. May isa lamang Panginoon, isang pananampalataya, at isang bautismo, isang Diyos at Ama nating lahat. Siya’y higit sa lahat, gumagawa sa lahat, at sumasalihat. ... Ginawa niya ito upang ihanda sa paglilingkod ang lahat ng hinirang, sa ikauunlad ng kanyang iglesya. Sa gayon, tayong lahat ay magkakaisa sa pananampalataya at pagkakilala sa Anak ng Diyos at magiging ganap ang ating pagkatao ayon sa pagiging-ganap ni Cristo.” (MB)

**Nagkakaisa ang nasa loob ng katawan.** Hindi dapat magkabaha-bahagi ang mga kaanib sa Iglesiang katawan ni Cristo dahil ang pagkakabahabahagi ay laban sa kagustuhan ng Diyos: “Inilagay ng Dios ang bawa’t isa sa mga sangkap ng katawan, ayon sa kaniyang minagaling. ... Upang huwag magkaroon ng pagkakabahabahagi sa katawan; kundi ang mga sangkap ay mangagkaroon ng

magkasing-isang pag-iingat sa isa’t isa” (I Cor. 12:18, 25). Ayaw ng Diyos ng pagkakabaha-bahagi sa loob ng Iglesia sapagkat ang pagkakampi-kampi ay hindi sa Kaniya kundi sa diablo (I Cor. 3:3–4 Revised Standard Version; Roma 8:9 RSV; Sant. 3:14–15 Lamsa Translation).

**Isang katawan lamang ang pinanagutan at ililigtas.** Bilang ulo ng katawan, si Cristong Tagapagligtas ang nanagot sa kasalanan ng mga miyembro ng Kaniyang katawan (Efe. 5:23, 25). Ginawa Niya ito dahil hinihingi ng batas ng Diyos na kung sino ang nagkasala ay siyang dapat mamatay (Roma 8:3–4; Deut. 24:16). Upang hindi malabag ang batas na iyon ay nilalang ni Cristo sa Kaniyang sarili ang isang taong bago na binubuo Niya, bilang ulo, at ng Iglesia, bilang katawan (Efe. 2:15–16; Col. 1:18). Sa sentidong iyon, hindi na Siya iba sa mga miyembro nito. Kaya, nagawa Niyang tubusin sila sa kanilang mga kasalanan upang sila ay ariing ganap at makatiyak ng kaligtasan sa galit ng Diyos sa Araw ng Paghuhukom (Roma 5:8–9; Zef. 1:18; II Ped. 3:7, 10). Samakatuwid, ayon sa mga patotoo ng Biblia, ang mga kasalanan na pinanagutan ni Cristo ay yaon lamang mga nagawa ng mga miyembro ng Kaniyang katawan. Kaya, sila ang may napakatibay na pag-asa sa kaligtasan.

**Ang Iglesiang katawan ni Cristo ay siya ring kawan na roon dapat mapabilang ang tao.** May ipinag-utos si Cristo na dapat tuparin ng mga taong hindi pa sangkap ng Kaniyang katawan o nasa labas pa ng Kaniyang Iglesia upang magkaroon din sila ng tiyak na pag-asa sa kaligtasan. Sa Juan 10:9, sinabi ni Cristo: “Ako ang pintuan; ang sinumang taong pumasok sa loob ng kawan sa pamamagitan ko ay maliligtas.” (Revised English Bible)\* Ang kawan na tinutukoy rito ay ang Iglesia na binili o tinubos ni Cristo ng Kaniyang dugo, batay sa Gawa 20:28 (Lamsa). Iyon din ang Iglesiang itinatag Niya na hindi pananaigan ng kamatayan. Doon dapat maging kaanib ang mga tao na nagnanais maligtas.

Ganiyan ipinakikilala ng Biblia ang iisang tunay na Iglesiang kay Cristo. Ito ang kaisa-isang katawan na may kaugnayan kay Cristo at ang mga kaanib nito ay nagkakaisa sa pananampalataya. Ang pangalang itinawag ng mga apostol sa Iglesiang ito ay isinunod sa pangalan ng Tagapagtatag, Pangulo, Manunubos, at Tagapagligtas nito—*Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Gawa 20:28 Lamsa).

Sa mga ayaw na ipakipagsapalaran ang kaligtasan ng kanilang kaluluwa, dapat silang maging kaanib sa Iglesiang ito—ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* na lumitaw sa Pilipinas noong Hulyo 27, 1914. Ang mga kaanib nito ay kinikilala ni Cristo na Kaniyang “ibang mga tupa.” Ito ang patotoo Niya sa kanila sa Juan 10:16:

“At mayroon akong ibang mga tupa, na hindi sa kulungang ito: sila’y kailangan din namang dalhin ko, at kanilang diringgin ang aking tinig; at sila’y magiging isang kawan, at *magkakaroon* ng isang pastor.”

Bagaman ang ibang mga tupa ni Cristo ay hindi sa parehong panahon at dako ng mundo na kinaroroonan ng mga Cristianong Judio at Gentil noong panahon ni Cristo at ng mga apostol Niya, gayunman ay magiging *Iglesia Ni Cristo* rin sila.

Ang ibang mga tupa ni Cristo ay magmumula sa “malayong mga panahon at dako” (Gawa 2:39 Rieu Translation).<sup>\*</sup> Sila rin ang mga itinuturing ng Diyos na Kaniyang mga anak na babae at lalaki na nasa “malayong silangan” (Isa. 43:5 Moffatt Translation).<sup>\*</sup> At ang malayong panahon na pagmumulan nila ay “mga wakas ng lupa” (Isa. 43:6 King James Version).<sup>\*</sup> Ito ang panahong malapit na ang wakas ng mundo at ang pagbabalik ni Cristo (Mat. 24:3, 33). Ang isa sa mga palatandaan ng pagsisimula ng panahong ito ay ang hinulaang digmaan na aalingawngaw o mapapabalita sa buong mundo (Mat. 24:6). Ang kinatuparan ng digmaang ito ay ang Unang Digmaang Pandaigdig (1914–1918). Kaalinsabay ng pagsiklab nito, narehistro ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* noong Hulyo 27, 1914, sa pamahalaan sa Pilipinas, isang bansa sa Malayong Silangan.

Samakatuwid, sinumang nagnanais na makatiyak ng kaligtasan ng kaniyang kaluluwa pagdating ng Araw ng Paghuhukom ay dapat dinggin ang tinig ni Cristo: pumasok sa kawan—umanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*—upang maligtas. 🌟

*\*Isinalin mula sa Ingles*

**Bienvenido A. Santiago Jr.**  
Associate Editor

# Ang pangalan ng Iglesia na itinayo ni Cristo

Ni SIEGFRED T. GOLLAYAN

**W**ALANG PAGTATALO na sa Biblia ay ipinakikilala ang Iglesia na dapat aniban ng tao upang magtamo ng kaligtasan sa pamamagitan ni Cristo. Tinatanggap din ng halos lahat ng samahang panrelihiyong nagpapakilalang Cristiano na ang Panginoong Jesucristo ang nagtayo ng tunay na Iglesia (Mat. 16:18). Sapagkat si Cristo ang nagtayo at may-ari ng tunay na Iglesia, tinawag ito ng mga apostol na *Iglesia Ni Cristo*—maliwanag na mababasa ang pangalang ito sa Biblia (gaya ng nakasaad sa Gawa 20:28 Lamsa Translation na “church of Christ”).

Bagaman may mababasa rin na iba pang katawagan na tumutukoy sa Iglesia, tulad ng “Iglesia ng mga banal” at “Iglesia ng mga panganay,” ang mga ito at ang iba pang katawagan ay pawang tumutukoy sa iisang Iglesiang itinayo ni Cristo. Ano ang katunayan nito sa Biblia?

## Ang opisyal na pangalan

Paano matitiyak ang pangalan ng Iglesia na itinayo ng Panginoong Jesucristo? Sa pamamagitan ng kaugnayan nito sa tagapagtatag at may-ari nito. Ganito ang paliwanag ng mga apostol tungkol dito:

“At siya ang ulo ng katawan, sa *makatuwid baga’y* ng iglesia ...” (Col. 1:18)

Ang tunay na Iglesia ay katawan ni Cristo at Siya ang ulo nito. Hindi ba tama lamang na ang katawan ay tawagin sa pangalan ng ulo nito?

Kaya, paano tinawag sa pangalan ni Cristo ang Iglesia na katawan Niya? Ang sabi sa Biblia:

“Magbatian kayo ng banal na halik. Lahat ng iglesya ni Cristo ay bumabati sa inyo.” (Roma 16:16 New Pilipino Version)

*Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang opisyal na pangalan ng Iglesiang ipinakikilala ng Biblia sapagkat ito ang katawan ni Cristo; Siya ang tagapagtatag at may-ari nito.

Kung may iba pang katawagan sa Iglesia na mababasa sa Biblia, ito ay para tumukoy sa uri ng mga kaanib o lugar na kinatatagan ng Iglesia. Ganito ang paliwanag ng mga iskolar ng Biblia:

“Sa pagkakagamit ng mga apostol, ang iglesya ay may iba’t ibang katawagan. Ang mga nagbibigay-uring parirala, gaya ng ‘ng mga Gentil’ (Roma 16:4); ‘ng mga banal’ (I Cor. 14:33); ‘ng mga panganay’ (Heb. 12:23), ay nagpapakilala ng uri, o ng kata-

ngian ng mga taong bumubuo sa mga iglesiang tinutukoy. Ang ‘ng Galacia,’ I Cor. 16:1; Gal. 1:2; ‘Asia,’ I Cor. 16:19; ‘Tesalonica,’ I Tes. 1:1; ‘Efeso,’ Apoc. 2:1, atbp., at ‘Sa Smirna, Pergamo, Tiatira,’ atbp., Apoc. 2:8–18, ay mga panlugar na katangian lamang, na nagpapakilala ng lokal o dako ng mga iglesiang binanggit.” (*The Church in the Bible*, p. 348, isinalin mula sa Ingles)

Tinawag din ang Iglesia sa katawagang “iglesia ng Diyos”—hindi dahil sa ito ang opisyal na pangalan nito, kundi upang ipakilala na sa Diyos na ang mga nasa tunay na Iglesia. Ganito ang paliwanag ng mga iskolar ng Biblia:

“Ang terminong ito ay ginamit sa sampung pagkakataon sa Bagong Tipan, at tanging ni Apostol Pablo lamang. May kapansin-pansin sa katotohanang malimit niya itong gamitin sa pagbati sa mga Cristianong Gentil. ...

“Ang mga Cristianong taga-Corinto ay nasa gitna ng iba’t iba at nakaririmarim na pagsamba sa mga diyus-diyusan (idolatriya). Hinayaan nila ang kanilang sarili, noong unang panahon, na “maihiwalay tungo sa mga hangal na diyus-diyusan” I Cor. 12:2. Ang pagkasira ng buhay na idinulot ng gawaing ito ay maliwanag na ipinakikita. I Cor. 6:9–11. Dapat nilang alalahanin na sila ngayon ay sa Diyos na. Sila ay mga pinili Niya—bagaman sila’y hangal at mahina, at masama at kinasusuklaman noong una.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 349–350, isinalin mula sa Ingles)

Sa kabila ng mga katawagang ito, pinatutunayan ng mga apostol na iisang organisasyon lamang ang Iglesiang itinatag ni Cristo, palibhasa’y iisa lamang ang Kaniyang katawan:

“Sapagka’t kung paanong sa isang katawan ay mayroong tayong

“  
**Idinadalangin ko sila,  
 hindi ang sanlibutan  
 kundi ang lahat ng ibinigay  
 mo sa akin, sapagkat  
 sila’y iyo. Ang lahat  
 ng akin ay iyo, at ang  
 lahat ng iyo ay akin;  
 at pararangalan ako sa  
 pamamagitan nila.**  
 ”

Juan 17:9–10  
 Magandang Balita Biblia

maraming mga sangkap, at ang lahat ng mga sangkap ay hindi pareho ang gawain: Ay gayon din tayo, na marami, ay iisang katawan kay Cristo, at mga sangkap na samasama sa isa’t isa.” (Roma 12:4–5)

### Hindi na ba pag-aari ng Diyos?

May nagsasabi na kung ang pangalan ng tunay na Iglesia ay *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, lilitaw raw na ito ay hindi sa Diyos kundi kay Cristo lamang.

Dahil ba sa ang tunay na Iglesia ay tinawag na “*Iglesia Ni Cristo*” ay hindi na ito sa Diyos kundi kay Cristo lamang? Pansinin ang pinatutunayan ng Panginoong Jesucristo sa mga talatang ito:

“Idinadalangin ko sila, hindi ang sanlibutan kundi ang lahat ng ibinigay mo sa akin, sapagkat sila’y iyo. Ang lahat ng akin ay iyo, at ang lahat ng iyo ay akin; at pararangalan ako sa pamamagitan nila.” (Juan 17:9–10 Magandang Balita Biblia)

Ang mga taong tunay na sa Diyos ay yaong mga ibinigay Niya kay Cristo—pag-aari din sila ng

Diyos. Kaya ang sabi ni Cristo: “Ang lahat ng akin ay iyo, at ang lahat ng iyo ay akin.” At ito rin ang sinasabi ng mga nag-aral tungkol sa Biblia, gaya ng nabanggit na sa itaas. Idagdag pa, pinatunayan din ng mga apostol na ang tinatawag na “iglesia ng Diyos” sa Biblia ay siya ring *Iglesia Ni Cristo*:

“Tinularan nga ninyo, mga kapatid, ang mga iglesya ng Diyos sa Judea, ang mga iglesya ni Kristo Jesus. Dumanas kayo ng hirap mula sa inyong mga kalahi tulad ng kanilang dinanas mula sa mga Judio.” (I Tes. 2:14 Biblia ng Sambayanang Pilipino)

Samakatuwid, ang tunay na Iglesiang sa Diyos o Iglesia ng Diyos ay ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*.

### Ang pangalang sa ikaliligtas

Hindi maaaring alisin ang pangalan ni Cristo sa pangalan ng Kaniyang Iglesia. Napakahalaga ng pangalan ni Cristo na siyang itinawag sa Iglesiang itinatag Niya:

“Kay Jesu-Cristo lamang matatagpuan ang kaligtasan, sapagkat sa silong ng langit, ang kanyang pangalan lamang ang ibinigay ng Diyos sa ikaliligtas ng tao.” (Gawa 4:12 MB)

Sa pangalan lamang ni Cristo matatagpuan ang kaligtasan. Kaya, ang nagtatakwil sa pangalan ni Cristo ay tiyak na walang kaligtasan.

Ang tunay na Iglesiang itinatag ng Panginoong Jesucristo ay walang iba kundi ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Dito dapat na umanib ang tao upang kilalanin ng Diyos at ni Cristo na Kanila at mapabilang sa mga maliligtas pagdating ng takdang araw. ☺

# Ang kaligayahang walang katulad

Ni RONNIE H. MUTYA

**S**A BUHAY NA ITO, maraming pinahahalagahan ang tao—mga bagay na pinaniniwalaan niyang makapagdudulot sa kaniya ng kaligayahan. Maaaring ito ay kapayapaan ng pag-iisip, edukasyon, ari-arian, propesyon, pamilya, estado sa buhay, karangalan, karangyaan, at marami pang iba. Upang makamit at maingat ang mga ito, ginagawa ng tao ang buo niyang makakaya at patuloy na binibigyang prioridad ang mga bagay na lubhang mahalaga sa kaniya.

Subalit, sa mga bagay ba rito sa mundo matatagpuan ng tao ang tunay na kasiyahan? At kung masaya man siya sa buhay na ito, iyon kaya ay magtatagal? Sino ang itinuturo ng Biblia na mga taong magkakaroon ng kagalakang walang katulad at walang hanggan?

## 'Mga tagapagmana ng Diyos'

May ipinakilala si Apostol Pablo na mga taong tatanggap ng mga pagpapala ng Diyos:

"Ang katotohanan na ngayon ay nahayag ay ang mga Gentil ay maaaring maging kapuwa mga tagapagmana ng Diyos na kasama ng Israel. Sila ay maging karapat-dapat na magkasama-sama sa iisang katawan—ang Iglesia Ni Cristo. Silang

lahat ay makatatanggap na ngayon ng mga pagpapala na ipinangangako ng Diyos sa Dakilang Balita tungkol kay Cristo." (Efe. 3:6 Last Days Bible)\*

Tinawag ni Apostol Pablo ang mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* na "mga tagapagmana ng Diyos." Dahil dito, sila ay "makatatanggap na ngayon ng mga pagpapala na ipinangangako ng Diyos."

Ano ang tinitiyak ng Biblia na dakilang pagpapalang nakalaan sa mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*? Sa Hebreo 12:22-23 ay ganito ang nakasulat:

"Subalit kayo ay nakarating na sa katotohanan (na rito ay nakatutok lamang ang mga simbolo), sa Bundok ng Sion, ang Bagong Jerusalem—ang makalangit na lungsod ng Diyos na buhay—at kayo ay bahagi ng lungsod na iyon. Nakisama kayo sa milyun-milyong mga anghel na nagdiriwang sa harapan ng Diyos, sa makalangit na santuwaryo—ang tunay na iglesia ni Cristo—na ang mga pagkakakilanlan ay nakaimbak sa langit. Kayo ay nakarating na sa Diyos—ang pinagmumulan at pamantayan ng katuwiran para sa lahat ng mga tao sa bayan; sa iningatang mga pansariling kata-ngian ng mga taong matuwid na sakdal na pinanauli sa pagkatao na

tulad ng kay Cristo." (The Remedy New Testament)\*

Totoong mapalad ang mga kaanib ng tunay na *Iglesia Ni Cristo* sapagkat sila ang may bahagi sa "Bagong Jerusalem—ang makalangit na lungsod ng Diyos na buhay" o ang Bayang Banal.

Kaya, magiging tunay na maligaya ang mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* dahil sila ang may pangakong pagpapala ng Diyos, higit sa lahat, sila ang pinangakuang makapaninirahan sa langit kapiling ang Diyos at si Cristo.

## 'Laging magiging masaya'

Inilarawan ng Panginoong Diyos ang magiging uri ng pamumuhay ng mga taong makarating sa Bayang Banal:

"Tandaan ninyo ito: Balang araw ako ay lilikha ng bagong langit at bagong lupa. Ang mga ito ay magiging lubos na kamangha-mangha na hindi na ninyo maiisip ang dati ninyong mga paghihirap. Maging masaya at laging magalak dahil sa aking gagawin: Ang Jerusalem ay magiging isang lugar kung saan magagalak ang mga tao; laging magiging masaya ang mga mamamayan doon. Ako ay magagalak tungkol sa Jerusalem at magsasaya ako kasama ng aking bayan. Ang mga tao ay hindi na mananangis o iiyak dahil sa

kanilang pagdurusa." (Isa. 65:17–19 Unlocked Dynamic Bible)\*

Tinitiyak ng Panginoon sa mga taong makapanirahan sa "bagong langit at bagong lupa" na sila ay "laging magiging masaya." Idinagdag pa ng Diyos na ito ay "magiging lubos na kamangha-mangha" sapagkat doon ay "hindi na [nila] maiisip ang dati [nilang] mga paghihirap." Kung sa mundong ito, pawang kalungkutan ang nadarama ng tao dahil sa bigat ng pagdadala ng buhay, sa Bayang Banal, ang "mga tao ay hindi na mananangis o iiyak dahil sa kanilang pagdurusa."

Ito ang inspirasyon ng mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* gaano man kahirap ang maglakbay sa mundong ito—mayroon silang magiging tunay na tahanan kung makukumpleto nila ang takbuhing bigay ng Diyos sa kanila. Kaya, pinahahalagahan nila ang kahalalang ibinigay ng Diyos. Hindi sila aalis sa Iglesia anuman ang mangyari. Bakit? Ano ang kasamaan kapag hindi nakapamalagi sa loob ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*? Inilahad ni Apostol Pablo ang kanilang sasapitin:

"Sapagkat wala akong panangutang hatulan ang mga nasa labas ng Iglesia Ni Cristo ... Ang Diyos ang Siyang hahatol sa mga nasa labas ng iglesia. Inuutos sa atin ng mga kasulatan na, Dapat ninyong alisin ang masamang tao sa gitna ninyo!" (I Cor. 5:12–13 UDB)\*

Kaawa-awa ang kalagayan ng mga taong aabutan ng Araw ng Paghuhukom na wala sa loob ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* sapagkat ang "Diyos ang Siyang hahatol sa mga nasa labas ng iglesia." Kahit pa natamo nila ang mga bagay na makapagpapasaya sa kanila rito sa mundo, mawawalan lamang ng kabuluhan ang lahat ng

iyon kung hindi naman sila maliligtas pagdating ng takdang panahon.

Kaya, hindi matutumbasan ng kahit anong kayamanan o karangalan dito sa mundo ang katiyakang makapanirahan sa Bayang Banal. Kung nakadarama man ng kasiyahan ang mga tao rito sa mundo, ito ay panandalian lamang; hindi ito panghabang-buhay.

Dapat pagsikapan ng tao, kung gayon, na mapabilang sa tunay na Iglesia. Dito matatagpuan ang tunay na kagalakan sapagkat ang mga kaanib nito ang magtatamo ng buhay na walang hanggan.

#### **'Ang Diyos ang may kapangyarihang gumawa'**

Paano kung sa gitna ng kanilang paglalakbay sa mundo ay makasagupa ng napakabigat na pagsubok at suliranin ang mga kaanib ng Iglesia? Ipinayo rin ni Apostol Pablo na:

"Lahat tayong kabilang sa iglesia ni Cristo, dapat natin Siyang purihin magpakailan-kailanman. ... Ang Diyos ang may kapangyarihang gumawa nang higit pa sa mahihiling natin! Hindi natin mahuhulaan kung ano ang kayang gawin ng Diyos upang tulongan tayo sa pamamagitan ng kapangyarihan Niya." (Efe. 3:21, 20 Traducción en Lenguaje Actual, isinalin mula sa Kastila)

Sa pamamagitan ng tulong ng Diyos, magtatagumpay ang mga lingkod Niya sa anumang hadlang sapagkat Siya ay "may kapangyarihang gumawa nang higit pa sa mahihiling" nila. Ang totoo, hindi nila lubos na maiisip "kung ano ang kayang gawin ng Diyos" sa buhay nila.

Kaya, hindi dapat mawalan ng pag-asa o masiraan ng loob ang mga

kabilang sa bayan ng Diyos. Anuman ang mangyari, dapat nilang ipagpatuloy ang pagbibigay kapurihan sa Kaniya sa pamamagitan ng pagtupad sa Kaniyang mga kalooban. Yayamang sila ang inibig at hinirang ng Diyos na taglay ang "kapayapaang ibinigay ni Cristo," (Col. 3:12, 15 Expanded Bible)\* marapat lamang na sila ay "magpakatampang, manalig, magpakatotoo, lakasan ang loob" sa kabila ng "pagkabalisa at kabiguan" (Juan 16:33 Amplified Bible).\*

Ang isa sa mga kalooban ng Diyos na dapat pagtalagahang gawin ng mga hinirang ay ang masiglang pagdalo sa mga pagsamba tulad ng ibinilin ng mga apostol:

"Mga kapatid, dapat ganito ang paraan kapag sama-sama kayong sumasamba sa Diyos. Ang bawat isa sa inyo ay dapat dadalong may salmo na aawitin, o may ituturo mula sa mga Kasulatan, o may anumang sinabi ang Diyos sa inyo, o mensahe sa wika na ibinigay ng Diyos, o may pagpapaliwanag sa mensahe. Dapat lahat ng gagawin ninyong magkakasama ay nakakapagpalakas ng loob ng isa't isa, sapagkat iglesia kayo ni Cristo." (I Cor. 14:26 UDB)\*

Ito ang dahilan ng walang sawang pagtuturo ng Kapatid na Eduardo V. Manalo, Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan, na pagtalagahan ang pagsamba sa Diyos—sapagkat dito itinuturo sa mga tunay na mananamba ang Kaniyang mga aral na lalong magpapalakas ng loob at magpapatibay ng kanilang pananampalataya.

#### **'Magtiwala ka sa Panginoon'**

Upang makatiyak na tatanggapin ang lahat ng mabubuting bagay mula sa Diyos, higit sa lahat ang

Kaniyang pagliligtas, ang mga lingkod Niya ay dapat na lubos na magtiwala sa Kaniya:

“Magtiwala ka sa Panginoon, at gumawa ng mabubuting bagay. Manirahan ka sa lupain, at magsanay sa pagiging tapat. Maging masaya na kasama ang Panginoon, at ibibigay Niya sa iyo ang mga hangarin ng iyong puso. Ipagtiwala mo ang iyong mga gawain sa Panginoon. Pagtiwalaan Siya, at Siya ang kikiilos para sa iyo. Gagawin Niyang maliwanag ang iyong katuwiran tulad ng ilaw, ang iyong makatuwirang layunin tulad ng araw sa katanghaliang-tapat. Isuko mo ang iyong sarili sa Panginoon, at matiyagang maghintay sa Kaniya ...” (Awit 37:3-7 God’s Word)\*

Ang mga lingkod ng Diyos ay pinapayuhang magtiwala sa Panginoon, “gumawa ng mabubuting bagay,” at “magsanay sa pagiging tapat.” Tulad ng laging ipinapaalala ng Namamahala sa Iglesia, dapat ay naitataguyod ng mga nasa kahalalan ang pamumuhay sa kabanalan o ang lubos na pagbabagong-buhay.

Nangako rin ang Panginoong Diyos na “Siya ang kikiilos” para sa Kaniyang mga hinirang. Anuman ang hangarin ng kanilang puso ay ibibigay Niya sa kanila kung hahanapin nila ang kasiyahan sa piling ng Panginoon. Kaya, sa bawat pagkakataon, dapat silang laging manalangin sa Diyos, magpakumbaba sa Kaniya, at matiyagang maghintay sa kasagutan Niya bilang kahayagan ng kanilang lubos na pagtitiwala sa Kaniya.

Nakadarama man ng labis na kalumbayan dulot ng iba’t ibang intindihin sa buhay, sinasampala-

tayanan ng mga tunay na kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* na ito ay panandalian lamang. Hindi ang mga bagay sa mundong ito ang tunay na nakapagpapasaya sa kanila. Kaya, kung may mga kabiguan man, hindi nila iisipin na sila ay kahabag-habag. Matibay ang pananalig nila na sila ang tunay na mapalad sapagkat sa kanila ipinagkaloob ng Diyos ang pag-asa sa kaligtasan. Ito ang maghahatid

sa kanila sa tunay na kaligayahang walang katulad. 🙏

*\*Isinalin mula sa Ingles*

*Batay sa leksiyon sa pagsambang pinangasiwaan ng Tagapamahalang Pangkalahatan, Kapatid na Eduardo V. Manalo, sa Lokal ng San Fernando, Distrito Eklesiyastiko ng Pampanga East noong Oktubre 14, 2022*

## Random notes

### The name befitting the true Church

“Name of the Church – If the church is to be scriptural, then it must have a scriptural name. ...

“As to the church, Christ promised to build it (Matthew 16:18). It is said that he purchased it with his own blood (Acts 20:28), that he was the saviour of it (Ephesians 5:23), and the head of it (Colossians 1:18). It is only natural that it would wear his name to honour its founder, builder, saviour, and head. So when Paul wrote to the church at Rome, and sent along the greetings of the congregations in his area, he said, ‘The churches of Christ greet you’ (Romans 16:16). Then in speaking to the church at Corinth, he said, ‘Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually’ (1 Corinthians

12:27). But since the body is the church (Ephesians 1:22, 23), then he was simply talking about the church of Christ. ...

“If it is not the church of Christ, then whose church would it be? Furthermore, with all of these names and descriptive phrases of it, it would seem that one would really be desirous of getting away from the scriptures to have to choose another name for the Lord’s church. But let us stay with the Bible and call the church what the Bible calls it. Then we will be right.” 🙏

*(The Church of the Bible. By J. C. Choate, World Literature Publications, 2000, pp. 28–29)*

## MINDORO OCCIDENTAL DISTRICTS

FAITH MORE  
PRECIOUS  
THAN GOLD

By LIE CATHERINE C. GALAM and JOBELE C. CUDIAMAT

**G**OLDEN PADDY FIELDS, mountain ranges, pristine beaches, underwater sceneries, the second largest contiguous coral reef in the world, the Apo Reef Natural Park, among other spectacular sites. The province of Occidental Mindoro is not merely a *Mina de Oro* (mine of gold) or mine of precious metals, as its Spanish explorers named it in 1570. It is also a promising hub for tourism and is considered as one of the food baskets of the Philippines.

But despite having a history that predates the Spanish conquest of the Philippines by hundreds of years, Occidental Mindoro is a relatively young province, having been borne out of the division of the Mindoro Island into two provinces—Oriental Mindoro and Occidental Mindoro—on June 13, 1950. The province is in the western part of Mindoro Island that lies off the southern coast of Mainland Luzon. Its major industries include agriculture (rice, tobacco, onions, garlic), fishing and aqua farming, food processing, and mining (gold, silver, copper, chrome).

**"APO REEF NATURAL PARK** is the second largest contiguous coral reef in the world after the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. It serves as a sanctuary for overfished species and important nesting grounds for several species of endangered sea turtles."

Source: [marine-conservation.org](http://marine-conservation.org)





# HIGHLIGHTS

**1958**

Brother Felix Y. Manalo conducted pastoral visitation and led an evangelical mission in the municipality of San Jose.

**1959 January 15**

Brother Felix Manalo officiated at the dedication of the concrete house of worship of the Local Congregation of San Jose.

**1989 April**

Almost 2,000 converts were baptized in Busuanga River.

**2013 April 12**

Brother Eduardo V. Manalo ordained 60 ministerial workers to become ministers of the gospel at the San Jose house of worship.

**2020 January 10**

Brother Eduardo Manalo conducted a pastoral visit at the Local Congregation of Mamburao.

The province was the second landing site of the US Expeditionary Force that helped liberate the country from Japanese occupation. It was also where what is considered as the first sugar central in the Far East when the Philippine Milling Company established a sugar processing factory in San Jose Municipality in 1910.

The people of Occidental Mindoro are generally peaceful and shy, but friendly. The same can be said of the pioneering members of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* in the province, whose congeniality to their fellowmen paved the way for the establishment and growth of the Church in Occidental Mindoro. Their efforts in helping in the Church's works of propagation and edification brought forth the formation of new ecclesiastical districts within their province.



"The entire Ecclesiastical District of San Jose, Mindoro Occidental will remain united with the Church Administration in all the intensive works and activities of the Church. We thank the Lord God that through the leadership of the ministers, ministerial workers, along with the Church officers, the Church members in our ecclesiastical district zealously continue in their services and performance of their duties to God. We are one with the Church Administration in overseeing and taking care of the brethren, so that no one will be separated and that all will be saved. We promise to remain active in all the endeavors of the Church and always submit to our dear Executive Minister, Brother Eduardo V. Manalo."

**Brother Arnel P. Macatangay**  
District supervising minister

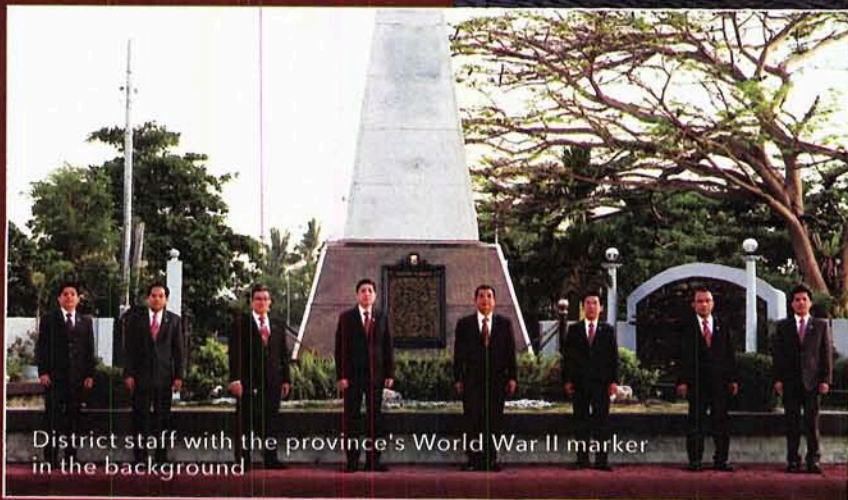
# Ecclesiastical District of San Jose, Mindoro Occidental

## San Jose is formed into an ecclesiastical district

The beginnings of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* (Church Of Christ) in the province of Occidental Mindoro can be traced back to early 1949 when Sisters Priscila Sarasola, Maria Jingco, Lydia Sarasola, and Brother Cesar Sarasola, members from the Local Congregation of Tayuman in Manila, arrived in San Jose (formely Pandurukan) to reside there. Because of their fervent desire to carry on with their services to God, they agreed to have Sister Priscila write a letter to Brother Felix Y. Manalo, God's Messenger in these last days, to ask for a minister who would propagate God's words and start the missionary endeavors of the *Iglesia Ni Cristo* in their area. The request was approved; Brother Felix Manalo sent Brother Catalino Alipio, a minister of the gospel.

The first worship service was held in a Quonset hut owned by Sister Priscila in Brgy. Pag-asa, San Jose. On March 13, 1949, the first local congregation in San Jose was established.

Afterwards, the Church Administration sent three more ministerial workers, namely, Brothers Samuel Gaña, Gregorio Abaya, and Marcelino Tacasa. Sharing the gospel with the locals in San Jose was not easy. The brethren were persecuted but that only strengthened their determination to intensify the propagational work, not being deterred. With the help and guidance of God, the initial fruits of their labors resulted in the conversion of ten people.



District staff with the province's World War II marker in the background

**43** Local Congregations  
**9** Extensions  
**10** Group Worship Services

### District Office Address

Felix Y. Manalo Ave., Brgy. Pag-asa,  
San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, PH

### San Jose

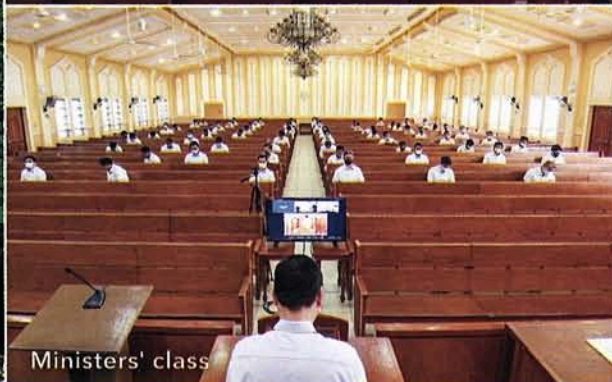
First Local Congregation

### Pedro Almedina

First District Supervising Minister



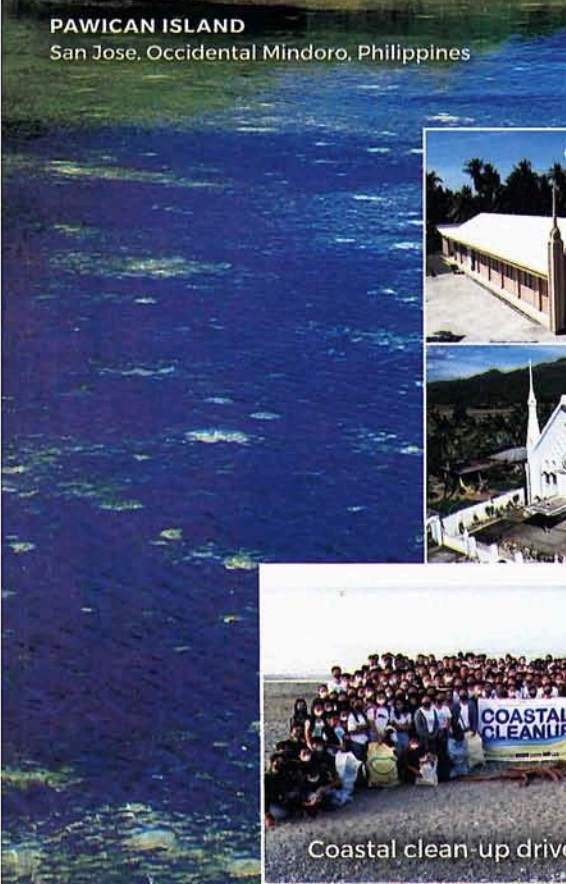
District ministers and ministerial workers



Ministers' class



SAN JOSE



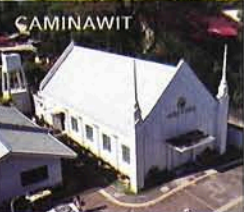
PAWICAN ISLAND  
San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines



BUBOG



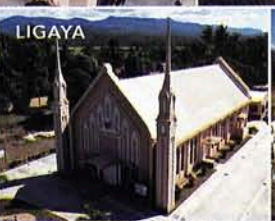
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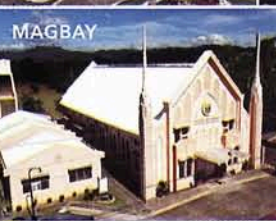
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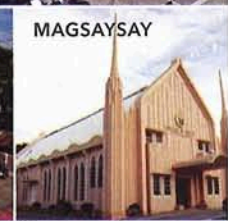
CONCEPCION



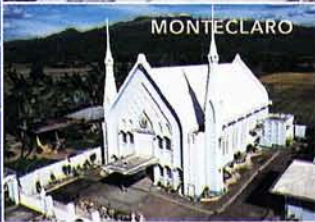
LIGAYA



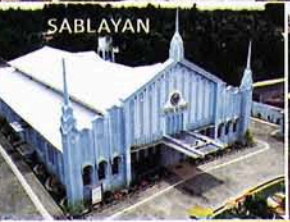
MAGBAY



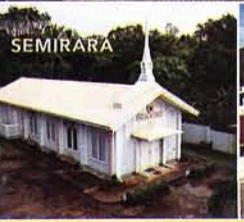
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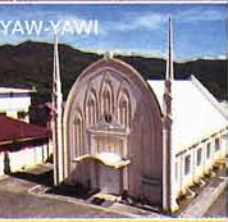
MONTECLARO



SABLAYAN



SEMIRARA



YAW-YAWI



Coastal clean-up drive



Himig ng Kaligtasan Buklod Edition

# Ecclesiastical District of Mamburao, Mindoro Occidental

**26**  
Local  
Congregations

**5**  
Extensions

**19**  
Group  
Worship Services

After that pioneering year of propagation, local congregations were established one after another. By 1985, when the office building for the Ecclesiastical District of Mindoro Occidental was inaugurated, there were already 35 local congregations established.

To all the more efficiently look after the spiritual needs of the growing number of members, on November 6, 2018, the Church Administration approved that the Ecclesiastical District of Mindoro Occidental be split into two—Mamburao, Mindoro Occidental and San Jose, Mindoro Occidental—the latter being the former Mindoro Occidental Ecclesiastical District.

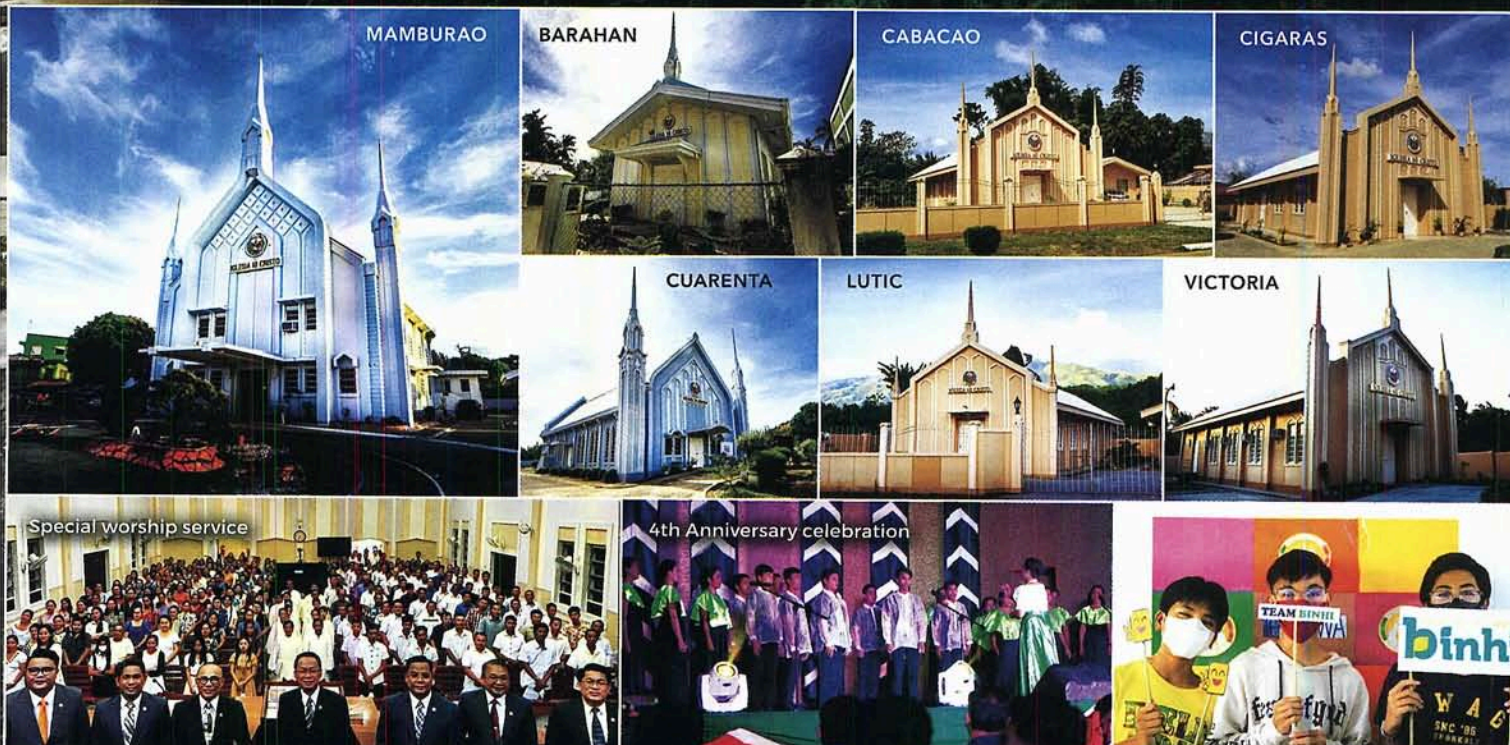
To date, the Ecclesiastical District of San Jose, Mindoro Occidental comprises 43 local congregations, 9 extensions, and 10 group worship services under the supervision of Brother Arnel P. Macatangay.

## The younger ecclesiastical district

The Ecclesiastical District of Mamburao was only established on November 6, 2018, when the former Ecclesiastical District of Mindoro Occidental was split into two, but the propagational works of the Church there has already started in 1957. The Church activities then were held at the house of Brother Diosdado Robles and were led by Brother Ernesto Ramos. Helping Brother Ramos were two volunteer workers, Brothers Alejandro Meneses and Pacifico Salum.

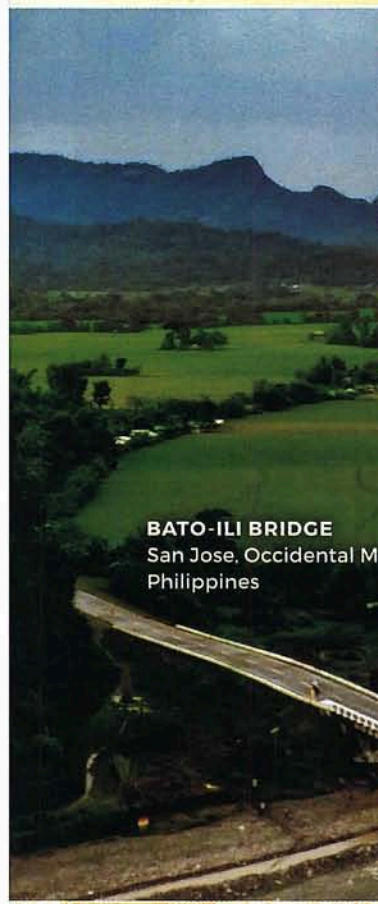
Their initial efforts resulted in the conversion of six people. And on March 7, 1957, the Church Administration approved the establishment of the Local Congregation of Mamburao with the holding of its first worship service.

Made of bamboo and straw, the first chapel the brethren used was built on the land owned by Brother Gerardo Tañedo along





District staff at the provincial capitol



**BATO-ILI BRIDGE**  
San Jose, Occidental Mindoro,  
Philippines



Ministers' class

**District Office Address**  
112 National Road, Brgy. Payompon,  
Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro, PH

**Mamburao**  
First Local Congregation

**Herminio R. Guimary**  
First District Supervising Minister



"The brethren in our ecclesiastical district wholeheartedly thank God for using Brother Eduardo Manalo in overseeing the Church Of Christ. We greatly feel his love and care through his untiring dedication to teach God's words that inspire us to firmly hold on to our election and right to attain salvation. All the ministers, ministerial workers, and Church officers will continue leading all the brethren in obedience to the commandments of God. We will also completely unite with the Church Administration for the success of all the activities that they launch."

**Brother Wilfredo A. de Luna**  
District supervising minister



District ministers and ministerial workers

"My membership in the Church has a great impact on my career because of the guidance and advice that I receive each time I attend the worship service. I am able to apply Christian values in my work ethics, such as getting to work on time, being hardworking, and always giving my best in providing services to our fellowmen. Whatever happens, I will remain in the Church Of Christ."



**Sister Analisa F. Guillard**

Deaconess

Local Congregation of Rumbang  
Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and  
Management Officer

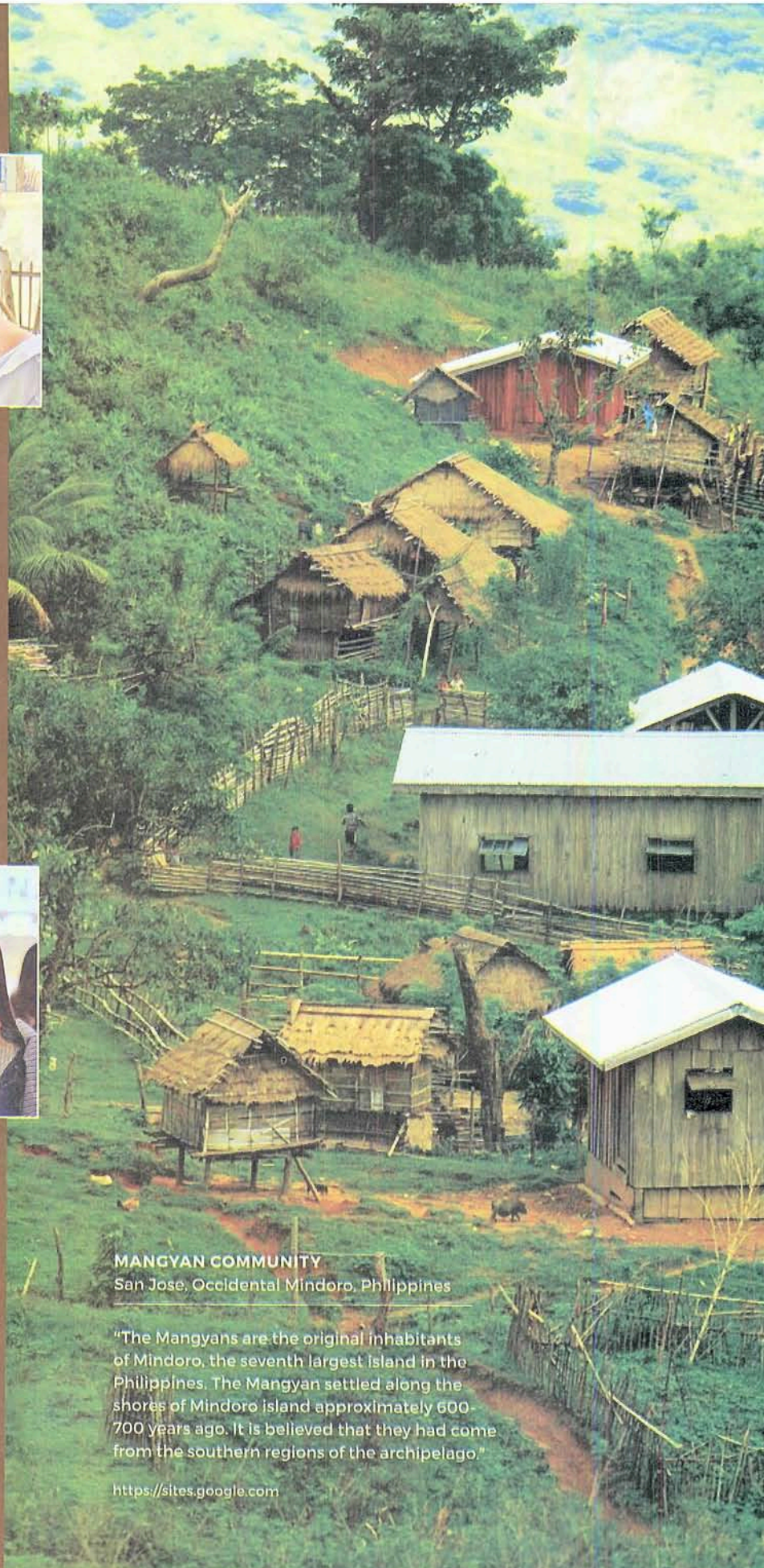
"My office is responsible for the promotion and development of tourism in our municipality. At the same time, we promote the preservation and protection of arts and culture. Diligence and perseverance and, most of all, strong faith in God, I believe, helped me succeed. While there are policies and procedures that must be observed in government service, God's words are my primary guide in life."



**Sister Ann Roxanne J. De Vera**

KADIWA district officer

Local Congregation of San Jose  
Municipal tourism officer



**MANGYAN COMMUNITY**

San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines

"The Mangyans are the original inhabitants of Mindoro, the seventh largest island in the Philippines. The Mangyan settled along the shores of Mindoro island approximately 600-700 years ago. It is believed that they had come from the southern regions of the archipelago."

<https://sites.google.com>

the highway. With God's grace, the brethren were able to find a more strategic lot on June 2, 1965. There, a bigger house of worship was constructed for the local congregation to cater to the growing number of brethren. Its dedication to God was officiated by Brother Bienvenido C. Santiago on October 29, 1982.

The other congregations that are also considered as pioneers in the young district are those of Ligang and Abra de Ilog. During the establishment of the ecclesiastical district, there were 22 local congregations. In less than five years, the district already comprises 26 local congregations, five extensions, and 19 group worship services. The district supervising minister at present is Brother Wilfredo A. de Luna.

Tried and tested, the faith of the brethren in Occidental Mindoro is proven to be much more precious than gold. They are fervent in their hope to receive God's promise of salvation on the day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. 🌿

With assistance from  
**San Jose, Mindoro Occidental  
District Multimedia Team**



**Mamburao, Mindoro Occidental  
District Multimedia Team**



"I was chief of the environmental bureau for 38 years. But even if there were a lot to do and close attention is needed to do my tasks, I made it my priority to fulfill my duties as head deacon. All those years that I was in service, I fulfilled my

responsibilities with all honesty and dedication, just like in performing my duties in the Church. I promise to God that as long as I have life and strength, I will lead my household to remain zealous in our Church offices."

**Brother Rogelio Daproza**

Head Deacon  
Local Congregation of Mamburao  
*Chief Provincial Environmental  
Management Officer (Ret.)*



"What I have achieved is just God's answer to my devotional prayers. I asked God to give me the opportunity so that my dreams may be fulfilled, and He did not fail me. Even if I am busy with my work, that never hindered me in fulfilling

my duties. And because of the Church Administration's dedication to teach us God's words, even in difficult situations and times of severe trials, me and my family are able to carry on."

**Brother Edward Cabalbag**

Head Deacon  
Local Congregation of San Vicente  
*Department Head, Sablayan General  
Services Office*

# Ang kaligtasan, ang Tagapagligtas, at ang ililigtas

Ni PIERRE ANTHONY M. RACSAG

**S**A PANAHONG ITO ng matitinding kahirapan at mga pagsubok, normal sa isang tao ang gumawa at humanap ng paraan upang bigyang lunas ang kaniyang mga suliranin. Ang marami ay ibinubuhos ang kanilang buong panahon sa paghahanapbuhay para matugunan ang pangangailangan nila sa araw-araw, maging ng kanilang mga mahal sa buhay.

Maaaring sa pananaw ng maraming tao, ang ganitong isipan ay tama. Subalit kung ang pagbabatayan natin ay ang mga salita ng Diyos na nakasulat sa Biblia, tama kaya na gugulin ang buong buhay at panahon para lamang sa ikabubuhay?

Bilang tao ay may pananagutan tayo sa Diyos na lumalang sa atin—una sa lahat ang kilalanin Siya, maglingkod sa Kaniya, at sumunod sa Kaniyang mga kautusan (Ecles. 12:13). Kaya, kung uubusin ng tao ang kaniyang buong panahon para

lamang sa buhay sa mundong ito ay nagkakasala siya sa Diyos. Kapag nabigo ang tao na isagawa ang paglilingkod na hinihingi ng Diyos, darating ang panahong huhukuman siya ng Diyos, at parurusahan nang walang hanggan (II Tes. 1:8–9; II Ped. 3:7, 10). Samakatuwid, kung may dapat na ipagpauna o higit na pahalagahan ang tao kaysa kaniyang pang-araw-araw na pangangailangan, ito ay ang matugunan niya ang kaniyang pananagutan sa Diyos, sa ikapagtatamo niya ng kaligtasan sa Araw ng Paghuhukom.

## Ang kaligtasan

Bakit kailangan ng tao ang kaligtasan? Sapagkat ang tao ay naging masama sa paningin ng Diyos dahil sa kasalanan. Ganito ang pahayag ni Apostol Pablo:

“Sapagkat ang lahat ay nagkasala, at walang sinumang nakaabot sa kaluwalhatian ng Diyos.” (Roma 3:23 Magandang Balita Biblia 2012)

Ipinasiya ng Diyos na pagbayarin ang tao sa nagawa niyang kasalanan: “Sapagkat kamatayan ang kabayaran ng kasalanan ...” (Roma 6:23 MB2012)

Subalit, hindi ito nangangahulugan na kapag ang tao ay nalagutan na ng hininga ay iyon na ang kabayaran ng kaniyang kasalanan. Ganito pa ang itinuro ni Apostol Pablo:

“At kung paanong itinakda sa mga tao ang mamatay na minsan, at pagkatapos nito ay ang paghuhukom.” (Heb. 9:27)

Itinuturo ng mga Banal na Kasulatan ang paghuhukom na gaganapin ng Diyos sa tao. Bagaman napugto na ang kaniyang hininga, gayunman ay may pagkabuhay na mag-uli:

“Huwag ninyong ipanggilalas ito: sapagka’t dumarating ang oras, na ang lahat ng nangasa libingan ay makaririnig ng kaniyang tinig, At magsisilabas; ang mga nagsigawa ng mabuti, ay sa pagkabuhay na maguli sa buhay; at ang



mga nagsigawa ng masama, ay sa pagkabuhay na maguli sa paghatol.” (Juan 5:28–29)

Batay sa mga talata ng Biblia, ang tao na gumawa ng masama, bagaman nalagutan na ng hininga, ay bubuhaying mag-uli upang tanggapin ang hatol ng Diyos—ang ikalawang kamatayan o ang dagat-dagatang apoy:

“At ang kamatayan at ang Hades ay ibinulid sa dagatdagatang apoy. Ito ang ikalawang kamatayan, *sa makatuwid ay* ang dagatdagatang apoy.” (Apoc. 20:14)

Ang mga taong ibubulid sa “dagat-dagatang apoy” ay “pahihirapan araw at gabi magpakailan kailan man” (Apoc. 20:10). Ito ang ganap na kabayaran ng kasalanan na ginawa ng tao.

Kung mahalagang asikasuhin at pag-ukulan ng panahon ng tao ang mga pangunahing pangangailangan niya sa mundong ito, tulad ng pagkain, inumin, tirahan, at pananamit, lalong dapat niyang paghandaan ang ukol sa ikapagtatamo niya ng kaligtasan. Ito ang higit sa lahat na dapat pakahangarin ng tao. Hindi ito dapat ipagwalang-bahala o iwasan.

### **Ang Tagapagligtas**

Paano tatamuhin ng tao ang kaligtasan kung ang lahat ng tao ay nakagawa ng kasalanan? Ito ay sa pamamagitan ng biyayang kaloob ng Diyos:

“Sapagkat kamatayan ang kabayaran ng kasalanan, ngunit ang walang bayad na kaloob ng Diyos ay buhay na walang hanggan sa pamamagitan ni Cristo Jesus na ating Panginoon.” (Roma 6:23 MB2012)

“

**Huwag ninyong ipanggilalas ito: sapagka’t dumarating ang oras, na ang lahat ng nangasa libingan ay makaririnig ng kaniyang tinig, At magsisilabas; ang mga nagsigawa ng mabuti, ay sa pagkabuhay na maguli sa buhay; at ang mga nagsigawa ng masama, ay sa pagkabuhay na maguli sa paghatol.**

”

Juan 5:28–29

Ayon kay Apostol Pablo, ang kaligtasan ay kaloob ng Diyos. Ito ay matatamo ng tao sa pamamagitan ng Panginoong Jesucristo, sapagkat Siya ang itinalaga ng Diyos upang maging Tagapagligtas:

“Ibinangon ng Dios ng ating mga magulang si Jesus, na siya ninyong pinatay ... Siya’y pinadakila ng Dios ng kaniyang kanang kamay *upang maging* Principe at Tagapagligtas ...” (Gawa 5:30–31)

Hindi matatamo ng sinuman ang kaligtasan sa ganang kaniyang sarili lamang. Kailangan niya ang Panginoong Jesucristo. Subalit hindi ito nangangahulugan na para maligtas ang tao ay sapat nang sumampalataya o tumawag lamang sa pangalan ng Panginoong Jesucristo. Sinabi Niya mismo:

“At bakit tinatawag ninyo ako, Panginoon, Panginoon, at di ninyo

ginagawa ang mga bagay na aking sinasabi?” (Lucas 6:46)

Binibigyang-diin ng Panginoong Jesucristo ang halaga ng paggawa o pagtupad ng mga bagay na Kaniyang sinasabi. Kapag ginawa ito ng tao, ipagkakaloob sa kaniya ng Panginoon ang buhay na walang hanggan (Juan 10:27–28). Samakatuwid, napakahalagang malaman ng tao kung ano ang ipinagagawa ng Tagapagligtas para ang tao ay maligtas.

### **Ang ililigtas**

Ano ang ipinagagawa ng Panginoong Jesucristo para ang tao ay makasumpong ng buhay na walang hanggan o ng kaligtasan? Ganito ang Kaniyang pagtuturo:

“Kayo’y magsipasok sa makipot na pintuan: sapagka’t maluwan ang pintuan, at malapad ang daang patungo sa pagkapahamak, at marami ang doo’y nagsisipasok. Sapagka’t makipot ang pintuan, at makitid ang daang patungo sa buhay, at kakaunti ang nangakakasumpong noon.” (Mat. 7:13–14)

Ang tao’y dapat na pumasok sa pintuan upang makasumpong ng buhay o ng kaligtasan. Ang pintuan na tinutukoy ay ang Panginoong Jesucristo mismo (Juan 10:9) at magagawa ng tao ang pagpasok sa Kaniya sa pamamagitan ng pagpasok sa Kaniyang kawan:

“Ako ang pintuan; ang sinumang taong pumasok sa loob ng kawan sa pamamagitan ko ay maliligtas. ...” (Juan 10:9 Revised English Bible, isinalin mula sa Ingles)

Mismong ang Panginoong Jesucristo, na Siyang Tagapagligtas, ang nagpapatotoo na ang mga mali-

ligtas ay nasa loob ng isang kawan. Hindi sila basta nagpahayag lamang ng kanilang pagkilala sa Panginoong Jesucristo ni tinanggap lamang Siya bilang pansariling Tagapagligtas. Malinaw sa Biblia na ang mga maliligtas ay nasa loob ng kawan. Ang kawan ay ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo*:

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

Samakatuwid, upang ang tao ay magtamo ng kaligtasan, dapat siyang pumasok o umanib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. Ito ang ililigtas ng Tagapagligtas. Bakit ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang ililigtas?

Bakit ang mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang nakatitiyak ng kaligtasan, gayong sila ay nagkasala rin? Dahil ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang binili o tinubos ng Panginoong Jesucristo ng Kaniyang dugo. Bunga nito, natamo ng mga kaanib nito ang kapatawaran sa kanilang mga kasalanan:

“Na sa kaniya’y mayroon tayo ng ating katubusan sa pamamagitan ng kaniyang dugo, na kapatawaran ng ating mga kasalanan, ayon sa mga kayamanan ng kaniyang biyaya.” (Efe. 1:7)

Dahil ang *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang tinubos at napatawad sa kasalanan, tiyak na tatamuhin nito ang karapatang maglingkod sa Diyos at ang kaligtasan pagdating ng Araw ng Paghuhukom:

“Gaano pa kaya ang dugo ni Cristo, na sa pamamagitan ng walang hanggang Espiritu ay inihandog sa

Dios ang kanyang sarili na walang kapintasan, upang malinis ang ating budhi mula sa gawaing naghahatid sa kamatayan. Sa gayon, makapaglingkod tayo sa buhay na Dios!” (Heb. 9:14 New Pilipino Version)

“Ngunit pinatunayan ng Diyos ang kanyang pag-ibig sa atin nang mamatay si Cristo para sa atin noong tayo’y makasalanan pa. Yamang sa pamamagitan ng kanyang dugo, tayo ngayon ay napawalang-sala, lalong tiyak na maliligtas tayo sa poot ng Diyos.” (Roma 5:8–9 MB2012)

Kung may mga tao man na nagtuturo ng ibang paraan para mapatawad sa kasalanan at maligtas, gayunman, tiniyak ng mga apostol na ang katubusan lamang ang tanging paraan:

“At ayon sa kautusan, ay halos masasabi kong lahat ng mga bagay ay nililinis ng dugo, at maliban na sa pagkabuhos ng dugo ay walang kapatawaran.” (Heb. 9:22)

### **Ang pananagutan ng mga ililigtas**

Hindi natatapos sa pagpasok o pag-anib sa *Iglesia Ni Cristo* ang kailangang gawin ng tao upang siya ay maligtas. Hinihingi ng Tagapagligtas ang katapatan sa mga ililigtas Niya:

“Ngunit ang mananatiling tapat hanggang wakas ang siyang maliligtas.” (Mat. 24:13 MB2012)

Ang tapat ay masunurin sa mga utos ng Panginoong Diyos (Apoc. 14:12 MB2012). Kaya, ito ang patuloy na itinataguyod ng mga kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*—ang pagsunod sa lahat ng utos ng Panginoong Diyos. Sa ganitong paraan ay napatutunayan nila ang kanilang katapatan sa Kaniya. Tinitiyak ng Biblia na

hindi malulugi ang kaanib na tapat at masunurin sa mga utos ng Diyos:

“Ang sabi ng Diyos, ‘Iiligtas ko ang mga tapat sa akin, at iingatan ko ang sinumang taong ako’y kikilanlin. Kapag sila’y tumawag, laging handa ako na sila’y pakinggan, aking sasamahan at kung may problema ay sasaklolohan; aking ililigtas at ang bawat isa ay pararangalan. Sila’y bibigyan ko’t gagantimpalaan ng mahabang buhay, at nakakatiyak, tatamuhin nila aking kaligtasan!’” (Awit 91:14–16 MB2012)

Sa buhay pa lamang na ito, nakatitiyak na ng pagpapala ang mga tapat at masunuring kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*: mahabang buhay, kasagutan sa mga panalangin sa Diyos, lunas sa mga suliranin—at higit sa lahat ay ang pangakong kaligtasan.

Samakatuwid, kung paanong kailangang maging kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, kailangan ding manatiling tapat at masunuring kaanib nito hanggang wakas upang maligtas pagdating ng Araw ng Paghuhukom.

Hindi masama na maghangad at magtamo ang tao ng mga bagay na materyal na kaniyang kailangan sa araw-araw, lalo na at ang mga ito naman ay mula sa kaniyang pinagpagalan at sa marangal na paraan. Subalit, kung paanong nagsisikap ang tao na matugunan ang kaniyang mga pangangailangan sa buhay, lalong higit na dapat pagsikapan niya ang nauukol sa ikapagtatamo ng kaligtasan sa pamamagitan ng pagsunod sa itinuturo ng Tagapagligtas, upang makabilang sa mga taong ililigtas—ang mga tapat na kaanib ng *Iglesia Ni Cristo*. ●

# Kami ang mangunguna

Kami ay nasa kapisanang Buklod,  
Nasa loob ng bayang ibinukod.  
Kami ay dalawa subalit naging isa;  
Sa harapan ng Diyos ay pinagsama.

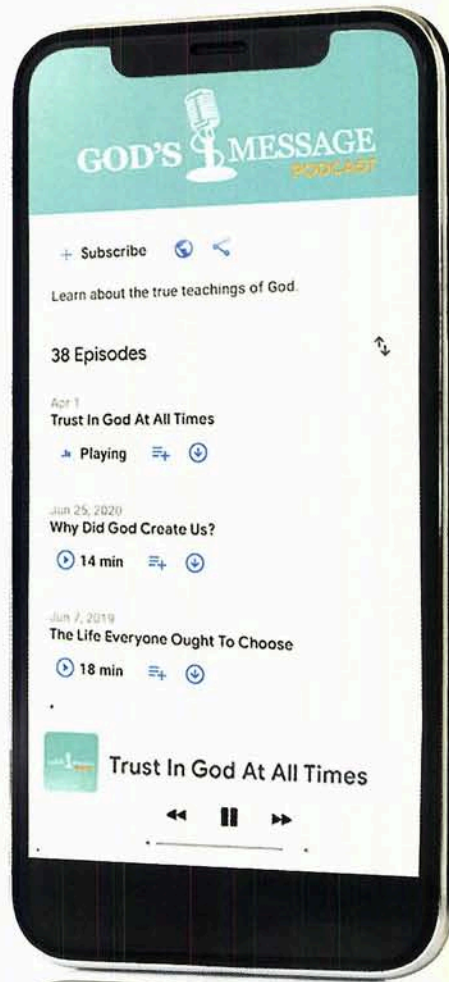
Magkatuwang na hinarap ang bagong buhay,  
Tapat na pagmamahal sa isa't isa ang alay.  
Mga pangarap, sabay naming aabutin,  
Pangakong binitawan sa isa't isa ay tutupdin.

Ang aming buhay ay di naging madali,  
Pagkat ang kasamaan sa mundo ay naghari.  
Kalamidad, pagsubok, at mga karamdaman  
Nagpabigat sa pagdadala ng sambahayan.

Ang naging sandigan namin sa bawat sandali,  
Ang Makapangyarihang Diyos na kumakandili.  
Di kami pinabayaan, Kaniyang iniligtas sa tuwina,  
Inalalayan at pinagsanggalang ang aming pamilya.

Di matapos ang aming pagpapasalamat sa Kaniya,  
Pagkat patuloy na pinatatatag, aming pag-asa.  
Namamalagi ang aming pangako sa Diyos, ating Ama:  
Pagsunod sa lahat Mong utos, kami ang mangunguna.

ERIC ANTENOR  
MANILA, PHILIPPINES



# GOD'S MESSAGE

**PODCAST**



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