



The MENORAH

The Official Publication of the Fullness of Christ International Ministries

THE BIRTH OF A NATION:

FOLLOWING HIS COMMISSION
BEING ONE WITH
HIS COMPASSION:
FOCIM
LAUNCHES LEAD
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FOCIM INSTRUMENTAL
IN THE VICTORY OF THE
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TOP KOREAN STREET

**NEW LEADERS,
NEW EXPERIENCE!**

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esus is Lord (JIL), Christ Commission Fellowship (CCF), and Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF), are all well known Christian megachurches in the Philippines, having 2000 or more worshippers in attendance during a service. Add to that their growing and expanding satellite and home churches across the country and even abroad. But another common in these megachurches is that they all came from humble beginnings.

From a Bible study of 15 PUP students, *Jesus is Lord* has exploded to a phenomenal constituency of over a million. Another megachurch began as an evangelistic home Bible study in Brookside Subdivision, Cainta. Only three couples attended that first Bible study, but as they began to invite their friends, the Bible study grew and is now known as Christ's Commission Fellowship. On the other hand, Victory Christian Fellowship started when a team of sixty five American university students were sent on a one month summer mission trip in Manila's University Belt. After two weeks of evangelistic meetings at the Girl Scouts Auditorium on Padre Faura, the new church, consisting of about 150 high school and university students, moved into the basement of the Tandem Theater on Recto Avenue. From this original group of 150, Victory is now composed of thousands of students, professionals, and families.

Luke 13:19 says "It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the bird of the air nested in its branches. It's truly amazing how a magnificent and useful tree sprouted from a minuscule seed. Bible history is punctuated with examples of how the Lord's people, with divine help, have achieved the greatest of goals with but tiny means at their disposal. Small doesn't mean cheap, shoddy, or low quality. As the old saying goes "from little things, big things grow." Just like these well known megachurches in the country.

Our church, Fullness of Christ International Ministries may be small in number, but through our church, many have been blessed. For the past 30 years, FOCIM has survived challenges and has stayed active in nation transformation and in the expansion of the Kingdom of God through its partnership with Touching Heaven Changing Earth Movement led by the BSP Christian Fellowship and other Christian churches and through the help of Mandaluyong Christian Churches Association (MCCA). Nation transformation is a giant of a goal for us who are relieved to constitute a small church.

Through the different ministries of our church, children are taught to love and respect the family, the nation, and God above all. The youth are being equipped to reach non-believing youth. Families are united through home churches. Yes, we may be a small church but Bible speaks of how God loves to use small things. He delights in using nothings and nobodies.

Just like how He fed five thousand people out of a boy's five barley loaves and two fish (John 6:9). Remember in Mark 12:42, when a widow dropped two coins into the offering and went her way and Jesus said "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on. And how can we forget the story of the mustard seed, that nothing is impossible; we can move a mountain even with faith as small as a grain of mustard seed (Matthew 17:20).

One thing that one can realize about God through these stories is that little things matter to Him. So no matter how small we are as a church, we matter to Him. No matter how unworthy and undeserving we think we are, we matter to God. Most people only look at the big and grand things, but God cares about the little things. It means there is hope for all of us. It also means there is no hiding place for any of us because He can do something with all of us. He's been making something out of our small church. We can no longer hide behind the excuse that "I am a nobody," "I don't have anything He would want," "I can't sing or dance," "I can't teach or preach," or "I am not good with people." You can do anything God wants you to do or be. Our church may be small now, but we should never forget that from little things, big things grow. Remember, not by might nor by power, but by the spirit of the Lord (Zechariah 4:6).

We can all feel and see that God is up to something supernatural this year. He is moving in our church, shaking and challenging us to trust and move with His supernatural anointing. So what if we are small? We have been called to be a lampstand to the nation and He has equipped us for this. Truly, we have been anointed. So what are we waiting for? Now is the time to do mega things for Him.

“Following His Commission, Being One with His Compassion: FOCIM Launches LEAD

By Daniel Alberto G. Guinigundo

Discipleship is not a new topic in FOCIM; in fact, in 2012, Bro. Diwa Guinigundo launched FOCIM's first discipleship manual while conducting discipleship sessions for nearly six months during Sunday School on Sunday mornings. Seeing the need for discipleship and fellowship to be more intensified this year, the LEAD program was launched in order to give more structure and to have a more methodical and uniform approach to discipling members and non-members alike.

ADHERING His Word in Matthew that each Christian must go out and make disciples, FOCIM answered the call and formally launched its discipleship ministry, entitled LEAD, last January 29, 2017, Sunday, at the Lampstand. With more than 80 attendees composed of home church leaders, disciples, existing mentors, and those who simply expressed interest in the program were present. After a short icebreaker and an in-depth discussion on the true meaning and value of discipleship by Bro. Broderick Santos, the program was officially launched by Bro. Daniel Guinigundo, followed by the signing of enrollment forms and commitment forms by Sis. Pamela Young.

After thorough research and reading on discipleship ministry structures, the Core Committee made up of Bro. Daniel Guinigundo, Sis. Pamela Young, and Bro. Broderick Santos, integrated the lead program into both the Word and the World pillars, having both spiritual and numerical growth as its purpose. "Basically, the lead program is divided into two branches; the home churches, which are tasked with the spiritual growth of the members, and the lead groups, which is geared towards numerical growth and in discipling non believers and Christians who are seeking a church, as explained by Sis. Pamela Young.

To ensure that each home church and lead group are on the same page, the materials used shall be standardized. "As an initial step, home churches and lead groups will

be using the LEAD manual which are divided into four: The first manual is L, learn, where attendees are taught basic Christian principles and doctrines about our faith. E, equip, the second manual, focuses on amplified and more advanced teachings. The third manual, A, Act, is geared towards putting the attendees' faith into action through the activation of their gifts. In the last manual, D, develop, FOCIM's calling and identity will be discussed in depth, to encourage lead group attendees to become part of the FOCIM membership," Sis. Pam adds.

More important is that the learning does not stop there; once a lead group is done with the LEAD manuals, the lead group leader, or facilitator, is then tasked to channel his members to an existing home church for continuous spiritual nourishment with the use of Mission manuals



materials centered on the Books of the Bible.

The journey ahead of the core committee and the Ministry Team is both daunting and exciting. At present, the members are focused on completing the membership databases and in drafting the manuals, which shall be formally used by all home churches and newly found lead groups this June. While the road may be bumpy, the souls won along the way shall be well worth the journey.



New Leaders,



New Experience

By Raphael Luke G. Cuello

¹ Timothy 3:2 emphasized the need for leaders to be faithful and above reproach. With this as criterion, new heads were commissioned last December 2016 to lead important ministries, who fit the stringent standards of the Book of Timothy. Sis. Danika Bello, Sis. Allyssa Paranas, and Bro. Bryan Faune were chosen to serve as part of the Generation for Christ Youth Ministry Executive Committee. Sis. Hedy Leah Marcelo and Sis. Lourdes Unite, who are both with the Ministry Team, were commissioned to head the Friday prayer meeting and the FOCIM Quezon City home churches respectively.

While these new heads are already known to us, the Menorah talked to them and asked them several questions to get to know more about their thoughts on their new roles within the church:

How will you manage your time for the ministry along with your occupation?

Hedy Leah: I am already a retiree, so as long as my services or ministry is needed, I will be willing to open my schedule for Him!

Lourdes: My occupation requires me to attend meetings and trainings in Makati usually from 6 to 9 pm. Since this is in conflict with the time of most of our home church schedules, I have decided to give priority to my walk with God.

Danika: By eliminating what's unnecessary like using social media or going out with friends. I also manage my time by simultaneously doing my tasks as part of different ministries in church. Lastly, I find time to slow down or stop, knowing that we also need relaxation for our physical body and mind.

Bryan: I let the Lord manage my time, but I make sure that more of my time goes to God. I also make sure that it will not affect my job.

Allyssa: If sometimes, I have something to do for school, I do it first. When I'm finished with it, I do all that I'm assigned to do in the ministry.

What are the other ways you are helping right now in the church?

Hedy Leah: I am with the Ministry Team, I help in the medical field, being a speaker, and lecturer at times. My new assignment is with the prayer concerns and for the events or activities that our church is working on.

Lourdes: Being one of the elders in the Ministry Team, I do whatever task is assigned to me; assisting in planning and projects, prayer meetings, leading Sunday devotions once in a while, and supervising home churches.

Danika: I'm one of the Gen-C leaders and one of its projects is the Church Caroling, where I think 60% or 70% of the proceeds are for the church.

Bryan: I help in the ushering ministry and in events decorating activities. I also support any projects.

Allyssa: I am one of the members of the Worship Team.

How do you think the year will go for you as a newly commissioned leader of a ministry?

Hedy Leah: With God's grace, I am already preparing or calendaring activities that will align with the church programs or activities. I am also given a special assignment for the Touching Heaven Changing Earth Conference.

Lourdes: I am looking forward to a great year. This position poses a great challenge to me to apply Colossians 3:1-3, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God", as well as Luke 12:31, "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Danika: To be honest, although I'm always present in every activity in our church, there's still something in me that longs for more, and yes, the Lord answered and called me to be one of the leaders of the youth. I know it would be difficult but I know I can do it with the Lord's help.

Bryan: I always pray that this year will be a year for me to grow, to mature, and to be able to do my work as a newly commissioned youth leader efficiently and effectively. I am also praying that this year will be fruitful.

Allyssa: As I was commissioned for this position, I take that responsibility as a challenge, so this year I think God is doing something better for me this year than my past year.

What new activities/projects/ideas do you have to further improve the ministry you were commissioned for?

Hedy Leah: As a matter of fact, we already discussed with Sis. Apple Guinigundo the possibility of starting a prayer chain for each member or home church in order to have this continuity of prayer time. We planned to set speakers or an assigned person in charge every Friday for the whole year! This also applies to the Ministry Team devotion.

Lourdes: In surprisingly our homechurches, I have to gather the facts, study and evaluate all concerns and pray for the Holy Spirit to give me wisdom and guidance. This means more time with bended knees, so God will reveal to me what to do.

Danika: Maybe, for the next two years, we can do "Harana" outside our church every month of February for their loved ones.

Bryan: For new activities, I am thinking to have a Gen-C mini concert if God will allow it and also a film showing for fund-raising with mini talks about the movie and connect it to the Bible.

Allyssa: Because I am one of the heads of Gen-C FOCIM-Quezon City, Bro. Bryan and I are planning to reconnect the other youth that are not active right now in the church.

"... God has chosen leaders who are above reproach for a great purpose. Each new leader brings new expectations"

Why do you think God called you to this position?

Hedy Leah: Actually when I was assigned to this position, I was quite hesitant because I thought that I might not meet its expectations. So what I did was pray about it! God is always my priority! The Lord must have seen in my character the spirit, burden, and discernment with regard to prayer concerns.

Lourdes: In everything God has a purpose. However before He uses us, He prepares us for the task. For me, God knows the right time is now, so He called me. I have to set aside my personal concerns and I am sure he will take care of them. I just have to obey and trust Him!

Danika: Because God knew that I need to focus on Him more and have a deeper relationship with him by serving others and leading people to Christ. Last year, I had a struggle that no one else knew except me and God, while the enemy was poisoning my mind. However, I did not allow Satan to deceive me; instead, I surrendered everything to God and sought Him more. To God be the glory, He gave me victory in my Board exam and He even gave me a job! To God be the glory!

Bryan: I really don't know why God chose me for this position. However, I am aware that God knows me better, so He placed me in this position to grow and mature, not only for myself but spiritually; maybe God is preparing me also for a big challenge on how to lead people.

Allyssa: Because God has plans for me, and this is one of His plans.

Without a doubt, God has chosen leaders who are above reproach for a great purpose. Each new leader brings new expectations. And the led acquired new experiences. Everybody learns and the Church benefits. With the daunting challenges ahead of them, it is clear that their open minds and dedicated and willing spirits will be useful in order to make FOCIM more fruitful this 2017 and the years to come.

Crossing Over.

FOCIM NEWS SNIPPETS

Dare to be Bold: The Generation for Christ's First General Assembly



By John David C. Dionisio

LAST JANUARY 15 2017, the Generation for Christ Youth Ministries held its first General Assembly of the year, entitled "DARE: Answer the Call, Fulfill Your Destiny." The event was attended by the youth and young professionals both from Mandaluyong City and Quezon City. To start the event, everyone was warmly welcomed by its President, Sis. Aerzall Denise Cerveza, followed by an inspiring message from Bro. Daniel Guinigundo, emphasizing that we, God's children, have been built for boldness.

After loosening up the attendees through an icebreaker, they were oriented and reminded of the goal of the youth ministry thru an audiovisual presentation. Sis. Danika Ija Bello, Sis. Allyssa Paranas, and Bro. Bryan Faune, the newly commissioned members of the executive committee, were also introduced. After each of the counselors introduced the projects and the main three pillars of Gen-C, the members were encouraged to join and participate in the given committees to activate and develop their giftings. The committees are as follows, with the assigned head: Administrative Committee (Sis. Allyssa Paranas); Logistics (Bro. Bryan Faune); Multimedia Committee (Sis. Danika Ija Bello); Finance and Marketing Committee (Bro. John David Dionisio). Sis. Danika Ija Bello formally closed the program with a heart-felt thanks to all the members. The General Assembly finally closed with an expression of overwhelming support by the members who signed up to the committees.



Shining Like Fireworks: 2017 Remains Bright for the Blithe Ushering Ministry

FIREWORKS



By Michelle D. Sarmiento

MUCH LIKE the fireworks that shine, the outcome of the Blithe Ushering Ministry's first general assembly shone equally bright. With the theme "from small things to big things", in line with the Church's vision for the year, it was held at the Lampstand last January 22, 2017, at 1 in the afternoon. The main thrust of the event was to inform, form and transform the vision for the Ushering, Security, and Helps. With the highest turn-out of attendees, at about thirty, it was no doubt that the event was a success.

First, the attendees were INFORMED. As an assessment and starting point of the year, Sis. Emma Belle Cerveza, one of the head ushers, apprised everyone about the performance of the ministry last year, including the activities, devotion and the results of the trainings conducted. This way, all the ushers will be held accountable for all the envisioned programs for the year.

Second, the attendees were FORMED. To give structure to the activities of 2017, Sis. Rosalie Faune, one of the head ushers, discussed the proposed plans and programs. This year, the usher's training modules will be formalized and given more foundation, as the three E's (Equipped, Emblazed, and Empowered) will be launched.

Lastly, each attendee was motivated to TRANSFORM. Bro. Daniel G. Guinigundo, the Blithe Ushering Ministry adviser shared more about FOCIM's vision for 2017, "from small things to big things." Through his message, each usher was made aligned to the goal of the church.

It is indubitable that the ushering ministry has a significant role in transforming FOCIM into a church that encourages the saints of the living God; with the successful event to trailblaze the year, the ministry can be expected to carry out its role step by step. To echoe the message of Bro. Daniel, "success is a sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out."

GO FORTH! The Menorah Holds Successful First General Assembly

By Franco G. Capalangan

A BRAND new year has come and the Menorah has begun shifting its gears to full speed, starting off with its first General Assembly, entitled "GO", last 26 February 2017, 1 PM, at the Lampstand. Roughly based on the popular game, Pokemon, the Editorial Board thought of a creative way to express the characteristics of each section through gyms: The News Section, as the Cinnabar fire gym, as news travels like fire; the Features Section, as the Celadon grass gym, as the same deals with the roots of the church, its people; - celadon gym (grass) deals with the roots of the church-- its people; the Arts and Culture Section as the Saffrom psychic gym, as it involves the identity and culture of FOCIM; the Web Section as the Cerulean water gym, being a fluid department, that can penetrate the people in a very particular way, such as through social media and the internet; and lastly, the Layout Section as the Vermillion electric gym, as they focus on making each issue "electric" and catchy to the eye!

The program started with an opening prayer and thereafter, opening remarks by the Editor-in-Chief, Sis. Rosalie Faune. To wake up the attendees, Editors Bro. Abe Guinigundo and Sis. Mari Colinares conducted a short but energizing ice breaker, requiring everyone to run. After a short audiovisual presentation about the publication, Sis. Rosalie delivered a short exhortation to inspire and excite everyone to re-ignite their

passion to serve God. She highlighted that God equips you when He calls you, to reassure the attendees that writing, while seemingly difficult at first, will not prove to be a challenge, with God's help. After the message, everyone was asked to go around the room where the Sections were divided. Each editor, representing a gym, conducted a short activity

The assembly closed with some short remarks by one of the Menorah's advisers, Bro. Elso Cabangon and some refreshments. Truly the event encouraged everyone to go and serve God!



FOCIM NEWS SNIPPETS

CROSSING OVER

The Birth of a Nation: FOCIM Instrumental in the Victory of the First Congress for Nation Transformation

By Woodrow Wilson C. Young

CAN A NATION be born in one day? is a pressing question posed by Bro. Diwa C. Guinigundo during the recent first National Congress for Nation Transformation. The question needs to be addressed given that 2017 has so far been a challenging year for our nation. With the decline of the Philippine peso and possible impact on foreign investor's confidence, it seems that the blessings from the Lord. There is an urgent need for intercession and declaration from the people of God for this nation. We can no longer postpone the plan of God for this

country. We need to remind God of His promises for this nation.

This first Congress was an initiative of the BSP Christian Fellowship, in partnership with churches Fullness of Christ International Ministries and Jesus is Lord, as well as Philippines for Jesus Movement and the Intercessors for Christ under the Touching Heaven Changing Earth movement. Bro. Diwa, FOCIM Senior Pastor, serves as the movement's Vision Keeper.

The event lasted for two days, on March 17 - 18. Several hurdles faced the organizers

during the planning stages of the event, such as logistical and fundraising concerns. But there was no stopping God from bringing the event into fruition. The first day was held at the JIL Worship Center in St. Francis Square in Ortigas, Mandaluyong and was primarily intended for leaders and workers. The second day involved the entire Body of Christ and was held at the Plenary Hall of the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City. The speakers for the Congress composed of Church leaders having the prophetic gifts and mandated by God to share

A thousand Church leaders, pastors and workers showed up during the first day, with FOCIM at the helm of the ushering committee. After the anointed praise and worship led by the JIL Mandaluyong Worship Team and the introduction to the mandate of the Touching Heaven Changing Earth Movement by Bro. Cezar Arceo, Reverend-Apostle Jim Hodges, founder and apostolic team leader of the Federation of Ministers and Churches International based in Texas, USA, kicked off the event as the first speaker, emphasizing that we as Christians have a share in God's inheritance—taking the nations. He emphasized that the church must know itself and its purpose in order to be familiar with its mission.

Thereafter, Malaysian apostle and missiologist Bro. Dexter Low highlighted that the time is now for the Philippines to arise and transform; he encouraged awareness among the attendees that the portal is open in the heavens and that God is

ready to release His presence. He ended by reminding everyone that God can make time move rapidly.

As the third speaker, Dr. Donald Crum, chairman of Gospel of Glory Board based in Texas, USA, prophesied that the Philippines is being positioned by God to be a model nation and that the worst is behind the country and only the best is before its people. He also reminded the leaders present that they should not be hiding until Jesus comes—instead, they should occupy and take dominion until he comes!

To close the event, FOCIM's very own Bro. Diwa C. Guinigundo enlivened the crowd by centering his message on the popular movie, "Saving Private Ryan." As with the protagonists of the film, the frontliners of the church, its leaders, should be ready to go behind enemy lines and fulfill the God's mandate upon it.

The PICC event was equally packed, with more than 2,000 people of God attending the March 18 event, many coming from different provinces as far as Cavite, Nueva Ecija, Cabanatuan, and Baguio. This assured that each of the speakers' prophetic message and call to action will echo across the nation.

Reverend-Apostle Jim Hodges once again started off as the first speaker. He encouraged us Filipinos to speak life to the nation and take back the blessings. He shared that the declarations of the prophet Isaiah on Israel will be manifested in the Philippines. The nation of Israel, similar to the Philippines, was also destroyed by corruption. However, Israel rose and went to the mountain of the Lord, learned His ways to become righteous, and established itself as God's nation. Through the empowerment of the Church, the Philippines will learn to embrace the law of Christ and be established as God's nation.

THICE



Dr. Don Crum, who is blessed with the gift of healing and is appointed by God to minister to kings and presidents, spoke of God's miracles that he personally prayed for and witnessed such as the healing of woman who was sick for 12 years and was healed due to her faith and determination. In God's presence, Dr. Crum said Filipinos will experience miracles and do things that have never been done before.

Dr. Crum shared the significance of the prophet Jeremiah's experience when the prophet saw the branch of an almond tree - indicating that a new season is on the horizon. The Philippines will have the same experience as a new beginning marked by righteousness and prosperity is about to come. Dr. Crum also emphasized that we need to take back our inheritance of kingly authority as it is God's desire for us to be reconnected to the royal blood of Jesus Christ. It is in God's plan that we walk in the dynasty of our kingly authority.

Bro. Dexter Low recalled that during the first "Touching Heaven Changing Earth" conference back in 2005, a portal was opened in the Heavens to release the Presence of God. Today, what needs to be done is to sustain and accelerate the momentum gained for Nation transformation. God's message to the nation is that we have entered into a season of accelerated change and there is the urgent need to break the poverty level, destroy the scourge of bad governance, and foster rapid development across the nation. Bro. Dexter expounded on the power of linking generations as we are a manifestation of King David's vision - the power of the father and son coming together. The linking of generations will determine the destiny of our nation.

Bishop Dan Balais, Senior Pastor of Christ the Living Stone Fellowship and Chairman of the Intercessor for the Philippines, spoke of our nation's destiny. He established the undeniable truth that we have a prophetic destiny as a nation, and the only way we can realize it is through God's divine perspective simply because God's ways are higher than our ways. Similar to Lazarus, a man miraculously raised from the dead by Jesus Christ, the Philippines is the "Lazarus" that God is resurrecting, and in the process the Lord has destined this nation to be the most righteous country in Asia. It is indeed time for the Philippines to rise because God has dispensed His redemptive plan to mankind by the seasons, and this is the season of resurrection.



Bro. Diwa Guinigundo stood as the last speaker and established the Biblical truth that a nation can be born in one day. He reiterated that the Philippines is a blessed nation of God because His people walked into their kingly anointing. Furthermore, he showed several prophecies declaring the Philippines' rise that was made as early as 1992. These declarations were made by world-renowned prophets such as Dr. Bill Hamon, Morris Cerrullo, Cindy Jacobs, and Chuck Pierce. Bro. Diwa then presented statistics proving that God is moving mightily in the Philippines showing that the Philippines has the fastest economic growth among Asian nations, and has established key policy and structural reforms through five presidencies.

At the end of the Congress, a manifesto was signed and issued to publicly declare that the Philippines is truly a nation of God. The manifesto was signed by each and every member of the Body of Christ present on that historic day. Church leaders, government leaders, business leaders, foreign leaders, church workers / volunteers and members all took part to pledge their commitment to the Church's responsibility for Nation transformation.

***"Can a Nation
be Born in One
Day?"***

Isaiah 66:8



The ANNIVERSARY

By Elso U. Cabangon

How does one account for 40 years of marital "entanglement"? One does not and cannot, unless one has that memory bank that does not allow any withdrawal of deposited remembrances.

But there are lots of pleasant memories that animate and hover at the fringes of one's brains. I still remember, rather vividly, some of those times.

Like that time when, after enduring more than two years of political detention under martial law, I managed to get married to Vicky in Dipolog with her father footing all expenses, and me wearing my EEI uniform (barong) for my wedding attire.

Like that time when, during my vacation in 1986 from EEI Kuwait assignment, the EDSA People Power Revolution happened, and Vicky and I became part of that momentous event.

Like that time when, after 10 years of marriage, God finally blessed us with a child. Going back to Kuwait shortly after Kay was born, I delighted on hearing her baby voice in cassette tapes that Vicky sent me and which I played non-stop in my car radio while driving on Kuwait highways.

Like that time when Vicky and Kay joined me in Saudi Arabia where I worked with a perfumes and cosmetics trading company, and where Kay completed her elementary and high school studies. Those were the

best, longest 8 years of being family together, living together, traveling to places together.

Like that time in Riyadh when Vicky and I got hit with chicken pox at the same time so we were confined at a hospital together, in one room, till we both got well! Talk about marital vow of togetherness forever, "in sickness and in health"!

Like that time when Vicky and I hosted Kay's 18th birthday, and attended her UP Diliman graduation (Economics degree) and marvelled how our girl grew up to be a very intelligent, level-headed woman.

Like that time when my restless feet left the sand dunes of Saudi Arabia and brought me to more cosmopolitan United Arab Emirates, where Vicky and Kay also joined me for the next three years, and where Kay started her own career as OFW.

Like that time, on our 30th wedding anniversary, when Kay surprised me and Vicky with a dinner treat at the famed Burj Al Arab, the seashore, iconic hotel of Dubai.

Like that time when, on my retirement from overseas work, and before Vicky and I left Kay alone in Dubai, Kay wrote us touching, thoughtful, loving notes that I keep in my wallet to this day, and that read:

30 April 2009

My dearest dearest Tats and Nanay,

I'm going to miss you both so much. Only God knows how much. I may not show it a lot, but having you around keeps me steady and I'm not really sure how I'll fare without you here every day. I act tough, sure, but I'm sure you both know that I'll always be your baby girl. I know that we have to be far apart for so long but I guess everything happens for a reason. Don't worry, I won't be away too long. I'll come home soon, or I'll just take you back here when my pocket allows me to.

Stay safe, ok? And stay healthy. Don't eat too much of the bad stuff. Try not to fight also, bawal na high blood. Bawal magkasakit. Anyway, I'm trusting God not to let anything bad happen to either of you. I am sure He will not let me down.

Try not to worry too much about me. I'll be fine here. And I'll be a good girl. As good as I can be, hehe. There's YM, Skype, Facebook and Multiply anyway. So you won't miss out on anything I'll be up to here. Buti na lang hi-tech na ang mundo. Hindi na kelangan ng voice tape ko.

Always remember that I LOVE YOU BOTH SO VERY MUCH and that I'll do anything & everything to make you happy & comfortable & healthy & safe. You guys are the most important people in my life & nothing will ever change that!

Ingat kayo lagi and I'll see you soon!

*Love always,
Kay Ganda*



Like that time when Kay gifted me with an NIV Bible that I did not touch for two years, until God sent me Pastor Diwa through our rare reunions of former college editors and out of curiosity, I began reading the Bible. And thus began my baby steps towards my being reborn, to the delight of both Vicky and Kay who were much ahead of me in accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Like those times when Vicky needed surgeries and hospital confinements, FOCIM and Kay and I mobilized prayer warriors among our spiritual families including those in UAE and the USA who bombarded the heavens with supplications that our good God answered by allowing Vicky to survive life-threatening illnesses and get better and better. I'll never forget how both biological and spiritual families and friends came to our succor in so many different ways, but united in prayers for Vicky's healing.

Like those times Vicky and I make "lakwatsa" together, enjoying semi-

retirement by having Saturday breakfast at weekend markets, or taking advantage of free movies privilege given to Mandaluyong senior citizens. We continue to do those till now.

Like those times Vicky and I perform our Couples Ministry tasks, like taking charge of twice a year raffles events for FOCIM brethren, thanking God for using us spread cheer (or cause disappointment?) to our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ.

Like those many times, to the present time, when we as a family felt really close to God who shower us with blessings after blessings. Not least the blessing of being part of FOCIM.

Last February, Vicky and I celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary in Dubai with Kay, expense-free, courtesy of Kay.

So, have I accounted for 40 years of marital bliss (forget "entanglement")? Not by a long shot. But we'll keep on praying for more anniversaries to come. Our faith is strong, and our God is with us.



"But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children— with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts."

Psalm 103:17-18

RISEN : A FILM Review

By Anna Pamela U. Young

One of the major debates in religion revolves around the resurrection. Did Jesus literally resurrect in bodily form? Set in the days of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the film follows Clavius (Joseph Fiennes), a Roman soldier who, under orders from Pontius Pilate, sets out to solve the mystery of the missing Messiah.

Although the plot might best be thought of as historical fiction, it accomplishes something rather remarkable: It tells the familiar, timeless story of Jesus' death and resurrection from a fresh vantage point. It invites viewers to look at our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, not from an insider's perspective, but from an outsider's; through the eyes of someone with no reason to believe and every reason to be skeptical. The film provides a safe platform for every man to look at the Gospel account through the eyes of a doubter.

"Risen" also adopts a lighter, more playful tone than most Hollywood biblical classics, generally steering away from heavy-handed dramatics. But while we laughed at how the disciple known as Bartholomew acted in a very hippy, goofy-like character while declaring that a follower of Jesus' only weapon is "love," his attitude offers us a sense of what it must feel like to truly believe and be astounded by the reality that is Christ.

While so many films end at the cross, the movie "Risen" dares to explore this very practical question - "What difference does the resurrection make to our lives?" Indeed, in the end, Clavius removes his Roman signet ring (his worldly symbol of power and authority), telling an innkeeper, "I believe. I can never be the same."



Artwork by James Paul G. Francisco

PLANETSHAKERS AWAKENING

By Dan Abraham C. Guinigundo

AN impromptu audition, a 5-second mannequin challenge, dubstep drops, and a massive "Holy Ghost party" – these are just some of the things that summed up the first-ever Planetshakers conference in the Philippines.

The two-day event, aptly entitled "Awakening," was held at the Smart-Araneta Coliseum and featured talks from Pastor Russell Evans, founder of Melbourne-based Planetshakers City Church, Pastor Sam Evans, worship leader and wife of Pastor Russell, and Pastor Andy Harrison, lead drummer of the band and the church's youth pastor.

Day 1 (Friday, 13 January 2017)

The first day of the conference served as an introduction to the many events lined-up. As expected, the crowd was treated to a visual and aural experience – dazzling lights, massive LED screens, smoke machines, and most of all, loud and unadulterated worship music. The entire production was a perfect union of spontaneity and precision; every song sounded as if played off a record without compromising the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Most of the songs performed were from their most recent album, "Overflow," which included "Come Right Now," "I Know Who You Are," "Sings My Soul," and the unreleased but equally-catchy "Alive Again." The night was capped-off by a spirited message from Pastor Russell, who ministered to those desiring to move into a new stage in their lives and towards a deeper relationship with Christ.

Day 2 (Saturday, 14 January 2017)

The second day of the conference was divided into three "sessions," covering a variety of topics and catering to all attendees.

Session 1 (9:30am-12:30pm)

After another worship session from the band, the day opened with a lecture from Pastor Andy, who centered on the life story of Gideon. The audience was repeatedly asked the question, "Are you someone who tries to be someone you're not?" Pastor Andy challenged the crowd to disabuse their minds from the notion that God only wants to use the "better version" of them – the "better Christian." Instead, God wants to use every person as they are, wherever they may be, so long as they are available. A prayer for the youth leaders and a brief moment of worship ended the sermon.

Next to give a talk was Pastor Sam, whose topic involved the power of agreement and the practice of forbidding and permitting. It was stressed during the lecture that Christians should not allow circumstances to simply "roll over them"; whatever one permits will be permitted, and whatever one forbids shall be forbidden. Thus, whenever Christians agree to blessings, God will begin to move. Pastor Sam also cited Ephesians 1:18-23, which, according to her, empowers believers to take authority and dominion over their respective "atmospheres."

Session 2 (2:30pm-3:30pm)

The second session was split into two separate lectures, giving the attendees the option to attend whichever they find more interesting.

One of the lectures was tailored for the church leaders and was held at the nearby Kia Theater. Meanwhile, the other lecture, which was recorded as an episode of their podcast entitled, "The Well," was geared towards worship ministers, where the topic discussed was about "quality worship." The second lecture ended with a question and answer portion, where the audience was treated to a surprise vocal audition by one of the concertgoers.

Session 3 (7:00pm-10:00pm)

The last lecture once again saw Pastor Russell address the crowd, this time talking about developing a "hunger" for the presence and Word of the Lord. In challenging the audience, Pastor Russell urged everyone to continue to position themselves for breakthrough and to chase after God.

To end the night, the worship team flooded the airwaves once more with their chart-topping songs, this time making sure to play old crowd-pleasers, which energized the entire coliseum.

Although no encore was given by the band at the conclusion of their last set, the attendees were very much delighted to hear the news of *another* Planetshakers conference sometime in January 2018.

All in all, the conference was productive as much as it was entertaining. As one of the recognized frontrunners in gospel music all over the world, the entire affair was a product of the team's collective effort to deliver the complete Planetshakers experience of quality worship – in whatever form it may be.

StrEATs!:

By Daniel Alberto G. Guinigundo

LET'S face it—food has, and will always be, part and parcel of one's travel adventures. Aside from pleasing the eyes, ears, and nose, nothing quite completes a sojourn to a foreign land than pleasing one's tastes buds.

Apart from the sunny beaches, cool, dry holiday spots are more often than not, frequented by us Filipinos, who are most used to the scorching heat during the summer season; thus, it comes to no surprise that apart from Baguio and the usual trip to Hong Kong and Japan, South Korea is quickly becoming a top vacation hotspot. While Seoul has its fair share of cultural and historical places to visit, one must never go home without trying *The Menorah's* top picks of Korean street food—and make no mistake, they are more than your ordinary fish ball or *kwek kwek*.

Tteokbokki (spicy rice cakes)

These soft, gooey, babies doused in *gochujang* (spicy red pepper paste) are a welcome treat during the winter season due to its heat that will truly wake up and warm any eater in an instant. Virtually found everywhere, from the finest restaurants to the market stalls, the tteokbokki are served either on its own or mixed with fish cakes, noodles or cheese.

Image: www.gulubowl.com

Usually served during winter, these dessert pancakes are served in either of two ways—grilled or pan-fried. Filled with brown sugar, pine nuts, honey, and cinnamon, thus giving it a distinct, nutty taste, one serving is really not enough! (recommendation: the ones served in Nami Island are probably the tastiest!)

Image: MyKoreanKitchen.com

Hotteok (Korean pancakes)

Gyeran-Bbang (Egg Bread)

Practically a breakfast meal all on its own, this little treat is made up of a steamed, waffle-tasting loaf, topped with a fluffy sunny side-up. Served steaming hot and quick to cook, this pastry is simple as it is savory and scrumptious. Watch out for the soft yolk as it pops in your mouth upon biting!

Image: www.google.com



A Countdown of Seoul's Best Street Food

Yangnyeom Tongdak (Korean Fried Chicken)

Twice fried tender morsels of fried chicken mixed together with little potato fritters, tteokbokki, and lightly covered in a secret glaze, truly tastes like fried chicken that died and went to street food heaven. Not for those allergic to calories, the sauce is just enough to still feel that slight crunch upon biting into the tender chicken flesh. Made in small batches, this delicacy is always served hot and fresh, and not left cold and stale. To add insult to injury, you can opt to add piping hot mozzarella cheese into the mix! (Recommendation: try Hongcup in Hongdae District!)

Image: www.google.com



Hotdog on a Stick

Surprisingly, Korean street vendors have turned into artisan hotdog vendors, wrapping the sausage in several unusual batters—French fries, fish cakes, bacon, mashed potato, and even corn. Greasy as it is, slathering it in ketchup and mustard makes for a perfect, guiltful snack—don't worry, walking around the street markets could burn a couple calories to assuage your conscience!

Image: www.google.com



Rose Ice Cream

Popularly sold by Milky Bee in Myeongdong and Hongdae, this dessert is as tasty as it is beautiful to look at. Bought even during the coldest of winters, they make for the best instagram posts yet. Served in either strawberry, chocolate, green tea, or yoghurt flavors, one must resist not eating these as each ice cream scoop is shaped into a petal on top of a wafer cone!



Mandu Dumplings

Filled with pork, chicken, vegetables and glass noodles, these savory dumplings are served either steamed or fried. Served with soy sauce and a dash of vinegar, the sauce, mixed with the gingery mixture of the filling, truly makes for a perfect snack on a rainy day. Our personal favorite is the fried mandu dumplings as they are served crispy, hot, and with the proper skin to filling ratio. (Recommendation: Bukchon Son Mandu in Insadong District!)

Image: www.koreankitchen.com



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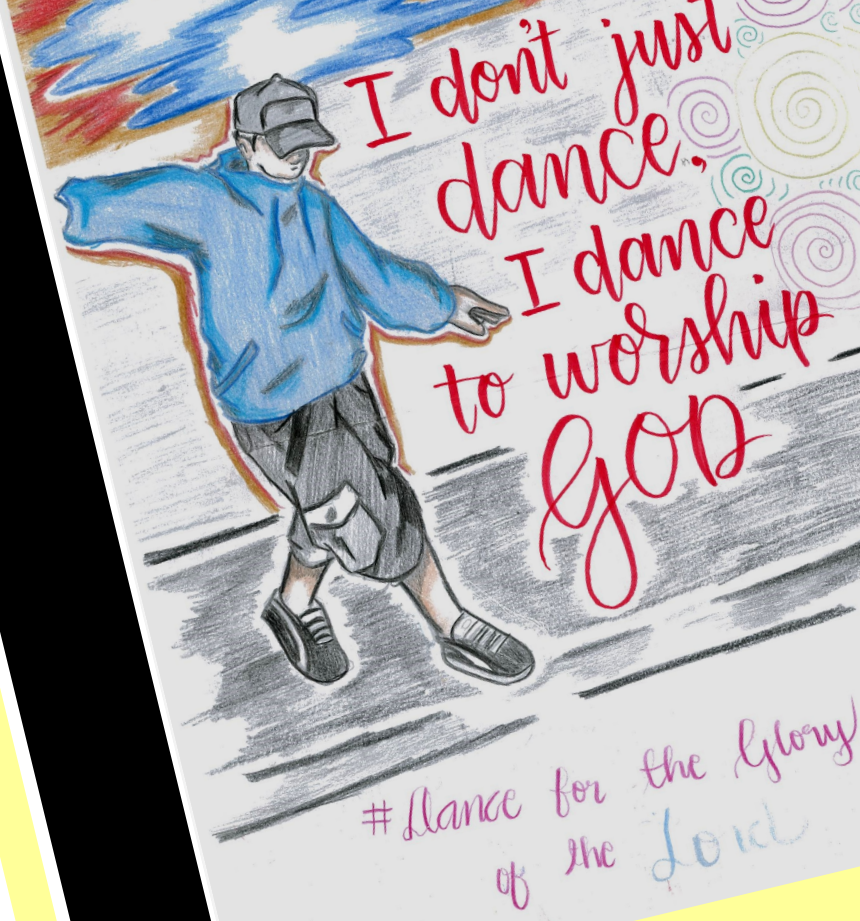
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