



The
MENORAH
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Special
Christmas
Issue

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TO MAKE ROOM FOR JESUS, EVERYTHING MUST GO TO MAKE ROOM FOR JESUS, EVERYTHING MUST GO

Daniel Alberto G. Guinigundo

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:7 KJV

As someone who loves sales and closing store discounts, I had the chance to experience the Black Friday sale in the US for the first time; and it was nothing short of overwhelming. You could get the latest designer shoes for as low as 80% off the original price and that new laptop for half the price. Before the advent of technology (where you can shop at the convenience of your sofa online), news outlets would have a field day documenting the horrendous lines in the department stores; worse, social media was filled with videos of people engaging in fistfights for some latest gadget that half of America wanted to get their hands on. Standing in line with my bag of items, I did what any extrovert would do—chat with the cashier. While I was recounting my first Black Friday experience, she said something that was as mundane as it was profound—“we need to clear out everything for the new and better stocks to come in. Everything must go.”

Everything must go.

To make room for something new, it wouldn't do to empty out half, or even just a portion, of the stocks. It was imperative that everything should go, even if it meant selling these formerly expensive items almost dirt cheap. Regardless of whether these pieces cost almost a quarter of any working person's half-month salary, they had to be disposed of to make space for newer, better pieces to come in.

Everything must go.

I had a chance to exercise this new way of thinking the day my brother and I decided to change churches. During the service, the pastor did something quite unthinkable. While delivering the sermon, he was justifying his choice of engaging in same-sex practices to the congregation while twisting the Word on the pulpit. In fact, he used as an example his own same-sex marriage to seemingly illustrate how “outdated” some of the Old Testament commands were. The air in church instantly became awkward. The pastor's kid-slash-seminarian in me instantly kicked in, and at the moment, I felt enraged. I did not expect such egregious exegesis and self-rationalizing in front of the congregation.

My mind went on overdrive with arguments on pastoral ethics, homiletics, theology, and hermeneutics. I personally felt offended to the blatant misuse of the exercise of the calling of a Pastor and Preacher.

Suddenly, I remembered the words of the cashier —“everything must go.” I was quick to realize that my mind was filled with condemnation instead of compassion. My heart was full to the brim with tension and regret that there was no room for grace and understanding. I had made room for my own thoughts that I had no space to receive, and in turn, extend forgiveness.

I was too full of myself to make room for Jesus to work. I was too full to make room for Jesus. It was at that point that I was able to let go of all my hasty assumptions—while I remained stalwart in my belief that misusing the Word was not befitting for anybody, much more a Pastor, I had to balance that with the understanding that Jesus came to die for everyone, that we were called to love all people despite their struggles with sin, and that it was neither my place nor my position to judge or condemn. I soon understood that in order to be Christ-like and make room for Him, I had to be un-Daniel-like.

From the time prior to His birth, people have always struggled to make room, to understand, and to even accept the Messiah. In the age of Black Friday sales and social media circuses, this still rings true today. How much room have I left for Jesus in my heart—heck, in my schedule, my career, my finances, my family? How much space do I have for Jesus in the midst of meetings, youth activities, worship practices, night outs with friends, Christmas parties, and exchange gifts? When I find something that disagrees with my own perspective, how much of Jesus' views do I take up as my own?

As you go through the holiday traditions and usher in 2020, we at the Menorah encourage you to exercise this new thinking—if you want to make room for Jesus, everything must go.

BREAKING NEW GROUND: FOCIM MARKS NEW HOME FORWARD

By Woodrow Wilson C. Young

September 7 was a historic day for FOCIM as it held its Groundbreaking Ceremony on the recently purchased lot where the new sanctuary will be built. The 647 square meter lot is located in Mayon Street cor. Boni Avenue, a few blocks away from the MRT Boni Avenue Station in EDSA. The program started with the FOCIM Worship team leading the way in dedicating the lot to the Lord by singing "Holy Ground" along with the rest of the church members present. Pastor Robert Lee Guerrero led the opening prayer followed by a short message by Rev. Diwa Guinigundo. The highlight of the Ceremony is the embedment of two time capsules containing FOCIM's memorabilia and paraphernalia in commemoration of the Church's milestone up to this day and beyond signifying the Lord's goodness and faithfulness. The following items were included in the said time capsules:

- Latest 2 issues of the Menorah
- SEC Incorporators Document
- List of "Word", "World", and "Well" Ministry Team Members
- Bible
- Latest newspaper
- Bank Notes
- Seven "General Luna" Commemorative Coins

After the embedment, each Ministry Team member and the rest of the Church members present took turns in carrying the ceremonial shovels and putting soil on the ground covering the time capsules while singing the Victory song "He is Lord". The program ended with a closing prayer led by Rev. Diwa Guinigundo. It was truly a historic day as it marked a new beginning for our Church. We now look forward to the completion of the Lord's Temple and the fulfillment of a prophecy.





33 AND BEYOND: FOCIM CELEBRATES FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY

By Woodrow Wilson C. Young

The number 33 is a prophetic number. This was evident in Jesus Christ spending 33 years on earth before ascending to His throne in heaven. The number 33 marks a new beginning or the coming of a new season. As such, it is in God's perfect timing that a historic event took place a day before FOCIM celebrated its 33rd Anniversary – the Groundbreaking of the recently purchased lot where the new sanctuary will be built. The said event also presents a new beginning for FOCIM as it celebrated its 33rd Anniversary last September 8 in 500 Shaw Centrum, Shaw Boulevard Mandaluyong City. Given that the Church's next step is to build the Lord's Sanctuary, the theme of FOCIM's 33rd Anniversary is "Anointing to Build" based on the Bible's "Genesis", "1 Kings", and "Nehemiah".

Sis. April Eve Guinigundo, head of FOCIM's "Word Ministry", started the Anniversary program by giving the welcome remarks and leading the opening prayer. The FOCIM Praise and Worship Team then opened the heavens and claimed anointing by singing powerful songs of declaration entitled "Jesus We Enthroned You", "Every Praise", and "Awesome in this Place". After the Worship, members of the Children Sunday School Ministry took the stage and performed a very unique and beautiful special number by doing a mime of the song "If there's one more gift" using white light. The AVP greetings followed and featured FOCIM's friends from the international community – Dr. Michael McKinney (Promise Christian University) and Bro. Jim Hodges (Federation of Ministers and Churches International). Bros. Daniel and Abe Guinigundo, FOCIM Worship Team Leaders who are currently pursuing their Master's degree studies in Washington DC, USA, also sent their greetings and congratulatory messages to FOCIM. The Generation for Christ Youth Ministry also gave a special number by doing a short but well-acted drama skit focusing on problems being encountered by today's youth and how accepting Jesus Christ brings restoration. This was followed by another AVP presenting the testimonies of Bro. CJ Cabasag, Sis. Cielo Elipse, and Sis. Katrin Distor. Rev. Diwa Guinigundo then gave a brief introduction of the speaker, Bro. Cezar Arceo. Bro. Cezar was introduced as the Head of Jesus Loves You Church and a prophet, preacher, and steadfast servant of God.

In his message, Bro. Cezar shared the story of Jacob (Gen. 28:18) showing how Oil brings prophetic enabling power to do God's plan. He further explains how we need anointing for the fulfillment of our dreams, just like Jacob. Upon receiving anointing, there is unexpected great provision to finance the building construction (Exodus 12:36). Anointing will keep miracles happening and God will give us the power to make wealth. Bro. Cezar also made it clear that God wants us to be part of building the Sanctuary because He wants to bless each of us. The involvement of everybody removes the hindrances of the enemy (Nehemiah 2:19). The speaker further encouraged the congregation to keep looking up to the anointed finisher, Jesus Christ, who sustains our faith in order to finish strong (Hebrews 12:1-2). We must let Jesus build and guard everything and see the miracle effect of anointing. Lastly, Bro. Cezar stressed the fact that the dedication of the Temple brings the glory in physical manifestation. After his message, Bro. Cezar requested each head of the family to come forward to be prayed on and receive the building anointing. Each member of the FOCIM Ministry Team also came forward to receive double portion of anointing.





CASTING THE VISION

**“DO NOT BE AFRAID.
BUT LET YOUR HANDS
BE STRONG!
I AM WITH YOU!”
(ISAIAH 41:10)**

FOCIM Senior Pastor Rev. Diwa Guinigundo presented the “Casting the Vision” for 2020. He expounded on what the Lord wants FOCIM to do moving towards next year. The Church needs to recognize that it is the Lord who will build the temple, and not human hands. In addition, the church needs to expand its network so that even people outside the church will help build the temple. As one body of Christ, it is imperative we keep focus, prioritize God and ministry, forge on, and uphold righteousness. As the Lord’s reminder for FOCIM - “Do not be afraid. But let your hands be strong! I am with you! (Isaiah 41:10)”.

The Lord has truly been faithful to FOCIM for the last 33 years and will continue to bless our church as it welcomes a new beginning marked by the new sanctuary that will be built. As each head of the family has received the building anointing, we must now forge on having full courage in establishing God’s kingdom and expanding our network towards nation transformation. We now look forward to our 34th Anniversary and the start of construction for the Lord’s temple.



BUILDING THE SANCTUARY, 26 AND BEYOND! FOCIM QUEZON CITY CELEBRATES ITS 26TH ANNIVERSARY

By Woodrow Wilson C. Young



FOCIM Quezon City celebrated its 26th Anniversary last November 24 at the SB Park Villa Beatriz along Dona Felomina Street in Diliman, Quezon City. The theme for this year's anniversary was "Building our Spritual Sanctuary" taken from 2 Timothy 2:21. Sis. Vanessa Bolo and Sis. Violy Siquete were the lovely emcees of the said event. FOCIM QC's beloved "Pastora" Shirley So opened the event with her Welcome Remarks and led the Opening Prayer as well. The energetic and passionate members of the FOCIM QC Praise and Worship Team started with the opening song "Banal Mong Tahanan", which definitely set the tone and directed the congregation's focus towards our Lord Jesus Christ. This was followed by the joyful songs "God is Here" and "Awesome in this Place", which then fired up the congregation and lifted up our spirits. The worship song "Jesus at the Center" shifted the attending members and guests into a solemn mood ready to receive God's powerful message.

Sis. Lourdes Unite, one of FOCIM Ministry Team members, gave her greeting and congratulatory message to FOCIM Quezon City. Sis. Lourdes also shared that sometimes terrible things happen that is part of God's plan, like the fire that struck the FOCIM Quezon City Church in Zuzuarregui back in 2015. This incident eventually led to the building of a bigger Church with spiritually stronger members. Sis. Marie Demafelis, FOCIM's new Church Administrator, also greeted FOCIM QC declaring more victories in the coming years. This was followed by a special AVP presentation highlighting the rich and colorful history of FOCIM. The Children's Sunday School Ministry performed an amazing special number presenting the gifts of the Holy Spirit through a music-filled and story-driven performance. Additional AVP greetings followed including members from abroad – Sis. Hannah Cabasag (currently taking up her Master's degree in Japan), Brothers Daniel and Abe Guinigundo (currently taking their Master's degree in Georgetown University in Washington D.C.).





This was followed by another AVP featuring the amazing life testimonies of Bro. Carlos Onza (member of the FOCIM QC Worship Team), Sis. Paulin Custodio, and Bro. CJ Cabasag. The Generation for Christ Youth Ministry then gave a wonderful dance number featuring a remixed version of the powerful song “Here I am to Worship”. Prior to the main message, Before the message, Sis. Kat Distor performed an impromptu special number by singing the very heart-warming song entitled “Grace”.



Pastor Robert Lee “Bing” Guerrero, head of FOCIM’s World Ministry, delivered the message centered on building our Spiritual Sanctuary. In his message, Pastor Bing emphasized that as Christians, we need to ensure that our walk is consistent with God’s purpose and plan for our lives. He urged the congregation to stand firm on God’s solid foundation – Jesus and His Words (Matthew 7: 24-27). Lastly, he shared that FOCIM Quezon City has already built its physical sanctuary after the fire and now we need another fire, this time coming from the anointing of the Holy Spirit to inaugurate a revival of both the Church and ourselves as spiritual sanctuaries.



After the main message, Bro. Diwa Guinigundo (FOCIM Senior Pastor) prayed for the anointing of each FOCIM Quezon City leader including those who are willing to serve the Lord. Bro. Diwa also led the closing prayer followed by the victory song from the FOCIM QC Worship Team.





GEN-C CLOSES 2019 WITH ITS LAST VERTICAL SERVICE

BY KATRIN JESSICA I. DISTOR

Last 7 December 2019, the Gen-C concluded its Vertical Youth Service Series for the year, entitled: *The Ascent*. From *A Hard Trail*, where we learned what the journey to Jesus Christ entails, we are now on our way to *Reaching the Higher Ground*, the point when we get to take pleasure in the life that God has set for us.



Sis. Michelle Sarmiento and Sis. Kat Distor started off the program by doing a quick ice breaker, which everyone enjoyed. The Lampstand was filled with laughter and excitement while all the participants fought for a chance to win the jack n' poy challenge! Thereafter, the Worship Team commenced the program proper through their heartwarming and soulful praise and worship; followed by the opening prayer, led by Bro. Matthew Unite, and the opening remarks delivered by Gen-C President, Sis. Denise Cerveza, who gave a brief summary of the previous Vertical Youth Service installments. Gen-C QC, then, brought smiles to everyone through their dance number.

Bro. John David Dionisio, Sis. Louver Arada, and Sis. Pam Young were the speakers for the night. They gave the youth three factors significant to *Reaching the Higher Ground* – the three Ps: Perspective, Potential, and People. Project head, Sis. Katrin Distor, then, delivered the closing remarks, while Ptr. Bing Guerrero closed the program in prayer. It was indeed a very fruitful and eventful night. The youth is looking forward to the 2020 Vertical Youth Service Series. To God be the glory!



CARE FOR THYSELF: SELF-CARE PRACTICES AMONG PASTORS IN THE PHILIPPINES*

Blessille V. Guerra and Daniel Alberto G. Guinigundo

**The following are excerpts by the authors in a research study done during their second year as Masteral students at the Asian Theological Seminary*

BACKGROUND

A common and naïve misconception is that pastors, as well as ministry workers, are exempt from mental distress; in fact, it seems unthinkable for pastors to be perceived as ever struggling with any mental health issue. It was therefore taboo to hear of pastors ever committing suicide and spiraling into depression or any mental malady. As a pastor, he or she was expected to be an image of spiritual maturity and deeply committed and immersed in the Word; they were the ones to whom broken people would run to seek refuge and not the other way around. At present, these situations are no longer unthinkable.

Pastor Andrew Stoeklein was the Lead of Pastor of Inland Hills Church, one of the mega churches based in California. One Saturday in August 2018, this 30-year old pastor committed suicide after battling with anxiety and depression for years, leaving his wife and three children (Relevant Media Group, 2018). The story of Pastor Andrew Stoeklein clearly shows that pastors are not immune to mental health issues.

In light of the heavy demands of his or her vocation and the crucial role he fulfills within the church community, a pastor becomes more vulnerable to mental illness. Aside from the physical toll on his or her body, the pastor faces much psychological and relational distress, thus making him or her susceptible to various mental health issues including depression, anxiety, trauma, and burnout. It cannot be ignored that a pastor should likewise confront the undeniable stigma of mental illness within the Christian community, mainly brought about by mixed perceptions and reactions; plainly, mental illness is erroneously perceived as a mere spiritual struggle, with prayer and reading of the scriptures as its suggested panacea.

What most Christians should understand, more particularly pastors, is that mental illness is not simply “a prayer away”. Being exposed to the rigors of church work and the issues pastors must face on a daily basis, the need to be proactive in monitoring their mental health and disposition is all the more necessary. Aside from having a holistic understanding of mental health, it is incumbent upon the pastor to practice self-care strategies not only in order to promote longevity and effectiveness in the ministry, but for his or her own well-being.

In view of the foregoing, this study focuses on the self-care practices pastors and ministry workers employ. It likewise explores the possibility that the length of service would be an affective factor in the self-care practices that pastors and church workers employ.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

J.I Packer (2003) describes the conceivable journey that pastors face by saying that “the possibilities of discouragement, disillusionment and bitterness, even broken-heartedness, in this situation are huge” (p.3). While generally, pastors find fulfillment in their vocation, studies show that in the first five years of a pastor’s work, there are “four times as many pastors leave the profession” (Vitello, 2010; as cited by Bledsoe and Sutterland, 2015, p. 48).

According to Christianity Today (2014), pastors also need to be ministered to. In its interview with Dr. Margo Stone of Ministry Development Network, an organization serving the people in the ministry, pastors experience isolation, loneliness, tremendous stress and burnout (p. 92). Dr. Stone adds that some



**MENTAL
ILLNESS IS
NOT SIMPLY
“A PRAYER
AWAY”**

pastors find it difficult to completely share with their spouses and, at the same time, they have no “external support” which can help them in handling the stress they experience (p. 92). As a result, seminaries can help pastors by teaching them self-care skills (p. 93).

For pastors that deal with issues of mental health, their situation may demonstrate two things: first, even pastors are not precluded from experiencing mental illness; and second, dealing with such illness may even be used by pastors to become “highly-effective wounded healers and spiritual leaders” (Parachin, 2016, p. 29).

A study conducted by Duke University in 2011 shows that it is more probable for pastors to experience depression and anxiety compared with other professions (as cited by Sauer, 2014). According to Sauer, the causes of depression on pastors are diverse which may include the strain inherent in their line of work, the stress taking its toll on them because they need to be present for people in distress almost on a daily basis, and excessive pressure they place on themselves or by others on them (pp. 9-10). Thus, considering that there is a more risk for pastors to battle with depression, Sauer proposes that “pastoral care needs to be provided to pastors” since “depression paralyzes and can render even the most competent and skillful pastors” (p. 10).

Considering the nature of the vocation of pastors, literature shows that self-care is an essential component that has to be taken into consideration by pastors themselves as well as the church. Gates (2015) presents a possible definition of self-care by explaining that, “When people practice self-care, they do not indulge themselves but rather behave in ways that normally enhance their own ultimate well-being and avoid activities that usually bring them harm” (p. 6). This attempt to define self-care stems from Gate’s interpretation of the second greatest commandment (p. 5).

METHODOLOGY AND CONCLUSIONS

To best attain the study’s objectives, this study adopts the quantitative instrument, “Self-Care Inventory”, designed by David Irvine (2016).

To best attain the study’s objectives, this study adopts the quantitative instrument, “Self-Care Inventory”, designed by David Irvine (2016).

The said instrument assesses the subjects’ current level of self-care in six (6) key areas, composed of five (5) questions each:

- (1) Physical health;
- (2) Mental well-being;
- (3) Managing demands and personal agency;
- (4) Spiritual health and inner well-being;
- (5) Supportive relationships; and
- (6) Meaning.

The said survey was conducted personally on thirty (30) pastors and/or full-time church workers of varying ages and sexes, with churches either within the National Capital Region (NCR) or outside in the provinces. In order to determine the relationship between number of years to the employment of certain self-care practices, the subjects were divided into two (2) groups, the first group consists of pastors and full-time church workers who had been in the ministry for ten (10) years and above, while the second group are pastors and church workers who have been involved in the ministry for less than ten (10) years.

Through the survey and upon statistical tests, the following conclusions were determined:

- Pastors and church workers in the Philippines appear to have a relatively good self-care system with some key areas to focus on.
- Pastors and church workers, regardless of length in the ministry, tend to neglect their health and physical well-being vis-à-vis other key areas of self-care. Thus, the need to focus on a regular exercise routine, as suggested by literature, is warranted.
- Pastors and church workers who have been in the ministry for ten (10) years and above focus their attention more on their spiritual maturity and well-being. On the other hand, those serving for a lesser period still continue to seek fulfillment and meaning in their ministry and in their life than any other self-care practice.
- There appears to be no distinct difference in how Pastors and church workers serving in the ministry for ten (10) years and above employ self-care practices as compared to those serving for a period less than ten (10) years.
- No significant connection or relationship may be ascertained between self-care practices and length of service in the ministry.

As suggested by the existing literature on self-care practices, Pastors and church workers struggle the most with mental health issues, considering that the demands and rigors of their vocation make them likely targets of depression and anxiety. As a step further, to strengthen and complement the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Pastors’ and church workers’ perception of mental health and its implications be a component during data collection.

OVERSEAS FILIPINO STUDENT: LIFE IN THE USA

By Dan Abraham G. Guinigundo



We have all heard of Filipinos traveling abroad to work. Often we have seen some go for leisure. Studying abroad, however, is an entirely different animal. In this issue, the Menorah asks Bro. Abe Guinigundo about the challenges and benefits of studying abroad.

Why study abroad?

There are plenty of reasons to go abroad to study. For me, it was to mainly to improve my competitiveness in the marketplace. Lawyering is increasingly becoming a global profession and as a lawyer, I have to evolve with it.

On a personal note, I studied abroad to fulfill my dreams. Even before knowing what lawyering was, the idea of taking “masters” abroad was already at the end of a long list of goals.

What were the struggles you encountered prior to leaving? While living in another country?

Prior to leaving, the most difficult part was the application process. A lot of paperwork was involved and schools demanded a variety of documents from transcripts to recommendation letters. I had to draft several personal statements and essays too. The student visa application was also stressful. I struggled with these tasks as I was then still working. The biggest struggle with living abroad is being away from home. This probably comes as a surprise as I am known not to be traditionally clingy (laughs).

Of course it is amazing to be in Washington, DC, let alone the US, but there are just some days when you miss your loved ones and can't help but want to go back. I especially missed my parents and my girlfriend, Erika. And NIV. And FOCIM.

What has studying abroad taught you aside from the lessons you learned in class?

I learned that the world doesn't stop for anyone. People will rarely do things for you beyond their obligation. You have to do everything on your own because, as obvious as it sounds, it's your life. This was a painful but welcome realization for me.

This forced me to be more proactive. I recall the time when I was applying for an externship for the upcoming spring semester. All that was given to us was a list of offices and organizations around the DC area. Everything else was up to us. From this experience, I also found joy in organizing my schedule and even in performing daily tasks like grocery shopping, cooking, and doing the laundry. I also learned to work around my reading time by being more efficient.

What has helped you to adjust in another country?

Technology, technology, technology. Video calls and social media gave me the emotional anchor that I needed to get through my day-to-day.

Any tips you would like to share with those planning to study abroad?

Plan ahead. Get a planner and set-aside time to map-out the pertinent deadlines and then work backwards.

Establish rapport with your professors. Make a good impression because they will be a valuable resource in the future. You never know when you will encounter them again in your career.

One word to describe your experience thus far?

#blessed.

Must see places in DC for those who want to study there?

The Smithsonian museums and the national landmarks (White House, the Capitol, the Washington Monument). The food is also a reason to visit.

Bro. Abe Guinigundo is currently taking up his Master of Laws at the Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, DC. He is set to graduate on May 2020 together with his brother, Bro. Daniel.



SUKI DESU SAPPORO

By Anna Pamela U. Young

Japan has always been on top of every list of go-to places for every Filipino. For those who are serious on ticking this off your vacation bucketlist, here are a few of my top selections for traveling in Sapporo!

1. Mt. Okura Observatory and Sapporo Winter Sports Museum

The 90 meter ski jump competitions of the Winter Olympics 1972 were held in the Okurayama Ski Jump Stadium. Today, when the stadium is not being used for world cup or other ski jump events, the Okurayama Observatory at the top of the hill can be accessed via a chair lift for spectacular views of Sapporo.

2. Mt. Moiwa

The Mount Moiwa Ropeway climbs from the base of the mountain three quarters up the mountain to a transfer station. From there a rather unique mini cable car travels the rest of the way to the upper station at the summit where there is an observation deck and restaurant with nice views out over the city. The station also houses a planetarium and theater.

Mt Okura Obsevatory



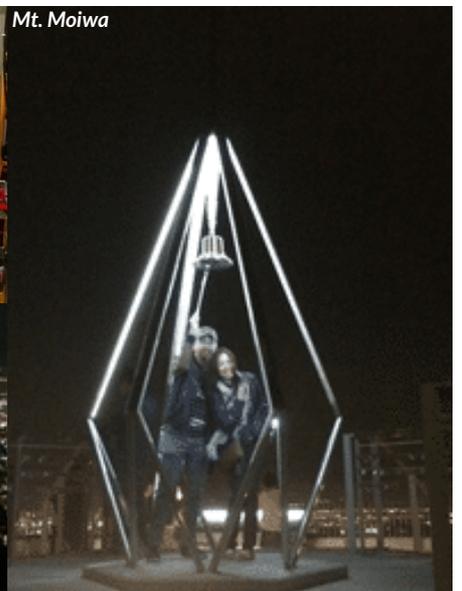
Sapporo Winter Sports Museum



Mt. Moiwa



Mt. Moiwa





3. Hokkaido University Campus

Taking a walk around the campus is a great activity in late summer when its not too hot, but even better in autumn when the leaves start to change colors and beautiful colorful sceneries dominate the entire campus park. From the main entrance you will come across popular spots such as the Elm Forest and The Ono Pond. The campus park is huge and you can spend hours exploring its surroundings and historical buildings.



4. Sapporo Beer Museum

The Sapporo Beer Museum showcases one of the city's most famous beverages. There are galleries to fill you in on the history of the beer and you can also end by sampling a range of different blends.



5. Clock Tower

The Clock Tower is known for being one of the most iconic buildings in Sapporo and it dates from 188 when it was built in honor of what is now Hokkaido University.

6. Odori Park and Sapporo TV Tower

Odori Park is the most famous green space in Sapporo while the Sapporo TV Tower is one of the most recognizable buildings not just in Sapporo but also the whole of Japan. The tower is modeled after the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.

You can travel up to the observation deck here which is located at a height of some 90 meters and take in the gorgeous views over Sapporo, so this makes a good choice if you are new in town and looking to get an overview of the cityscape.



7. Sapporo Sato Land

You'll love Sapporo Sato Land if you have small children. In addition to regular bicycles, you can rent a four-wheel bike with two child seats, so even families with more than 2 small children can enjoy cycling! Children will also love riding the SL bus around the park.

The park has a little farm where you can feed goats and sheeps, and even see cows up close. There is a small factory too, and you can see how they manufacture dairy products. They have a restaurant and playground for small children near the factory. Hokkaido ice cream here is a must-try! On the other side of the park, they grow vegetables and fruits where you can try to harvest seasonal Hokkaido products.



Daytrips from Sapporo

1. Otaru

Otaru Canal is the main attraction in Otaru and was built in 1923. The canal is bordered by a walkway so that you can stroll along the banks of the water way and if you can make sure to come here in the evening as this is when the promenade is illuminated with ancient oil lamps giving it an old-world feel. You can also take a tour along the canal or take to the water on a canal boat if you want to see the city from a different vantage point.



Otaru

2. Asahikawa Zoo

Asahikawa Zoo is Japan's farthest northern zoo but is visited by 3 million people per year. At Asahiyama Zoo, there are about 150 kinds of animals. In addition to Arctic creatures such as polar bears and penguins, the zoo houses other species including capybaras, atelids (monkeys), and orangutans normally found in jungles.

Asahiyama Zoo focuses on a "behavior exhibition" to show animal activity in as a natural a manner as possible. This also supports breeding conditions that simulate the real ecological system. For example, the most popular exhibit is the Polar Bear Pavilion, where you can observe polar bears diving into a huge pool, showing their natural swimming behavior in a real Arctic ocean. At the Penguin Pavilion, you'll be astounded to see swimming penguins "flying" at high speed over your head through an amazing aquarium tunnel system.



Asahikawa Zoo

A PSALM OF THANKSGIVING

By Daniel Alberto G. Guinigundo



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FULLNESS OF CHRIST INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES
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I lift my hands to the heavens,
I lift up my hands in praise,
For Your goodness and grace has
been overwhelming,
What more can I ask from thee?

You make known to me the times
and the seasons
You breathe life into my everyday
You remind me that You are
present in both my struggle and
my victory,
What more can I ask from thee?

Four times I wrestled with Your
will,
Four times I pleaded with my days
drowned in sorrow,
Four times I stayed in the valley,
longing to be on the
mountaintop,
There was so much that I sought
from thee.

Four times You crushed my soul
and the dreams birthed through
time and strife,
Four times You feigned to listen
to my cries,
But four times You rebuilt and
forged me in the fire,
There was so much that I sought
from thee. *Selah.*

How could I not see that You
broke me only to rebuild me?
How could I not see that You were
preparing the way for me?
How could I not see that You
never left me outside the shadow
of Your wing,
What more can I ask from thee?

Now that the battle has been
won, now that You have quieted
my enemies,
What more can I ask from thee?
Like Daniel in the Lion's Den, you
rescued me from those that would
harm me,
Like Daniel you showered me with
favor from men,
What more can I ask from thee?