The background of the cover is a dramatic seascape. A small boat is being tossed by large, white-capped waves. The sky is dark and stormy, with several bright lightning bolts striking down. In the foreground, a large, dark rock sits on a sandy beach, with waves crashing against its base. The overall mood is one of intense struggle and peril.

For Christ Alone

*The Incredible Faith Journey
of Ping and Lina*

Dr. Ceferino D. Villegas, LI.D and
Dr. Lina Fiel T. Villegas, Ph.D

As you read the stories and testimonies of faith reflected in the lives of Dr. Ping and Dr. Lina Villegas, your heart leaps to worship Him who is always good, good, kind and faithful. Written in natural style, *For Christ Alone* is deeply moving, challenging, humbling and inspiring. The book comes from the hearts that are truly in love with their Lord and Master and it will surely speak to every reader's heart.

DR. BEN DE JESUS

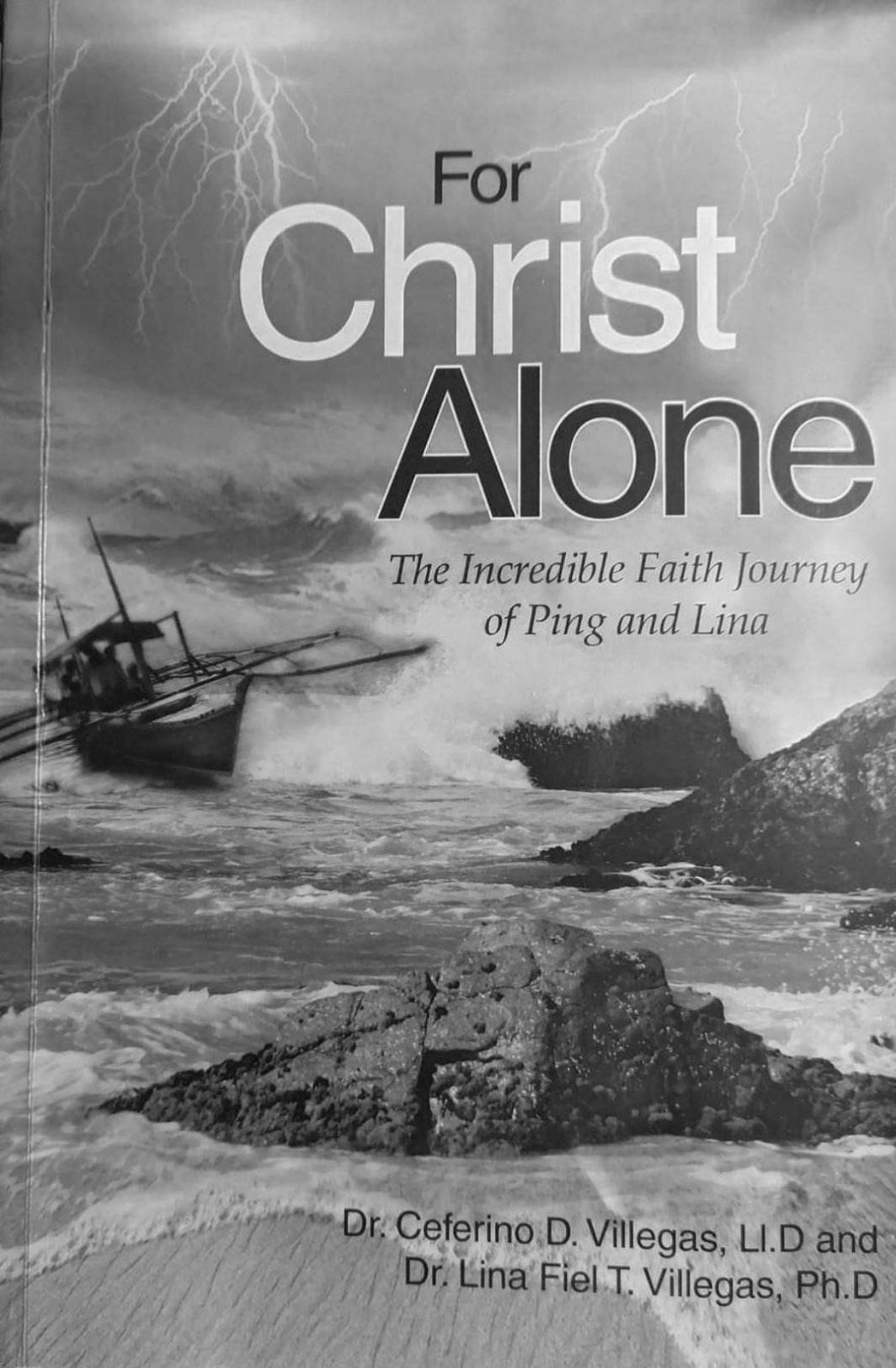
President, Ebenezer Bible College
President, Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches
of the Philippines, Inc

This is an excellent and inspiring true story of what God can do in two lives turned completely over to Him. Certainly, it will be an inspiration to many. It reminds again and again, keep your eyes on God no matter what and always pray and have faith. Believe He can and does control all aspects of your life.

Ping and Lina's story proves that a life turned over completely to God will be a tremendous lifelong adventure, blessing untold thousands. This is a MUST read that will encourage a closer walk with God.

BETTY WAGNER

President, Wayfarers

A dramatic black and white photograph of a boat in a stormy sea. The sky is dark and filled with multiple bright lightning bolts. The sea is turbulent with large, white-capped waves crashing against a rocky shore in the foreground. A small boat is visible on the left, struggling against the waves. The overall mood is one of intense danger and adversity.

For Christ Alone

*The Incredible Faith Journey
of Ping and Lina*

Dr. Ceferino D. Villegas, LI.D and
Dr. Lina Fiel T. Villegas, Ph.D

FOR CHRIST ALONE

The Incredible Journey of Faith of Ping and Lina

by Ceferino D. Villegas, Llb, and Dr. Lina Fiel T. Villegas, Phd

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Dedicated to the Glory of God

With our heartiest thanks and praise on our
Golden Anniversary,
A legacy to our family for the joys they give —

Lovelin and Bing and children: Michael, Marcus, and Jasmine

Stephanie and Toto and children: Mickey, Ramon, Joshua,

Priscila and Daniel

Ping J and Jennifer

JP and Cielo and children: Iko and Chloe



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TO OUR BELOVED READERS

I just sent our picture in the airport walking to the airport to Cross the Blue Sea (our Red Sea) on higher ground up in the sky across the other side of the world in the vast blue Pacific Ocean. We did not have a single centavo for our airfare and visa that required funds for our education to prepare for our Missionary Call.

As for the topic For Christ Alone, it would be important to express the background for the title *FOR CHRIST ALONE*.

The verse in 2 Corinthians 5:15, “He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them,” changed my whole life to live For Christ Alone to accomplish the Lord’s specific call for us to “GO” to make disciples of all the nations.

– Ping and Lina Villegas

FOREWORD

It was a privilege to have spent a number of years as a young Christian with Ping and Lina Villegas at the Capital City Alliance Church in Quezon City. They were always a happy couple whose lives exude the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Lina and I were closely knit like real-blood sisters. I went to Ebenezer Bible College in 1965 for my theological training. A few years later, Ping and Lina, to my surprise, enrolled too. After a year, our Lord led them to Wheaton College in Illinois. Providentially, I also followed them to Wheaton. Our lives were intertwined. The stories recorded in this book are very familiar to me, and had been used by the Lord to challenge my own walk of faith. I am sure their child-like faith and their lives of full commitment and obedience to the will of God will inspire many of God's people.

Dr. Adynna Y. Lim
Past President
Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary

PROLOGUE

The Lord works in mysterious ways. Why the Lord has chosen us to do what we are presently doing is really beyond our comprehension. We have discovered that God can use us only when we have come to realize and acknowledge our unworthiness before Him. Like Paul whose life was changed from persecutor to an apostle, it is not for us to reason or question why. It is for us just to follow His will and no longer live for ourselves.

Some forty-two years long ago, our missionary friends in New York, Rev. Bill Kerr and Rev. Jack Shepherd, prodded us to write our early experiences with the Lord, which we were able to share with them, in order to encourage and inspire our fellow Christians, especially our co-workers, in their walk of faith. For the past years we had the opportunity of sharing with a good number people in the world about the many great things the Lord had faithfully done for us. They expressed how much they were inspired and blessed to hear our experiences with God.

So, finally we have acceded to the urging of our friends to write down our adventures with God. We trust that we will be able to inspire and challenge more people this way. We asked the Lord what we should do for all that He has blessed us with. He answered us through a verse in Psalm 40. We have vowed to declare to the world so that “many will hear the glorious things He has done for us, and stand in awe before the Lord, and put their trust in Him” (verse 3).

When we recall our bygone days, as the Psalmist has written, “I remember the days of old. I ponder on all your great works and think about what you have done” (Psalm 143:5), we cannot help but declare *FOR CHRIST ALONE* “the glorious things He has done for us, and stand in awe before the Lord, and trust in Him.”

It is our hope that our Lord will also challenge you to go on living by faith as you serve HIM during this time of great harvest of souls (Matthew 9:37).

PART ONE

GOD'S CALLING



The Collegian will come out
with a Special Loyalty Day
Issue on Friday

PHILIPPINE COLLEGIAN



Search for national identity
in the fine arts
on Page 4

Official weekly student newspaper, University of the Philippines
DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY

VOL. XVI NEW SERIES No. 16

SEPTEMBER 18, 1967

Approve proposed



FIRST CAMPUS WALKATHON CHAMP—Ceterino Villegas of the College of Law, who was congratulated by President Romulo's management at President Romulo's congratulations for winning the recent Walkathon Contest at the campus. (Inset: Joseph Romulo and part of the Walkathon crowd listen.)
Photo by Alfonso Pardo
Inset photo by Alfonso Pardo

Law senior outpaces 138 walkers; bags scholarship, wooden trophy

A senior Law student, Ceterino Villegas quickened his pace in the second half of the walkathon to beat his nearest rival in the finish line by 45 seconds last Tuesday. With this final spurt of energy, Villegas won the first walkathon in the campus, negotiating the 10-kilometer route in 2 hours and 8 minutes.

Coming in a close second was Teofilo Davaz, a fourth year student in the College of Veterinary Medicine, who was clocked at 2 hours, 8 minutes, and 45 seconds. A poor third was Armandito Romulo, a second year student in his city year, who crossed in 4 minutes after Villegas.

The Law senior immediately grabbed the lead over all other participants in the walkathon and maintained this lead until midway in the last lap when Davaz caught up with him. Davaz's threat was but temporary for Villegas immediately overtook him and regained the lead until the finish line.

For his win, Villegas was awarded a wooden trophy sculptured by a boye lost depicted by Prof. Napolion Abueva of the College of Architecture and Fine Arts, President Romulo, who counted the trophy for him. He also received a scholarship for his outstanding performance in the walkathon. (Continued on page 6)

Winning the Race

1

I joined the First U.P. Campus Walkathon Contest widely participated by 138 walkers. Why I do not know, I am without any experience or interest in walkathon. Secondly, I was the only physically able bodied man in the family; my only brother tied to a wheelchair, has been afflicted with polio since he was one year old and my father who was crippled with his knee cap split by a bullet during the Japanese occupation in Jolo, Sulu. These really challenged me to take the chance to fully make use of whatever physical capability I had and strive to give all I can do in order to win the 17.6 kilometers First U.P. Campus Walkathon Contest for my father and brother.

I took the early lead, but over halfway through, I felt the strength waned, I was overtaken and lost the lead. Suddenly, my Upsilonian Brod rushed towards me and inspired me to give all of my very best. With all of their hearts, they expressed their pleas with hope, “For the

Part One: God's Calling

Frat Brod! For the Frat Brod! For the Frat Brod!” and kept on repeating it until at last I decided to give all the energy that was left in me exerting my full efforts step after step, second after second just to be able to overtake and finally managed even to maintain a comfortable distance of 45 seconds ahead to win!

But it was certainly with all of the encouragement of my Upsilonian Brods that was led by Efren Yambot as cheer leader, with Jean Bueno, Nestor Budy, Gilbert Tipton, Mae del Fiero and others who came to the rescue when I was overtaken at the start of the last 8th lap of 2.2 kilometers.

I owe it all and give the credit to the Brods who poured out their loyalty to the Fraternity and to a Brod. True and tried Upsilonians indeed all they were and they deserved all of the honor for without all of the Brods, I could have never won!

When I acknowledged many years later in a Testimonial Dinner for IF Doming Santiago and Tony Rosales that I am an Upsilonian as I am because of cheerleader Efren Yambot, he then replied in his email, “Thanks for your compliments, but I just think you’re going overboard – giving me too much credit. And your winning that walkathon as well as your being an outstanding Brod and Most Illustrious Fellow is mainly because of what you are, and what you strive to be, period.”

I answered, “Sorry, they were not compliments but only the truth. If you remember what you emailed stating that you would immediately forward to Jean Bueno my email on the reinstatement of iko that he refused unless we solve the root of the problem, what I had testified having gone through what Kiko went through. And you were

Winning the Race

the first one who went to me saying “For the Frat Brod, For the Frat Brod, For the Frat Brod” during the First U.P. Campus Walkathon Contest and was followed by Jean Bueno and the rest. What if you as the cheerleader of the Brods did not do for the Fraternity what you have done, what would I be? Nada, Brod, nothing to discredit. So do not discredit what I feel down in my heart that is there in my mind that I am what I am as an Upsilonian because of you! Amen, Brod.”

It was also during the Testimonial Dinner that Upsilonian Batch '58 gave to our Most Illustrious Fellows Doming Santiago and Tony Rosales that I acknowledged our Best Friend Nando Piedad that it was not the arduous physical initiation that I went through that ended once in my convulsion but his being just a Best Friend during the initiation that really mattered to be what an Upsilonian I am.

I won the First U.P. Campus Walkathon Contest widely participated by 138 walkers winning the unique and the only artistic movable wooden trophy that was donated by President Carlos Romulo. And it was very specially sculpted by the well known internationally famous artist Dean Napoleon Abueva of the College of Arts who became a National Artist having been commissioned to design artistically the trophy. I was granted a semester scholarship I gave to my sister Joehebed.

When I went to see artist Dean to thank him for the trophy, he asked me if he could buy it from me. I politely declined as I told him that I really liked it very much as a unique fine work of art. He must have desired it for himself as it was really an excellently designed sculpture that depleted speed and strength. It had two legs up to the

Part One: God's Calling

knee joint together that moved like a propeller as it walks signifying speed. The joint portion of the legs is attached in the middle of an enlarged massive foot that gives one the idea of power strength. And he could not make another one like it as an artist like Michael Angelo never repeats his work of art. It was a masterpiece of art.

“CHOOSE! Your Mission Call . . . Or Me?”

2

“Sweetheart, I love you so much that I really want you to be with me. But I would rather be in the center of God’s will without you than be with you and out of the center of God’s will.” This is what I told Lina, my wife, when she asked me to choose between my missionary calling and her. I knew very clearly and definitely what the Lord wanted me to do. How I came to know it took years of seeking.

It all started in a Daily Vacation Bible School in Cotabato City during my elementary school days when I felt and realized my need for a Savior to save me from all my sins, and I prayed to receive the Lord Jesus Christ into my life.

My heart was drawn towards Missions early in my high school days, with the very frequent ministries of some missionaries and evangelists in Cotabato City. I became very active in all of the young people’s meetings and participated in the Sunday afternoon evangelistic prison ministries. I also volunteered to be a Junior Pastor to minister to the spiritual needs of the children, besides

Part One: God's Calling

helping in the Sunday Service and prayer meeting on Wednesday night. Lina was one of the children who faithfully attended.

The lives of missionaries continued to fascinate me as I grew older. Their faith in God left me in wonder how to walk in faith and live in faith. They had a pervading influence in my life. And there was a time I recall when I desired to become a missionary, and not too long thereafter I decided in my heart to be a missionary.

This deep desire however started to wane as the years went by. Winning in oratorical contests and debates started to convince me to become a lawyer instead. But proceeding to Bible School after graduating from high school was also an alternative course. A number of my close friends in high school proceeded to Bible School just after graduation. Bible School students convinced me to go to Ebenezer.

The influence of my pastor and the students of Bible School was strong. The thinking during those early years was the imminent Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, and therefore everything should be geared towards the preparation for His return. Thus, the youth were expected to go straight to Bible School upon graduation from high school. But my having won the oratorical contest representing our City and also being the captain of our high school debating team gave a different direction to my life. My father and my uncle, who was a pastor, persuaded me to pursue a law degree in order to have a very good preparation for life and a foundation should the Lord call me to become a missionary. That appealed to me since I was still very young at the age of sixteen to go to Bible School and graduate at the age of twenty. Who would believe me as a pastor at such a young age?

“Choose! Your Mission Call or Me!”

During my college days, however, my desire to become a missionary completely faded. My pastor was utterly disappointed with my final decision to pursue my studies in college instead of going to Bible School as everyone had expected. He never talked to me nor even looked at me when friends and I visited him in Zamboanga City on our way to Silliman University in Dumaguete City where I was finishing my Preparatory Law course.

Years later when he became our pastor in Quezon City while I was studying at the University of the Philippines finishing my law studies, he never bothered to talk to me and even avoided me. His attitude made me all the more reluctant about becoming a missionary and I stopped believing in God.

Being Most Illustrious Fellow

3

Towards the third year of my studies at the College of Law of the University of the Philippines, I ventured to enter the Upsilon Sigma Phi, the oldest Greek-letter fraternity in the Philippines. Most government officials in the past such as Presidents, Vice Presidents, Senate presidents, speakers of the House of Representatives, Supreme Court justices, senators, congressmen and prominent leaders in business and private sectors were members of the fraternity.

During the initiation, my body went into convulsions. But what mattered most to me at that time was a master who humbly approached me and told me that he was Fernando “BF” Piedad, (“BF” stands for “Best friend”) and he shared his friendship without any hesitation. Unforgettable!

I succeeded in becoming a member. Five years later, I was chosen as the Most Illustrious Fellow of the fraternity, the topmost position during my senior year at the College of Law in 1963. I

Being Most Illustrious Fellow

immersed myself in some curricular and extracurricular activities. I was a staff member of the Philippine Law Journal in charge of the review and digest of all the Supreme Court decisions of criminal cases for the year 1963. I also became a staff member of the U.P. university graduates yearbook, *The Philippinensian*.

I worked as a student assistant at the Foreign Students Office, won the presidency of Yakal Residence Hall, and I participated in other activities in our yearly Upsilon Sigma Phi Cavalcade of musical presentations. When I was appointed Most Illustrious Fellow we presented *Once Upon a Mattress* at the U.P. Theatre which was fully packed for two days. I was the 4th member of the Upsilon Sigma Phi Fraternity chess team which won the First Inter-fraternity Chess Tournament with Fred Sese, Dennis Abcede, and Pete Reyes as captain. I led student movements to picket the well-known elite Ilongo Kahirup and Pampango Mancumonidad associations which, amidst poverty in the country, competed in their lavish display of wealth, jewelries, and gowns designed by well-known couturiers such as Pitoy Moreno and Ramon Valera in their annual balls in the famous and historic Manila Hotel.

Some forty years passed and the Fraternity had a serious problem that was causing division more than seven years on the issue of reinstating a Brod who was then a Senator who did not vote for a Brod to be U.P. President. It was the time in his life that his relationship in the Fraternity was such that it did not mean anything at all or the least, he gave as his apology. The decision of the Upsilon Sigma Phi Alumni Association was his reinstatement that was not acceptable to many and some even demanded the

Part One: God's Calling

President and Board's resignation. I did my best to get the Brods to be united by appealing to them in my letter I sent to the Brods and the USPAA.

The letter I wrote was Forwarded by the President Jun Anig to the Brods attaching my letter with subject: THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS FELLOW HAS SPOKEN: I began by stating I have tried by sending this letter to keep the Fraternity from dividing. I admitted the reason he gave for his refusal to vote for a Fraternity Brod for the Presidency of the University of the Philippines which was his relationship with the Brods in the Fraternity was that the Fraternity did not mean anything at all and the least, was not a legitimate reason.

However, I said that I was exactly in the Brod's life situation that the Fraternity did not mean anything at all or even the least. I was then being treated by the Brods not rightly then I will not mention to avoid trouble. Was this the kind of relationship I get in the Fraternity I questioned in my mind ceasing to believe in it and the least of all. I detached myself for three years starting only to get back the time when I joined the First U.P. Campus Walkathon. I was then only one in the College of Law and it was the tradition that only those in the College to be an Illustrious Fellow but was not chosen. I never thought of being IF but was chosen later only by the IF Brod failing to enroll.

It was certainly the encouragement of Upsilonian Brods led by Efren Yambot as cheerleader and together with Gene Bueno, Nestor Budy, Gilbert Tipton, Mac del Fiero and others rushing to me when I was overtaken at the start of the 8th lap 2.2 kilometers,

Being Most Illustrious Fellow

“For the Frat Brod! For the Frat Brod! For the Frat Brod! For the Frat Brod!” they kept repeating until I was able to harness all energy left in me, exerting all my effort step after step, second after second to be able to overtake and finally even then managed to maintain a very comfortable 45-second lead ahead to win! I owed it all and gave the credit to all the Brods who poured out their loyalty to the Fraternity and to a Brod. True and tried Upsilonians they were indeed and they deserve all the honor, for without their support, I then could not have won!

I wrote, “Brods, a Brod who as a Prodigal Brod for years have done all he can to come back to the Fraternity that he loves. He suffered more than enough and he had learned his lesson. He deserved our hearty welcome. Let us unite supporting the decision of the USPAA upholding once more our Motto, “We Gather Light to Scatter”

Brod Efren sent it immediately to Gene Bueno who refused to accept reinstatement of Brod Kiko unless we solve the root of the problem and so with Dion dela Serna who decided he will send my email to all the Brods in his Website. This finally brought back the Brods to agree to the decision as from that time no one else questioned the decision of the USPAA of the reinstatement of the Brod.

Choosing to Live For Christ Alone

4

During my graduation, two missionaries Rev. and Mrs. Francis Gulbranson and Ruth N. Ziemer gave me a gift. They were the only ones who never ceased to pray for me. The gift they gave was a book entitled *Cannibal Valley* by Russell Hitt which is about the Christian and Missionary Alliance work in Irian Jaya, now Papua New Guinea. “Why do they still think of me becoming a missionary after having gone through all my difficult preparations to become a lawyer?” I thought and hurriedly browsed through the book and thereafter laid it aside.

However, my life changed its course when I got married. Just about the time I joined the fraternity in 1958, I met in church one of the children I ministered to during the time I volunteered as Junior Pastor in Cotabato Evangelical Church. She came to Manila to study and she enrolled at the University of the Philippines. When I saw her, I recognized her. Tapping her head, said, “Lina, my, you have already grown up!”

Choosing to Live for Christ Alone

I was captivated by her smile and charm. I courted her for one year, being absolutely sure of my love. I wrote her a poem of what I felt deep in my heart,

*Oh that I may
Be as I pray
But come what may
My love will stay!*

We were engaged for six years. I finished my studies, and a few months after I got a job as a lawyer, we got married. That we had met in Manila and be united in marriage must indeed have been pursuant to the Lord's Master Plan! On the night of our wedding, we knelt down and committed our marriage to the Lord. I was really brought back to God. With Lina's influence in my spiritual life, little by little I was drawn closer to the Lord's plan for our life together. I kept feeding on God's Word and began to grow in my spiritual life.

As I assiduously read the Bible, one verse struck my mind:

“And that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.”

2 Corinthians 5:15, KJV

“What am I doing exerting all of my efforts and time practicing law protecting the rights, life, and the properties of other people?” I

Part One: God's Calling

questioned myself. I began to see beyond what I usually saw in my clients, officemates, and people around me—I now saw their souls. I got persuaded in my mind, and felt in my heart that I should spend my life in something more relevant. *What should concern me more are their souls! The most important is I should cease to live for myself and live for Christ.* I was convinced that since I live because Jesus died for me and have received Him in my life as my Savior, I should not live for myself but live for Him alone!

As the days, weeks, and months passed I found myself more in church than in any other place after work. More and more I became engrossed in the Lord's work and my interest in my work as a lawyer was fast diminishing. I became more active in church activities joining visitation, prison ministries, and the choir and conducting home Bible studies. I started sharing my faith, witnessing to my officemates and others. I became a Deacon in church and later, Chief Deacon. I got involved in the national affairs of the CAMACOP (Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines, Inc.), faithfully attending the yearly General Assembly that was held in Zamboanga City.

As a lawyer, I discovered in 1967 that although the CAMACOP was already incorporated, it was not legally operating through a Board of Directors, which is the policy-making body provided by law, but through the National Executive Committee composed of the officers. In the 1967 General Assembly during its Constitutional Convention, I proposed the creation of a Board of Directors in the midst of opposition of the Alliance Mission. Six

Choosing to Live for Christ Alone

ministers and three laymen formed the Board of Directors. I was elected for four consecutive years as a Layman Director and was chosen as Secretary in 1969 for a one-year term.

Resisting the Devil

5

One very early morning at about three o'clock, I was all alone decorating the sanctuary of the church for the Easter Cantata, "Hallelujah, What A Savior!" I went down the stairs towards the kitchen at the basement to finish copying the Cantata score cover. The basement was fully lighted and so was the sanctuary.

I heard very loud voices coming from the kitchen which was not lighted, as though all of the cupboards and cabinets were being pounded. I looked inside the kitchen door that was wide open, but saw nothing that could explain the loud noise. All the lights in the kitchen were not on but everything inside the room could clearly be seen from the lights in the social hall. I was drawing a huge figure of the face of Jesus extending from the platform of the sanctuary up to a few feet below the high ceiling. The sound became louder and louder as though there were very many invisible animals running around knocking all of the cupboards and cabinets.

Resisting the Devil

I did not know what to do, but I found myself going towards the door with my hair standing on their ends. Somehow I was able to muster enough courage to challenge the evil spirits. Simultaneously, I stomped my right foot strongly on the cement floor at the door and shouted, “Yaaahhhhh!!!”

Instantly, I heard all of these pounding sounds rush rapidly outward, towards the windows like hundreds of cats and dogs jumping and stampeding out of the cupboards and cabinets. All of a sudden, there was complete silence! This was my first encounter with evil forces demonstrating the truth in the Scriptures, “Greater is He that is in us than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4, KJV). Truly, since we have the Lord we can “Resist the devil and he will flee from us!” (James 4:7, KJV)

Seeking God's Will For My Life

6

One Easter afternoon in 1968, after the church service in Sandejas, Pasay City, Rev. Joseph Arthur, a missionary who just arrived from the United States for a teaching assignment at Ebenezer Bible College in Zamboanga City, approached me, extending his hand to shake mine. He inquired, "Are you the lawyer who is to be a missionary?"

I was taken aback! He must have been informed earlier that I was a lawyer. Was he serious? Had he been led by the Lord to ask such a question? Moments later, after finally recovering from shock, I replied, "Well, I will have to get confirmation from God." To which he quickly answered, "That's the right place to go."

That question kept lingering in my mind after we parted. The following morning as I was preparing for my court cases in Manila, I felt so restless. I remember pausing while putting on my barong Tagalog.

Seeking God's Will for My Life

All of a sudden, I felt a strong pressure on my head as though two hands were directing both sides of my head as I was looking up at the ceiling. Downwards straight towards the wastebasket at the corner of the room on top of which was a card that bore the name of our law firm, the Law Offices of Paredes, Poblador, Cruz, and Nazareno.

It was a card that accompanied the Christmas bonus that the law office had given to all associate lawyers of the law firm which Lina had thrown into the waste basket. The thought that struck my mind as I saw the card was to inquire, "Lord, do you really want me to throw away my present employment with the Law Offices of Paredes, Poblador, Cruz, and Nazareno?"

I was perplexed and could not really understand as I confronted the Lord for an answer to the missionary's query, "Lord, what do You want me to be?" I was at the other side of our bed near the window as these things were happening.

Somehow I felt around the foot of the bed on the other side towards the headboard. I picked up a book that Lina intended to give to my brother-in-law, Capt. Efren Funtanilla of the Philippine Airlines, but I told her I would like to read it first before handing it to him.

The book was entitled *Out of My Life* by Raymond Edman, once editor of the *Alliance Witness* who later became the president of Wheaton College. He narrated in the book how the Lord led him to accept the position of president of Wheaton College at Wheaton, Illinois.

It was the first time I opened the book. I turned over the first few pages of the book and kept on turning on the pages until

Part One: God's Calling

suddenly I was stopped at a page. I felt my right hand being led to the lower portion of the page and my fingers rested and pointed to a sentence, "You must go to Wheaton!"

My! I could not comprehend the significance of this very strange incident so I let it go. That week we had our Missionary Convention at the Capital City Alliance Church with our guest speaker, the Rev. Florentino de Jesus, father of our pastor then, Rev. Benjamin de Jesus. The question, "Are you the lawyer who is going to be a missionary?" kept occupying my mind. As we faithfully attended the Missionary Convention every night, the more I got so interested with Mission.

After the third night of the convention, as we went home, I felt the Lord dealing with me and I was not able to rest. We went to bed early at ten o'clock. The question kept coming back in my mind, "Are you the lawyer who is going to be a missionary?" as I tried to sleep but could not.

Usually, it takes only a short time for me to sleep, but this time I just kept tossing in bed until midnight trying my best to sleep but without success.

God Writing His Will for Me

7

Finally at about one o'clock, I went down the apartment towards our backyard, wondering what it was that kept me awake. This was the very first time I ever felt this way. I looked up the darkened blue sky. It was cloudless and filled with all of the brilliant stars twinkling above.

I had to settle the issue that kept bogging my mind. I could no longer evade the question, "Are you the lawyer who is going to be a missionary?"

With all sincerity I spoke my heart out to the Lord and challenged Him to show me in black and white what He really wanted me to be. I had exerted great effort studying law and my parents had spent much for me to be trained at the College of Law of the University of the Philippines. Admission and living expenses

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as a student there was not easy but rather very difficult.

Passing the Bar Examination was very tough, but I made it the first time. Only 25% of the more than five thousand that took it had passed. I was active in law practice as an Associate in one of the most prestigious law firms in Manila, so I needed some concrete evidence directly from the Lord of what He really wanted me to be. What would my associates in our law firm, relatives and my friends say?

I needed to have a good and credible reason if I were to give up my profession as a lawyer. So I deeply cried my heart out to the Lord as I directed my eyes toward heaven longing to hear from Him. I asked, "Lord, what do You want me to be?" I desired to hear with my own ears and see with my own eyes what the Lord really wanted me to be. Suddenly a streak of white cloud began to appear clear enough against the dark blue sky that cloudless night, similar but not as thick as the smoke emitted by an airplane. My eyes began to notice something moving up there. It appeared like the invisible hand of God writing something that looked like a cloud which formed something like letter "G" and then another letter "O" spelling the word "GO."

I was really stunned! That was the very first word of the theme of our Missionary Convention at church written in front at the sanctuary, "GO YE!" which was enjoining obedience to the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19, KJV). "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

God Writing His Will for Me

This was the confirmation that I desired from God! I was fully convinced in my heart, without a cloud of doubt, what God specifically wanted me to be: a missionary. “GO” confirmed His answer to the very clear question I asked. I surrendered my life completely for His direction and uttered, “Okay Lord, I will be a missionary as you want me to. I will GO as you command.”

I received the message “GO” as directed specifically to me, a personal command straight from God, in the same way Jesus instructed all the disciples before He left them, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

It was at this time that I remembered the book, *Cannival Valley* by Russel Hitt, given to me during my graduation from the U.P. College of Law. I got fascinated with it for the first time and rapidly read it through until I finished it. The book inspired and challenged both Lina and I to go as missionaries to Irian Jaya (now Papua, Indonesia).

PART TWO

**GOD'S
CONFIRMATION**



Recharting Our Life's Course

8

“We are no longer able to give our Mission pledge,” we told Rev. Florentino de Jesus Sr., our Missionary Convention speaker, after the congregation was challenged at the end of the Convention to give their Mission pledges.

We reasoned out to him, “We are giving up ourselves now to the Lord and have decided to be missionaries. We are giving up our professions as a lawyer and a language teacher, and therefore would not be in a position to be able to earn and give as we have been giving to Mission before.”

Most of our money offering went towards Mission but in reality, we were still holding on to our lives. This time we had decided to give up our lives to the Lord. What more can Rev. de Jesus expect! He was surprised to hear what we had told him, and could not believe what he heard, but was surely spiritually uplifted and much pleased to hear our unexpected decision. So he laid his

Part Two: God's Confirmation

hand upon us anointing us and prayed for us, giving us God's blessing. We had two real estate properties that we had paid by installments for three years since I became Associate Attorney of our law firm. We decided to sell them and use the proceeds to train at Ebenezer Bible College in Zamboanga City.

That night after talking to Rev. de Jesus, I sensed a small inaudible voice that spoke to me, "You say that you have nothing more to pledge since you are giving up your job. How about the proceeds from the sale of the two lots that you wanted to dispose?"

Convicted, I talked with Lina and suggested, "Sweetheart how about giving one half of the sale of our two lots as our pledge to Mission?" She readily agreed. "All right, if you believe that's what the Lord wants us to do." We figured we would still have enough money from the sale to pay for moving expenses and something left for our educational training.

We decided to see our church Elders and proposed to them to sell our two lots at the cost of whatever we paid for them. After three years, the price of the two lots must have appreciated in value but we did not mind even losing all of whatever profits we could have as we just wanted to get back all that we had paid for them. They readily agreed to buy the lots at cost and promised to pay for them the following week.

We were so eager to get started with our trip and training at Ebenezer Bible College. We packed our belongings and contracted the Allied Brokerage to professionally pack the rest of our things to transport to Zamboanga City.

We met with our church Elders the following week, expecting to receive the money they had promised to pay us for the two lots.

Recharting Our Life's Course

We were surprised when they had changed their minds and decided not to buy our properties. We were devastated! As we headed homeward, I asked “Lord, why did you allow this to end this way?”

That night with a very heavy heart, I had my personal devotion before going to bed. I was so disheartened and could not understand why this was happening to us even after having given our lives to the Lord. I could not believe what I had heard after wanting to give half for Mission!

As I opened my Bible to Psalm 85, one verse struck my attention, “Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase” (Psalm 85:12, KJV). Could it be that the Lord indeed was speaking to me and wanted to tell me something through this verse? I went to bed still nursing my deep frustration.

Early the following morning, we heard a loud knock at our door. Who could it be? The knock became louder, and we thought it must be something urgent! I hurriedly got up and went downstairs straight to the door. As I opened the door, I saw our landlady who asked frantically, “Ping, Lina, were you able to sell your land?”

“No,” I answered.

“That’s good because I am willing to pay you 50% more than what you are asking for!”

Was that what the Lord meant when He gave me the verse as an answer to my question? Was that why He stopped the sale of our

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two lots to our church Elders where we would not have gained anything? “The Lord shall give that which is good.” and that “our land shall yield her increase.” We had gained 50% increase! This was exactly what we promised to give as our mission pledge! The Lord really is great, He is amazing indeed!

First Steps of Faith

Our training and adjustment with our youthful classmates at Ebenezer Bible College who were fresh from high school was a very enjoyable experience. In my desire to learn more, in addition to the regular first year full academic load, I also took one major subject in the second, third, and fourth years.

Both Lina and I joined the Ebenezer Church choir that visited the churches in the outlying rural areas. We devoted much of our time in our studies while I performed all my duties as one of the Directors and Secretary of the CAMACOP, Inc., on the year when we enrolled at Ebenezer.

But things were not all rosy for us. After paying the expenses incurred in moving our things from Manila to Zamboanga City, fixing up our cottage and painting it, all the school fees, books and our living expenses, we were fast running out of all that was left

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from the 50% proceeds of the sale of our lots.

Surprisingly, we started to receive now and then some love gifts from my family in Manila. This was at the time I had started trusting the Lord to meet our needs as we no longer had any job to sustain us financially. But we did not tell anyone any of our needs. We just prayed.

There were times when we were in need. In simple faith, we asked the Lord for ballpens. To our amazement we received a bunch of ball pens the following day. How surprised we were and thankful for the ball pens that we needed!

There was one noon when all we had was cooked rice without any viand at all. We had no alternative but still, in childlike faith, thanked the Lord for the food on the table. Just as soon as we had said our prayer of thanks for the food, we heard a knock at the door.

When I opened the door, lo and behold! There stood our neighbor with a bowl of delicious chicken *tinola* for our viand. We just praised and thanked the Lord from the bottom of our hearts! When we needed some money, we learned to ask and trust the Lord alone in prayer. The Lord faithfully provided for all our needs in marvelous ways! We had started to live on faith trusting the Lord to supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19, KJV).

Right at the Center of God's Will

Eventually, Lina began to feel the strain of this kind of living on faith. She wanted me to have a part-time practice as a lawyer while I was trying to figure out how to earn something to help sustain us in our living expenses and studies since no one had promised financial support from any church or anyone. But I could not go on devoting myself full-time on my studies and still do part-time practice of law as that would leave me no time for it.

Somehow I believed in my heart that as I have completely surrendered my life to the Lord and just obeyed His command for me to “GO,” giving up our jobs, He will provide for all our needs thereafter. I did not know how He will do it, but I left everything up to Him in childlike faith. We had to concentrate on our studies and training, as our first step of faith.

One afternoon in the living room, we discussed the matter seriously. Lina argued that we could not go on with this kind of

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living by simply waiting on the Lord. Well, she must have reached the very end of her patience, and so she gave me the ultimatum. She told me to choose between my missionary calling or her. She was confident that because of my love for her, having waited for her seven long years with all the sacrifices I had made to win her love, I would definitely choose her over my calling. Without any hesitation, however, I answered.

“Li,” I started with unmistakable words, “you know how much I love you. I waited seven years for you, I gave up everything for you, chose you over my family being fully sure of my love for you. But I fully know what the Lord’s will is for me. I really want you to be with me as I faithfully follow the Lord where He leads.

“Sweetheart, I love you so much that I really want you to be with me. But I would rather be right at the center of God’s will without you than be with you out of the center of God’s will. I do not want to keep on dragging you along to be with me. I want you to be a willing partner in the Lord’s ministry.

“I will give you one week. I want you to talk it out with the Lord. You have to ask the Lord what His will is for you. You, too, have to surrender your will to the Lord for your life. After one week of talking it out with the Lord, should you decide to give up your will to the Lord and come with me to the mission field, I would certainly be very happy. But should you decide not to come along with me, we will have to tell your parents about your decision. We will have to part ways. I could leave you with your parents and I will go on following the Lord where He leads me.”

Right at the Center of God's Will

After a week of prayer and seeking the Lord's will for her life, Lina finally gave me her answer, and that was to go along with me wherever the Lord would lead us. How happy I was to have her, not only as my life partner but a willing partner in the Lord's work!

The work of the Lord is not rosy. It is difficult and toilsome. It would be doubly hard with a reluctant or grumbling partner. So now I can move on in the Lord's direction in our lives and with His promised presence, united in heart and mind with Lina, my beloved wife. I remembered and felt deeply the lyrics of our wedding song,

*Hand in hand together,
Darling you and I,
Fair or cloudy be the weather,
Bright or dark the sky.*

The Unfolding of God's Will

11

Not very long thereafter, about six months from the time we decided to train for Mission at Ebenezer Bible College in Zamboanga City, we were much surprised to receive a letter from Wheaton College! It was from Dr. G. Henry Waterman who worked in the Philippines as a missionary with the American Bible Society. We never wrote him. He heard about us from Dr. Bill Smalley who was also with the American Bible Society. He related to Dr. Waterman that we were at Ebenezer Bible College studying and preparing to become missionaries. "What are you doing in Ebenezer?" he wrote. "What you need is a graduate study, being professionals, and not another further undergraduate study in Ebenezer. A course in Linguistics has just been inaugurated here in Wheaton College to answer your need for training as missionaries. If you are able to raise all of the needed amount to pay for your transportation to the United States, you can apply for

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scholarship assistance and find work that would be available in the campus at the same time.”

Immediately after I finished reading the letter, a flashback crossed my mind to that very moment I had related earlier when I opened the book, *Out of My Life*, and my right hand fingers rested and pointed at the sentence, “You must go to Wheaton.” That was at the time I was searching with all my heart, asking God, “Lord, what do You want me to be?”

It became clear what the Lord wanted me to do. The Lord wanted us to go to Wheaton for missionary training. Now, how are we to go to the United States without any money? This was exactly what my uncle asked us when we went to Cotabato City before going back to Manila, “Are you going to swim?”

We shared our plan to further our training in the United States with teachers and missionary friends in Zamboanga City. They told us sincerely but bluntly that we belong to Ebenezer Bible College, and that is where we should finish our schooling.

We did not know what to do. Here was the Lord's direction for us to go to Wheaton. But where would we get all the money to pay for our transportation to the United States? It would cost a fortune to secure our visas! It would really be much easier to go to Heaven than to go to the United States! How to produce the needed money for transportation seemed to be impossible, how much more for securing our visas for our admission to the United States! For us it was like crossing the Red Sea. This was our first big test of faith! And we definitely did not have that much faith. But

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we had no other way out but to start to trust God completely. The Lord began to pave the way for us to go to the United States.

All of my three sisters were living in Manila. And my only brother was left in Cotabato City with my parents. My sisters figured that there was no sense in my parents' staying put in Cotabato as they were getting old to take care of themselves. On top of that, both my brother and father were physically disabled. My brother was afflicted with polio when he was one year old. My father's knee cap in his left leg was split by a stray bullet fired during the Japanese war which had crippled him. (Being the only able-bodied man in the family had really challenged me to join the First University of Philippines Campus Walkathon Contest which I had mentioned earlier and had won.)

The only alternative left was for our whole family to transfer residence in Manila. Half of our property had to be sold to purchase a lot and build a house in Banco Filipino Homes, a car, and the remainder was distributed to all of us five children. But my share was short of money needed for our air fare to Wheaton College.

With the money that I received, we left Ebenezer Bible College the following school year and proceeded to Manila to await the processing of our visas for the United States. Meanwhile, Lina was able to finish all her subjects to graduate with a degree in Bachelor of Arts, Major in Sociology and Anthropology.

We had to give our tithes from the portion I received from my parents from the sale of our land in Cotabato City. We had other

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expenses in Manila. We needed more money to pay for all of our transportation expenses to the United States. We started to pray hard and pray more!

God Sends an Angel!

12

Something so miraculous transpired while we were studying in Manila. Rev. Met Castillo, our teacher at Ebenezer, was awaiting his flight to Zamboanga City so we drove him to the Manila airport after church service. He was to take the Mercury flight at 3 o'clock early morning. We spent the whole afternoon up to way past midnight driving around Manila until the time he had to check in at the airport for his trip back to Zamboanga. On our way back, we were to drop off Adynna Lim at church at about three o'clock before dawn. I got drowsy as we were approaching the area of the Pantranco bus station not far from the church and fell asleep while driving. All of a sudden, I felt someone shaking my shoulders, frenziedly warning me, "Wake up! Wake up! You are about to hit a tree!" I woke up, raised my head from the steering wheel with my foot still pressed hard on the gas pedal. I saw a tree so close

God Sends an Angel!

to the right side of the road and was heading straight at it at a fast speed. The road was going downwards, and my foot must have pressed the gas pedal so hard that it accelerated the car at a very high speed.

As soon as I woke up, I saw the tree, and immediately turned the steering wheel to the left to avoid hitting it! In a split-second, I had narrowly missed crashing straight into the tree. After regaining full consciousness, I straightened up my driving, and looked at my right front side. Lina was fast asleep. I looked at the back seat to my right and noticed my sister, Jochebed, was also sleeping sideways. I began to wonder, who shook me and woke me up? It was someone at my back I clearly recalled. I turned my neck and looked directly behind me and saw Adynna Lim; she was also sleeping and reclining at the back seat. Who then had awakened me?

Who could have shaken my shoulders and awaken me to avoid the danger of smashing the car against the tree? The family car that I drove was a Renault TS that was newly purchased. It must have been an angel sent by God to protect all of us in the car that early morning! Who else could it have been?

Adynna Lim later proceeded to study at Ebenezer Bible College and took further studies in the United States to finish her Ph.D. in Christian Education at New York University. She later became president of Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary.

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My sister Jochebed graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Music in the Philippines, and worked with the Far East Broadcasting Company for some years. She later became the registrar at the Asian Theological Seminary in Quezon City until she retired. She also got a Master's Degree from the University of the Philippines.

Is it any wonder that the Lord protected us all from an accident that could have been fatal to all of us, considering the very high speed in which I was driving, in order to be able to serve Him actively in our respective fields?

Confirmation of God's Will

13

Meanwhile, we had to apply for our visas. (We kept ourselves busy by enrolling at the Asian Theological Seminary. We were among its first students.) Upon receiving all of the necessary documents from Wheaton College, we presented them to the U.S. Embassy in Manila, confident that our visa applications will be readily approved.

The Consul asked us if we had any funds to pay for our studies. We answered honestly that we did not have any as we were banking on the scholarship grant that the college promised us. To our surprise and shock our applications were denied!

We immediately informed Wheaton College of the denial of our visas. The college registrar wrote back, stating that in addition to the scholarship grant of the college, we could get employment in the college to help us with our expenses. We were confident that this time our visas would be approved!

Part Two: God's Confirmation

In spite of the registrar's letter, our applications for visa were still denied as we had to be in a financial position to be able to support ourselves. The consul informed us to get an organization to guarantee to meet our financial needs.

"Lord, I thought you wanted us to go to Wheaton College?" I began to question the Lord. "How come our visas were denied the second time?" We certainly were so frustrated and wrote back the registrar of Wheaton College, stating that his letter was the basis for the second rejection of our visas.

We felt so disheartened and did not know exactly what to do. We did not know of any organization or any church that could financially back us up and be a guarantor for our financial needs. We practically did not have anything to our name. We were infants in the school of faith, so to speak, and prayed to the Lord to take over. There was nothing more we could do but trust Him. So with our childlike faith, we left everything in the hands of the Lord. It was truly a long wait. We took off to visit relatives in Margos, Sarangani, Cotabato City, then proceeded to Zamboanga City where Lina's parents lived. Then I met a close friend in Tetuan, Zamboanga City. "Ping, congratulations!" said Rev. Jose Nebab, who was one of the members of the CAMACOP Board of Directors, heartily greeted me and kept shaking my hand as he talked to me right at the street fronting the CAMACOP Headquarters in Zamboanga.

"You can now travel to the United States! The CMA (Christian and Missionary Alliance) in New York called the

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CAMACOP, asking if the Board of Directors would endorse you and Lina to guarantee your stay in the United States, and we readily endorsed you!”

What a great relief indeed! This was exactly what the U.S. Embassy required for the approval of our visas. When the registrar of Wheaton College received our letter, informing him of the rejection of our visas and the consul requiring an organization to guarantee financial support for our studies while in the United States, he called up Dr. Waterman. He informed him that our visas were rejected and that we needed an organization which would financially guarantee our stay in the United States.

Dr. Waterman in turn called up the CMA Headquarters in New York and asked if it could furnish the said guarantee required by the consulate. All that was needed was the endorsement of the CAMACOP of which we were members from our childhood, and I was a member of the Board of Directors, so the CAMACOP readily endorsed us.

It was indeed astonishing how the Lord worked things out for us even without us lifting a finger. When we presented the said letter of guarantee to the U.S. Embassy in Manila, our visas were readily approved. It brought unspeakable joy to our hearts. We got in the family car and switched on the radio. The song that was being played was “Nothing Is Impossible If You Put Your Trust In God!”

Trusting God for Our Needs

14

There was still the huge problem of our plane fares and Greyhound bus tickets that we had to buy, and we did not have the sufficient amount for them. What compounded the problem was the unexpected positive result of Lina's pregnancy test!

We have been desiring for a child for the past five years. What could be better news for us to learn after the pregnancy test that Lina was pregnant! I could hardly believe that I would be a father at last! I felt like walking on clouds even hours after the most welcome news came. We had a big celebration as it was a chance for us to have a child to carry our family name.

But, while it was good news to have a child after a long wait of five years, there was the added big expense of childbirth in the United States. Well-meaning friends expressed their concern, "Where will you get the money to pay for the delivery of the baby?"

Trusting God for Our Needs

How could we respond to that question? We had no other way except to put our complete trust in the Lord to supply that particular need. One question after another came coming.

“And have you been promised and assured of an employment at Wheaton College?” was another question asked to which I simply said, “No, but I was told that there are available jobs in the campus that I could apply for.” There were other questions so sincerely forwarded to us. “Where will you get the money to pay for your winter clothes?”

We did not have the slightest idea how much winter clothes would cost and neither had we the knowledge where to get the money for them. I was tongue-tied and could not give any answer.

Another question was thrown at us. “How much scholarship assistance were you granted?”

To which I replied, “We were given two-thirds scholarship grant.”

“Where will you get the money to pay the balance of one-third of the tuition fees?”

How could I answer this question and more when we were not even promised a job and will still be looking for one? So my mind went blank hearing all these questions. The Enemy used them to discourage and stop us from going to the States to follow the Lord’s leading.

We did not have any money to pay all these great expenses. We still did not have sufficient money to pay for our transportation

Part Two: God's Confirmation

to Wheaton College. There was really nothing that we could possibly do to meet all these needs. We had one alternative: to trust God completely to meet all of these financial needs.



A Miracle of God's Provision

15

Lina's parents for sure were of the impression that the Villegas family will surely help us out fully in all of our transportation expenses to the United States considering that our land had been sold and they must have expected there was enough amount that could be doled out towards our transportation.

In all likelihood, my parents were expecting Lina's parents to extend their financial help in meeting our transportation expenses. But neither happened, so we ended up with nothing. Lina suggested that we go the route of Fly Now, Pay Later. How could we when we were not even certain of our job in Wheaton College? We would need a state permit if we were to work outside.

Another alternative was to collect from all those who owed us. Even if we collected from all of them, we would still not have

A Miracle of God's Provision

enough. All these ways were the usual human ways. Little by little, the Lord was weaning us from the ordinary human ways and was leading us to take the next step of faith by teaching us to learn from His ways, which were higher than ours.

The Bible points out unmistakably, “‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways and thoughts’” (Isaiah 55:8–9). We had come to the end of our resources but we never breathed a word to others about our financial needs. Our only recourse was to go directly to the Lord. I told Lina, “Let us just kneel down, pray and trust the Lord.” So we knelt and prayed for our transportation needs before the customary despedida (goodbye) party to be given for us by our Capital City Alliance Church and friends.

We still did not have our tickets. To be able to cut on our transportation costs, we decided we would take the Greyhound bus from San Francisco, California to Chicago, Illinois.

On the night before we were scheduled to leave for the United States, we were given a despedida party by my family at Shantung Restaurant. The food was very delicious, but how could we enjoy it to our hearts' satisfaction with our financial problem still hanging like a sword over our heads. We still have no plane tickets for we have to pay the big balance!

Our scheduled flight the following day was at ten-thirty in the morning. The party ended about ten o'clock that night, but we still

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did not have the money to pay the full amount of our transportation. We had given our down payment, a substantial amount, but we still had a large remaining balance before our tickets could be released. As we were leaving, my sister came to me.

“I do not know Ping whether to give this to you now or send it to you when you get to Wheaton,” my elder sister Pet told me as we walked out of the restaurant after the party. “I figure I would save on stamps if I can give this to you now,” and she handed me a big brown Manila envelope. I thanked her and gave it to Lina. When we got in the car, the curiosity of the little girl in her got the better of her, and opened the envelope inside the car which was parked underneath a place where there was a brightly lighted post.

To our utter surprise, it contained a bundle of cold cash! Lina hurriedly counted it. It turned out to be exactly the amount that we needed to pay the total balance of our plane tickets to the United States and the bus fares from San Francisco to Chicago!

It was a miracle! Was this what they call the life of faith— just simply trusting solely the Lord for something that seemed impossible to us? It was truly like crossing the Red Sea which the Israelites crossed it on dry ground! To our great surprise and amazement, the Lord opened a higher ground, there up in the sky and provided the airplane for us to cross the vast blue ocean to get to the other side of the world, to America!

A Miracle of God's Provision

We had a good night's sleep. I rushed to the travel agency early at 8 o'clock in the morning to get our plane and bus tickets and proceeded to the airport after passing by the house to pick up Lina and our things. We made it to the airport with all the family and friends in church to see us off.

We still could not believe our eyes that we were now on our way to the United States! It was a dream come true! Never had I imagined being able to go to the United States, especially when we had given up our work and profession and had nothing left at all.

It thrilled us with excitement to be able to board the plane at last on our way to the land flowing with milk and honey. All the money we had went to the purchase of our tickets and ended with not a single cent, zero balance!

Surprisingly, we were given a ten dollar bill clasped in the hand of a close family friend as he shook our hands at the airport in gratefulness for all the help we extended to his family—that was all we had with our two suitcases! Up we soared in the sky still in utter disbelief of what great things the Lord had done for us—in securing our visas and providing money for our transportation! We were now on the higher ground instead of the dry ground of the Red Sea, soaring over the vast blue ocean in the sky like an eagle flying toward the opposite side of the world over the Pacific Ocean. Yes, the Lord is so great indeed, the God of Miracles!

PART THREE

**GOD'S
COMPANIONSHIP**



God's Unique Way of Protection

16

When we arrived in Hong Kong, we realized that in our great excitement we forgot our toothbrushes. We spent \$5.00 for 2 pairs and toothpaste. We were not able to join a tour for those traveling as that would have cost us \$5.00 each, and all we had was \$5.00 so we just stayed in the hotel. It gave us the time to ponder, praise, and pray still dazed and recovering from the unbelievable glorious things that the Lord had done for us!

We flew early the following morning to Japan; the following day we passed over Hawaii and landed finally at the land flowing with milk and honey in Los Angeles on to our destination to Chicago after three long days in San Francisco.

We stayed with my uncle and aunt in San Francisco. We were given a bag of candies, grapes and apples. My aunt wanted us to taste the food along the way to Chicago, and thus she intentionally did not prepare food not even sandwiches for us. As they had fed us so much in San Francisco throughout the two nights' and three days'

Part Three: God's Companionship

trip, we really did not feel hungry at all, although we wanted to taste some delicacies like chili con carne, hash brown, corn flakes, and others. When we reached Chicago we still had two dollars left! We enjoyed seeing all the very beautiful sceneries along the way!

My cousin was supposed to meet us at the Greyhound bus station, but she was invited to attend a wedding and requested my uncle who never knew or saw us in his entire life to meet us. When we got down the bus, we did not see my cousin or anyone who looked familiar. We waited for more than 15 minutes but still no one was there to meet us.

We did not know what to do. Since we did not see anyone there to meet us, we headed towards the escalator to go up the upper level of the station. We thought maybe we would be able to see our cousin there who was asked to meet us, not knowing there would not be anyone to see us there who knew us. As we were about to take the escalator, I noticed two elderly women who were on their way to take the escalator. Although Lina and I were way ahead of them, somehow God must have led me to wait and give way for them to go ahead.

My uncle, who was asked by my cousin to meet us, noticed the incident and told my aunt who was with him not far from the escalator, "He must be a Filipino!" He thought that only a Filipino would conduct himself with such courtesy as is the custom of Filipinos to give respect towards their elders. He rushed towards us and asked, "Are you the Villegases?"

God's Unique Way of Protection

Oh! How relieved we were! They explained that our cousin requested them to meet us as she had to attend a wedding. I never realized that the Lord could use culture to save us from being lost in the human jungle of Chicago, as we did not know anyone, and did not have even the home address or the telephone number of our cousin. We were completely relying on her to meet us at the Greyhound Bus Station at the time of our arrival. Doing a good turn for the elderly had saved us!

Humility Has Its Own Reward

17

We did not have a full meal along the way from San Francisco to Chicago. So it was a big treat for us when my uncle and aunt in Chicago invited us to a buffet dinner! Our first taste of what the United States can offer, a land overflowing with milk and honey!

We were able to contact Dr. Henry Waterman in Wheaton the following morning, and he came over and brought us to Wheaton. The family offered their home for us to stay while studying at the college. We volunteered to do household and yard work for them for our stay in their home.

That afternoon, I went to Wheaton College and looked at the bulletin board for job opportunities for students. We still had a couple of weeks before school opened. What caught my attention was a job opening to make a Japanese garden!

I had no idea whatsoever what a Japanese garden looked like nevertheless I responded and called up the number given in the card and that was pinned on the bulletin board. The homeowner, who

Humility Has Its Own Reward

was a contractor named Mr. MacCaron, picked me up early before seven o'clock the following morning in his Cadillac.

As we were driving to his home, Mr. MacCaron asked me, "Have you arranged with the college how much an hour you would be getting?" "No sir," I replied. I was briefed earlier by Ray, the eldest son of Dr. Waterman, that if I was asked how much I would charge for an hour, I should respond, "Two dollars and fifty cents." He asked me, "How much do you want?"

I was tempted to follow Ray's instruction as the minimum wage then was only \$1.65 an hour, but I found myself being honest and humbly said, "I am just new here, Sir, and I really do not know what to charge. Whatever is fair to you is fair to me." So when we reached his home, I was given all the instructions on how to make a Japanese garden. First, I had to uproot a cypress tree in front of the house that he wanted dug out. It was starting to get cool with the wind that was blowing down from Lake Michigan so I had to use the thick jacket given to me to keep warm. I had not done any manual work since I had left home for college, and I had a hard time flexing my muscles to do the digging. The roots of the cypress tree went very deep into the soil. After an hour of digging, I paused, starting to get very exhausted, perspiring inside although it was cold outside and uttered a prayer for help, "Lord, please give me strength for another hour!" After this, I felt I had the strength to continue. The cold wind was striking against my face which was dripping with perspiration in spite of the cold weather. I kept on digging around the

Part Three: God's Companionship

roots deeper and deeper. It seemed endless, and I was fast losing my strength.

“Lord, please give me more strength for another hour!” The Lord gave me the strength that I needed to be able finally to uproot the cypress tree. How I thanked the Lord for giving me the strength to accomplish the task! I proceeded to make the Japanese garden, and it turned out to be not as complicated as I thought.

Compared to an ordinary garden, apart from the plants, there was no area of the ground that was exposed for grass to grow. All was covered by man-made look-alike pebbles or stones that were bordered around by plastic irregularly shaped to separate it from the lawn. It was straight work without lunch break; there was just enough time to eat the Arby's roast beef sandwich that was provided by Mr. MacCaron.

Having started at 7 o'clock in the morning, I thought the work would cease at 3 o'clock in the afternoon as that would be eight hours, the regular normal work hours per day. But Mr. MacCaron was nowhere to be found. Probably he would arrive a little later, I thought. But after a long wait while working—hoping that he would soon appear as I was already exhausted from over 8 hours of work, he finally drove in at five o'clock. I had never worked so hard in my life with 10 straight hours of physical labor!

Mr. MacCaron drove me home and he handed me an envelope. After thanking him and bidding him goodbye, I opened the envelope not expecting much as the minimum wage then was

Humility Has Its Own Reward

\$1.65 an hour. If I went along with the instruction Dr. Waterman's son, I would have received \$25.00 for the ten hours of work. I was pleasantly surprised when I saw the amount in the check, it was \$30! Oh how I thanked the Lord so much for giving me more than I imagined I would get. At that time, that was equivalent to one month's work in the Philippines. Humility, indeed, has its own reward!

God Understands

18

The next day, I expected Mr. MacCaron again to come home at three o'clock but this time he arrived at six o'clock. Eleven hours of physical labor had completely left me overly exhausted upon arriving home. I felt so good and refreshed with a warm shower.

I needed to have a little break after two successive days of more than 10 hours work in a day. I prayed in my heart that the Lord would give me some rest for a while. About six-thirty the following morning, I got a call from Mr. MacCaron apologizing that the family will be going out of town as it was Labor Day, and thus I would not have to work that day. That was welcome news, an answer to my prayer!

School opened after the two full weeks that I worked for Mr. MacCaron, and I had to stop working— mowing the huge yard, cutting down trees, laying bricks on the driveway, cleaning the walls, the indoor swimming pool, windows, etc.

God Understands

Lina too, was given a couple of weeks of household work. She was asked once by Mrs. MacCaron to mop the kitchen, which had a special brick floor, to make it shiny. She started to use the floor mop, but Mrs. MacCaron told her to use her hand. Being a few months' pregnant, she felt it would be rather difficult for her to bend down on her knees to mop with her hands as told. But she didn't tell her she was pregnant.

She knelt down on her knees, mopping and polishing the floor with her hands, filling her heart and mind with songs such as, "Praise the Lord," "How Great Thou Art," "Great is Thy Faithfulness," and other songs until she was able to make the floor so shiny. When Mrs. MacCaron returned home and saw the kitchen floor, she was all praises for the work well done by Lina, not knowing that she did it for the Lord and not for her.

The Next Step of Faith

19

We wanted to look for a place to stay and be on our own. In the meantime, we lived with the Watermans, who were just too willing to accommodate us in their home even from the start when he wrote us. We volunteered to help in the household chores and yard work.

We had to enroll for full-time academic load for the fall quarter. I had to find a job on campus to pay for the remaining balance of one-third of our tuition. I thought of going to our Graduate School Dean, Dr. Merrill Tenney, to seek his assistance and recommendation for us to work at the Maintenance Department.

He was not only accommodating but had a deep spiritual insight. He gave me this nugget of God's wisdom: "Mr. Villegas, I know you have great needs. But you must realize that however great our needs are, God's supply is still greater!" What an encouraging word from a spiritual giant!

I took the short note that he had scribbled straight to the Maintenance Department. I was assigned by the Head of the

The Next Step of Faith

department to do janitorial work from seven o'clock at night up to twelve thirty midnight. My work on the four floors of Blanchard Hall was to collect all the garbage, clean all the floors with a mop, dust off the tables, and clean the President's Office and its washroom.

I did some household cleaning too in the morning in the home of Dr. H. Waterman where we stayed and spent the rest of the day attending classes up to 5:30 in the afternoon. It was a 30-minute walk from his residence to the college. After my janitorial work at 12:30 midnight, I had to hike 30 minutes in the cold night, arriving home at one o'clock to get some rest for the night after five-and-a-half hours of work.

We had prayed for a place to stay, and the Lord answered by giving an efficiency apartment in a nursing home where Mrs. Waterman worked. I could not work outside the campus as a foreign student, but I was able to make arrangements with the head of the Parkway Terrace Nursing Home whereby I could work the whole morning in payment of the unfurnished basement efficiency apartment with one bedroom, toilet and bath, and the living dining room with stove and refrigerator in the kitchen. There was no financial obligation on the part of the nursing home to pay me. Since no money was given from the employer to the employee, securing permit to work from the Immigration and Naturalization Services was not required. It was janitorial work in the nursing home in exchange for the free stay in the efficiency apartment.

Part Three: God's Companionship

My sisters, Pensy and Pet, wrote us that they cried upon learning that I was humbly doing janitorial work after practicing my law. I wrote them saying that “nothing is too menial or low when we do it for the Lord.” The Lord provided for all of the furniture we needed through the generous assistance of the Salvation Army.

God Knows Our Needs

20

I worked in my janitorial job the whole morning in exchange for our efficiency apartment. My full-time academic load started from noontime to five-thirty in the afternoon. It took about a 30 minute walk from the place where we stayed. Then I had to walk back to the college for my other janitorial work starting from seven o'clock to twelve-thirty midnight. So I had practically no more time left to study and do my assignments. I had learned earlier from some students who worked as security guards that they could squeeze in some study time in their schedule. But no such job was available on campus. I brought the matter up to the Lord and prayed, "Lord, it is not that I am complaining. I thank you for the jobs given to me to be able to sustain us with our stay in the United States, but I came here to study and learn. I have no time left after my jobs to devote for study and do my assignments."

The Lord surely knows indeed and understands all that we need. He opened up a security guard job at the Container

Part Three: God's Companionship

Corporation about six miles from where we lived. I applied for a permit to work outside the campus, citing economic necessity, reasoning out that when we applied for our visas in the Philippines, we were childless for five years, but after the approval of our visas, my wife got pregnant.

The Immigration and Naturalization Services granted my request for a permit to work off-campus. It was the Lord's providence which He had provided long before I had prayed that I would have a convenient reason to be able to work and study at the same time as a security guard outside the campus. The next problem was how to get to work as I did not have any means of transportation. We were able to accumulate \$300 from the two-week work with Mr. MacCaron. This we brought again to the Lord in prayer.

The Lord opened up an opportunity in a Volkswagen Auto & Service, where there was an available 1965 VW for \$895. I was able to give a down payment of \$150, with Dr. Waterman acting as guarantor. He co-signed for the payment of the car's balance for one year. I paid \$150 for insurance for the first six months.

I could not believe my eyes that in so short a time, I was able to have a car I could call my own! How happy and thankful I was to the Lord for giving me the car which I named "Kaire" from the Greek word, *rejoice*! It would have taken me many years or decades to own a car if I were still in the Philippines. It was to me a dream come true!

PART FOUR

**GOD'S
COMPASSION**



God Allows Hardship for Good

21

I worked as a security guard of the Service Master Security and Service Company assigned to the Container Corporation six miles away from Parkway Terrace Nursing Home, where we stayed. My schedule started at 11:00 at night to 8:00 in the morning. My night had turned to day! I was assigned to a huge box manufacturing company.

It took me thirty minutes to make my rounds every other hour, punching the keys in the Bundy clock at designated stations. This gave me some time to do some studying. After my work, I had to rush to my other job that started at 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 noon. So I really needed to make a “fastbreak” instead of having breakfast at my next job as a janitor in the nursing home in exchange for our efficiency apartment accommodation.

Having done well in my academic load for the first quarter, I applied and was allowed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service to work beyond the 34 hour-limit. That gave us additional

God Allows Hardship for Good

income to make both ends meet and enabled us to start saving for the delivery of our first child, whom we expected to be born in a few months.

Considering the big amount that we were to pay the doctor and the hospital bills, we had to make arrangements for monthly installment payments, which we had to start paying before delivery and continue paying after the birth of our first child. The Lord gave us a missionary doctor, Dr. Miner, who agreed with the financial arrangement; otherwise we could not have afforded the expenses involved in the delivery of our first baby.

God Answers in His Own Way

22

As we devoted our time to do all our studies with a full load of courses throughout the subsequent months that followed, Lina was getting heavier. We were anxiously expecting our firstborn child. We attended the lectures offered to all prospective parents by Delnor Hospital located in St. Charles, Illinois, about fifteen miles from Wheaton College, which prepare would-be parents for their coming babies.

It was getting colder and colder as the months passed. It went way down to below zero up to minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit plus the wind chill factor of one degree per mile speed of the wind. The wind went as fast as thirty-five miles per hour blowing down from Lake Michigan to the windy city of Chicago, which is 26 miles north of Wheaton. It froze as cold as 55 degrees below zero with the chill factor.

I had to warm up our old Volkswagen beetle after my rounds at the Container Corporation as a security guard. I had to drive it

God Answers in His Own Way

around the parking area so that it would be ready to get me to my other job at 8:30 A.M., as janitor at the nursing home. The week that we were expecting the birth of our first-born, I had our car tuned up to be ready for the 16-mile trek to the hospital. That early morning when Lina's contractions became regular every five minutes, I started the car to head for the hospital.

But the car would not start. For several minutes, I tried hard but the car remained stationary. I began to get frantic and prayed for the car to start so I could bring Lina to the hospital on time for her delivery.

The Lord taught me that it was not for me to dictate how He would answer our need at any moment. Instead of answering my prayer, the Lord provided our head maintenance man, Danny Darousci, who offered to drive us to the hospital in his car!

The Lord was always there to help us in time of need! My co-worker discovered later that the spark plugs of the car got wet because of the heavy moisture in the air, thus the car could not start. He then warmed them up which solved the problem.

Delnor Hospital encouraged fathers to be present at the delivery room. They realize the importance of fathers to be beside the mothers as they give birth, to see and feel for themselves how much hardship the mothers have to go through delivery to their child. This results in fathers being bonded closer to the mother and their child.

Part Four: God's Compassion

I went through the lectures then with Lina, offered free by the hospital which prepared the parents for their first-time experience of the delivery. When the time came, I right there, beholding through the big circular mirror that was positioned above, the real miracle birth of our first child, Lovelin Joyce (Lovelin coined from my deep feeling of love for Lina and Joyce, a combination of joy and rejoice).

I kept holding Lina's hand very tight. What an unforgettable experience, the marvelous sight of God's creative process! Indeed that brought my heart even closer to the mother of my child and certainly to the rest of our four children whose births I have also all personally witnessed.

Another Trip of Faith

23

We pursued our masteral studies in Linguistics to prepare for missionary work which included the translation of written materials into the language of the people we would be ministering to. The Lord opened the door for our enrollment at the Summer Institute of Linguistics of Wycliffe at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Our professor in Bi-Culturalism class, Dr. Marvin Mayers who was formerly with Wycliffe as a missionary translator, introduced us to Lambert Anderson, also a Wycliffe translator in Peru who also happened to be our classmate at Wheaton College. As we could not afford the costs of tuition fees, board and lodging, he recommended us for scholarship assistance which was approved.

On our way to Grand Forks, which took two days' driving, I noticed that there was a knocking sound in the engine. The car was not moving normally and that loud abnormal sound kept disturbing me. I was concerned, and was praying and hoping that we could

Part Four: God's Compassion

reach our destination. What a great relief when we finally made it to Grand Forks. I brought the car the following day to a Volkswagen shop. The mechanic told me that the car engine needed a major overhaul as the pistons had gotten busted. It would cost close to \$500. We did not have that money!

The problem was we could not go back home to Wheaton with the car not overhauled. We just did not know what to do except to take the problem to the Lord in prayer. Two days later, we were bewildered when we opened the door of our room and we saw an envelope on the floor. We were wondering what it was.

We opened the envelope and to our utter surprise, it was exactly the amount we needed for the repair of our car! We could not help but rejoice in the Lord's miraculous provision, and we kept praising and thanking Him for it! We have aptly named our car, Kaire, a Greek word which means *rejoice!*

We went on with our linguistic studies, learning all of the various sounds and how they are formed, and how to decipher and record them. We ended with live exercises wherein foreign students jotted down the strange sounds of their own language.

We had a very wonderful time and fellowship with the rest of the students from the other states. We had various assignments every day, not only school work but also chores of peeling potatoes and washing dishes. But we also had some time for fun—brief programs with humorous skits, volleyball games, and eating homemade pizzas baked by Bob Garripa who was married to Del Townsend,.

Another Trip of Faith

daughter of the founder of Wycliffe

Every now and then, our little Lovelin would get sick with very high temperatures that sometimes scared us. Lina, who was then pregnant with our second child, had pregnancy discomforts. We prayed to the Lord to sustain us throughout our studies. We had our various examinations and managed to pass even the very tough ones.

That culminated our two months of the Basic Training that summer. Taking another summer for the Advance Training would qualify us as Wycliffe translators. We still had to pray for the Lord's direction where He would want us to do missionary work. Our eyes were still on Irian Jaya.

Going Through the Flood

24

We arrived at Wheaton, exhausted from the hectic study schedule in Grand Forks and the long two-day trip back in our reconditioned car. We arrived under a heavy downpour that night. The following day, we had another long heavy downpour that went on till evening. The ground was now fully saturated with rain water that poured that day and the day before. Water started to get inside the window of our basement apartment. It didn't take long before it started to rise on the floor!

Our little girl Lovelin found the water exciting and played around as the water kept on rising. Lina was then already very heavy with our second child and also was afflicted with chicken pox all over her body.

But we were more concerned about Mila, our adjacent neighbor, who was blind. As we headed towards her room, we heard some pounding on the door. The carpet acted as a stopper underneath the opening between the floor and the bottom of the door that was

Going Through the Flood

keeping the water inside the room from flowing out into the hallway. Mila wanted to get out of the room—the water had risen above her waist and still kept rising.

The water pressure against the door was so strong that she could not manage to pull open the door. And we could not push open the door either so I ran upstairs to seek for some help. Danny Darouci, the head maintenance man was fortunately around, and he came down to help. However, no matter what we did, we just could not open the door.

I tried to move the top of the door, and it was able to move but not at the bottom. All of a sudden I remembered the small chopping board that Mila gave us when we moved into our efficiency apartment. The Lord must have given me the idea that if we manage to stick in the chopping board at the top of the door, we could force it downward.

With the help of Danny Darouci, we were able to get it to a lower point so that water started to flow out. We had just been able to push the door open, when we heard a loud explosion in the wall, a couple of meters away. It was an electrical short circuit. We were able to get Mila out of the room, safe from being electrocuted. That little kindness of Mila to us had in turn saved her life!

We had entirely forgotten about Lovelin who kept on playing around. We looked around and finally found her. Water was rapidly rising and so we hurried up to higher ground. After safely securing ourselves on the upper floor, I went back to retrieve some of our

Part Four: God's Compassion

things. When I went to the room through the rising water, I was only able to take hold of my Bible, Lina's bag, my sandals, and a special pair of Florsheim shoes given by a Filipino doctor friend, Dr. Robert Pagarigan. All the rest, the appliances such as the refrigerator, table, etc. had started to float. As I rushed upstairs, one of my Florsheim shoes dropped to the flood water. Failing to find it, I had to let it go.

That night, we had nowhere to sleep. One of the nurses working at the nursing home invited us to her home, out of the kindness of her heart, even letting us sleep in her master's bedroom! The following morning, after managing to get some good sleep past midnight, I went back to the apartment and saw everything floating: our beds, all the pieces of furniture given to us by the Salvation Army and friends, the refrigerator, books, and all of our earthly things.

I likened our nightmare experience in the flash flood to that of Job and the pain that he experienced. Lina, on top of having chicken pox, also had to suffer the loss of our material possessions. I felt depressed with all the loss of all our material things which were floating around. I thought to myself, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes, but surely the Lord would give them back again!" He really did—more than double!

Before this, Lina had been bugging me for a new bed as the bed we had looked more like a hammock, sagging at the middle especially with the two of us in bed. Lina was getting heavier, too,

Going Through the Flood

with our second child. I told her to be patient as we did not have sufficient money for it yet. I was then glad that we were not able to buy one, or it would just have been destroyed like the furniture and appliances floating around in the apartment! Surely, it would just have been thrown out. The Lord knows when to give! Delays and denials are ordained by the Lord.

Searching for a Home

25

When one is full of chicken pox sores all over, from head to toe, people would certainly stay away. Lina was already seven months pregnant and that really compounded everything. As we were flooded out of our efficiency apartment, we had no place to go. We wondered who would welcome us to their home in Lina's condition. She looked like someone afflicted with leprosy and "unclean."

We did not get any invitation to stay in another home, not even our closest friends or church mates, who were unaware of the flood. But the Lord was with us all throughout this ordeal. We prayed for a place to stay and sleep. And He gave us one that very day. The Lord indeed is an ever present help in time of need! He promised never to leave us nor forsake us.

At that time, a couple of college mates needed someone to house-sit their rented house for a week. Then at the very end of the week when they returned, the Lord opened up another home, that of a family who also needed someone to house-sit for them for a few weeks.

Searching for a Home

Meanwhile, we looked around for a place to rent so that we could have a place of our own, by the time the owner of the house returns. We found one close to the College, exactly at the time we had to vacate the home where we were staying then. The Lord knows all our needs and is always on time in meeting them! How wonderful He is! Only when one goes through an unspeakable hardship and is delivered from that unbearable feeling would he or she be able to fully appreciate truly how the Lord is so wonderfully good!

Looking for Another Job

I received a notice from the Immigration and Naturalization Services for me to reduce the hours of my work outside the campus to 20 hours a week. It was not my fault that I was permitted to work beyond the 20 hour limit as it was with the approval of the officer-in-charge, and therefore I was not going to be investigated, provided I reduced my hours of work.

So I acceded to the instruction to reduce my working hours. Lina, at that time was already suggesting that I should change my job. I was already apprehensive too, as I may not be that strong enough to get by with less than three hours of sleep a day. It was the Lord's answer to her prayer that I would have a different job instead of working all night. For I hardly had enough sleep. Even getting sleep for two hours straight would have been sufficient for me, but I had very little rest, and very seldom.

I informed the Service Master about the instruction I received from the Immigration and Naturalization Services to reduce my

Looking for Another Job

work to 20 hours a week. I was therefore given another schedule from 8:00 P.M. to 12:00 midnight, five days a week. (There would be no limitation of hours if I were to work inside the campus with the college as the employer.) But, the money I would be receiving from the reduced number of hours would not be sufficient to sustain us, especially when we would have to start paying for an apartment.

I had to look for another job on campus. We just had to pray so hard for a job. Not long thereafter, I learned of a job opening as a college mailman. That appealed to me. I applied for the job, and the Lord readily opened the door for my employment. I was able to work out my schedule to fit my class hours. The Lord made up for the hours that had been reduced from my job as a security guard.

He was true to His promise that He would supply all of our needs. I did like my new job sorting and delivering letters to the various departments and offices in the campus. Delivering mail during fine and sunny weather was an enjoyable experience. However, it was a different story when it rains, when it snows, or during rain with freezing drizzles or when the temperature gets low to 10 degrees below zero, with the wind chill factor. I dreaded it!

Well, the mail had to be delivered whether it rains or shines, snows or drizzles with freezing drops of rain when driving gets too hazardous. The Lord had always been present as my protection and my strength whatever job I had—at yard work making a Japanese garden, mowing lawns, felling down trees, laying bricks, or doing household work, or being a janitor, or maintenance man, or security guard, and now, being a mailman.

Model of Servanthood

27

When the time of birth of our second child came, a classmate of ours volunteered to take care of our firstborn Lovelin while I brought Lina 16 miles away to the hospital at St. Charles, the same hospital where Lovelin was born. Lina had then started her regular labor pain past midnight. After eight hours of labor, Lina finally gave birth to Cefelin Grace (Cefelin coined from the first syllables of our names Ceferino and Lina). But as she grew up, all her playmates called her Stephanie as they had difficulty saying Cefelin.

We had expected a boy, and I was very much disappointed when the attending doctor, Dr. James Stough who was a missionary, announced the baby was a girl. The attending nurse remarked that she was a pretty girl. I thought she was kidding because I saw the baby immediately when she came out—her lips were swollen, and she did not look pretty.

Models of Servanthood

But, I got all excited thereafter when I stood by the glass window of the nursery beholding our pretty little girl in her first movements, using her eyes and lips and hands. The nurses remarked that they had never seen a father look at his child that long—about an hour standing there just outside the nursery!

I knew in my heart that she was going to be a beauty queen when she grows up. I was so thankful and full of praise to the Lord for giving us such a sweet pretty little baby! I entirely forgot our desire of having a baby boy. We were very grateful for the way the Lord undertook her safe delivery and for enabling Lina to go through the laborious ordeal of birth! The nurse was right after all! She was indeed a pretty girl!

True enough, when Cefelin grew up, she became the Miss Venezuela in the Miss United Nations Beauty Contest during her elementary grades at the Philippine Christian Gospel School, Miss Valentine of our Sto. Niño Village, Miss Nursing of Cebu Doctors College, Miss Cebu Doctors College First Runner Up and Miss CREBA First Runner Up.

When we got home to our surprise, we received word from our professors and their wives that for the next few days, while Lina was still recovering, our meals and all of our laundry will be taken care of by them. I could not imagine that our professors of top academic standing in their various fields with all their doctorates would stoop down to bring food and do laundry for their lowly students!

Part Four: God's Compassion

What could have moved these professors to be willing to come down from their supposed “ivory tower” to the level of those who do a very humble service? Such modeling of servanthood in the name of Christ has brought a lasting imprint in us that we have purposed in our minds to follow their example. They truly lived up to the reality of their Christian faith even with their exalted high profession! Such very clear demonstration could never escape the conclusion that the Christian life could really be lived regardless of one's social status.



Myanmar (formerly Burma) is a Southeast Asian nation of more than 100 ethnic groups, bordering India, Bangladesh, China, Laos and Thailand.

Yangon (formerly Rangoon), the country's largest city, is home to busy markets, numerous parks and lakes, and the towering, gilded Shwedagon Pagoda, which contains Buddhist relics and dates to the 6th century.

The Christian & Missionary Alliance began its work in Myanmar in 1985 under the leadership of Rev. Dr. K.T. Vta. Today, there are 6 Alliance churches in Upper Myanmar and 10 churches in Lower Myanmar with a total of 773 baptized members.

Pray for greater openness from the government of Myanmar. Pray for wisdom and direction for all the national leaders and local workers/ministers. Pray for the spiritual and numeral growth of all the churches. Pray for the Myanmar people that they will worship the only true God.







RECOGNITION OF APAW AS A MINISTRY OF APAC, July 30, 2011



5TH APAW CONFERENCE 2012 (HONG KONG)



In response to the call for partnership, delegates of the 6th APAW Conference in New Zealand pledged to give by faith 5,034 USD to support the Northeastern Bible Seminary (NBS) in Thailand and others in need.

As of 2015, APAW has given 3453 USD to NBS which was used to cover tuition fees of 2 Thai students and help 3 Lao church planters. A total of 800 USD was also given to relief work in Erbil for Syrian refugees.

6TH APAW CONFERENCE 2013 (NEW ZEALAND)



PRAYER SESSIONS AND LECTURES DURING THE 7TH APAW CONFERENCE



OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 7TH APAW CONFERENCE 2015 (JAYAPURA, INDONESIA)



PARTICIPANTS DURING THE LECTURE ON "BEING GLOBAL BLESSERS"



CANDLE LIGHT CEREMONY LED BY DR. LINA FIEL T. VILLEGAS, APAW PRESIDENT (MISSIONS NIGHT)



CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE APAW CONFERENCE 2015 (Speaker: Rev. Arie Verduijn, AWF President)



TRAVEL TO/FROM METU DEBI ISLAND



ARRIVAL AND WELCOMING OF APAW DELEGATES

APAW DELEGATES PRAYED AND BLESSED THE LEADERS



APAW PRESIDENT, DR. LINA FIEL T. VILLEGAS, SPEAKING BEFORE THE DELEGATES OF THE MINI-CONFERENCE



FELLOWSHIP TIME - WAMENA PEOPLE AND APAW DELEGATES





**The APAW conference in session (Top photo)
The delegates during the Missions Night (Bottom photo)**



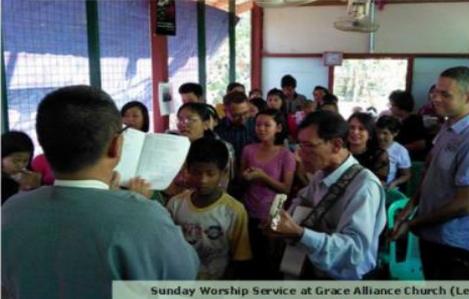
Rev. Sanga introduced the women leaders of Upper and Lower Myanmar.



The delegates cheerfully gave to missions (Left); The team prayed for Myanmar as they went around the National Races Village (Right).



The women of Myanmar committed themselves to global missions during the Missions Night (Left photo); Lunch Fellowship (Right photo)



Sunday Worship Service at Grace Alliance Church (Left photo); Medical ministry (Right photo)







Truly the Lord Provides

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The Lord provided for all our financial needs in mysterious ways. Sometimes we received money we never knew where it came from, and sometimes through friends in college even though we never made known our needs to anybody.

One morning we met an elderly couple in a grocery store. We talked to both of them for a short while. They did not even bother to ask for our names or address. One day, they just felt so strongly that they should look for us. They went around from house to house in the large community of Wheaton, just looking for a Filipino couple among other Filipinos. They kept on looking for a long time without giving up, like searching for a needle in a haystack. Was it the Spirit that prompted them? Fortunately, after several attempts they came knocking at our door and there they found us! How glad they were to find us at last. We ushered them into our apartment. They introduced themselves as the couple we met in a grocery and told us that they wanted to see us. We talked to

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them and got to share our testimony of how the Lord had led us to the United States. They were so blessed that they exclaimed, "No wonder we had that very strong feeling that we had to look hard for you! Now we know the reason for sure. We needed exactly the encouragement that your testimony has given us. It was even a miracle to have found you not knowing your names or address!" Before they left, they handed us a \$50 bill. We did not expect such a blessing! We thanked them as they left and thanked the Lord for ministering to their need and ours.

The next day when we went to church, the pastor mentioned the need to repair the water pump in the parsonage. As the collection plate was being passed around, I was led to take out that \$50 bill and gave it towards the repair of the water pump. We needed all the money we could have, but I felt led by the Spirit that I had to give it up to help meet the need of the church parsonage.

As I dropped the \$50 bill in the collection plate, I felt a hand tapping my left shoulder. I looked back and saw an Elder of the church who was ushering. He handed me something folded and when I unfolded it, to my surprise, it was a \$50 bill! The Lord indeed knows what we need! But He puts us to a test at times. We have to obey His leading, and then give up whatever He wants. The Lord has a way of giving back what we release and even much more than what we give.

A Door Opens for Further Training

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After three hard-pressed years which we had to work out, we finally finished our Masters of Arts Degree in Communications, specializing in Linguistics. The Dean of the Graduate School of Wheaton College, Dr. Merrill Tenney, commented jokingly during the Commencement Exercise that there is one who is now marching with three M.A. degrees, Lina Villegas. The first one of her M.A. degrees is in Communications and the other two were her being twice “MA” with her two little girls who marched with us, as there was no baby sister to watch over them.

He remarked jestingly one time in class, “Mr. Villegas, with all your work as a security guard, janitor, and mailman, and full-time studies, how do you find time to have all these babies?”

Sometime before our graduation, in the Lord’s providence, we met a missionary in Indonesia, Rev. Bill Conley, during a family dinner hosted by one of our classmates, Leila Lewis, who was also a missionary in that country. He took time to talk with us and asked if I would be interested in pursuing my Doctorate in Mission. He

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knew the Dean of the School of World Missions, Dr. Arthur Glasser, having been once his student and said he would be happy to recommend me. I never thought of it and was in fact ready to go back to the Philippines for an assignment in Irian Jaya pursuant to our desire to go as missionaries of CAMACOP. "Well, if the Lord would open the door for our further training, I would," was my response.

I received an application form from the School of World Missions of Fuller Theological Seminary located in Pasadena, California. I applied and my application was subsequently approved with a full tuition scholarship assistance. We thanked the Lord for this opportunity. We headed for California in our old Volkswagen beetle driving through Mt. Rushmore, Yellowstone Park, up to Mt. Rainier in Washington. We visited the University of Washington, the alma mater of my father who finished his engineering course there. We passed through Oregon and parts of California to see the famous giant redwoods and we were able to drive through one giant tree with our car.

We dropped by my relatives in San Francisco, Uncle Basil, a retired U.S. Air force personnel and Auntie Maling Dangilan, his wife. We happened to relate our experience to them, how we travelled via the Greyhound bus the first time we arrived the U.S.A. in 1970 and how the Lord provided for all of our needs when we only had \$5 in our pocket and reached Chicago after two nights and three days with \$2 left! They felt bad about it and lamented why we did not even tell

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them our predicament. They would have not only shared us more food than the bag of grapes, apples, and malted candies but they also wanted us to have a good taste of American food along the way. They could have given us some cash, too, but we told only the Lord our needs and never to others.

My Auntie Maling wanted to make up for their inability to help us in 1970. So when she learned that the whole family would return to the United States in 1987 for a vacation after an absence of ten years, she was determined to make it up to us and give us some money. But she did not have any cash to give, as she was unemployed, and was solely dependent on her pension.

She related to us an inexplicable interesting experience that in her sincere desire to give our family some money and a delicious dinner, she wished and prayed in her heart that she could have some money. She happened to drop by Reno, Nevada as she goes there once in a while to have some pleasurable leisure, to see if she was lucky enough to win, and surprisingly, she won a substantial amount!

She recounted that she was so happy that she was financially ready when we dropped by as she was able to prepare a sumptuous turkey dinner with all the works that she longed to give us some cash too for us and all the children. That was a big treat for us, with all the food to eat and money too, for the children's Disneyland trip for which we were all very much thankful and gave God all the praise and glory!

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We arrived in Glendale, California where we were able to rent a home in a compound that was meant for retired missionaries. But I was not allowed to work so that I could concentrate on my studies. Thus we did not have other means of support.

We prayed that the Lord would open a door for Lina to have a job. And the Lord answered our prayer by enabling her to work at the Los Angeles Times in downtown Los Angeles. She was given a practical training visa in line with her graduate course in Communications.

She was given a swing shift starting at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon until 12:00 midnight. As I had my classes in the morning, was able to drive Lina to the *Los Angeles Times* building. Rev. Joseph Arthur, the missionary who had asked me if I was the lawyer who was going to be a missionary, was finishing his doctorate in Mission. There, he volunteered to watch over our girls when I picked up Lina at midnight.

In 1974, Rev. Arthur finished his doctorate and left for the Philippines to go on with his work with the Philippine Student Alliance Lay Movement (PSALM) that he founded. For the following years up to 1977, before we went back to the Philippines, I had to bring along all of our children at midnight to pick up Lina.

We had to move out of the Glendale compound the following year and transferred to Pasadena. We were able to secure an apartment right at the campus of Fuller Theological Seminary after a few weeks of waiting at a housing provided by the Seminary for

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the temporary stay of foreign students.

After the birth of our third child Ceferino Andrew, Jr. in January 10, 1975, we transferred to the parsonage in Carmona, West Los Angeles. I had accepted the position of Associate Pastor of Grace Community Church which belongs to the Christian and Missionary Alliance, with international membership while working on my dissertation.

Training with Filipinos

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Our Senior Pastor, Rev. Angelino Apelar, assigned me one Sunday each month to preach in church. I have always looked forward to this opportunity of preaching to our Filipino “kababayans” (our countrymen) as well as to the rest of the American congregation. This gave me the opportunity and responsibility of preparing myself spiritually, seeking the anointing power of the Holy Spirit in preaching and giving myself wholly to the study of the Scriptures.

We opened the parsonage to all the members as their home when they come to church from distant places, spending practically the whole of Sunday with us. They were free to cook breakfast and help themselves to whatever food there was in the refrigerator. For those who needed it the beds were theirs to rest for afternoon siesta.

The parsonage with utilities was free, and I was given a salary of \$50 a month which I had freely given back to the church as our offering for Mission. We came to love and fellowship with all the members—Filipinos, Caucasians, and Blacks. We felt that they

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loved us too.

At times, when we went out for some Bible studies somewhere, a black lady in church would volunteer to take care of the children. But most of the time we brought our kids along with us. We were particularly concerned with those Filipinos who were deep in pornography, were drug pushers, and others who did not seem to have any direction in their lives.

We made ourselves available to them at any time even late at night. They were free to invite us over to their homes for Bible studies. At their beck and call, we responded to them even way past midnight, bringing along the children with us.

One by one, they were convicted of their lives of sin as they listened to us break forth God's Word and we shared our simple testimony of how the Lord changed our own lives. They all gave up their lives of sin and surrendered their lives to the Lord. One young man, who was married and had never cried in his life, broke down in tears under the convicting power of the Spirit, crying his heart out like a child as he prayed when Lina led him to receive the Lord as his Savior.

Another one, who was on the verge of breaking up with his wife, also surrendered his life to the Lord. He confessed that it was the simplicity of the way I presented the Gospel to them and my sincerity in giving my testimony of how the Lord had changed my life that drew him to receive the Lord the Spirit having brought about the conviction.

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We encouraged these Filipinos, who were members of the Filipino Concert group which toured major cities in the United States, to form a singing group to sing for Christ and they banded together to form the Living Circle. Angie and Lito Bagasao were their leaders, with Alvin and Bevs Algallar, Lito and Mimie dela Paz, Vince and Thelma Casequin, and Josue and Angie Vencito making up the members of the group. They sang from church to church, this time no longer singing for the world but singing for the Lord, testifying how the Lord had changed their sinful lives, and how they were now living for the Lord! They were invited to sing in a large stadium in San Francisco where they expected 15,000 people to attend the affair.

God's Power Demonstrated

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I was at home taking care of the children one morning while Lina was at work at the *Los Angeles Times*. I was entertaining Lina's cousin Am with his wife, Betty, and their little boy, who were on their way to Wheaton College for him to pursue his studies. The phone rang and at the other end was a frantic voice of one of the members of the Living Circle. "My wife is going crazy!" he cried over the phone in Tagalog, begging me to come over to his house to help him.

I had been counseling the couple to be very careful as they were always quarrelling. The husband wanted to have a child while the wife was not yet prepared to have one. The enemy could take advantage of their worsening conflict. I took along Lina's cousin and his family with me. When we arrived there, I sensed something unusual and so I prayed in the car for the Lord's guidance, leaving the children and Betty in the car.

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Just as we got close to the door of their apartment, my hairs stood at their ends! I sensed the presence of an evil force. I knocked at the door and we were ushered in by the young man who called me earlier to help him. The whole apartment was a mess with everything scattered around the floor—it was like the whole living room was hit by a typhoon or hurricane. The wife had locked herself in the toilet and we could not even get to talk to her.

She threatened to drink some injurious liquid stored in the toilet. We knelt down and prayed right in front of the closed door. After praying, we ventured to open the door but when we succeeded, we did not find her inside. How she had managed to open the door without us noticing her go out puzzled us! She passed by the car that was parked in front looking so strange, without speaking at least to our children in the car, who she knew so well.

We did not know where she went. The husband figured that she must have gone to her place of work. We found her when we got there. We were wondering how she could have gotten there before us without a car; maybe by bus, but that would take about an hour's ride. It was impossible; surely something was above it all.

I spoke to her and I noticed black spots on her face. I asked her if I could pray for her. And the answer that came out from her mouth was “No!” But she claimed later on that what she meant and tried to say was “Yes!” So I desisted from praying and told the husband to call me any time he needs me as I was at home the whole day.

God's Power Demonstrated

We did not get any call that whole day. While we were having a Bible study that night with a mixed group of Chinese, Japanese, and Caucasians, we received a call past ten o'clock that evening from the Living Circle. They begged us to come over and pray for the singing group as they would not leave for San Francisco to sing before an expected crowd of 15,000 unless we see them.

It was close to midnight, when we get close toward Northridge where they were all waiting for us, I noticed the car we were driving was swaying from left to right. I held on to the steering wheel with much effort and managed to keep the car go straight. When we arrived, I asked the children to go upstairs as the singing group formed a circle. Each one of us prayed but when we got to the lady that I suspected was demon- possessed, she could not pray. Pursuing my suspicion I asked her to say "Jesus!"

She tried and tried but no sound would come out. I asked her again to utter the name of Jesus. And all she was able to mutter was "Je - Je - Je - Je - Je." She finally resigned and blurted, "I can't! I can't!" I then prayed, "Lord, I have never experienced casting out demons in my life. I do not know what to do. But I know that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. Only by Your power and in Your name could we cast out this evil spirit."

I asked the group to sing the hymn, "There is Power in the Blood." And I prayed again and claimed the power of God to cast the demon from the lady in the name of Jesus. After praying, I prodded her to say "Jesus." She struggled for a while but finally

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managed to say "Jesus!" At the very moment that she was able to utter "Jesus," she fell on her back to the floor, but her countenance changed, like an angel and all the black spots around her face disappeared. I told the group that the Enemy had attempted to hinder them from singing for the Lord in San Francisco, but had failed. Somehow I was led to say, "The Lord has allowed this to happen because we will be on our way back to the Philippines. You yourselves will be able to do what you have seen by the power and in the name of Jesus." And sure enough, while they were touring some major cities with the larger Filipino Concert group, they were able to do similarly by the power and in the name of Jesus to cast out a demon from one of the singers and delivered that one from Satan's possession. Angie and Lito reported that he was commanded by Satan to jump from the third floor of Holiday Inn in Texas, but was restrained just in time by his companions. In another instance, they were called to help this guy as he was floating up in the air. They got stuck up in the elevator for an hour. When they got to the hotel room, they saw him floating above the bed. They held the man by the hand and prayed to the Lord. By the power and in the name of Jesus, they were able to cast out the evil spirit!

Trusting God for Greater Things

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I was very much fascinated by multi-media presentations I had seen. This would be an effective means of communication in our ministries in the Philippines. I thought I could trust and ask the Lord for a set of multi-media equipment that I could bring back to the Philippines.

I went to an Audio Visual Shop and discussed with the manager about setting up a complete set of multi-media equipment. The set consisted of 6 slide projectors, 3 dissolve units, 1 master programmer, 3 portable screens, 1 movie projector, 1 reel tape deck, 1 hi-fi stereo receiver-amplifier, and custom-built cases for all the equipment.

I had strong faith that the Lord would provide the huge amount for the payment of the multi-media set. I told the manager, “Ken, the money will be ready when all of the equipment are put up and the set finished.”

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It took some time to set up the whole multi-media system. Half-way through I received a call from the manager. "Ping, even a church could hardly afford this set of multi-media equipment that you are ordering. Could you give me at least half of the full amount?"

I had been praying hard all the while for the money to come. Fortunately some money came and it was just enough to give the manager the amount he was asking. Thereafter, I prayed for more money for the equipment but the money did not seem to be coming. Lina and I had a serious talk about the project. We did not mention this need to others; we just kept it to ourselves and brought it straight to the Lord in prayer. She also suggested that we should start saving for the huge expenses that we expected for our trip back to the Philippines.

I agreed with her but the pursuit of the set of multi-media equipment was for our ministry, and so I told her that we should put the Lord's work first and He will surely supply all the rest of our personal needs to sustain us, including our transportation expenses.

One morning I knelt down, praying to the Lord in my study room. I poured my heart and cried out to the Lord to purify my motives. I knew from my heart the multi-media set would be best for better communication. My prayer was interrupted by a knock at the door. Lina told me that she had a talk over the telephone with Angie Bagasao, a leader of the Living Circle, and she would like to

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share with me what they just talked about.

I took hold of the extension phone on the wall and heard Angie say, “We have been praying and we have decided to give part of the tithe of the sale of our house to you. Lina just told me you have a project of setting up a multi-media system for your ministry in the Philippines, and you could certainly use it for that purpose!” Oh, what a wonderful surprise!

I was so thrilled and praised the Lord for answering our prayers. I thanked her very much and prayed for her and Lito, her husband. The Lord wants to make sure that all our motives in our ministries will certainly be all for Him and His glory!

A couple of weeks thereafter, I received a call from Ken informing me that the set of multi-media equipment was all ready to be picked up. “You only have a balance of \$285.00.” I told Ken that I will pick up all of the equipment at four o’clock after I have fetched Lina. But when I went over our check book, we had just a few dollars in it. We still lacked \$285.00 to complete the remaining balance of the multi-media.

I remembered what I promised Ken that when the whole set of multi-media equipment will be ready, the money will be ready. But where will we get the \$285.00? What will I tell Ken? I thought, probably the Lord will send the money through the mail then.

It was already ten o’clock in the morning and the mailman would then be dropping the mail shortly. I waited for thirty minutes but the mailman had failed to appear. Maybe he was delayed so I waited

patiently up to noon time. Thereafter, I went out every now and then to check on the mailman but I never saw any trace of him at all. This delay in the delivery of the mail had never happened before!

There was only one thought that came to my mind. Who in the world would be interested in preventing me from keeping the promise I made to Ken in full faith in the Lord that the money will be ready when the equipment will be ready? And so undoubtedly I said audibly, “You, Satan, today you will surely be put to shame!”

That afternoon I went with the children to pick up Lina at work. I told her the set of multi-media equipment is now all ready for pick up, but we still lack \$285.00 to complete the remaining balance.

With full confidence, I told Lina, “I believe the money will be at home when we get back. What I can do is to issue a check for the whole remaining balance. Anyway I could deposit the money to cover the checks tomorrow morning to complete the full payment.”

We proceeded to the Audio-Visual Shop and I issued a check for the remaining balance. We loaded the set of multi-media equipment in our station wagon. We were so excited finally to have the multi-media equipment for our ministry. We drove home and when I opened the door, I saw a number of letters scattered on the floor close to the door by the mailbox. I picked them up and one by one I opened the envelopes.

To my amazement, there was a check in each envelope. I added up the amount, it was exactly \$285.00! The Lord indeed honors our faith in Him. He will never let us down if we put our trust in Him! Jesus assured us, “Ask and it shall be given you.”

Our Gifts from the Lord

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In the first five years of our marriage, we did everything within our means, even getting medical help to have a child without success. But in the next five years after the birth of our first child we did everything not to have a child as that would interrupt the pursuit of our studies. So we tried all contraceptives available but to no avail. Cefelin came twenty months after Lovelin. And the boy we had long expected, Ceferino Andrew Jr. (who we nicknamed Ping J), came fifteen months after. When he was born, I felt like I was walking on clouds for several hours with praises and thanks to the Lord!

However, after the birth of Ping J, Lina's doctor recommended her to use an intrauterine device (IUD) to prevent any further pregnancy as we already had three children and had no more time to take care of another one, due to our studies and work. We agreed that Lina should have an IUD for the purpose. After our studies, the Lord willing, we could have another boy.

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Seven months after the birth of Ping J, our third child, the unexpected thing happened—Lina's pregnancy test was positive! How could that be when she had an IUD? However we accepted it as a blessing from the Lord. We welcomed the coming of our fourth child!

We have our own family plans but God could always overrule our plans to conform to His Master Plan. When the Lord wants to give, we have to accept His perfect will. All our children are our gifts from the Lord! Even though the timing of their birth were not according to our expected timeline—the first one delayed and the were way ahead of our plans—we were just too happy to have them when they came! Four children in five years! When it rains, it pours!

Lina's doctor, Dr. Jane Bower, wife of a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, tried to retrieve the IUD but the string broke off and the loop remained. So we prayed that no possible damage or complication occurs as far as the safety of the baby was concerned. We also prayed the Lord would provide for all the expenses that would be incurred in the delivery of our fourth child as pregnancy was not covered by any insurance at that time. Lina would be out of work before and after her delivery, which would leave us without any income. During the birth of our third child, Lina was out of work for five months. We just had to trust the Lord for all of our expenses. And He supplied all of our needs even though we were both unemployed.

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When we went to Lina's doctor for her monthly check up, the baby was about ready to be born, and we were to go as soon as possible to the hospital in Glendale. So Efren and Letty Colinco, our church members and close friends, gladly volunteered to take care of our three children to enable me to attend to Lina's delivery.

After eight hours of labor, the baby was finally ready to be delivered. We adopted the Lamaze method for our last two children. I advised the doctor that the baby was ready based on my experience with our three children. She did not take me seriously, however, as she still continued to eat up her sandwich. When she came to the labor room, the baby was already on the way out, which made her frantic. Twice she tried to put on her gloves but these were torn in the process. The baby kept moving, and there was no time to roll Lina's bed to the delivery room. She told Lina to stop pushing so as to delay the baby's coming out. But Lina did not know how, and the baby little by little was coming out!

The doctor could not handle the child with her bare hands and the nurse and attendants did not know what to do either to keep the baby from coming out. The Lord caused me to remember a lesson in a Lamaze book. I told Lina to hold her breath and she complied. Immediately the baby stopped sliding out. The doctor finally got her gloves on and undertook the delivery of our fourth child right there at the labor room. We named him Joseph Phillip (J.P.).

The doctor did not find the loop of the IUD in the placenta. So they had to schedule a surgery the following day to locate it. It

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pierced through her uterus and was found in the omentum of her womb. We had prayed that the IUD would not cause any injury or serious complications such as peritonitis while inside Lina's womb. The Lord answered our earnest prayers! We thanked the Lord that both mother and baby were unharmed. And added to this were the expenses for Lina's delivery and surgery for the removal of the IUD which we also brought to the Lord in prayer. We did not have the money for all these huge expenses. We prayed to the Lord and He did not leave nor forsake us. Every single cent was paid up through a foundation at the Los Angeles Times. We gave God all our praises and thanks for answering our prayers!

Going back to our third child, Ping J, he developed a stutter in his speech when he was a child. We had already gone back to the Philippines at that time, but my dissertation was unfinished. The stutter began when he must have missed me when I left for the States to finish my dissertation. And the Lord miraculously poured His healing touch upon him as he trusted in Him to recover from his stuttering speech when he was still in his early childhood. He had an unfailing trust in the Lord. We raised him up to be positive in everything when he was in his youngest years. He once asked me what was the passing mark and I replied 75%, and he was so happy saying, "*Ngiga da* (wow), just one more point to pass!" I helped him with his studies to pass his subjects. This brought him to the top, and he became the top computer consultant of Bloomberg in New York. Their office was located at the World Trade Center.

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Nevertheless, Ping J got terminated by the Merrill Lynch supervisor, who had a Filipino son-in-law whom she hated. Ping J cried his heart out at the Central Park in New York. Lina counseled him to desist from filing a racial case and just take it as the Lord's plan for his life. Later, he found a job at Bearsterns. Every time we would drive past the World Trade Center, he would remark that his office was at the 87th floor. Months after, the 87th floor was struck directly by the 9-11 terrorist attack. Were it not for the Lord's protection, he could have been one of the more than three thousand victims who perished that day!

Proving the Power of the Lord

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After three months, one Sunday afternoon, Lina noticed some fresh blood in the toilet bowl. But we had planned to attend a Filipino Concert in downtown Los Angeles, so we proceeded to go. When we got home, the same thing happened. We did not know what to do. We thought, however, that it would be gone the following day.

But the same bleeding happened again the following day and the day after. We got concerned and brought her to Midway Hospital where our very close friend Del Pamaran, a member of the Grace Community Church, worked as a nurse at the operating room.

Lina was admitted and she underwent the various tests: varium, protoscopy, endoscopy, and nuclear tests, but they were not able to trace the source of the bleeding. She kept on bleeding up to Friday. One of the nurses who was a Filipina working at the Midway Hospital was able to take hold of Lina's medical record which showed that her hemoglobin count was down to two. She remarked with wonder to Lina, "*Tepok ka na sana!*" (You should already be

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been dead!). One of our close doctor friends also confirmed later that the low hemoglobin count is normal only for birds (the normal count is 12-15.5 grams per deciliter for humans, women in particular). There is no one in medical history who has survived with that low hemoglobin count. She could not believe that Lina was still alive.

They scheduled her for exploratory surgery the following day to find out exactly where the bleeding was coming from. That Friday morning, we received a letter from Dr. Joseph Arthur mentioning the death of his mother. Before her death, she had one wish.

She requested that those who would like to send flowers during her funeral should instead send the money for the support of PSALM which was the ministry that her son, Dr. Joseph Arthur, had founded. We did not have very much in our checking account then, but I was led to share practically all of what we had in our check book except for a few dollars. We needed money for Lina's hospital bills, but even if we kept everything we had, it was far from sufficient to pay for her hospitalization. I issued a check for PSALM and brought it to the airport with our four children to be handed to Dr. Met Castillo. We saw him off that afternoon on his way back to the Philippines and requested him to hand the check to Dr. Arthur for PSALM.

The following day, Saturday, we proceeded with then scheduled dedication of baby Joseph Phillip to the Lord while Lina was to undergo exploratory surgery. To my surprise, I received from the

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Lord through the gifts handed to me by all our *kumpares* and *kumares* (witnesses of the dedication of our baby) three times the amount that I released for the PSALM ministry!

Meanwhile, on Friday evening, Lina was reading the Bible about the woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years. The woman had thought that if she could only touch the hem of the cloak of Jesus, she would get healed, and indeed she got healed. Lina said, "Lord, if you are the same yesterday, today, and forever and you have healed that woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, you could likewise heal me!"

She observed that as she looked at the Scripture portion of what Jesus said to the woman, the words, "Your faith has made you whole," jumped out from the rest of the verse. This gave her the assurance that she too was healed of her bleeding at that moment!

Not long thereafter, she received a telephone call from Bunny Thompson, wife of our then Pacific District Superintendent. "Lina, I want to pray for you." And in the middle of her prayer she paused and said, "Lina, I should stop praying for your healing. The Lord had healed you. And let us start praising and thanking the Lord!" So they began praising the Lord.

The following morning, Dr. Zisk came to Lina and greeted her before the exploratory surgery. He then proceeded with the preliminary examination. He was surprised that Lina's blood discharge was no longer fresh but brownish and had coagulated indicating that the bleeding had stopped. There was no longer any

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need to go on with the exploratory surgery to find the source of the bleeding.

“What happened?” he asked, so perplexed. She answered with confidence, “Doctor, the Lord healed me!” He was a Jew. However, he could not believe what he saw, and told Lina, “Well, we will observe you further for two weeks. If after two weeks there would be no bleeding, I would be able to declare you are healed.”

We waited for two weeks, and there was no bleeding at all. So, Dr. Zisk confirmed that Lina was completely healed. We rejoiced with all our hearts! The Lord had healed Lina as she had believed that He could heal her, just as He had healed the woman in the Bible who had a blood issue for twelve years! Truly, the Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

PART FIVE

**GOD'S
COMMISSION**



Following God's Leading

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We had been advised by friends and relatives to stay put in the United States instead of going back to the Philippines for various reasons. First of all, Martial Law had been instituted and was still in force and so, our return was not advisable. Secondly, Lina was getting a very good pay at the Los Angeles Times, and she was told that with her salary, she could support four missionaries. Very well-meaning and sincere pastors tried to convince her to continue on working there, but I could go back to the Philippines alone and come back and forth as need be. This did not meet our approval as we did not want to be separated. We opted to go home.

The Vice President of Los Angeles Times pleaded with Lina to reconsider her decision to resign. The newspaper company had been looking for a worker like her for the past twenty-five years or so. She had developed a system at her department that saved the company millions of dollars! It was difficult for the management to release her.

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For the short time that she had worked there, she had been given several merit increases in her salary. She was already receiving a salary of over a thousand dollars a month with fringe benefits such as medical insurance and participation in the profit sharing. She was offered again an increase in salary to induce her to change her mind. But she wouldn't. The Vice President, having failed to persuade her, told her straight, "Lina, your decision to resign and return to the Philippines is very stupid! But I respect your decision."

Some friends of our children remarked, "Lovelin and Stephanie, when you go home to the Philippines you will become poor!" This must have scared our children after enjoying all the blessings of the United States—the apples, grapes, chocolates, and all the food they wanted, on top of all the toys their eyes could desire.

"Daddy, is it true that we will become poor if we'll go back to the Philippines?" they asked. I assured them, "Children, the God of the Philippines is the very same God of America. If God provided all of our needs here in the United States, then He will also provide all of our needs in the Philippines!"

At that time, I was assured a monthly salary of P450 (\$15) by Dr. Joseph Arthur, founder of PSALM, plus P200 for housing for the total amount of P650 as its National Director. But we were also being persuaded by friends to apply as missionaries in the Philippines of Grace Community Church of the Valley with Dr. John McArthur as Pastor, with a salary of \$600 plus living expenses and work money.

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But the Lord's leading for us was to help PSALM develop its lay ministries regardless of the remuneration. We have decided never to put a price tag on our ministry. Money is never a consideration in our acceptance of any ministry, as the Lord is our employer and He determines what we would get. It is His work, and He will give us all that we need. The hymn, "Where He leads me I will follow!" guides our life.

Sensing the Lord's Leading

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Lina was out of work for eight months while she recovered from her last childbirth. Her condition also required surgery to remove the IUD in her omentum and deal with her bleeding. Thus, she was bedridden for some time. She had been out of work too, for five additional months with our third child. But the Lord was faithful in providing for all of our needs during those times when Lina was not receiving any salary, as giving birth was not compensable then.

My salary of \$50 as Associate Pastor I gave as our missionary pledge. What little we had as savings we released for the ministry of PSALM, but the Lord gave back to us threefold and also took care of the more than \$8,000 we incurred in medical bills. We still had a long way to go as far as our transportation expenses to the Philippines were concerned. So we prayed. I had the full confidence that if we put the Lord first as we did when we purchased the multi-media equipment that we envisioned to use for the Lord's work in the Philippines, all of our needs will surely be provided.

Sensing the Lord's Leading

Lina's employment at the Los Angeles Times was overwhelmingly beneficial not only financially being the employee that the company had been looking for the past twenty-five years—she had saved it millions of dollars with a system in advertisement she had developed for the company. When she left it to go back to the Philippines, she was given the assurance that any time she comes back to the United States, she would be given priority by the Los Angeles Times if ever she would need a job.

Lina, however, felt prouder of her personal spiritual growth. She had led Susie, one of her co-workers, one day to the saving knowledge of the Lord. With tears flowing from her eyes, Susie prayed to receive the Lord in her heart. She told Lina afterwards that she no longer felt the same about sleeping with her live-in boyfriend. Lina simply told her that's because she already has the Lord in her life; the Holy Spirit makes her feel that way since they were not married. So Susie decided to tell her boyfriend for them to get married, otherwise they should not be living together. Her boyfriend refused to marry her, so she let him leave her apartment.

Lina was getting tired of hearing foul language and four-letter cuss words flooding the department where she worked. She heard her co-employee keep on repeating a cuss word that sounded in her ears like “son of a gun.” She suggested to him, “I am really so tired of hearing you say, ‘son of a gun’. How about changing it to ‘daughter of a pistol’?” So from that time on, the warning spread at the *Los Angeles Times*, “Be careful and watch your foul language when you are in the department of Lina the Filipina.

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Lina also had an opportunity of ministering to a young single co-employee, Leon, who was into drugs. One day, he felt led by the Lord to help us in our ministry when we got back to the Philippines. He offered to give us his big and powerful Harley Davidson motorcycle. I had never driven a motorcycle that big and powerful!—so scary but that was not the only reason we politely declined his offer. It would not be easy to bring any vehicle to the Philippines, and the taxes and duties to be paid would be sufficient to frighten anyone who did not have the cash for it.

Leon attended our church service one Sunday morning. He had lunch with our family at the parsonage afterwards. All the while, the Lord had been dealing with him while we were enjoying our meal and conversing around the table. He pulled out some bills from an envelope and told us, “Here’s \$500 for your transportation to the Philippines.” How happy we were! We thanked him very much for it. He was still uneasy though, as he admitted that the Lord has been urging him to release his money to help meet our needs. He pulled out another \$500. We were all the more happy! Again we thanked him for his generosity.

But that was not the end of it. He sensed that the Lord wanted him to give all of the contents of the envelope. So he pulled out the remaining cash of \$800 and turned the open envelope upside down, showing us that it was already empty! “That’s it, all of it, and I feel very much relieved as I have given everything that I have sensed the Lord wanted me to give you.”

Sensing the Lord's Leading

You could just imagine how happy we were to receive that much money from the Lord through Leon! How thankful we were to the Lord and to Leon who gave everything that the Lord led him to give to us! That helped to pay for all our airfares to Manila, Philippines. As Jesus had said, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:35, *KJV*).

Looking After Other's Needs

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We had to trust the Lord for the freight fee of about \$5,000 for the things we had decided to bring with us to the Philippines. The Lord had been very gracious not only in the wonderful miraculous healing of Lina's bleeding, but also for undertaking the full payment of her hospital bills that amounted to more than \$8,000!

We cannot help but think that it was part of God's reward for my willingness to part with whatever little we had for the Lord's work when we released it all at the time we needed it most for Lina's hospital bills. It was at that time when Lina could have died with her low hemoglobin count when the source of her bleeding could not be ascertained then except by undergoing a complete radical exploratory surgery in her stomach.

One Sunday, I preached in church about looking not only after our needs but also after that of others. "While we have great needs, let us not close our eyes to the needs of others. If we are only concerned about our own needs, we would never be able to help

Looking After Other's Needs

others as well. We always have needs. If we look after others' needs as well, we will all be building good relationships." As I was bringing up this point before the congregation, I knew the Lord was watching.

He impressed upon my heart to give up our relatively new car which was now fully paid. We had traded our old VW beetle Kaire for it, as we could not risk having our old car conk out at midnight when I would pick up Lina with the children. Who would help us when our old car conks out? We did not have support from any church or organization. This is the reason I gave to the Foreign Students Adviser who questioned why we had a new car like other students who were under support when we were only on Student Scholarship Assistance.

While we needed all the money we could take hold of for our expenses in order to go back to the Philippines, we should not close our eyes to the needs of others. "Was I willing to do this myself?" was the challenge that struck my mind.

Give your car to Roy! I heard a small inaudible voice telling me. Roy was a young Japanese man who worked with World Vision, but he did not have a car to bring him to his place of work. The Lord touched the heart of his poor family to sell their house and then donate all the proceeds of the sale to help towards the purchase of the ship Logos that was to bring the Gospel around the world through preaching and sale of books and other literature. They were now just renting an apartment where they could all stay. This was how they expressed their love for the Lord!

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I was convinced with all my heart with what I was preaching. “Okay Lord, I will give Praisel to Roy” without any hesitation. Praisel was the name that we gave to our new car. We joined the first syllable of Praise to the last syllable *El*, the Hebrew word for God, which put together means “Praise the Lord.” As mentioned earlier, we had made it a practice to personalize all our belongings by giving them names and treating them as though they were persons, so we could take care of them better. After the church service I approached Lina and told her, “Sweetheart, the Lord wants us to give Praisel to Roy.” She then paused for a moment and reflected, saying “We need all the money we can have and we could sell Praisel for a good price considering that it is new, just two years old.” She paused for some moment, with a trace of reluctance. She argued, “I have heard of pastors receiving cars but never heard of a pastor giving a car to others.”

After some more reflection, she said thoughtfully, “But then if you think that is what the Lord wants, go ahead.” Even if we had sold the car, the proceeds would not be able to pay for all of our expected expenses in transporting all of our belongings and other expenses of our return to the Philippines.

The following day I cleaned up the car and while I was washing it, I said, “Praisel, you have been a very good car to us, giving us the best service. We thank you very much for your wonderful service! But the Lord wants us to give you to Roy.” So I brought the car to Roy's place. We exchanged pleasantries and after a while I looked at Roy and told him straight “Roy, the Lord wants

Looking After Other's Needs

us to give you our car. Here's the key."

He did not know how to react in disbelief. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"The Lord wants us to give to you Praisel. That red air-conditioned VW station wagon with a roof rack out there in the parking lot." I pointed to our car as he looked outside the window directly at the car.

He appeared completely shocked, in utter disbelief of what he heard me say. After some moment, he was able to recover and managed to speak, asking me, "How did you know I wanted a red air-conditioned VW station wagon with a roof rack? I have been praying for a car like that for years!" We had never talked about cars whenever we got together. I answered him, "I did not know. I sensed beyond any doubt that the Lord wanted me to give that car to you."

He was still in a daze. He seemed choked up before he finally said something, with tears rolling down his cheeks. "You know what, yesterday, I had been struggling with the tithes of all my earnings now which I had been saving for years." Roy had been hopping from one church to another, seeking for one to his liking where he could grow in his spiritual life.

"The Lord dealt with me and I sensed Him directing me, 'Roy, give all of your tithes to Ping and Lina as they need it for all of their expenses for their return to the Philippines.'" He continued to unburden himself.

"Lord, I will give one-fourth of the total amount," he

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bargained. Then Roy related he felt the Lord urging him “No, you give the whole amount.” Still he said that he resisted and compromised with the Lord, “Okay Lord, I will give one-half! That is already big!” He still believed in his heart that giving the whole amount was just too big for him to give. He had never given such an amount to anyone in his life.

This was around the time I was preaching in church about looking after the needs of others as well, and not simply after our needs. The Lord was testing Roy to heed His bidding to release all his tithes and give it to us. Roy recalled what the Lord clearly impressed upon him, and he confessed he could not just give up the whole amount. He still insisted, “Alright Lord, I will give three-fourths!” But the Lord was firm, “No Roy, release everything!” Finally he said that he could no longer resist what the Lord was asking him to give, “I give up Lord, I will give everything to Ping and Lina as you want.”

When we both traced the time, we discovered that that was the precise moment when I felt the leading of the Lord to give to Roy Praisel, his dream car—the moment when he obeyed the Lord. The Lord had tested both of us: He tested Roy's willingness to release all of his tithes with the reward of his dream car, and He also tested my willingness to give up our relatively new car, applying what I was preaching with the reward of Roy's tithes that would help us with our transportation needs. The Lord has His surprises for us when we listen to Him and obey His leading!

Learning to Directly Trust God

38

After seven years of studies and the birth of our four children, we were about ready to go back home. We decided to take one last trip around the States and bid goodbye to our friends. We started our trip from Los Angeles and proceeded eastward to Texas and north-eastward to Chicago until we reached Harvard, Boston. Then we went southward, encircling Florida and north-westward to Chicago and on to Grand Forks, crossing the country to the state of Washington and southward down to Los Angeles, passing by San Francisco. We travelled some 12,000 miles in one month's time. The Philippines is only 10,000 miles away from Los Angeles. Surely we could have driven to the Philippines if it were accessible by roads and bridges!

Earlier in 1973, in a trip to New York, we had some time to thank the Christian and Missionary Alliance for their letter of guarantee that we would not be a public charge while studying in the States. This was what we needed after our application for visa had been

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denied twice. We could not have been granted our visas were it not for that letter of guarantee. We were very grateful for the willingness of the CMA to extend its help which enabled us to go to the States on the strength of their letter of guarantee.

We went to see the top CMA officials: President Rev. Nathan Bailey, Treasurer Rev. B.S. King, Area Secretary Rev. Bill Kerr, and Rev. Jack Shepherd, former missionary in the Philippines, teaching at the Jaffrey School of Mission. Rev. King expressed how sorry they were for not being able to help us with our schooling expenses much as they wanted to. He also apologized as I was a layman and not an ordained minister of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, their policies prevented them from assisting us financially.

“We are really very sorry for we were not able even when we wanted to help you with your schooling financially as our hands were tied. We wished that we could have helped you,” Rev. King apologized. I spontaneously responded, “That was the very best thing you did for us by not helping us financially, as that way, we learned to directly trust God for our needs.”

We were able to share some of our true-to-life experiences of faith with them. They encouraged us to write about them so that our fellow workers and Christian brethren would be inspired and challenged to put their trust in God! That was in 1973. It has taken us forty-two years to finally sit down and follow their advice.

Looking to God for Direction

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One missionary couple we wanted to see and thank was Rev. and Mrs. Francis Gulbranson in St. Paul, Minnesota. They were the only ones, together with another lady missionary, Ruth N. Ziemer, who never ceased to pray for us after I graduated from high school. They were the ones who gave me the book, *Cannibal Valley* by Russel Hitt, when I graduated from the College of Law in the University of the Philippines.

They were hoping that I would give my life for missionary work considering that I was active in religious work when I was in my high school days as a Junior Pastor and showed interest to go to Ebenezer Bible School. They were the ones who started the Alliance work in Manila, with the Alliance students from the south. The book that they gave me inspired us to go as missionaries to Irian Jaya, the place where the Alliance work was written about in *Cannibal Valley*.

We pursued our Masters' degrees in Linguistics to prepare us for translation work. We were missionaries waiting for our

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assignment from the CAMACOP (Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines, Inc.), and our eyes, hearts and minds were focused on Irian Jaya. We expressed to them our excitement for possible assignment to the country as we were challenged by the book that they had given me during my graduation from the College of Law.

However, without dampening our interest, Rev. Francis Gulbranson smiled and after he had commended us for our missionary passion and zeal, he said, "Let me tell you something. When we first started our preparation for Mission, our eyes were directed at China. We did our studies with China in mind. Everything then pointed to China. Everything was set until the last moment. The day before we were to fly to China, the Lord closed the door and we ended up in the Philippines." And as he looked at us, he continued, cautiously telling us that he was not throwing a wet blanket, "Don't be surprised if the Lord will likewise do the same thing with you. Just look to the Lord for His direction and what He wants you to do." That is how, in the Lord's providence, our paths met again with the Gulbransons who were models of our spiritual life to us and were instrumental in our decision to give up lives for Mission. That is precisely what we desired, to look to the Lord for direction and do exactly what He wanted us to do. After Lina was healed by the Lord from her bleeding, the cause of which even the top doctors could not trace nor stop in spite of all the advanced medical technology, she sought the Lord. "Now Lord,

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what would you have me to do after you have healed me of my bleeding?”

She was reading *The Living Bible* in the book of Psalms and what stuck out was something she could never forget! It was as though the Lord was speaking directly to her through this specific Scripture in Psalm 40:3, “Many will hear the glorious things he did for me, and stand in awe before the Lord, and will put their trust in him.” So she responded by saying, “Yes, Lord, if this is what you want me to do, that is what I am going to do!”

There was a big group, led by the members of the Living Circle and their families, at the airport to see us off at the Los Angeles Airport. There were also church members of the Grace Community Church where I was Associate Pastor and members of our Bible studies—a mixed group of Chinese, Japanese, and Caucasians.

Some of Lina’s officemates from the Los Angeles Times were also there and many other friends. This extraordinarily big group of probably a hundred sang aloud, “To God be the Glory,” a song composed by Bill Gaither, attracting the attention of many passengers in the airport.

Rev. Angelino Apelar, our Senior Pastor at Grace Community Church, prayed for us before we boarded the plane. It may have been the very first time that it ever happened in the airport, and we were deeply touched by this gesture of love for us. To God be the glory for the things He has done!

There were many Filipinos, some Blacks, Caucasians, Chinese,

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and Japanese. One elderly woman in her nineties was there in a wheelchair. The Lord had given us earlier the opportunity of touching their lives for which we are very thankful, and we give God all the glory! They were there to see us maybe for the last time and to bid us goodbye until they see us again in Glory!

In Everything Give Thanks

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Our hope and vision was to go as missionaries to Irian Jaya. The book, *Cannival Valley*, given by the Rev. and Mrs. tfrancis Gulbranson and Ruth N. Ziemer during my graduation from law course, definitely had a bearing in the direction of our life as we desired to go there. The Lord, however, had other and better plans for us.

The Lord indeed closed the door of Irian Jaya to foreign missionaries as the Rev. Gulbranson had intimated. We thanked the Lord, and I accepted the invitation of Dr. Joseph Arthur to be the National Director of PSALM (Philippine Student Alliance Lay Movement).

When I assumed this office, I endeavored to regain the confidence especially of the city Alliance churches and pastors where PSALM was having its campus ministries. PSALM was then getting its financial support from the various denominations that believed in student outreach. Dr. Joseph Arthur who had been an

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Alliance missionary, started PSALM in Zamboanga City. He ventured and succeeded in convincing other denominations for a student ministry, spreading it to other major cities.

Converts were encouraged to join the church of their choice, which was usually that of the PSALM workers' denomination, so they can grow in their spiritual life. Not all of the converts were channeled to the local Alliance Church and this had caused misgivings in the Alliance constituency. PSALM only has a monitored relationship with the CAMACOP, and the latter has no control over it, although the CAMACOP President and CMA head sat in all the meetings of the PSALM National Board of Directors.

With operational use of the multi-media equipment that we brought along from the United States, we were able to come up with a 22-minute multi-media production to present the PSALM ministry to all the CAMACOP pastors and workers attending the 1978 Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusade and Christian Workers Workshop in Manila.

This gave us the opportunity to challenge our CAMACOP constituency to support the student ministry of PSALM. We presented the same during the PSALM Jamboree in Silliman University at Dumaguete City. Little by little we were able to succeed to get the rest of the CAMACOP churches to support PSALM.

We put up our PSALM Headquarters at the PSALM Center in Cebu City, making it as presentable as possible with some of our personal belongings. I also put up my personal library and desk at

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my office. The students who came to the PSALM Center enjoyed the beautifully decorated facilities. We were then renting a house, but Lina chose to share some of our stateside household furnishings at the Center.

During the Spiritual Emphasis of the Ebenezer Bible College at Calarian, Zamboanga City where I was the main speaker and delivered six messages on various topics, I received the news from Lina that the PSALM Center had been burned. I was speaking on the topic, “In Everything Give Thanks” at that time.

The students were wondering how I would react since all of our personal belongings that we had made available for the use of PSALM including my personal library were burned to ashes. These included all my research notes for my dissertation that I was still working on for my doctoral degree in Missiology. The Lord gave me peace of mind, so I was able to praise the Lord in spite of all the loss that I had sustained in the fire. I had just preached, “In Everything Give Thanks!” We had gone through the flood in Wheaton, Illinois where we had practically lost everything and were still able to praise and thank the Lord! This time, however, it was through the fire, suffering a greater loss but with the Lord’s grace, I was able to praise the Lord indeed!

Trusting God in Reaching Souls

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After serving the Lord through PSALM for four years, I felt the Lord's leading to move on to further develop lay ministries, pursuant to my doctoral dissertation on Principles of Lay Ministries. The PSALM's ministry was mainly among students and I tried to expand it to include the PSALM Alumni and Associates to form the base for the financial support of the ministries of PSALM, but there was an apprehension that it might compete with the regular student organization. My main concern was to develop the student ministry of PSALM and involve laymen to help it financially, but I found myself facing a wall of resistance as the thrust of the movement was focused solely on the studentry.

Lina and I could not freely accept many invitations to speak in churches and elsewhere as I had been tied up with the ministries of PSALM. It was the Lord's way of letting me know He wanted me to change our course so we could respond to the Lord's leading to a wider scope of ministries. I resigned with no promise of financial

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support from anyone at all, looking to the Lord's direction and guidance completely and trusting Him to supply all our needs according to His promise never to leave us nor forsake us.

Apart from helping our mother church, the Cebu City Alliance Church, in its ministries, we received speaking invitations in conferences, seminars, and evangelistic campaigns from churches of various denominations. All over the CAMACOP, we helped in penetrating the community which was closely protected by the "defenders" of the oldest established church in Mambaling, Cebu City. In a period of two weeks, we were bombarded with lots of disturbance of noise outside and needless discussion with the "defenders" during Bible Study inside our tent. During the second week, one man ran inside and overturned the table with the projector that we were using.

Towards the end of the evangelistic campaign, their leader came in the tent. I asked him, "By the way, Father, are you sure of going to Heaven?" He answered, "No, no. no. St. Paul said that you have to work out your salvation," to which I made this rejoinder, "That is right, Father. He said that we have to work out our salvation, but he did not say that we should work for our salvation.

So I did not bother to discuss with him and just shook his hand, and said, "The Lord bless you." I was rebuked by our Senior Pastor, Rev. William Sabillo, "Why did you give him God's blessing?" I responded immediately, "Did not Jesus say to bless them that persecute you?" He did not reply.

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This challenged me as the Lord led me to write on the subject of the assurance of going to Heaven, and I entitled the booklet, *You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven! Here's How*. Most of the time, we do not have the opportunity of one-on-one personal evangelism. We found the best tool we could share that could give our contact the material to read at his own free time. I had been approached personally by some of those I had given the booklet which led them to receive the Lord in their lives.

We had also shared this material to the top officials of the government, from the President, Vice President, some senators, representatives, justices, judges, and to others. We have likewise handed it to doctors, lawyers, engineers, dentists, teachers and other professionals. We had also given this booklet to pilots, businessmen, housewives, and others we had the opportunity to meet.

Our family together with the Gayas family and Ms. Pilar Cedeno, formed the nucleus of a group that planted a church to cater to the business community and urban professionals. We pursued our church planting through the tithing from the mother church, the Cebu City Alliance Church, together with Rev. and Mrs. Dan Harstad. The English and Cebuano congregations grew out of the church planting ministry. Rev. and Mrs. Ron Goshulak later joined the group. The church that was planted in Cebu was named Banilad Alliance Fellowship. We had the opportunity of developing materials on evangelism and discipleship that was printed out as The Great Commission kit. The first was *You Have*

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Only One Choice Left, with a follow-up material that is a complete discipling primer from conversion to resurrection named *The New Personality Development*. I developed another evangelistic tool, *Who Is A Christian?* Many souls had been ushered already to the Kingdom of Christ, churches planted, and converts were disciplined through the use of these materials not only by CAMACOP but other denominations as well.

The Lord had likewise opened to Lina doors to the community in various schools and civic clubs, with the opportunity the Lord had given her to pursue her Ph.D in Education majoring in counseling while she taught at the University of San Carlos in Cebu City.

It is now close to three decades and the Lord has always been faithful to His promises. We have been completely under the Lord's employment and under His direction in all our various ministries. He took care of all our needs from daily sustenance, to the schooling of our four children through college, medical needs, the shelter of our home, our need of vehicles, and the support of our varied ministries. The Lord has taught us to put our full trust in Him. During times of financial, physical, medical, and other needs, He was always there to help. Most of our ministries were among the CAMACOP churches in Mindanao and especially among tribal and rural churches. In many cases, we had to pay for our transportation, but the Lord was always there to supply all the needs.

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We also had the opportunity of not only speaking but conducting a practicum by demonstrating to various congregations how to share their faith with the use of our very simple printed evangelistic materials *You Have Only One Choice Left* and *Who Is A Christian?* Men as well as women in Southern Mindanao like in Barayong, Glan, Caburan, and other places were excited in having their personal experience in leading scores of people to receive the Lord in their life.

Giving Up Our Comfort

42

The Lord opened up for us ministries from up north in Luzon, midway in provincial islands of Visayas, and down south in Mindanao including Tawi-Tawi. We ministered not only among the Tagalogs, Ilocanos, Cebuanos but also among the Bilaans and Manobos. While they were still in the grade school years, we managed to bring our children to see the places we went to in the interior areas of Sarangani and Balut Islands, south of Mindanao. Although they enjoyed experiences like riding on horseback through the hills and walking and wading through muddy streams, they were unanimous in their comments that they would not like to go back to those places.

Speaking in the interior areas is not only difficult for those attendees but also to the ones delivering the messages. Transportation posed a big problem. Crossing the treacherous Sarangani channel and the unavailability of pump boats were a hindrance; it would require strong determination to attend the

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scheduled meeting. For those living in the mainland, walking through the rugged mountains and rocky coastline for hours would be the sacrifice that one has to pay.

One elderly woman who claimed to be about 60 years old, as her mother was more than 90 years old, had to start her whole night walk in the afternoon to be at the meeting site early morning at six, a good 14-hour' hike! Many have to bring their pots, rice and chicken to cook for the duration of the meeting. Upon arrival at the camp site, they would to build their own huts for shelter. Some have to bring their younger siblings to nurse while listening to us as we shared God's Word. Thus, speaking for one hour or two would not satisfy their eager ears to compensate for the hours and hardship they have to go through in order to hear God's Word. tfor a 3-day seminar that we conducted at Michelson Alliance Bible Institute, between Lina and me, we spoke 18 times!

Each day I had to take over the devotional for one hour, followed by a seminar session of one hour after Lina's session in the morning. With a brief siesta at noon, Lina would have her session for at least an hour and I have to take my turn thereafter. In the evening I have to give another message to culminate a program that lasted very late at night, conversing and counseling afterwards with people who do not care about time pressure.

Once, we conducted a seminar in an Alliance Church in Glan, South Cotabato. I spoke during the devotional time in the morning. This was followed by a lecture of more than an hour by Lina, after which I gave a lecture until noon. There was another set of sessions

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in the afternoon for both of us and a practicum of sharing our faith in the community up to five or so in the afternoon. I thought I had done my share of ministry for the day.

One evening, there was a program and I was invited to march up to the stage together with the pastor and other leaders. After more an hour of preliminaries, I was shocked to hear the pastor say, “And now we will be privileged to hear from Dr. Villegas who will deliver the evening message.” I just had to smile to cover up my surprise and asked the Lord to help me to be able to preach His message.

The comforts you get in the cities are non-existent in the tribal areas. The first of our trip to the islands took us 18 hours, sleeping on top of the boat over boxes of empty softdrink bottles with the stars as our mosquito net. We had to eat our meal a few feet away from carabaos on board. Sleeping through the rainy night with a leaking roof was something we just had to endure. We also have to adjust to the smell and flies in the toilets in the interior areas that are dug out in the ground.

We had to brave the rough seas and big waves in Sarangani. This is something that was enough to discourage one from going back. We had to walk hours to get to our destination. We had to ride in jeeps that were overcrowded not only with people but also with pigs and chickens. Once a 12-person capacity jeep that we rode on was filled up inside and upon the roof with 34 passengers!

Giving up our privacy and comforts in our home are few of the sacrifices that we have undergone. I do not mind sweating it out

Part Five: God's Commission

through the day as long as I get to take a bath before I sleep to wash out the stickiness all over my skin because of the humidity.

One night after taking the plane and bus for over an hour to Camp Mariano in South Cotabato, we were assigned to our cottage. There was no water in the bathroom and so we requested for water. All they could produce that night was one-fourth of a pail of water. There was not even a cup around for us to use. We had to be resourceful.

Fortunately we had saved the small plastic cups that were given to us when we asked for water in the plane. We had to use as little water as we can. Amazingly the one-fourth pail of water was sufficient for both, Lina and me to take a bath including shampooing our hair to cleanse all the dust along the way to the camp.

Was it a miracle? Maybe not, but how in the world could two people take a bath, and shampoo our hair, with only one-fourth of a pail of water that contained little more than two gallons? Definitely it was not physically possible! But whether it was a miracle or not we just thanked the Lord for the bath to feel fresh, to have a good night sleep in preparation for our speaking ministries the following day.

Under the Mercy of the Waves

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Once when we were on our way back from the islands, we got stuck for hours in one of the points that we had to pass in Batolaki, Sarangani. We took shelter at the coast guard station. The rain kept on pouring from ten o'clock in the morning up to four o'clock in the afternoon.

It didn't take long for the coast guard station to be flooded. It still kept raining and visibility was then zero — we're not given clearance by the coast guard to proceed to our destination. We did not have any alternative but to return to Michelson Alliance Bible Institute to save the big load of bangus fry that the boat owner had brought along to sell in the city.

Going back, we had problems with the engines of the pump boat. The operator had a hard time starting the two engines. After finally getting them started, we headed towards Batolaki Point. All of a sudden, one engine conked out and the operator tried to get it going again but never succeeded. We had to settle for only one engine. As

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we were reaching the point, we realized that the waves were getting bigger and bigger.

We were not far from the shoreline that was rugged and rocky. It would have been all right gliding through the waves but the problem started when the engine started to sputter. It was getting worse as it gave a sound that the engine was on its way to stop revolving—it became fainter and fainter.

As I looked at the shoreline and the waves kept beating furiously against the rocks, I thought to myself I could not endure seeing Lina being smashed against all those rocks if the engine conks out completely. We would be under the mercy of the waves as the boat could no longer be maneuvered without the engine working.

I remembered having been told that we were right at that place where another missionary assigned to Michelson Alliance Bible School, Margaret Shick, a Canadian, was shipwrecked but miraculously survived.

A Bible school girl who went with us started screaming and held on to Lina's neck, almost choking her. I tried to muster enough courage by singing aloud, "Jesus, never fails, Jesus, never fails." I kept repeating it as I heard the faltering sound of the engine, "Putt . . . putt . . . putt . . ." It sounded surely to die down so I cried aloud, "Lord, you cannot fail! You cannot fail!" I went on singing, "Jesus, never fails!" The engine finally ceased giving out any sound.

But I could not accept the truth. I cried out again, "Lord, you cannot fail! You cannot fail! Jesus never fails!" All of a sudden I heard a sound from the engine, "Putt, putt, putt, putt, putt, putt,

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putt,” and the engine was revived! How I thanked the Lord in my heart and with tears rolling down my cheek I kept on singing “Jesus never fails! Jesus never fails!” Lina was wondering whether I was singing or crying. Not long thereafter, the engine started to sputter and began to conk out again! I began to be apprehensive, so I kept singing “Jesus never fails! Jesus never fails!” But then the sound coming from the engine just became weaker and weaker, “Putt . . . putt . . . putt . . . putt” until I could no longer hear any sound. At that precise moment I blurted out, “Lord, Lord, Lord, you cannot fail, you cannot fail! Jesus never fails! Jesus never fails!” Almost instantly I heard a sound from the engine, “Putt, putt, putt, putt, putt, putt,” and the engine was revived again!

Oh, what a great relief! So I thanked the Lord again from the bottom of my heart and sang “Jesus never fails! Jesus never fails!” again and again for the next few minutes. Once more the engine began to show abnormal sound, “Putt . . . putt . . . putt . . . putt” until I could not hear any more sound from the engine. Again I believed with all my heart what I was singing, and so I sang it louder this time, “Jesus never fails! Jesus never fails!”

I cried out looking upward, “Lord, you cannot fail! Lord, you just cannot fail!” I repeated believing it with all of my heart! The Lord revived the engine for the third time! I kept singing the same chorus until we reached our destination. We later learned that a pump boat had capsized about that time in the vicinity and six people drowned, one of them a fisherman whose body was not recovered.

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When we reached the shore, Lina just broke down and cried aloud, releasing all of her fears and anxiety that got frozen within her. She exploded, "I will never come back here again! And this will be the last time!" I tried to calm her down saying, "Sweetheart, let us just thank the Lord for enabling us to come back and saving us from being crushed against those rocks in Batolaki."

Somehow her fears vanished. Several months thereafter, we got another invitation to conduct a seminar in Caburan which was much farther up north towards Davao City. This time our prayer partner in Cebu, Inday Lim (Eng. Ramon Lim's wife) prayed that the sea we would be crossing will be like oil. Sure enough the sea all the way was smooth like oil, just as she had prayed!

Singing in the Rain

44

I accompanied our Professor, Dr. Emory (“Em”) Griffin of Wheaton Graduate School, Illinois, USA, to Sarangani. He belonged to a small group of rich professionals in Wheaton who call themselves “The Bruised Camels” (the camels that manage to enter the eye of the needle bruise themselves in the process, as Jesus had said, “It is easier for a camel to enter the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter heaven”). He took interest in helping the natives in Sarangani.

He wanted to visit the piece of land planted with coconut trees that he purchased to help the Michelson Alliance Bible School. The proceeds of the sale of copra (the dried meat of the coconut) could help meet some of the financial needs of the students training for the ministry. Lina and I had gone there a number of times with him before, preaching and conducting seminars, braving the rough and treacherous channel of Sarangani. But this time only Em and I went to Sarangani. It was not the best time of the year as it was the rainy season.

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There was not one pump boat available for hire considering the very rough condition of the sea at that time of the year. We had to take the land trip by jeep from General Santos to Glan and on to Pangyan, a rough road through the high mountains. From there we had to hike for more than a couple of hours to Margos where we hoped we could hire a pump boat to get to Michelson Alliance Bible School. There was still a long distance to travel by sea but much closer after the land trip.

The way to Margos from Pangyan along the coast was not easy. In the rainy season, we had to cross streams with a fallen coconut tree laid across a ravine to serve as bridge. Dr. Griffin preferred to cross the coconut bridge with his hands and feet, like a monkey instead of walking in upright position. It was one of those funny times we had joking with him all along the way. When we reached Margos with the District Superintendent, Rev. Porfirio Quia, as our guide from General Santos, we were able to contact an owner of a pump boat to take us to the Bible School. The weather was not very cooperative that day nor the following day. We were not able to proceed to Katingan where the land that Em Griffin purchased was located. It was about fourteen kilometers away and that would take a long walk through the forest and rugged shore. So we decided to wait until the weather would be more favorable for return to General Santos to catch the plane to Cebu and proceed to Manila.

After waiting for two days, the weather seemed to improve early

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the following morning. We proceeded to General Santos on the pump boat that we had bought the previous trip to bring us back to civilization from Malagupos where Michelson Bible School was. We were five who boarded the pump boat: Em, Porfirio, the pump boat operator and his companion, and I.

The sea was just a little rough but the sky was cloudy with some sunshine. We reached Batolaki, one of the critical points where Lina and I almost had a shipwreck. We had to see the coast guard before proceeding to General Santos. Then we headed towards the next point, Tikang, which was at the opposite point of Batolaki, where strong currents from opposite directions meet.

Everything was all alright when we reached Tikang Point but dark clouds were fast approaching. To keep me from being scared, I thought of singing a medley of choruses: “His Name is Wonderful,” “He’s the Great Shepherd,” “The Rock of All Ages,” and “Almighty God is He.” In a few minutes, it started to rain. I just kept on singing as I looked at the huge waves coming from the front, left side, and back. The rain became stronger and the raindrops kept hitting my face.

I shivered as the ice cold raindrops touched my face. We were exposed to the rain without any shelter. Both of my arms were shaking strongly as I had never seen them shake before. Em was bothered as I went on singing. I was seated on an elevated board and Em’s ears were so close to my mouth. Not long thereafter, he complained, “Ping, my ears are hurting!”

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But as soon as I stopped singing, we were engulfed by a big wave! The natives believed that my singing kept us untouched by the waves, as almost immediately when I ceased to sing, we were swallowed up by what they call a *hunas*. The pump boat started to capsize as it was tossed from the left by a huge wave. Porfirio jumped towards the left outrigger and hung on to it to keep the boat from capsizing. He managed to keep it upright, and then he got back to the boat.

The engine conked out. The waves were so huge, rising several meters high. They frantically paddled hard and fast to get the boat out of the rocky area, and they we succeeded.

We headed for shore and getting close to it, we started to get off the pump boat. I jumped off and I felt my left leg touch what I thought was a bush. We could not see underneath the surface as the top surface of the water was murky. Immediately I felt very painful penetrating stings around my lower left leg. A jellyfish had wrapped itself around my left leg. The sting was acutely painful, and I screamed at the top of my voice.

I never felt such pain in my life. I tried to get out of the spot and took a step with my right foot, but to my shock I had stepped on a giant sea urchin! Its spines pierced deep into the sole of my foot. I felt the piercing pain up to my spine and gave out a deep moan as I tried to control the pain by clenching my jaws tightly.

As we reached the shore, my companions were alarmed. Porfirio immediately went to look among the trees close to

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shore to see if there was a particular tree whose leaves could counteract the poison. But there was no such tree in sight. The deadly jellyfish must have been a giant Man of War. I prayed that the poison from the jellyfish would not spread to the rest of my body. Recalling stories that urine was an antidote to the sting of the giant sea urchin, I managed to urinate on my feet. I just do not know if that helped. But somehow the poison and pain were concentrated in my leg and feet and did not spread to the rest of my body. The pain ultimately vanished. The Lord indeed delivered me from what could have been fatal accident in answer to my prayer.

We had to leave the ruined pump boat with the operator and his companion and proceeded towards Margos and on to Pangyan where we hoped to get land transportation to Glan. For more than five grueling hours, we trekked through slippery and sharp rocks along the shore, passing through terrorist rebel areas, amidst intermittent showers and the hot sun. We went hiking from Tikang through Margos where we had taken off with a pump boat a few days ago on our way to Michelson Bible School.

We finally made it to Pangyan where we had to wait for our ride to Glan. After an hour, we were able to ride a very overcrowded jeep, to Glan where we stayed overnight. We proceeded to General Santos the following morning then we took a plane back to Cebu.

I arrived home with only my rubber slippers. When Lina noticed the marks of the jellyfish sting around my leg and the

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visible traces of having walked through those rocky shores, she wondered aloud, "Is this what the Bible says, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news'?"

Danger is Everywhere

45

We accompanied to the United States our second daughter Cefeline (“Cefie”) or Stephanie, as she was fondly called by her playmates, who was expecting her firstborn child in a month. She had planned to take the Nursing Board Exams in New York City after she gives birth. Her husband Toto could not go with her because his travel papers to the United States could not be processed on time for the delivery of their child.

We were hospitably accommodated in the home of Lina’s brother and his wife, Sammy and Pearl Tomale, who were in New Jersey. In preparation for Stephanie’s delivery, Lina and I accompanied her to a course on Lamaze natural delivery which makes use of controlled breathing. Mickey was born a week before Christmas in St. Petersburg Hospital, New Brunswick. In the Cantata that was conducted by Pearl, he was perfect for the role of baby Jesus with Stephanie acting as Mary.

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After a couple of months, Stephanie reviewed for her Nursing Board Examination in New York. It was not easy, living in New Jersey and reviewing in New York which was more than an hour away. Lina took care of the baby the whole day while I accompanied Stephanie in New York.

She took the Board exams after her review and successfully passed it. In about two weeks' time, we were to leave for the Philippines. Meantime, she had some clinical care for the baby in New Brunswick to get him ready for travel. Lina and I left her and the baby at the clinic and we went to Piscataway. We were to pick them up at about 4 o'clock.

As we headed back to pick them up, we stopped at the intersection of George St. and Jefferson St., a few blocks from the clinic. When the light turned green, I started to move forward behind the car that was in front of me. I drove slowly looking straight in front at a safe distance.

When we reached the center of the intersection, all of a sudden I heard a very strange sound which was immediately followed by a strong bump on the right side by the car behind. The impact was so strong that our car was thrown towards the left. Then an oncoming car from the opposite direction hit the left side of our car with a force that caused the hood to spring up. We came to a complete stop.

At the first impact, Lina's head was thrown towards the steering wheel and her forehead hit so hard a streak of blood flowed from her nose. Both of us had our seat belts fastened and this prevented further injury. I held hard on the steering wheel at the first collision.

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This was immediately followed by another impact from the left.

I felt like something had kept me steady in my seat as I felt the strong force first from the right and then almost simultaneously from the left. Then I felt severe pain at the bottom of my neck from the backlash, I suppose. “My nose is bleeding,” Lina said. “What happened?” The impact was so strong that she was momentarily unconscious.

We were brought to the hospital, and the doctors examined us immediately with CT scans and x-rays to determine if there was any injury. The doctor called me aside and told me that Lina had bleeding in her brain. She has to be under observation at the intermediate intensive care room for the next two days. If the bleeding does not stop, they would have to drill hole in her skull to siphon the blood out.

I called on the Lord to relieve the pain in my neck. I was allowed to go home and see another doctor to follow up. I did not realize that my injury was much worse than Lina. I had a herniated disc as shown by the MRI taken a few days later.

The next day Lina was given another CT scan. She had no one else to depend on except the Lord. She called on Him. “How I prayed so hard begging God to stop the bleeding as I was still inside the CT scan equipment.” And the Lord heard and responded to her pleas. “God answered my prayers the bleeding had stopped. I was discharged to recover at home for a month.

One day we were supposed to leave for the Philippines as I had a terrible unbearable pain that I could no longer urinate. I was driving

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in Verrazano bridge after bidding goodbye to our son Ping J suffering all the way every second driving all the way to Belt Parkway taking us half hour to Bayside where we stayed. Arriving the Emergency I was told I needed to have surgery on my prostate as it was completely blocked that prevented me to urinate. Our departure was postponed to have my TURP or Trans Urethral Resection of Prostate.

The Lord was so good in providing for me a laser surgery that could have cost us at least \$30,000.00 that we did not have any money at all. Dr. Badlani who was an Afghanistan Doctor in Long Island Hospital where our daughter Cefelin works was able to arrange an emergency surgery that we did not have to pay.

What happened was the great danger, trouble, and hardship that I had to undergo turned out to be a blessing! While I was then recuperating from the surgery, the blocking of the urine and blood from the bladder through the operated prostate caused so much unbearable pain while the doctor in charge who was on call 25 minutes away from the hospital. I was shouting aloud in pain in the room for several minutes while waiting for the doctor to open up the block of the urine and blood. I could no longer endure the gruesome pain (doctors say some patients that are not healthy enough to suffer are not able outlive the pain).

I was calling on the Lord every second that passed to help me relieve the excruciating pain and have the doctor arrive but none of these happened. Instead of shouting that disturbed the whole

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section, somehow I just thought of singing as it might help relieve me of the acute pain I was struggling to endure. “O Lord my God,” I started feeling the pain so much in every word I sang hoping that I would be relieved but not a bit happened. So I just kept on singing with so much pain striving in pain to sing each word “When I in awesome wonder, Consider all the things thy hands have made, I see the stars I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed. Then sings my soul my Savior God to thee, How Great thou art, How great thou art, Then sings my soul my Savior God to thee, How great thou art, How great thou art!” and just kept on singing on without being relieved of the pain at all while singing until the doctor finally arrived and then got the removal of the block done.

The following morning I saw the old man patient who was operated on that day with me standing at the door of the room. He must be wondering what made me stopped shouting aloud and then kept singing. That gave me the thought of sharing with him the booklet *You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven!* the opportunity I had to share that the Lord made him to wonder why I stopped shouting and kept on singing instead. It opened up the chance for me to share the Heaven booklet to all of the doctors who took care of me, all the nurses and attendants. Oh what a great blessing!

Truly delays and denials are ordained by the Lord. All my pleas in prayer for the Lord to relieve me of the unbearable excruciating

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pain was denied and delayed the arrival of the doctor for to me to think of instead of shouting aloud the pain to try to sing every word of the song "O Lord my God how great thou art!" suffering and hoping my singing will relieve the pain I hardly could bear to no avail. The doctor's delay enabled me to take time to sing. It was so the old man patient tried to find out why I stopped shouting and instead kept singing.

Surely "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Romans 8.28 NLT. I had the opportunity to share You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven to save his life and others.

We Gather Light to Scatter

46

With God's grace, Lina and I both recuperated and returned to the Philippines, where we continued to serve God in various ministries. However, that was not the last time I had a close brush with death. In 2003, as I was repairing Christmas lights on the roof of our house in Cebu, I fell on my head. Both my skull and right clavicle were fractured and for a few minutes, my breathing stopped. If it weren't for the fast action of our helper, I wouldn't be alive today. I had to stay at the Intensive Care Unit for three days before getting transferred to a regular room, where I had to stay for 13 more days until I was discharged.

A week before the accident, Batch '63 of the Upsilon Sigma Phi Fraternity invited me to its 40th Anniversary Celebration, being the Most Illustrious Fellow on the year that they initiated membership. Three days after I have been transferred from the Intensive Care Unit, I was able to contact the fraternity brother who had invited me through a cell phone text. I informed him that I was still

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recovering from an accident where I was seriously injured. That was why I would not be able to attend the 40th Anniversary celebration in Manila.

The following week, a son of a Batch '63 member came for a business trip. He visited me at the hospital and told me that other fraternity brothers have been informed about my accident. He expressed that the Brods have decided to give me the amount they had prepared to pay for my transportation and hotel accommodation in Manila.

Many fraternity brothers contacted me through cell phone, texting me their concern for my healing. After 13 days in the hospital, I was finally released, my condition having improved but I still needed to recuperate at home. I was also contacted through e-mail by many fraternity brothers in Manila and also in the United States. One of them even addressed me as a Christian Brod. With this mind, I took it as an opportunity to witness.

I am fully confident that the Lord miraculously had saved me and gave me back my life in order to have greater opportunities of sharing the Gospel to my fraternity brothers. Thus, I dedicated to the fraternity the reprinting of *You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven! Here's How*.

Top popular fraternity brod, Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., or Ninoy, as he was popularly known (and was considered a hero) who was imprisoned during the Martial Law, wrote to the brods. Our fraternity Brods Ed Gumabon and Ronnie Dy Liacco quoted him

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online: “Brods, we could either be a candle or a mirror to reflect the Light.”

I wrote to many brods that God had a purpose in restoring my life when in 2003 that I fell while repairing our Christmas lights and that dedicated the Heaven booklet to the Fraternity in line with its motto, “We gather light to scatter!” I also wrote fraternity Brod Christian Monsod who also became an Illustrious Fellow and top official of the Commission of Election. What better light to scatter than the light that our fraternity Brod Ninoy Aquino desired to spread.

I shared the letter that I wrote Brod Monsod to other brods as an explanation of the dedication of the Heaven booklet. Enclosed with the letter was Ninoy’s picture and his message with his worded signature “I am Ninoy.” The letter reads:

The Brods, Batch ’58 Ed Gumabon and Ronnie Dy Liacco, in their internet communications to the Brods mentioned that Ninoy Aquino wrote during his Martial Law imprisonment, “We, Brods, could either be a candle or a mirror to reflect the Light.” I wrote them that was great! I shared I had the opportunity of talking with Cory during the Mass that the Brods in Cebu gave Ninoy in Brod Quisumbing’s residence, not long after he was shot in the airport tarmac.

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I asked, "Cory, what is this that I have heard about Ninoy being born again?" I saw on television Ninoy Aquino being interviewed by Pat Robertson about his being born again. Ninoy mentioned that he had an encounter with the Lord when he read Chuck Colson's *Born Again* and got to meet him during an air flight in the U.S. He expressed that when he gets back to the Philippines, "I am going to spread the Light." Cory answered. "Ninoy was enlightened." I gave her a copy of the Heaven booklet and she promised to read it.

I told Brods Ed and Ronnie that I was interviewed by Vic Puyat in his room and questioned during the initiation if I believe in God. That was the time in my life when I had stopped believing in God so I replied, "No."

Twenty-five years ago during the Upsilon Congress, Teng Puyat met me and greeted me saying, "Brod, I have heard that you are now a minister." And I replied, "Yes Brod, and in fact I have just written a booklet, *You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven! Here's How*, a copy of which I gave him. When he read the title he remarked, 'Ah, *iba na ito!* (Ah, this is different!). *You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven!*

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Brod Doming Vidanes, who was just by our side immediately told him, “Brod, *totoo ’yan. Nabasa ko ’yan kagabi.*” (Brod, that is true. I read that last night.) I had made 200 copies available at the registry table during the 1st and 2nd Upsilon Congress. Both Teng and Doming have gone ahead of us, but for sure we will meet them up there. We talked about the Heaven booklet during the Upsilon Congress Ball with Vic Puyat and some Sigma Deltans with Winnie (wife of Christian Monsod) seated with us. Vic categorically expressed that he believes that we can be sure of going to Heaven.

Five years ago, I fell while repairing our Christmas light on the roof of our house in Cebu and broke my skull and right clavicle (shoulder bone) I had stopped breathing, our helper claims, for at least five minutes as she tried her best keeping on pumping my chest area for several times. Somehow in the process God restored my life. I was brought to the hospital and was in the intensive care for three days. I was in the hospital up to 13 days until I was discharged.

I was supposed to attend the 40th Anniversary of Batch ‘63 as their Illustrious Fellow in Manila at about the time I had the accident. Confident that

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God had given back my life for a purpose, I have dedicated the reprinting of the Heaven booklet to the Upsilon Sigma Phi in line with its motto, "We Gather Light to Scatter." What better light to scatter than the Light that Ninoy himself desired to spread upon his return to his country. I have thought of sending you, my New Life Eternal Pack that contains the Heaven booklet just in case so you have a copy thereof. I have also sent Bossman Doming Santiago the Pack as he had asked me during the 2nd Congress if the Heaven booklet was the only material that I had written.

As Ninoy had written, "We could either be a candle or a mirror to reflect the Light."

In every opportunity I have kept on sharing the message of Ninoy: "Brods, we could either be a candle or a mirror to reflect the Light," with the *Good News! New Life Eternal Pack* not only with Upsilonionians but with others who need the Light.

In our email exchange, I encouraged the president of the frat alumni association (UPSAA), Jun Aniag, to welcome back to the fraternity a "prodigal Brod" who has shown remorse over his actions. I also reminded them of our Brod Ninoy's charge to us brods to reflect the Light. I did not waste the opportunity to extend an invitation to anyone in our fraternity who might be interested in reading the booklet that I had dedicated to the frat. I asked them to

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send me his postal address so I can send a copy to him. It was through the frat email list that I was able to reconnect with “Best Friend” Nando Piedad and I sent him too a copy of the *Heaven* booklet.

My Brod Nando shared to me that if it were not for the opportunity that I gave him to know God through the Heaven booklet, he could not have turned back from his life of unbelief to the Lord. There was a time he requested prayer when he had a very serious problem and desired to reach the age of 75 years old, addressing me as Father. I asked him not to call me that way as I am just a friend and brought the matter to the Lord to answer his need.

A Brod, Benny V. Fulgencio wrote this about Brod Nando in *Living the Credo: Stories and Essays* about Upsilonians,

“No other Upsilonian doctor of medicine attended to so many Upsilonians that included their immediate family members—whether rich or poor, or known to him or not known—for so long, that spanned for generations, and without discrimination, sometimes at very great sacrifice of his time and resources, without even any thoughts or expectations of compensation. Doc. Nando is one of a kind, a rare gem even in an elite fraternity, envied by outsiders for the graciousness and generosity of its members to one another.”

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It seemed that God used Brod Nando as an instrument to get the attention of one of our Brods. During the 45th Anniversary of Batch '63, Lina noticed Brod Nando standing by the table asking a Brod who was a hardened atheist: "Have you read Ping's booklet?" to which he responded, "What's it all about?" He replied to him: "Repent, reform, renew!" A few years later, in 2008, during the Golden Anniversary of our Batch '58, I was able to give him a pack of our *Good News! New Lif Eternal* Pack that contained the *Heaven* booklet. He passed away a couple of years after. I was happy to have been given an opportunity to witness to him before his passing.

Just as the Lord used us to minister to my brods, He also used them to minister to our needs. Lina recovered from her too low sodium in Centennial, Colorado. But then she had another problem, this time with her retina—she could not see clearly with her left eye. We had her eye examined and was told she had to undergo surgery for her retina which we could not afford. She was advised to have a second opinion, but the doctor we wanted to see was abroad. We had to leave for Manila to attend a ministry with an Upsilonian Brod Butch Puyat and Joy Estrada. I asked him if he knows of an ophthalmologist that we could ask for a second opinion regarding Lina's retina surgery. It was providential as he knows of the doctor we needed, Dr. Arnold Salud. And what more, he told us to our great surprise, that he would take care of all of the medical expenses and secure the retina medicine that had to be imported

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from Switzerland. Lina would have to take three times in three months. Dr. Salud was also so kind, he did not charge us for his services.

We just could not thank Butch enough for all the wonderful blessings that he so generously and very lovingly shared. I marveled when he expressed that all that was showered upon us—the medical expenses which were far beyond what we could ever afford as well as the other blessings that we needed—were not from him but from the Lord! He mentioned that all that he was sharing was to help us in our ministry as we can do a lot more than what he could ever do. Surely, the Lord will reward him a hundredfold with blessings exceedingly and abundantly. The Lord indeed knows what we need, no need to worry and doubt. We give Him all praises and glory for the glorious things He has done for us!

Still Pressing Onward with God

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Early in 1980 the Lord gave me a burden and a vision to reach thousands of souls. This was part of God’s Master Plan to enable me to accomplish His specific command to “GO” and make disciples of all nations.

The Lord led me to develop a simple short evangelistic tool, *You Have Only One Choice Left!* when I was the National Director of PSALM (the Philippine Student Alliance Lay Movement). The tool *Four Spiritual Laws* of Campus Crusade was excellent but it takes me some thirty minutes to use. Many people do not have that much time to spare so I was led by the Lord to develop one that was very brief—it only takes a few minutes. It starts:

Either you have the Son or you don’t. If you have the Son you have life. If you don’t have the Son, you don’t have life. “And what is it that God has said? That he has given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son” (1

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John 5:11, *LB*). “So whoever has God’s Son has life; whoever does not have his Son, does not have Life” (1 John 5:12, *LB*). “Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious ideal” (Roman 3:23, *LB*). “That Christ died for our sins just as the Scriptures said he would” (1 Corinthians 15:3, *LB*). “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23, *LB*).

If you don’t have the Son, you have only one choice left. Receive him into your life so that you can have eternal life, which God has said, is in His Son. Jesus said, “Look! I have been standing at the door and I am constantly knocking. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door I will come in and fellowship with him and he with me” (Revelations 3:20, *LB*). Either you let Him in or you don’t. Either you receive Him or you don’t. “But to all who receive him, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12, *LB*). All they needed to do was to trust Him to be saved.

I presented the evangelistic tools to PSALM but it was refused as we use only the “true and tried materials,” the American Missionary Training Director said. A few months after, Bob Noles from Wheaton College visited us and saw the evangelistic tool, which he sent it to the editor of the Christian Publications of the Alliance in the United States. I received a letter from him asking me

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to give the copyright. They had been looking for an evangelistic tool like that for the past three years, and in fact, they had denied three materials they received that day for consideration.

I gave a copyright only for the United States and Canada. The PSALM Training Director must have been surprised to see, *You Have Only One Choice Left!*, which he had refused to be accepted as an evangelistic tool, at their yearly Alliance General Council in the United States and was being sold at \$0.15 a copy.

I gave a copy of *You Have Only One Choice Left* to the host of International Students of Fuller School of World Mission at San Marcos, California. She used it to share the Gospel with her neighbor who prayed to receive the Lord. She and her husband later decided to sell their house and come to the Philippines to be missionaries with us in Cebu. I suggested, however, for them to take a crash course in Mission if they decide to become full-time missionaries.

One of our CAMACOP church planters used the said evangelistic tool by giving it to a resident who refused to welcome him in his home during one of his evangelistic outreaches in Dapitan, Zamboanga del Sur. The man accepted it just to get rid of him. But three days later when the church planter passed by the same house, he was called and was welcomed inside his home. The evangelistic tool that the man received and read, got him to accept the Lord. He was a lawyer and later became the Chief Elder of the church that was planted there.

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Not long after, I met an Indonesian who wanted it translated for use in Indonesia. I had it translated in Cebuano with *Who Is A Christian?*, another tool I developed and was used by our CAMACOP church planters assigned in Visayas and Mindanao who succeeded in planting many churches there. Beth Limare, my student who became a missionary in Thailand, translated the booklet in Thai about 8 years ago. She also translated *The Only Way*, and we had 3,000 copies printed. We mobilized 53 Thai women leaders trained to spread the Gospel to their unreached people who had never heard it.

Thelma, a British lady who was then a Missionary in China, requested my permission to translate in Chinese *You Have Only One Choice Left!* and *Who is a Christian?*, so she could have them printed in Macau where she ministered, and have them distributed to win souls. She spends all her life distributing printed materials as her missionary work.

The Lord led me to develop *The New Personality Development after You Have Only One Choice Left!* in order to fulfill the Great Commission to “Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you” (LB). It is a complete primer from conversion to resurrection. It had been evaluated by the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary as the only discipling material that does not need a seminar to use it. I once met an African minister with whom I shared The Great Commission Kit for evaluation. He later gave my name to Billy Graham and I was able to attend the 1983 Amsterdam World Conference of Itinerant

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Evangelist for fourteen days. Some Christian workers looked for me from among 4,500 itinerant evangelists and requested permission to translate the material in Dutch as other materials do not click there. I gladly allowed them.

I revised and simplified *The New Personality Development* booklet, using only 3 questions instead of 4, thus reducing the pamphlet to only 19 pages. Together with the three evangelistic tools, it is now being distributed as *The Great Commission Kit* which has 3 evangelistic tools to choose from and discipling material too.

Since not all have the opportunity or the time to share the Gospel one-on-one, *You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven, Here's How!* is included in the *Good News! New Life Eternal Pack* as it can be shared and read by the recipient in his own sweet time. Hundreds if not thousands have already been drawn to the Lord through it since its publication in 1984.

I was led by the Lord to write it when I had an encounter with that priest in Mambaling, Cebu where we had a Tent Ministry. I asked the leader priest of Don Bosco if he is sure of going to heaven, and he replied, "No, as even St. Paul said that we have to work out our salvation." I told him, "Yes, he said to work out our salvation but he did not say work for our salvation." So I explained in chapter 5 page 18 of the Heaven booklet that what St. Paul meant was "to do the good things that result from being saved," quoting the *Living Bible* translation of the phrase in question in Philippians 2:12. In Guandong, China, I shared with Alfred, our tourist guide a copy

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of *You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven, Here's How!*, when he came to pick us up. He was touched by one of the Alliance women whom he saw crying while praying. He promised to read it that night. When the women bade him goodbye saying, "We will meet you in Beijing for the Olympic Games in 2008," his answer was beyond our expectation. He pointed his finger up and said, "No, I will meet you in Heaven!"

I gave another copy to another tourist guide named Steve in Bangkok as a part of the tip with some cash. He surprised me when he shouted aloud in front of the 20 Alliance women in the bus as he had read the title of the booklet, "Thank you for giving me *Heaven!*" Others to whom I have given copies have personally expressed they are now Christians as the booklet I gave led them to become one.

We have put all of our evangelistic materials together into one pack which we call *Good News! New Life Eternal Pack*. It consists of *You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven, Here's How!* and *The Great Commission Kit* which has three Gospel soul-winning tools: *The Only Way!*, *Who is a Christian?*, and *You Have Only Choice Left!* and our Complete Discipling Primer Series starting from Conversion to Resurrection entitled *The New Personality Development*.

We have shared it with as many as we were able to. We have given seafarers in New York many packs in their church planting ministries, in cruises and foreign vessels dropping by. Many souls have been ushered into God's Kingdom and 45,000 copies were

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requested in the following months. And we will continue on by going to the unreached Asian and Pacific countries to fulfill the Lord's command to go and make disciples of all nations, and thus accomplish our task of Global Mission. This is in line with what St. Paul wrote:

“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on Him to save them unless they believe in Him? How can they believe in Him, if they have never heard about Him? How can they hear about Him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?”

Romans 10:13–15, *NLT*

We sent them our translated and printed Gospel materials in their language.

Our Gospel tools *Good News! New Life Eternal* Pack have been translated by Rev. Crispus Christian in Gujarat in India, and we had 1,000 packs printed there and had them distributed to pastors and Christian workers there during the 2nd Asia Pacific Alliance women by mobilizing 450 Alliance Women leaders there,

We also had 1,000 packs of our *Good News! New Life Eternal* Pack, translated by Priskila, the wife of the Indonesian Christian and Missionary Alliance and President of the National Alliance Women. We distributed them during the National Alliance Women Conference in Bali, Indonesia mobilizing the women to share the

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Gospel. We also brought copies during the 3rd Asia Pacific Alliance Women Conference, and mobilized the Asia Pacific Alliance Women leaders to reach the millions of still unreached peoples in Indonesia and other Asia and Pacific countries. Another thousand copies of the *Good News! New Life Eternal Pack* were translated and printed in Thai which we shared to mobilized Thai women leaders in Khon Kaen and Bangkok who in turn shared the Good News to the unreached in November 2010.

The Gospel pack has already been translated in Mongolia and spread out by 23 churches there. We were able to reach a community at a very high altitude where the Gospel had never been taught. Lina with her asthmatic ailment had difficulty breathing anymore due to hypoxia at 20 degrees below zero. She asked the Lord that if it was time for her to go, to make it fast. But the Lord as He had promised was with us even unto the end of the earth, and she miraculously survived!

I sent our Mongolian tourist guide who was concerned about her Buddhist relatives, copies of a portion of Buddhists writings. We had previously shared some of those in Bangkok, Thailand during the 5th Asia Pacific Alliance Women Conference. Below is the aforementioned portion:

Buddha Prophesied About Jesus?

The Buddha answered, “. . . Look for another Holy One who will come and help the world and all of you in the future.”

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Then the Brahman priest asked, "What will the characteristics of the Holy One be like?"

The Buddha answered him, "The Holy one who will keep the world in the future will be like this: In the palm of his hands and in the flat of his feet will be the design of a disk, on his side will be a stab wound, and his forehead will have many marks like scars. The Holy One will be the golden boat who will carry you over the cycle of rebirths all the way to the highest heaven [Nirvana]. Do not look for salvation in the old way [trying to merit salvation]; there is no salvation in it for sure. Quit the old way, and there will be a new spirit like the light of a lightning bug which will come down from the sky above to live in all of your hearts, and you will be victorious over all of your enemies. Nobody will be able to destroy you. If you die, you will not come back to be born in this world again. You will go to the highest heaven [Nirvana].

Permission was granted to copy these Buddhist Scriptures regarding their prophecy of the Holy One (Jesus) from Wat Phra Sing in Chiang Mai Province. The person who gave permission was PhraSriwisutthiwong in Bangkok. It is guaranteed that this copy is accurate according to the original, that there is no error in transmission, which is in the book of the district headman, the religious encyclopedia, volume 23, book #29. This inquiry was

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made on October 13, 1954 A.D. (Buddhist era 2497). PhraSriwisutthiwong is the Deputy Abbot of the Wat Pho Temple and the Director of the Wat Pho Museum, in Thailand.

What was so amazing was the Lord continued to expand our Mission ministry through Mobilizing the Women Leaders and Christian Workers in Myanmar where we were able to have our Gospel materials translated in their language and have them spread out to their unreached.

The Lord enabled us through Mobilizing the Women Leaders and Christian Workers to reach people from way up in the North of the globe in Ulan Baatar, Mongolia where we brought the translated Gospel materials to a community that had never heard about the Lord, to way down South of the globe in Auckland, New Zealand where we were asked by a Maori tribe if Jesus is a Filipino.

What was most spectacular was being able to reach the land of Cannibal Valley in 2015. After fifty years, I had learned about it from the book *Cannibal Valley* given to me by some missionaries. (They were praying I would become missionary too.) Although I had followed the Lord's direction four years later with His Master Plan for me written in the sky to "GO" as a missionary, it seemed like the doors had closed after we had prepared to work in Cannibal Valley. Instead, we were led to minister to other parts of the globe. Little did we know what God had in store for us.

Along the way as the years went by, one of the Alliance women leaders Priskila Paksoal of Indonesia attended the 1st Asia Pacific

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Alliance Women Mission Conference in Khon Kaen, Thailand. She invited us to speak at their National Alliance Women Conference in Bali, Indonesia. Without being asked, she took it upon herself to translate our Gospel materials *Good News, New Life Eternal Pack*. When we held the next Asia Pacific Alliance Women Mission Conference in Bali, Indonesia, we mobilized the women leaders and Christian workers with 1000 translated packs to reach the unreached. A good number of the Alliance women leaders from Papua, Indonesia attended, even if it took them three days of sea travel. One of the Alliance Women leaders, Nora Sumule expressed her desire to have our next Asia Pacific Alliance women Mission Conference in Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia in 2015. Her wish came true and we held our next conference in Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia. We were surprised by the grand welcome given to us right at the airport, with groups of tribal women lined up to shake our hands. They were brought by government security to a big university stadium where Nora's husband was connected as Ambassador of Papua, Indonesia. Lina shared the simple Gospel of John 3:16 before the fully packed stadium with many delegates from the Dani, Kapauka and other tribes in the presence of the Governor and other top officials. Lina's message was televised, with Agus Sumule, Nora's husband, translating it simultaneously.

The Global Mission Team and other delegates from other nations were protected with government security all throughout our trip to reach the Dani Tribe and Kapauku Tribe in *Cannibal Valley* which

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could only be reached by plane. There are still some 200 tribes that have to be reached with the translated Gospel into their various languages from the already translated Gospel materials by Priskila Paksoal in Bahasa, Indonesia. We could have been the missionaries in Papua translating the Bible and the Gospel in their language if only the door had opened when we were ready to do the task in 1977. It was practically at the stone age then, when all the tribes were still at war with each other and they were known then as cannibals. We may never have survived so the Lord ordained our delay to reach other nations in the globe first before reaching Cannibal Valley which had inspired us to fulfill our mission dream.

And the Lord continued to bless our ministry. We just arrived from the States and had our ministry in Hong Kong where Lina, together with all of her Asia Pacific Alliance Women (APAW) team, were requested by Asia Pacific Alliance Churches (APAC) to render an APAW Report on its ministry. She asked Fiona Marshal of New Zealand and Priskila Paksoal, APAW Vice-President to join them in giving the APAW Ministry report, together with Flor Soler. The report impressed all of the APAC Presidents, that the President of the Alliance World Fellowship, Ariel Verduijn, announced that in the next conference of the Alliance World Fellowship in 2016 to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, he will have women leaders of all the regions to attend in order for them to be challenged and mobilized to reach their unreached friends and neighbors.

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We have been mobilizing the nations with our *Good News! New Life Eternal* Pack translated in the language of their nation. We presented a copy of the Pack to the President of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) Dr. John Stumbo, when we invited him to be the speaker during the Asia Pacific Alliance Women's Conference in Mumbai, India in September 2017. We reminded him that these days, we do not share the Gospel by knocking at the door of people's homes but through the Internet, We showed him a copy of the email we forwarded to our contacts which shows our website with the message:

AN ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEED FLIGHT
FLIGHT TO ETERNITY:
FREE FLIGHT TO HEAVEN
Website: www.heaven.ph

We have forwarded the copy to the CMA Headquarters in Colorado Springs, to provide all the district superintendents and for them to give to the pastors in their district churches for their congregation who in turn will forward the same to their contacts to be reached with the Gospel. We have initially forwarded a copy to the pastor of Long Island Alliance Church, Rev. Al Warren who said that it was terrific. We have likewise given it to a pastor in India, Rev. Yakub, who was so excited, and promised to email it to all of his contacts in India for outreach.

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Dear Sweetheart Ping,

Wow! 60 years hand in hand together swiftly passed by! They were all filled with colorful “Remember when’s.”

Remember that snowy cold day when I was on the way to the hospital to give birth to our first baby Lovelin? The car did not start and you prayed. Then help came to bring us to the hospital. Wow! You are a man of faith!

Remember that one early dawn? Our choleric baby kept fussing and would not sleep. I was extremely tired and called you in your security job to complain. And you sang over the phone: “I beg your pardon. I didn’t promise you a rose garden.” And then you whispered sweetly to Lovelin and she stopped crying and slept soundly. Your love is truly magical! Ha.

Remember that episode when I was near death in the hospital? There was an urgent plea for Mission and you gave all of our money knowing we had impending hospital bills. You decided to put God’s Kingdom first! God honored you and all my medical bills were paid miraculously! Wow! You are really a sacrificial whole hearted giver! I have learned from you that we cannot out give the Lord!

Remember that night you serenaded me until midnight to appease my bruised heart? You ran out of songs and finally sang the radio sign off song, the National Anthem! I laughed! We reconciled. You are always a joyful person.

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Remember what you do after your nightly prayer time in our garden? You hand print in your journal your feelings. After our morning devotion the next day, you read aloud your love letter to me.

Thank you my beloved for all these memories! Most of all thank you for choosing me to be your partner in the incredible faith journey of the Great Commission!

As we face our tomorrows, let us keep fresh as ever our commitment sang in our wedding song:

Hand in hand we'll walk together
Darling you and I
Fair or cloudy be the weather
Bright or dark the sky
Hearts entwined in Christ united
Let us ever be true
As we walk together dear
For truly, I love you.

Yes, Ping, together, hand in hand Darling you and I, until one lays the other in God's hands.

I love you truly, truly, dear
Li

Sharing Heaven on a Website

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For years, I have desired to put our Gospel materials in the Internet in order to reach more people with less time and work. The Internet has been replacing the reading of books, news, and magazines. After a long wait going through several resources, I finally got to share my vision with a computer teacher, Tess Ventura, who was one of the members of our Global Mission Team.

With the help of her son, Kevin, who was also into computer technology, they have finally developed a website we named Share Heaven in 2012. Our *Good News! New Life Eternal* Pack and other evangelistic tools which we have developed over the years, as well as the available translations of the tools, are available for free at the site. This made it easy for us to share and reach out to people. I have sent an email to my fraternity brods, putting in the subject field *Your Flight to Eternity*, to catch their interest. I wrote the following message in the body of the email:

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“Here's the Website for Your Flight to Eternity where you can get your free tickets to:

FLIGHT TO HEAVEN
ABSOLUTE GUARANTEED FLIGHT

www.heaven.ph.

See you Brods

I have even come up with a calling card, at the back of which is the message:

ABSOLUTE GUARANTEED FLIGHT
FLIGHT TO ETERNITY
FREE FLIGHT TO HEAVEN

Website: www.heaven.ph

In a meeting of a big group of brods, I sent leaflets with this message at the bottom of which is a smaller caption of my calling card. The idea alone of Eternity will catch the attention of anyone, and this would surely entice one to see for himself how to get the “Free Flight to Heaven” that is an “Absolutely Guaranteed Flight.”

We were one of the invited speakers in a National Conference of Pediatricians held in Zamboanga City attended by the well-known pediatrician, Dr. Fe Del Mundo. At the end of the conference, the best doctor in the city, Dr. Lucas, remarked that he is now at the pre-departure time of his life at ninety years old. As I have given

Sharing Heaven on a Website

the last copy of *You Can Be Absolutely Sure of Going to Heaven!* that I brought to Zamboanga to Dr. Fe del Mundo, when I got back to Cebu, I sent Dr. Lucas a copy of the *Heaven* booklet with a short note:

“Dr. Lucas while you are at the Pre-Departure time of your life, here’s something you can read while awaiting your Flight to Eternity.”

He was so glad to receive it and suggested that “I write more as I write so well.” This gave me the idea of spreading the Gospel through the attractive thought that everyone would surely want to get on their “Flight to Eternity” with their “Free Flight to Heaven.”

Pastor Yakub and Pastor Crispus of India had asked for my approach on “Absolutely Guaranteed Flight, Flight to Eternity with the Free Flight to Heaven” with the website: www.heaven.ph. I had shared this with Rev. Pastor Al Warren to make the website available to his congregation, to send online to their contacts whom they want to reach out, and he considered it a terrific strategy to share the Gospel.

EPILOGUE

After all is said and done,

“Only one life
‘Twill soon be past
Only what’s done
For Christ will last.”

The Lord has called us to be His servants to live for Him alone and for “life worth nothing less I use it for doing the work of telling others the Good News about God’s wonderful kindness and love.” (Acts 20: 24 NLT). We have responded to God’s unique call He wrote in cloudlike word in the sky to “GO” and make disciples and given up everything, our professions, our lives and all to follow Him.

Whatever the Lord has done through us was only because we surrendered our lives to Him. What the world could offer us is nothing compared to what the Lord is giving us. “My purpose is to give life in all its fullness” (John 10:10 NLT) Jesus said.

We never cease in our growth of our faith. And yesterday has become a dream. Tomorrow we can envision with a greater faith to trust God more. We can only look back at the great things the Lord has done for us just to inspire us to trust God even much more!

A very well-known billionaire and the richest if not one of the richest in the Philippines and one the top richest man in the world,

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claims that every time he breathes, he earns a million pesos! But he shockingly pointed straight at his heart and expressed, “Deep inside is empty!”

Only the Lord Jesus Christ can fill that emptiness in our life! He warned us. “And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your soul in the process? Is anything worth more than your soul? (Matthew 16: 26 NLT).

If you are experiencing that kind of emptiness in your life, you still have on choice left. Or you may not even be sure where you will spend eternity, with or without God. Simply invite Jesus in your life by receiving Him as your Savior and Lord in your heart to have eternal life.

God said, “And this is what God testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. So whoever has God’s Son has life; whoever does not have the Son does not have life.” (1 John 5: 11-12 NLT).

Jesus is calling, “Look! I have been standing at the door and I am constantly knocking. If anyone hears me calling him and opens the door I will come in and fellowship with him and he with me.” (Revelation 3: 20 LB).

You can acknowledge and confess your sins to Him. Repent of your sins by turning from them and turning to God asking Him to forgive you. As Jesus said, “Turn from sin and turn to God” (Matthew 4:17).

When you pray to receive Christ in your life as your Savior and Lord, He will come in your life giving you His Holy Spirit and

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giving you a new life! “Yet to all who received him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God or — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” (John 1: 12-13 NIV).

This is the only decision that you can make in your own life that you will never absolutely regret throughout eternity!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dr. Ceferino D. Villegas earned his Doctor of Missiology at the School of World Missions, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, U.S.A. and Bachelor of Laws at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City. Dr. Lina Fiel T. Villegas earned her Ph.D in Education at the University of San Carlos, Cebu City and Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Anthropology at the University of the East, Manila. Both of them have their Master of Arts in Communication, Specializing in Linguistics, at Wheaton Graduate School, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A.

He is a missionary ordained minister of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines, Inc. and she is a guidance counselor. She was President of the Alliance Women Philippines and President of Asia Pacific Alliance World Global Mission Mobilizer. They minister here and abroad conducting module courses in Seminaries, seminars in marriage, parenting, and family issues, and speak in conferences, churches, civic organizations and medical societies.

They have four children - two daughters Lovelin Joyce married to Vicente Perez with three children. Michael, Marcus, and Jasmine, and Cefelin Grace married to Enrique Murga with five children, Miquesas, Ramon, Joshua, Priscila, and Daniel and two sons, Ceferino Andrew, Jr. married to Jennnifer Harris and Joseph Philip married to Cielo Bulos with two children Iko and Chloe.

After all said and done,
"Only one life 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last."

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- from the Epilogue



About the Authors

Dr. Ceferino D. Villegas, LL. D and Dr. Lina Fiel T. Villegas, Ph. D

Dr. Ceferino D. Villegas earned his Doctor of Missiology at the School of World Missions, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, U.S.A., and Bachelor of Laws at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City. Dr. Lina Fiel T. Villegas earned her Ph.D. in Education at the University of San Carlos, Cebu City and Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Anthropology at the University of the East, Manila. Both of them have their Master of Arts in Communications, Specializing in Linguistics, at Wheaton Graduate

School, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A.

Dr. Ping is a missionary ordained minister of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches of the Philippines, Inc. Dr. Lina is a guidance counselor. She was President of Alliance Women Philippines and President of Asia Pacific Alliance Women Global Mission Mobilizer. Both, as a team, minister here and abroad conducting module courses in Seminaries, seminars in marriage, parenting, and family issues, and speak in conferences, churches, civic organizations, and medical societies.

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