



DECEMBER
ISSUE

VERITAS

The Faithful Christian

Albert Codiamat

The Master says, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.” -Revelations 22:12

Brother Albert Codiamat asks, “Are you ready?”

When we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, we are born into God’s eternal family and God lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. We are now called Christians – followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 7:22-23 says, “For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord’s freed man; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ’s slave. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of man.” This clearly tells us of our condition before and after we are redeemed from our sins. Before we are saved, we are slaves to sin. But after we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are slaves to Him who bought us with a price.

As those indebted to our Lord Jesus Christ, we are to be faithful. We know we are faithful if:

1) We acknowledge that everything including ourselves are our Master’s property.

- The Bible clearly states that God is the sole owner of all things. “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains (Psalm 24:1).” Colossians 1:15-20 also confirms the deity of Jesus, His ownership of all things and His work on the cross for our redemption from sin.

2) We acknowledge the stewardship of our Master’s possessions.

- The possessions that the Master entrusted to us include our time, skills, material possessions, talents, intellect, spiritual gifts and physical bodies.

3) We are prepared for our Master’s unexpected coming while He is away.

- In John 14:2-3, Jesus spoke of what He is doing while He is away in the present time (preparing a place for all believers in heaven). He also spoke of His coming again to receive believers unto Himself. He will come again to catch up the believers both dead and living in the air. This passage is known as the rapture. Although his master has gone away for business, the slave continues to work as if his master was present.

4) Our works have the quality approved by his Master.

- 2 Corinthians 5:10 says that all believers must appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds, according to what he has done.

5) The Master commends us by saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

- Matthew 25:21-23 records this commendation by the Master to the slaves who were given five talents and two talents. It’s clear that the Master’s basis for their commendation isn’t the quantity but the quality of their service.

Are we prepared to stand before the judgment seat of our Master? Let’s examine ourselves to see if there are areas in our life that need to be improved. Ask God to help you be a faithful servant while He is away.

The Power of Prayer

Pastor Jubi Camba

One common activity among the religions in the world is “prayer.” Prayer is the most used means of communication to the object of prayer and worship. It plays a big part in one’s life for it develops trust and an intimate personal relationship with God.

We Christians worship and pray to the One who is the “Supreme Being,” called God, the Creator. He is powerful enough that He created the world out of nothing but just with the command of His Word. “‘Let there be light,’ and there was light!” (Genesis 1:3). This is how powerful God is! Psalm 107:28-30 reminds us, “Then, they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and He guided them to their desired haven.” Jesus, as God, calmed the storm (Matthew 8:26), cast out evil, made the blind see, the lame walk, cleansed lepers, and the made the dead rise (Luke 7:21-22). Therefore, be assured that God won’t let you down. 1 John 5:14-15 says, “This is the confidence that we have in him that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: And we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” Yes, there is power in prayer because we have a powerful God! It is in this supreme powerful nature of God that the power of prayer lies. Prayer is the way to release the supremacy, sovereignty and authority of God to perform miraculously over nature, circumstance, event and happenings in the lives of every individual in this world.

But we must remember that only a person who has personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ has the privilege to have direct access to God’s holy prayer room. Moreover, God’s holy Word instructs his people to pray earnestly, fervently and without ceasing. He teaches His people to pray with humility,

with integrity, and with all honesty. God delights when He sees right motives and godly attitudes. He responds to the prayers of His people and releases blessings according to His absolute wisdom and perfect will. So many people have experienced God’s goodness and have received manifold blessings because they diligently persevere and pray faithfully to the ever powerful God of the Bible. The testimony of God’s people in the Bible confirms that this is true.

Let us not be weary in doing this divine instruction from God. Remember, God is powerful! Continue to ask, seek, and knock with faith in your heart and the door of blessing shall be opened unto you. “But thou, when you prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” Remember, nothing is too hard for the LORD. All things are possible before Him when we co-operate with Him. The great preacher William Barclay says, “when we pray, remember this: the love of God that wants the best for us, the wisdom of God that knows what is best for us and the power of God that can accomplish it.”

Keep praying, GOD is powerful!

Pastor Jubi Camba





After the “Happily Ever After...”

Duke and Ciara Asetre

Remember your wedding day? It’s a day full of excitement, love and the anticipation of the future you have with your partner. It’s a day where you are united with God as husband and wife. Jesus said, “They are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” Matthew 19:6

When all the thank you cards have been mailed out and you have moved into a new address with your new husband or wife...then what? Is the honeymoon over? What comes after the “happily ever after”?

As a married couple for a little over a year now, our experiences may be minimal, but it has been a learning and fruitful venture for the both of us. Even though we dated a few years before we got married, we soon discovered the impact of making adjustments as we joined our lives together for the first time. To our surprise, we discovered and learned new things about each other that we thought we already knew.

Determining who does the housekeeping chores, to whose turn it is to have the remote, are some simple things that can lead to interesting conversations. You may be thinking, “Are there fights and arguments?” The answer is “YES.” It’s always easy to find faults with your spouse. The stresses from everyday life can wear our patience down. We quickly learned the saying, “quick to listen and slow to speak.” Being able to say sorry and accept our faults are essential to a successful marriage.

Being patient and the ability to communicate are great factors, but we believe that the most important part of marriage is God. He must be the centre of the relationship. A marriage is something that is built over time with God as the core. There is no such thing as a perfect marriage, and we are far from being perfect ourselves. But we believe that if you put the perfect and all knowing God in the centre of your marriage, then you have the comfort of knowing that our Heavenly Father is in the driver’s seat.

Praying together as a married couple is something that we both cherish. Giving our praises and petitions to God helped us learn the roles of being a godly husband and wife to one another. We have the joy of knowing we serve a faithful God that loves unconditionally.

As we look back on our first year of marriage, we can truly say, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.” The trials and obstacles that life brings enable us to gain strength and comfort knowing that He is there. Our prayer is that God may continue to mould us, help us grow in love and in the image of Christ.

Although we are still rookies in this department, God’s goodness and faithfulness is upon us and we are excited as we look forward to the journey ahead.

So what comes after “happily ever after”?

... It’s up to you to decide.

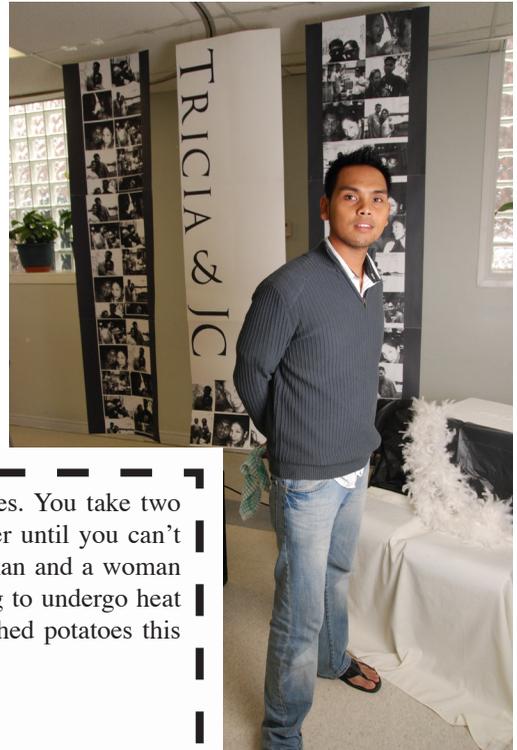
Grooms-to-be...

As the Asetre's described, marriage isn't always a bed of roses. So we asked two grooms-to-be their take on marriage. Here is what they said (fiancées, pay attention):



Firstly, I do believe that getting married is a once in a life time opportunity. It is an important decision in ones' life that is made with prayer and petition, as the partner you choose will be joined with you under God. For me, getting married is both exciting and filled with many challenges. Whatever the trial, I know my wife has given her heart to the Lord, just as I have. I am sure that as we lean together on God, our relationship will be able to thrive, despite our problems. I can't wait!

- Philipp Flores, engaged to Emily Labro,
wedding date: May 15, 2009



I expect married life to be like making mashed potatoes. You take two potatoes, peel off their skin, boil it and mash it together until you can't see two separate potatoes anymore. Marriage takes a man and a woman losing and denying themselves. They have to be willing to undergo heat and change to become one. I really want to make mashed potatoes this December. =)

- JC Fernandez, engaged to Tricia Castanos,
wedding date: December 27, 2008



Tessie Calampinay

Teaching Sunday School

Teaching is hard. Teaching in a different language is even harder. But amidst this obstacle, Tessie Calampinay testifies that with Christ's strength, she can do all things. Teaching Sunday School is a big blessing. Teaching the toddlers in Sunday School brings great joy to my heart even though it's very challenging.

When I came here to Canada, God led me to this family church, First Filipino Baptist Church. When I became a member of FFBC I had the desire in my heart to teach Sunday School in the children's' department. I talked to Pastor Eliezer Catanus about this, and he assigned me to the Primary class but he didn't ask me if I had any experience teaching Sunday school. Regardless, I accepted it.

The next Sunday, I had to start teaching the Primary class without realizing that I had to teach my students in English. I had studied my lesson but my problem was that I had to teach them and speak to them in English. Still, I continued to teach in kinamatis na English (broken English). I felt embarrassed because of this and one of my students even corrected my grammar.

I realized that the student was right, my wrong grammar can lead students the wrong way in learning

about the Lord Jesus and even confuse them. So, I went to school to learn more English. I continued teaching the Primary class for another year or two. Then, the Sunday school Superintendent, Sister Fely Labro, assigned me to the Toddlers class. I thank God for this class; my co-workers were happy and enjoyed this class. I thank God for our Pastor's encouragement towards us. He said that even though we only have onestudent in our class at times, we should go ahead and teach the Word of God anyway. Because of this, God gave us more students and it was very exciting. We have great joy in our hearts to serve God in this Ministry and of course, prayer is a big part of it.

Some of my students even teach me lessons. If I'm late, they confront me and say, "Teacher, you are late! (nakamaywang pa)." Even though it isn't Sunday School time yet, they are there in our classroom before me. So I've started to come earlier now. Another example is that same student confronted me on Sunday and said it was his birthday the day before. He said, "You didn't call me (akamaywang pa) it was my birthday yesterday." This example reminds me to call my students.

Some of our past Sunday School students are now serving God through music, playing piano during our worship services, leading the youth choir, and involved with the Young People ministries. Some are even teaching Sunday School and one of them is my assistant teacher, Camille Driz. Isn't that wonderful? It encourages us to continue serving God. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, "Let the children come to me and don't hinder them." In our class, we are teaching them who Jesus is and His Word, the Bible. We always stress to them that Jesus loves all the little children. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train a child in a way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it."

To my fellow co-teachers and workers in Sunday School, let us continue to serve our God through the Sunday School ministry until Jesus comes. Philippians 1:6 says, "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry in on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ."

Sunday School Questions

To all you Sunday school teachers out there who toil every week to learn new lessons for your students- this is for you. We asked a few of your students what they thought their most memorable Sunday school lesson was. Here is what they came up with:

“I would say Jonah’s story because he didn’t want to listen to God. He went away and then God got a big fish to swallow him. Then he prayed and God saved him.”

-Mishael Driz, age 12

“The most memorable lesson for me was when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. When God sent death to all the firstborn sons, He told the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood on the sides and top of the door frames of their houses. He told them that if they do what He said, He’ll skip their houses when He sends death to all firstborn sons. I like how it showed how the Israelites had faith and obeyed what God said.”

-Aaron Benwick, age 11

“I like remembering when Jesus was born because it’s very special to me.

I really like Christmas!”

-Rose Ann Ulep, age 8

The journey of Anthony Lasam’s transition from
IMPACT to Stepping Stones

MAKING THE CHANGE:



The unavoidable event of change is never an easy task. Even before 2008 began, I knew I was going to go through a lot of difficult changes this year. Off the top of my head, some of the major changes ahead of me were leaving high school, entering university, coping with the change from a high school workload to a university workload, and lastly, leaving the IMPACT group and entering the world of the Stepping Stones.

When saying the name of our older young people group, Stepping Stones, many words come to my mind; words such as responsibility, role model, maturity, and leadership. Ever since I joined our FFBC youth group, I always saw the Stepping Stones members as those who we younger youth look up to. They always took charge of events, led worship on Fridays, set good examples, and taught us younger youth many different things. Whether it was helping with instruments, devotions, or even giving much needed advice, they helped encourage us younger youth to become spiritually mature. To be honest, the few months before I became a Stepping Stone, I questioned myself whether or not I was “at the same level” as these individuals that I looked up to. Though this bugged me a bit, it also inspired me to push myself to be more like them, to help others, not for myself, but for God.

I entered Stepping Stones on the Friday in September 2008, in which both IMPACT and Stepping Stones held prayer meetings. In my mind, I secretly thought the two would be very different, thinking that IMPACT would be more relaxed and Stepping Stones would be really serious. But to my surprise, the meeting turned out to be similar in the sense of format and seriousness. Other than the difference of people and the format sequence of the meeting, I felt the same as I was when with the members of IMPACT. This feeling took a lot off my chest. That night, I also had the opportunity to talk to one of the older Stepping Stones one-on-one about my recent days and my feelings about entering the group. He also gave me advice on how to cope with the difficulties in between. During this talk, I was once again reminded why I looked up to these people; it was because they selflessly help others in His name.

Sugar Cookies

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups sugar
- 2/3 cups shortening or butter
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp vanilla extract
- 3¼ cups flour
- 2½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt



Method:

- 1.Preheat oven to 400°F
- 2.In a large bowl cream together shortening/butter and sugar
- 3.Add the eggs, vanilla, and milk, ensuring it is mixed together well
- 4.In a separate bowl combine all the dry ingredients together
- 5.Slowly add the dry ingredients to the creamed shortening/butter and sugar mix
- 6.Mix well until evenly combined
- 7.Refrigerate and cool for up to 3 hours
- 8.Roll out dough to desired thickness
- 9.Cut any shape or figure desired and decorate
- 10.On slightly greased baking sheets, place cut out cookies ½ inch apart
- 11.Bakes for about 8 minutes or until light golden brown and cool
- 12.Enjoy!

Makes about 6 dozen cookies

A Godly Perspective in Motherhood

Abigail de Leon

“Behold, children are a gift of the Lord.”

—Psalm 127:3, [NKJV]

Children can be a handful! Although I’m not a parent yet, teaching and supervising the toddlers at FFBC for Junior Church for an hour and a half once a month already takes a lot of energy out of me. Despite the draining of energy and enthusiasm, there’s nothing more enjoyable than being in the presence of happy children. To get a glimpse of a parent’s view of the blessings and struggles of parenthood, I interviewed Sister Nora Vivas, the mother of “three loving boys – 16 year old and 9 year old twins.”

Sister Nora Vivas is an active member of FFBC, and has been a mother for almost 17 years. As a mother, she recognizes herself as only one actor in the dual role of parenthood.

“Both the father & mother are responsible to give commandments and teach their children, says Nora. “Ephesians 6:1 says that children should obey their parents. The word parents include both mom and dad.”

There is a unique responsibility given to the father to be the head of the family. He is the one to lead, protect, and provide for his wife and family. Mothers, on the other hand, are told to love their children (Titus 2:4-5). This “motherly-love” includes caring, nurturing, affectionately embracing them, meeting their needs, among all others and most importantly, praying for them.

Within parenthood, there are inevitable disputes and disagreements. Nora and her husband Sam, are no strangers to this.

“Overtime, we have learned to respect each other’s decisions,” says Nora. “We have differences of opinion, we



argue sometimes...but we pray, talk, and have learned to compromise for things we believe would be beneficial for our children.”

Whether it’s concerning chastening and disciplining children, the Bible strongly stresses the importance of training your children in the ways of the Lord. A few ways the Vivas children understand rules are by setting up limits, motivating and rewarding them. This isn’t always easy. “Just keep trying to be firm and consistent,” says Nora. “O, how we need the Lord!”

Are you new to parenthood or praying/expecting to be a future parent? Sister Nora has a few valuable biblical tips:

- 1) Obey God’s command to love the Lord our God first and foremost, and teaching our children the ways of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 6:5-7)
- 2) There will be trying times in raising children. But LOVE them anyway, just as God loves us, in good times and in bad. (2 Thessalonians 3:5)

The key tie in any family is the immeasurable love of the Lord Jesus Christ! (1 Corinthians 13:13)

- 3) Children grow fast. Tag them along with you, spend more time with them, and ENJOY THEM! (Psalm 90:12)

Whether you are a child, teenager, parent, soon-to-be-parent, grandparent, or an aunt or uncle, remember these key tips that are given from the Bible. These may help you understand why your parents act the way they do. As ‘uncool’ as they seem sometimes, encourage your parents to keep on the race, raising their children in a godly manner in LOVE.

MISSION POSSIBLE

When you hear the word “missionary,” what comes to mind? Just look in the mirror - Candice Asetre tells us to look inward before we look overseas.

God has given each of us the privilege to be part of His mission, a mission to reach out to those who haven't yet heard about Jesus Christ. We have been provided with the means necessary to reach out to people around the world from where we are, but without actually going. Let's face it, not all of us are meant to be on a foreign mission field, but all of us are called to be missionaries. “Mission” is a small word with a big purpose, and is something we can all be a part of, at home and abroad. Just imagine what can be accomplished if each and every single believer helped to accomplish the goal set for us in Matthew 28:19 “therefore go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”

There is more than one way to help the goal of missions without setting foot in another country. Most, if not all mission organizations take monetary donations. By donating a portion of our earnings, we are providing more supplies such as books and other resources to communicate God's word. Financial support is something all mission organizations can utilize in more ways than one. It can provide for more effective tools on the mission field and provide financial support to missionaries around the world. God is the perfect example of giving; He has never fallen short of providing for our needs. 2 Corinthians says, “God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” And in John 3:16, He gave his only son for us. Make it a priority to epitomize God's way of giving when giving to others.

Another way to help is through prayer. Sometimes we fail to realize the power of prayer until we actually see our prayers being answered. Praying for missions is something we should all be doing, as it should be a part of our daily lives. We need to pray for God's appointed people out on the mission field who have the willingness and determination to spread God's word despite the challenges that get in the way-culturally, mentally etc. It's a blessing to hear reports from the mission field and even more encouraging to hear when people are saved.

The power of prayer is evident throughout the bible. It has healed the sick (James 5:14-15) and defeated demons (Mark 9:29) - just imagine what it can do for missions.

We can't help unless we understand. By way of understanding, we learn what is being done and why we do it. Although we have Missions Emphasis Month, it cannot be emphasized enough how critical mission work is. We all need to comprehend that it's our responsibility as God's chosen people to go out and share the good news. 1 Corinthians 12:12 says, “the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts, and though all of its parts are many, they form one body; so it is with Christ.” By learning and understanding, we can then encourage one another to do our part and be one step closer to accomplishing the mission.

There is always the opportunity of going out into the mission field if we are called, and there are always other ways to help if we are not. Let's not forget the importance of missions even after Mission Emphasis month. Make it part of your daily prayers and your daily thoughts. We are always on a mission whether we are on the bus or at work, a mission to share with people God's love. Let's not forget that God equips us with the knowledge that would allow us to take that first step. An anonymous writer once wrote “What is 750,000 miles long, reaches around the earth thirty times and grows twenty miles longer each day? The Answer: The line of people who are without Christ.” Let's all do our part whether at home or abroad to make that line smaller. Have you asked yourself what you can do for missions? How can you be part of reaching out the ends of the earth? Give. Pray. Understand. You, me, and a missionary can be the tools God uses to bring someone else closer to eternal life.

Candice Asetre

MY MISSION FIELD

Say to them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?’

-Ezekiel 33:11

Campus ministry has always held a special place in my heart. I came to truly know Jesus and accept Him as my Lord and Saviour through the work of a campus outreach-oriented youth ministry. Ever since then, I have always been burdened to reach out to lost souls and share God’s wonderful gift of salvation, in an effort to give back what was freely given to me and to show God just how grateful I am to Him for saving me.

Back in the Philippines, I would often find myself watching my youth pastor, ates and kuyas longingly as they went to different high schools for another evangelism activity or another school outreach. I would inwardly think, “When will I be willing and brave enough to take part in what they are doing?” I sincerely yearned then to be as bold and as fervent as they were in evangelism and sharing God’s Word. I earnestly prayed that I might be so.

It pleased God to honour my request – I didn’t have to wait very long before an opportunity to start a cell group at my high school became available. I grabbed the opportunity, but not without much terror and uncertainty. By God’s grace, our high school cell group thrived and it served as a training ground for me for even greater things I was again granted the privilege of leading a cell group during my two years of college

back home in the Philippines, and now I am leading a campus outreach at Centennial College in Scarborough. All throughout this time I have been incessantly haunted by feelings of weakness and inadequacy. I frequently feel utterly unworthy of the call God has placed in my life because of my imperfection and weakness. I also deal with discouragement and disappointment on a regular basis, as when people do not respond to the Gospel positively, and often do not show up for cell group meetings at all. But it is in these times of discouragement and inadequacy that I witness God’s faithfulness and am able to marvel at His ‘strength that is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Corinthians 12:9). During the years I have served Him, never, not once, has He ever let me down. Though I often speak with a shaky voice, even shakier hands and trembling knees, through God’s enablement, I continue to share God’s Word with my schoolmates, share the gospel with people who are hearing it for the first time. It is a blessing to witness lives being changed through the working of the Holy Spirit.

It is my prayer that I might be able to share the burden of creating campus outreaches, especially to the youth of our church. May Ezekiel 33:1-20 always serve to remind us of our duty to warn the lost and continue to share God’s message of salvation. For it is not God’s will for anyone to perish, but for everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). May Christ’s love compel us to reach out to them and do everything we can to persuade them to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:14). Please pray for our campus outreach as we continue to endeavour to serve God and share the good news of salvation in the mission field He has put us in. To God be the glory!

Lifestyles of the rich and famous

You always want what you can't have, right? Shiela Fangon talks straight up about the dangers of confusing your "wants" with "needs."

They're everywhere – up, down, left, right.

It's impossible to miss the newspapers, billboards, commercials, television shows both reality and fiction, and even music videos which propagate the lavish lifestyles of the rich and the famous. The constant contact of the wealthy, powerful and beautiful in the world's sense with the supposedly subordinate "normal people" has encouraged envy for the status, cars and homes as seen in the former by the latter. Consumerism is one of the consequences of this envy; the view that one's value in life is measured in items, which is translated to status. However, this media-concocted formula for a "perfect life" has tricked people into believing they are living a less- than- blessed life. However, when one compares the opinions of the world to the standards in the Bible, it's clear that there's no comparison. Instead, the Bible states that despite what seems obvious, the status, cars and homes that belong to those who love God are far superior to those of the world.

While the world rants and raves over the up and coming "Princesses/Princes of Pop," plastering them on every conceivable flat surface – magazine covers, billboards, and even not so flat surfaces like mugs, Christians need not be envious of this attention. According to the Bible, God has granted to every believer the right to be called His children, (1 John 1:12-13), and in doing so, secures our titles of princesses and princes of His eternal kingdom. In addition, the Bible states that Christ will transform our lowly bodies and allow us to be like His glorious self (Philippians 3:21). Evidently, the royalty we have inherited through the saving grace of Jesus has allowed us to surpass these lowly "monarchs" of this perishable, mortal world. Thus, the statuses attained by such people should not produce envious thoughts from minds of Christians, as the statuses freely received from Christ far exceeds what can be attained in this world.

Rolls-Royce Phantom, Ashton Martin Vanquish, Ferrari F430 Spider – no, these aren't the names of fictional villains, instead, they're the names of exceptionally expensive vehicles. From the innumerable car accidents

caused by celebrities publicized in the news, it's clear that they have the resources to buy cars typical of this price range, and many of them. While the idea of driving around in a \$300,000 car is appealing to many, the alternative promised by God proves to be even more enticing. In Isaiah 40:31, it states that those who wait on the Lord will mount up with wings like eagles. God doesn't want us to be stuck in the traffic of the world; instead he creates a substitute path for us that is free from garbage and pollution. Not only does God create the path, but he also provides everyone with the tools to keep it lit (Psalms 119:105). Believers are also given the greatest GPS system available, far more advanced than anything on the market. Proverbs 3:5 asserts that when we rely on Him, He is faithful to direct our paths. Therefore, not only do Christians receive a superior mode of transportation, they also can rely on their very technologically advanced devices given to them by God in order to ease their travels.

The most likely time for one to wish for a bigger house is during the early morning when the hectic schedule of brothers and sisters, wives and husbands' schedules intersect and clash in the fight for bathrooms. At times like this, it undoubtedly seems much simpler to have numerous multi-million dollar houses with fourteen bathrooms and twelve bedrooms like those of celebrities as seen on Cribs, but it's even more important to remember that where we truly live isn't in where we are right now, but we live in the Lord. The Bible states repeatedly that the Lord is our refuge, not only in good times but also in times of trouble (Psalms 9:9). Again in Psalms, David states that believers will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. As our Lord is the King of all Kings, it is only-fitting that he dwell in the Palaces of all Palaces. This is where we live, in the home of the King of all Kings. Not only do Christians reside in the house of the Lord, they are promised protection in this same house. God is the perfect alarm system, not even just a phone call away. Instead, He is there 100% of the time, never leaving nor forsaking. Not many stars, no matter how extravagant their homes are can boast of anything equal to this.

Therefore, while it's true that the life of the rich and the famous do offer some perks, it's nothing in comparison to what Christians have in God. The statuses, cars and even homes of those who love Him are superior to anything found on TV.



The Flourishing Church

“Fear not tomorrow, for God is already there,” is a saying which gives hope as we look forward to a bright future. Christ’s Great Commission is our mandate, forging ahead with confidence as Hudson Taylor’s words “God’s work done in God’s way shall never lack God’s supply.”— Oscar Castaños

First Filipino Baptist Church wasn’t like it is today. It all started in 1975 with four young Christians. Hungry for God’s Word, they gathered and met regularly for bible study, fellowship, and prayer. They spread the gospel to other Filipinos, blessing and encouraging each other towards God’s undying love. The focus of this group was to witness to friends and family about salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ and to encourage those who have stumbled along the way. Week after week, God’s plan was taking its course, and in May of 1977, Reverend Godfrey Catanus was called to become the pastor of FFBC.

Soon after, Reverend Catanus followed a new calling that took him to the United States. His brother, Eliezer Catanus, assumed the role of senior pastor of FFBC. Since then, Reverend Catanus has continued to spread the Word of God at FFBC. The church has become a God-fearing, Bible-believing church that has a growing passion and desire to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oscar and Norma Castanos are a few of the original members that still attend FFBC.

“Over the years, we’ve seen a phenomenal growth in our church through the establishment of our sister churches in the GTA; reaching as far out as Hamilton westward, and Ottawa eastward,” says Oscar. “While some churches have split, it’s fractured congregation dwindled or scattered, yet others simply died out and closed down. FFBC continued to flourish and mature as a testimony to God’s amazing grace.”

With three established churches around the GTA, FFBC also continues to aid missionaries around the world. As a whole, the church continues to grow spiritually and mentally, bringing praises to God with various ministries. IMPACT, Stepping Stones, New Life, and Higher Ground are some examples of the different ministries at the church.

“Church members and believers in the Filipino communities are pleased about this Gospel-preaching, Bible-teaching and Missionary-sending church right in the heart of downtown Toronto,” says Castanos. “The fellowship of Evangelical Baptist churches in Canada are astonished that over 5 sister churches have been established since FFBC’s was founded more than 30 years ago. We thank the Lord for the strong leadership He’s given to us.”



What did

The world talks. It's just unfortunate that sometimes they talk about us. Ever heard someone say that Christians are self-righteous? How about boring and void of any fun? Arabelle Samonte attempts to dispel the stereotypes associated with Christians.

The above statements are hateful and persecuting, but it's sad to say that some people think this way. Have you ever come across any of these statements before in trying to share God's word? I have, but it's not surprising to get these reactions from people who do not know Christ. As a Christian, I know that we are often misunderstood about what that actually means. When we talk about our faith and beliefs, people can misinterpret it as us thinking we're better than everyone else. I'm here to bust these myths about Christians!

A myth is a story or false conception about something or someone without valid evidence or proof. They are usually created by worldly social institutions around us. People often blindly believe in false statements because they don't know otherwise. It's natural to think that many people go along with what's comfortable with the rest of the world. Comfort is the norm! It's sad to think that people can easily believe in myths, but when it comes to having faith in God, they need proof to believe. However, this shouldn't upset us but rather push us to evangelize since there are so many people that still remain lost in this world.

But these negative outlooks are nothing compared to the completeness one feels in accepting Jesus

Christ as Saviour. Through the grace of God, we are saved and renewed, but it does not mean we do not make mistakes. We are sinful creatures, but Jesus Christ died on the cross to save us from our sins.

“For God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loves us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ by grace ye are saved.” (Ephesians 2: 4-5)

Our sins are forgiven if we come to Him sincerely, take responsibility for our actions and acknowledge Him. Once we have Jesus in our hearts, we are better aware of our actions and it becomes easier to know what is right from wrong.

Another myth about Christians is that we hate gay people. The Bible does not teach to hate others. We are all taught to love one another as outlined in Galatians 5:14 - “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Christians shouldn't hate homosexuals, but rather they rebuke their sinful lifestyles. The Bible teaches that though we should love one another, it also condemns homosexuality as a sin.

“Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is an abomination.” (Leviticus 18:22)

God created man and woman to be joined together. Unlike other sins, this sexual sin has a judgment administered by God Himself.

you just say?!?!?

“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of a woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.” (Romans 1:27)

Because of the pride of humans, our hearts are hardened by sin. As a result, they can no longer see the error of what they are doing. Without awareness of our sinfulness, there will be no repentance. Without repentance, there will be no forgiveness. With no forgiveness from God, there is no salvation. We are all sinful, but if we clearly disregard what the bible is saying, we are ignoring the truth and our sinful nature. Homosexuality is a sin and it needs to be dealt with as any other sin. All sin needs to be given unto God and repented for. As Christians, we shouldn't hate homosexuals, but pray for them and rebuke them of their sin with God's wisdom and love.

Lastly, who said Christians don't know how to have fun? Because we are saved with the blood of Jesus Christ, how can we be boring or somber?! Christians can and do have fun! There is just a fine line on what we refer to as fun.

“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do things that are pleasing in his sight.” (1 John 3:22)

One of the biggest problems with the world today is the seeking of pleasure. Pleasure can be referred to as anything that one seeks to feel good about themselves such

as drinking, smoking, pre-marital sex, and even money. Entertaining temporal desires never satisfies and always leaves one seeking for more. This is due to that fact that nothing of this world will ever leave us fulfilled. Matthew 6:19-20 clearly illustrates this idea.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal but lay yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”

We should trust God and his commandments because it's the best for us. Although we may be persecuted, keep reminding ourselves that we aren't here to please others, only God. It's only by His grace that we're saved and that is all we need!

From “my way” to God’s Way: A Testimony

A self professed workaholic and drinker, Noel de Guzman shares how the Lord transformed his life from deterioration to a new creation.



Before I came to know Christ as my Lord and Savior, my life had no direction or goal. I was self-centered, proud, weighed down by vices, and had no concern for my physical or spiritual health. Being a workaholic, I was very eager to make more money, even if it meant I had to be dishonest. I had no peace and was always afraid of many things in life. In fact, almost every night, I would have nightmares that would wake me up in the middle of the night. To get my mind off things, I would regularly spend my nights in bars with my friends. I was trying to run away from things in life that I was afraid of so instead of being at home with my family I would go out with my friends.

Growing up in a “religious” family, I was taught about God. I was required to observe the “Law of God” in order to attain salvation. I was also taught that one should be baptized before death; abstain from all food that is forbidden in the book of Leviticus, and to observe the Sabbath on Saturday. Because of this, I got tired of the do’s and don’ts of my religion. I said to myself, “I’ll do whatever pleases me and when I think I’m going to die, I will ask forgiveness from God on my deathbed.” God was like a bell boy to me it was when I needed him that I would call Him and ask for help. Therefore, I didn’t appreciate all His goodness He had given me in my life.

My wife went to church but she had no commitment or relationship with Christ. It wasn’t until she met a Christian woman who became her friend. She invited my wife to attend a Bible study. At first, my wife attended by herself. The next week, they visited me at home. After meeting me, they also invited me to their Bible study meeting. I was hesitant at first, but because of their persistence, I accepted the invitation. My wife and I joined the group. They were friendly and nice to us and we could feel their concern for our spiritual lives. During these Bible studies, they would pray, sing Christian songs, and study the Bible.

At first, I thought I already knew the Bible because I was taught about it during Elementary church school. As a child, I was taught that if you were baptized, obeyed the laws of God, were good before you died and asked for forgiveness of your sins, you would be fine. The teachings from this Bible Study group were new and different. The leader said that we are all sinners and our good works wouldn't be enough to bring us to Heaven. He said that if we wanted to go to Heaven, we would have to believe and put our faith in Jesus Christ alone and accept Him as our Lord and Savior. I had so many questions about this. Pastor Glenn Diel visited us and gave us his time to have one on one Bible study. This was when my wife and I understood God's simple plan of salvation.

In 1992, one year since settling in Canada, my family and I rented a basement in a house that belonged to a Christian family whom we had befriended. Every Friday night, they had a fellowship meeting upstairs. At first, I was not interested in joining them, even though they always asked me to come to their Bible study. Instead, I was drinking beer every weekend. Sometimes I would even invite people attending the Bible study to drink with me. Most of the time, when I joined them I would be drunk. They never said a word to condemn me. Instead, I heard them praying for me that I would start joining their fellowship. Later on, God made me realize the difference between my lifestyle and theirs. I realized that I was selfish, self-centered, and ungrateful to Him. During the fellowship, especially during sharing time, I saw how they were God-centered people. They were always pointing everything to God, in whatever they did and whatever they wanted. They were asking God for help and were always thankful to Him. Using their kind of behaviour, God rebuked me and my lifestyle. The Lord made me remember my promise to Him, that if He would let me come to Canada, I would be committed to Him. Remembering this, I told the group that I would like to talk to Pastor Glenn Diel. At that time, he was the one leading the cell group. Pastor Glenn visited my wife and I and led us to pray the sinner's prayer, committing our lives to Jesus Christ. The following week, we announced to the group that we had accepted Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior and we surrendered our lives to Him. The group was so glad and told us that even the angels in heaven are rejoicing to see us receive Christ as our Savior. In 1995, my wife and I were bap

tized at First Filipino Baptist Church by Pastor Eliezer Catanus.

God has made a lot of changes in my life since I received Christ. I became interested in listening to the preaching of God's Word. I always wished and prayed to God that He would use me in sharing His Word to others. God gave me the hunger and joy to read the Bible. He helped me to understand and accept my mistakes, learning to apply His Word in my daily walk with Him. He also changed my heart to be generous with my financial giving to support the Church ministry. He also gave me patience, taught me to be a good lover and leader to my family. He removed all my vices and my habit of being a workaholic. He made me honest and He gave me the joy of serving Him in my local Church. I saw that all the things I gave up were just garbage in my life. God changed my life and gave me a new one as He promises in John 10:10, "I have come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

I sincerely hope that God will use my personal testimony to challenge and encourage others. May this testimony be an instrument in showing people how powerful God is in saving and transforming sinners. God can do miracles in the life of anyone who believes in Him. I am also excited to share my personal testimony because this is the best thing that ever happened in my life. It's amazing to have a personal relationship with Jesus, in whom alone I put my faith, the only One who died for my sins and saved me. Christ is the most important person in my life because the day I committed my life to Him, He gave me peace, hope, assurance, and direction. He guides me daily in every step of life.