



The MENORAH

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SPECIAL FOCIM ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

33RD

Founding Anniversary

ANOINTING TO BUILD

GENESIS | 1 KINGS | NEHEMIAH

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EDITORIAL

by Rosalie C. Faune

How many times have we complained about the traffic in EDSA? How many times have we experienced flood during rainy season? How many times have we heard of terrible news about violation of human rights of suspected drug pushers? We have all seen the chaos in our country and the global crises time and time again and probably have thought that someone should do something about them. If you have, then you'll probably understand the heart of Nehemiah in the process of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

The first chapter of the Book of Nehemiah introduces him as a resident of Susa, the capital of the Persian Empire. From distant Persia, Nehemiah heard that its walls lay in rubble, even decades after the Jews returned home. What could Nehemiah do? Nehemiah occupied a very strategic position. He was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of the Medo-Persian Empire. As such, Nehemiah was pleased by God to seek all the resources to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He had a burden for Jerusalem and acted on such burden. By Nehemiah's leadership, Jerusalem rose again from ruins. The walls were rebuilt in 52 days.

When God calls you, He will place you in a position where you loved. What God requires from His servants is a humble heart and courage to do His work. When Nehemiah heard

that the walls of Jerusalem were still broken down more than a half-century after the completion of the rebuilding of the temple, he "sat down and wept," fasting and praying before God (Neh. 1:4).

Rebuilding comes in different forms. Sometimes we need rebuilding as is our relationships. It could also be moments in our lives when we feel lost, stuck, in dire need of a fresh start, or wanting to rebuild our lives. You might be in a situation where you have to rebuild your career. Maybe you need to rebuild your relationship, where trust has been destroyed by your loved ones, or you need to rebuild after a financial crisis. No matter what your current situation might be, through the process of rebuilding, you can learn to trust God in a deeper way while growing stronger in your steadfast faith. Rebuilding doesn't mean that we have failed in life; it's actually an act of courage to admit that something is not working and we need to try again.

Rebuilding isn't easy, nor for the faint of heart. But one thing is sure, it requires courage. We need the courage to admit that what we have is beyond repair, and starting over is our only choice. Rebuilding takes courage and requires willingness to admit the mistakes of our past, assess the new direction we are taking, and hold ourselves accountable

for the course of action we have planned for to make a difference, the way he did to Nehemiah. In Jeremiah 1:10 God says "See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."

FOCIM, it is time for us to do the same thing. It is time to rebuild...one action at a time, one day at a time, one life at a time, one relationship at a time. It is time for us to rebuild our personal relationship with our Father. It's time for us to rebuild broken relationships in our homes for it should be our first ministry. It's time to rebuild altars in our government, so that we can recognize that the source of our past success and our future hope totally rests in Jesus Christ. And we must rebuild the altar in the church. If the home is going to get right and the government is going to improve, then the House of God has got to be the church of the redeemed who are not afraid to stand up for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whatever it takes to get your life on track with Almighty God, even when it means to rebuild everything you have worked hard for... do it! Remember His promise in Jeremiah 29:11. He has a better plan in store for you so let go and let God. You were created in His image and destined for greatness, but... are you willing to rebuild to get there?



MOVING UP! FOCIM HOLDS BACCALAUREATE SERVICE 2019

By Woodrow Wilson C. Young



Last June 2, FOCIM held its annual Baccalaureate program to honor its graduates, those who have received awards, and those who have passed licensure examinations. Here is the list of FOCIM's outstanding young achievers for this year:

I. AWARDS

DELOS SANTOS, ZYLA B.

(Block 41 Day Care Center)

- Most Obedient
- Best in Reading
- Loyalty Awardee

BULASO, LUKE JEREMIAH B.

(Grade 1; Balara Elementary School)

- Top 6

MARCELO, EMMANUEL JOHNAST C.

(Grade 1; Rosewood Montessori International School)

- Patient Advocate Award

NERY, SAMANTHA BRIANA A.

(Grade 1; St. Joseph Academy)

- 3rd Highest Honor for the Whole Grade 1
- Best in Filipino
- Best in Math
- Best in Computer
- Best in Science

JOMOC, DANIEL B.

(Grade 4; San Miguel Elementary School)

- Top 4

BULASO, GABRIEL B.

(Grade 5; Balara Elementary School)

- Top 4

DELOS SANTOS, ZACKARIE B.

(Grade 5; St. Anthony of Makati Montessori Inc.)

- Most Behaved Award

SABADO, JOHN LORENZE M.

(2nd yr. HS; International Baptist College)

- Most Improved Award

CERVEZA, KESIAH COLLEN V.

(1st yr.; Rizal Technological University)

- Dean's Lister -1st and 2nd Semester

GUINIGUNDO, DANIEL ALBERTO G.

(2nd yr.; Asian Theological Seminary)

- Dean's Lister

II. GRADUATES

CAPALONGAN, FRANCO G.

(Grade 12; La Salle-Greenhills)

CUELLO, RAPHAEL LUKE G.

(Grade 12; La Salle-Greenhills)

GAMBOA, MARK CHRISTIAN M.

(Grade 12; Arellano University-Plaridel Campus)

ORETA, ARNOLD STO. DOMINGO

(Bachelor of Science in Computer Technology; Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology)



EXPLORING GOD'S WORD: VBS 2019

By Woodrow Wilson C. Young



The FOCIM Children's Sunday School Ministry held this year's Vacation Bible School last May 25 and June 1. The May 25 VBS event took place in FOCIM's outreach in Zuzuarregui, Quezon City, while the succeeding June 1 VBS was held in Mandaluyong. To ensure a more suitable learning environment, participants were grouped into three classes: Beginners (4 to 7 years old), Intermediate (8 to 10 years old), and Advanced (11 to 14 years old). The theme for this year's Vacation Bible School was "Adventure Kids: Exploring God's Word", which focused on the different journeys experienced by God's people in following His Word.

In line with the theme, the attending children were introduced to powerful stories from the Bible, namely the "Crossing of the Red Sea" (from Exodus 14), "The 12 Spies" (from Numbers 13), and "Crossing the Jordan River" (from Joshua 3).

The kids also participated in fun and interactive games that allowed them to experience the value of the lessons being taught. Afterwards, they engaged in artwork activities which encouraged them to bring out their creative talents. Through God's favor, the two VBS sessions were an overwhelming success as the number of kids reached close to 80. Each of the students received a Certificate of Participation during the VBS Recognition Day that took place the next day after the Sunday Praise and Worship Service. In addition, outstanding students were acknowledged and given the following awards:



Beginners Class:

1. **Zyla Delos Santos**
Most Behaved Award
2. **Jarel Lood** Best in Artwork Award
3. **Luke Jeremiah Bolaso**
Outstanding Award
4. **Steffi Ayesha Santillan**
Most Participative Award
5. **Veronica Santillan**
Most Friendly Award

Intermediate Class:

1. **Daniel Jomoc**
Best in Power Verse Award
2. **Reech Lebron Divinagracia**
Outstanding Award
3. **Zackarie Delos Santos**
Best in Artwork Award

Advanced Class:

1. **Angelo Santos** Outstanding Award
2. **Jhanice Lara** Best in Artwork Award
3. **Andrew Conise**
Most Participative Award
4. **Marie Apllo**
Best in Power Verse Award
5. **Gabriel Bulaso**
Most Behaved Award

The VBS was truly a significant event as it ended the kids' Summer season on a fulfilling note. The Sunday School children experienced God's journey through fun-filled activities and their learnings will carry on as they start a new school year. All Sunday school students, and even the teachers, now look forward to an even bigger VBS event for next year.



Inspirational message by Sis. Danika Bello



A testimony from
Sis. Hannah
Cabasag



Sis. Emma Belle
Cerveza - first
speaker



Sis. Michelle
Sarmiento - second
speaker



Bro. Daniel
Guinigundo - third
and final speaker

KEEPING UP WITH GOD'S PACE: THE GEN-C HOLDS SUCCESSFUL THIRD VERTICAL YOUTH SERVICE

By Aerzah Denise V. Cerveza

The Generation for Christ Youth Ministry held its third installment of the Vertical Youth Series last August 10. The said installment entitled "The Ascent: Keeping the Pace" had Sis. Jamesha De Guzman and Sis. Elipse Cielo as emcees.

The event started off with an inspirational message delivered by Sis. Danika Bello, one of the members of Gen C's Executive Committee. Sis. Danika gave a quick recap of the two previous Vertical events - the first one entitled "A Hard Trail" last March and the second entitled "Excess Baggage" last June. She also explained that to keep the pace, our focus should be on God. This was followed by a testimony from Sis. Hannah Cabasag, a member of FOCIM QC Worship team. Sis. Hannah talked about her trials and difficult circumstances she had to go through, and how she never lost hope by keeping her faith in God. Her greatest trial led her to surrender everything to the Lord as she learned to run life's race at God's pace. It was Jesus Christ who led her to the finish line. After Sis. Hannah's testimony, the FOCIM QC Dance Ministry gave a special number giving glory and praise to the Lord. Sis. Emma Belle Cerveza was the first speaker during the main message portion. In her message, Sis. Emma Belle emphasized that the right pace is important. To achieve the right pace, we must trust in God's timing. Our pace may not always be consistent with Jesus' pace.

God may slow us when we want to speed up, and He may move us when we want to stay put. God's plan is made perfect in His time. The next speaker was Sis. Michelle Sarmiento, who stressed the importance of avoiding shortcuts. Jesus, the ultimate role model for the youth, took no shortcuts in fulfilling His mission. We must also take our time and avoid shortcuts in carrying God's plan for us. The third and final speaker was Bro. Daniel Guinigundo, one of Gen-C's Pillar heads. In his message, Bro. Daniel shared a few details regarding the prevalent anxiety among the youth and stressed the importance of rest. In order to achieve rest, we must come to Jesus and get to know Him as "His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11:30)". Further, we must give up control to God as only He can give us rest in a situation, where we do not need anything and where we do not need to control everything.

As the program ended, Sis. Jamesha De Guzman gave the closing remarks thanking all those who made the event successful. As another victorious Vertical event has concluded, we now look forward to the fourth and final installment of this year's "Vertical" series.



EXPANDING THE TENT

FOCIM PREPARES FOR NEW SANCTUARY

By Woodrow Wilson C. Young

In line with the mandate of the Church to relocate, build and expand, the Fullness of Christ International Ministries purchased a lot for the new sanctuary. The said 647 square meter lot is located on Mayon Street cor. Boni Avenue, a few blocks away from the MRT Boni Avenue Station on Edsa. Although all necessary documents are still being completed by the lot owner prior to full payment, the church has already planned its ground breaking ceremony on September 7, 2019. The highlight of the church ground breaking ceremony is the embedment of a time capsule containing FOCIM's memorabilia and paraphernalia in commemoration of the Church's milestone up to this day and beyond signifying the Lord's goodness and faithfulness.

Now that the church has already secured enough funds for the lot, the church is now focusing its efforts to raise funds for the building of the sanctuary. In an effort to encourage each member to contribute, since April of last year, the church has established a pledge board. The pledge board contains five hundred boxes, each box worth one hundred thousand pesos. Each member is

encouraged to freely choose how many boxes he or she wants to pledge for the building sanctuary. He or she decides what amount to give every Sunday until the desired pledge is completed. As of August 2019, 129 out of 500 boxes in the pledge board are already with pledges amounting to roughly Seven Million Seven Hundred Thousand Pesos. Furthermore, 59 out of the said 129 boxes had its pledges fulfilled.

Other alternative ways to raise funds for building of the sanctuary are also being explored by FOCIM's Ministry Team. One is to have the existing apartments in the lot rented out prior to the construction of the new sanctuary. The lot currently contains eight two (2) storey apartments with a total floor area of 60 to 75 square meters each. Improvements and minor renovation are required for these apartments to be rentable again as some of its interiors have already deteriorated when they were vacated by their previous tenants. Each apartment can be rented out at around P 25,000.00 to P 35,000.00 a month, generating around P 300,000.00 to P420,000.00 a year.

The church is also interested in venturing out on other business in order to raise enough funds for the building of the sanctuary. All in all, the church's building fund is estimated to be around Fifty Million pesos (P50,000,000.00) as of August 2019.

YOUNG AT 65:

FOCIM's Senior Pastor Diwa C. Guinigundo Retires From the BSP

By Dan Abraham G. Guinigundo



For most people, retirement is one of the biggest milestones in their careers. It marks both an end and a beginning; an end to years of deadlines, late hours, and morning routines, and a beginning to a new and unfamiliar stage in life. FOCIM's Senior Pastor and former Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Deputy Governor, Diwa C. Guinigundo, recently retired after 41 years of service at the BSP. Hailed as one of the country's top economists, Pastor Diwa has been synonymous with monetary stability and fiscal policy in the Philippines. He has also been recognized around the world as an authority in central banking.

In this issue, The Menorah gets up close and personal with Pastor Diwa regarding his retirement.

Can you tell us briefly your career timeline? How many years did you serve in the BSP?

DCG: I spent nearly two years with NMYC-Department of Labor doing manpower planning and occupational forecasting. I enjoyed it very much but I thought it was rather narrow in scope and concern. All in, I spent 41 years and 5 months doing economic research and statistics, international operations and relations, monetary and treasury operations, loans and credit, asset management, currency management and regional monetary affairs. But in between those long years, I spent two years in London for my MSc in Economics, two years on secondment as head of research at the SEACEN Center in Kuala Lumpur and another two years on secondment as alternate executive director at the IMF in Washington DC.

How different was your life then? How did your routine look like when you first started? How would you compare that to your routine when you retired?

DCG: Before I started with BSP, life was very simple with very little demand on time and commitment. Manpower planning was rather a protracted activity. At the BSP, my time and life were rather very much engaged. Doing monetary policy and inflation management requires constant monitoring of the economy and the markets and the news. Short vacations were indeed short but not actually vacations because of the constant communication we had to sustain with other colleagues and media partners. Paper work was heavy I had to manage my time for my family and the church by sleeping late and waking up early. I caught up during weekends and the commute between the house and the office.



Did you lose contact with colleagues and friends along the way? How did that make you feel?

DCG: Unfortunately yes, with some of them. I had limited engagements with both my college and high school friends. I had very little time for the fraternity. But I made it a point to make time for the family and the church. I am the father of the family and shepherd of the Church.



What was the hardest decision that you had to make?

DCG: Any decision concerning the family and the church had been and will always be the hardest decision. That would require a season of prayer and searching for God's revelation.



Can you tell us about a time when you failed at something or fell short on a task, perhaps when you were still starting at the BSP? How did you handle it? What did that experience teach you?

DCG: My style of writing is quite engaged and a little biased to longer sentences. I tend to cover all grounds. My supervisor at the research department literally butchered my economic report I didn't recognize it at all. Since then I have avoided long, complicated sentences. They are a no no!

What was your favorite moment during your years in service? How did that moment change you?



DCG: My trips abroad. They gave me time to consolidate. Opportunities were there to look back and assess my performance and my life. I had more time to meditate on the word of God, prepare the list of themes and topics for the weekly preaching and do my own preaching. Those trips afforded me to regain my bearing and mindset.



What was the best advice that you heard from a mentor? From a peer?

DCG: There is no substitute to smart and hard work. Commitment and passion are the enabling elements. One of my subordinates reminded me that every decision I make has implications on real people. That means care and circumspection are crucial.

What do you miss most about your working life? What do you miss least?

DCG: I miss the regularity of my activities, the routine. I miss my staff who make my life so much easier. Someone to call for me, someone to get anything I need like research paper, statistics, someone to prepare my snacks, someone to drive me to work and back. I miss the opportunity to contribute to public welfare. I miss my speaking engagements and meetings with public sector colleagues, credit rating agencies and multilateral institutions.

I don't miss the long hours.

Tell us about your life nowadays. What did you do the on the first day of your retirement? What are you plans moving forward?

DCG: I woke up late. I went to the gym with Sis Apple. I plan to strengthen our leadership and discipleship programs in FOCIM. I also plan to continue with the Touching Heaven Changing Earth Movement. I intend to sustain my Thursday columns in the Manila Bulletin. I am preparing to serve in the Board of one of the departments of the Singapore Management University. With other former senior officials in the ASEAN, I am preparing to write a book on regional financial integration. And of course, look more closely at my investment portfolio including real estate.

If you could give your younger self some advice, what would you say?

DCG: Take more time to smell the roses. Keep yourself healthier.

UP CLOSE: BRO. CEZAR F. ARCEO

By Daniel Alberto G. Guinigundo



The Menorah had a chance to sit down and chat with our 33rd Anniversary Speaker. Get to know him closely through some of the questions we had for him!

“

CAN YOU GIVE US A BRIEF STORY OF HOW YOU ACCEPTED JESUS CHRIST?

During my field assignment as a BSP Examiner in Naga City, a regular housewife invited me to a Bible Study where I accepted the Lord. March 7, 1985.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT ROLE IN THE CHURCH AND/OR MARKETPLACE? HOW HAS THAT CHANGE SINCE YOU RETIRED FROM PUBLIC SERVICE?

In spite of retiring from public service, I continuously serve as the Head of the Jesus Loves You Celebration Church Radio Ministry and preach every Friday at 9:00 PM over DWBL with program entitled Life's Turning Point. I am also a member of Fire and Glory Prophetic team where we conduct conferences in various churches internationally.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE GREATEST CHALLENGE THAT YOU HAVE OVERCOME THUS FAR? WHAT HAS BEEN THE ROLE OF GOD AND YOUR FAMILY DURING SUCH TIME?

The greatest challenge I am facing now are the physical concerns of my wife. We regularly go to the hospital for treatment and consultation with the doctors.

HOW HAVE YOU CONTINUED ON IN YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST DESPITE THE STRUGGLE?

We have no other option, In Him we live and move and have our being. It is Christ or Never.

HOW HAVE YOU DEVELOPED YOUR LOVE FOR THE PHILIPPINES? HOW CAN WE AS CHRISTIANS ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO CULTIVATE THIS LOVE AS WELL?

It started in a heavenly visitation where I have seen a vision and revelation that God is cooking something for the nation.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE VERSE?

Romans 8:28

HOW HAS GOD'S ANOINTING BEEN EVIDENT IN YOUR LIFE?

Thru praying, preaching and prophesying.

ANY HIDDEN TALENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

House work!



FIRST WORD THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THESE WORDS?

FE ARCEO?

Partner

THE PHILIPPINES?

Prophetic Destiny

BRO DIWA GUINIGUNDO?

Revelation

THE CHURCH?

Take dominion

TOUCHING HEAVEN CHANGING EARTH MOVEMENT?

Blessing the Body of Christ and
Nation Transformation

JOYCE ARCEO?

Blessed daughter

PRESIDENT DUTERTE?

Prayer

CORRUPTION?

Fight

THIS OR THAT? CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO:

CHEESECAKE OR PUTO BUMBONG?

Puto bumbong

DANCING OR SINGING?

None of the above

MORNING OR EVENING?

Morning

BARONG OR SUIT?

Barong

PREACHING THE WORD OR FIXING BALANCE SHEETS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS?

Preaching the Word

RICE OR FRIES?

Fries

STAY AT HOME OR SPEND THE NIGHT OUT?

Stay at home

SPIRITUAL ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR LOCAL POLICEMEN

By Elso C. Cabangon



Training for Life/Value Coaches at PNPHQ, Camp Crame

If there is anyone in government whose ubiquitous presence intrudes our daily lives, it is the policeman on the beat. Whether untangling traffic mess, running after criminal suspects, or helping resolve domestic/family issues in the community, the policeman is the ever present symbol of legal authority on the ground. Whatever action or utterance he makes in addressing an issue on the street level instantly becomes the law to be followed.

The policeman is not always an impartial arbiter. Like any human being, he is subject to weaknesses that color his judgment and transform him into a lawbreaker himself. Tales of immorality, bribe inducing and taking or worse, involvement in organized

crime itself, abound across the entire force.

The good news is that the hierarchy of the Philippines National Police (PNP) itself recognizes this reality and has launched programs to address the problem decisively. During the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos, a moral regeneration program in the police ranks was launched.

More recently, the PNP leadership has updated this initiative, recognizing that a spiritual component must be integrated in the program. The PNP website announced it formally in early July this year, as follows: "The program dubbed as the Focused Reformation/Reorientation and Moral Enhancement for Police Officers in Line with Internal

Cleansing Efforts (FORM POLICE) is a month-long training that aims to address the increasing number of wayward policemen.

"The training is part of the revitalized three-pronged Internal Cleansing Program of the PNP under the Restorative approach wherein, the training focuses on changing the attitudes and perceptions of the erring policemen and instill in them professionalism and integrity to bring them back to their oath of service, honor, and justice."

The training referred to the intensive briefing of PNP Squad Leaders drawn from the police ranks, together with "Life Coaches" nominated by the different Christian, Muslim and Catholic denominations.



PNP Squadding at Precint 2, Brgy Hulo every Wednesday.

Earlier than July this year, the Mandaluyong Christian Churches Association (MCCA) already got involved in the organization of the PNP Squad System. Through MCCA, the Fullness of Christ International Ministries(FOCIM) joined the efforts and nominated Brothers Robert Lee Guerrero, Angel Dionisio and Elso Cabangon to the pool of Life Coaches assigned to the different police community precincts in Mandaluyong.

The PNP came out with a comprehensive Squadding Concept Manual that serves as a guide to both Squad Leaders and Life Coaches in conducting a weekly two-hour session in different precincts.

Realizing that any effort to reform the police ranks must have spiritual component to help instill discipline and prevent misbehavior and misconduct in the ranks, the manual focused on the objective of having “God-Centered, Service Oriented and Family-Based PNP Personnel”. It emphasized reliance on God’s purpose and will expressed in Psalms 127:1. “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain”.

While doctrinal issues are avoided at squadding sessions, the discussion of moral and spiritual values and sharing of everyday experiences ultimately and inevitably lead to practical Bible-based discipleship. Currently, FOCIM Life Coaches are engaged in squadding three times a week, covering Mandaluyong precincts 2 and 5.



PNP Squadding at Precint 5, Brgy Mauway every Thursday and Saturday.

BINGSU IN THE USA

By Dan Abraham G. Guinigundo

PASTORS BING AND SOPHIE GUERRERO, FONDLY CALLED “BINGSU” BY FOCIM, ARE ONE OF THE MOST BELOVED COUPLES IN THE CHURCH. RECENTLY, THEY CELEBRATED THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY AND IT LOOKS LIKE THEY HAVE PLENTY MORE YEARS OF TOGETHERNESS LEFT IN THEIR TANK. TO FURTHER MARK THEIR MILESTONE, BINGSU AND THEIR ENTIRE FAMILY TOOK A VACATION IN THE UNITED STATES. THE MENORAH INTERVIEWS THEIR DAUGHTER, ARLYNN, TO GET A GLIMPSE OF THIS MOMENTOUS OCCASION.

What was the reason behind the trip?

The Bingsu in US trip was an answered prayer from my parents who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this year. My Mom had been wanting to have a reunion with all her children and grandchildren in the USA, where my Kuya and his family are based.

How different was this trip compared to your other travels with the family?

1. First (almost) complete international trip (sans Myles who had to stay back due to work). Bingsu also visited South Korea two years ago, but without Kuya's family.
2. Celebrated a lot of occasions in the duration of the trip: parents' golden wedding and birthdays of relatives (Luke, Steven, Auntie Bingbing).
3. Hon's and Keith's first long-haul flight.
4. Reunion with our Maniquis family; Keith and Bodge got to see most of them for the first time.
5. Solid all-boy cousins bonding (mga apo ni Manong Bing).
6. Action-packed, not a single dull day.
First time to experience having a flight getting cancelled.



We understand that coordinating everyone's schedules can be difficult - how was that like?

We were a total of 14 persons and having to squeeze everyone's plans was indeed a great challenge. It helped that months ahead, we already prepared a calendar to plot out the cities we would like to go to and activities we wanted to do. We also worked around the request of some family members. Example, when I had a Handstand training in Sta Monica, we also scheduled on that day a visit to the Google office in the same area to maximize the trip. The rest of the family also took a stroll down the beach while kids went biking. Then they all had yummy umami burger for lunch while waiting for me. One time, my nephew had to go to a far place to attend a wedding. When we learned that there was a major shopping area near the wedding venue, we all decided to go. Not a time wasted!

While this all sounded pretty planned out, there were still plenty of unexpected turns. The greater challenges were felt during shopping days. There were moments when some of us would get so lost – literally and figuratively – while going around to shop. Some of us couldn't find our way around and lost track of time. As soon as we arrived at any shopping area – big or small – we first decided on a time and place we were to converge again. Most places are just huge so we got individual maps of the entire area. Some did not bother to keep them, so they ended up getting lost. The others were just so absorbed in shopping, they would miss the meeting time and arrive very, very, very late. It did not help that not all of us had internet access. No way to contact each other. So all we could do was wait and wait and wait.

Any first-timers in the US?
How did they find it?
Hon's and Keith's first time in the US, and boy, did they really enjoy!

What was your typical day like?

Most of the time we were travelling from one city to another. But wherever we went, some of us would be awake very early to prepare breakfast for everyone. After eating, we would get ready to leave and seize the day. So it's either shopping, sight-seeing, eating, and more shopping. We would be home very late, ready to go to bed. But then there were more chores needed to be done like clean the house, do the laundry, and the list goes on.

#LifeinAmerica

I also looked forward to visiting other churches. I love experiencing worshipping with them. We got to visit about three different worship centers in our month-long trip.



What was your favorite part of the entire trip?

My favorite part would be those spent in family gatherings like our cousin bondings where everyone also got to meet everybody's kids. Since we don't get to see each other often, I cherished each moment we were together. It was such a heartwarming sight to see our children connect very easily despite the distance and age.



Was there a place that you felt particularly attached to?

I instantly fell in love with San Francisco more specifically with the houses along the Marina Boulevard. The houses there were small BUT had a breathtaking view of the bay. I was never a fan of big houses so the ones along that boulevard pierced through my heart, even upon knowing how much they cost. I was told that each was worth a whopping MINIMUM amount of \$5M (almost 300 million pesos). Hey, dreaming is free anyway.

Can you tell us a story about how you felt God's favor during your vacation?

In Him, we live and move and have our being. 'The Bingsu in US Trip' was all because of God. He made all things happen and provided us with everything we would need – US visa, finances for airfare and other expenses, time to take a leave from work including other tasks in Manila, and the strength to be able to survive the Amazing Race schedule.

He was there in the peaceful moments and also in the wackiest of days (when I accidentally hurt my ankle, when we had left our passports in our Las Vegas hotels after checking-out, when our flight was cancelled at the very last minute, to name a few).

This trip was indeed a testament of God's faithfulness to our family. Our hearts are full.

Any new learnings/insights from your trip?

1. Long-haul travel for one month made me discover new things about Hon (Bro. Bodge) even after 23 years of being married. Another topic altogether.
2. Avoid going to the US during their summer period. Best to do so in cooler periods.
3. Our Kuya is the best! He spoiled us and said yes to all our requests. Fourteen persons means 14 different 'wants,' and Kuya out of his generous and loving heart, tried his best to grant them all. Together with his family, he was all out as our host. They drove us to places we wanted to go and fed us the food we wanted to try.
4. So proud how my nephew, Tim, has become. Because he has already grown and now a working man, he paid for many of our expenses (hotel accommodations, food, gasoline, etc). I remember him as a very active young boy when we would babysit him.
5. Making memories with family is priceless.

Any plans on going back?

God willing, we definitely would love to go back.

Book Review

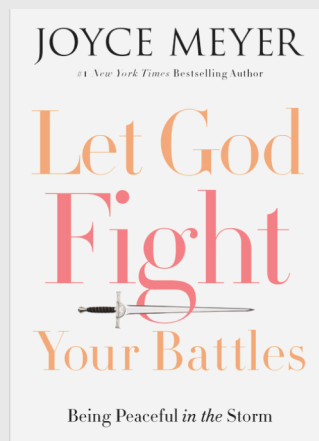
Let God Fight Your Battles by Joyce Meyer

By Dan Abraham C. Guinigundo

"Three things Jehoshaphat did were very important. First, he acknowledged he had no might to stand against his enemies. Second, he admitted he did not know what to do. And third, he said his eyes were on God. By saying these three things, Jehoshaphat put himself in position for a miracle." (Joyce Meyer)

Challenges and Christianity have always gone together. Christians understand that a blessed and abundant life does not exempt one from facing battles in life: financial, spiritual, physical, and any and all worries experienced by our neighbors. Challenges can sometimes feel like an unexpected visitor or a familiar friend, but for Christians, they will always be an opportunity for God's handiwork. However, letting God work is not always easy. Human emotions and worldly logic can sometimes frustrate God's plan; humans tend to look at problems through their limited understanding and take matters into their own hands.

In her book "Let God Fight Your Battles: Being Peaceful in the Storm," New York Times Bestselling Author Joyce Meyer tackles this issue head-on. What do we do when we are faced with battles that seem insurmountable? How do we stay still and "let God be God" when the world is telling us to "work hard" and "achieve your goals?"



Far from being a "self-help" book, Meyer encourages her readers to do the exact opposite in her book. Meyer combines practical and specific advice with Biblical wisdom to address all circumstances that a Christian might be facing. Throughout the book, Meyer encourages her readers to slowly unlearn relying on their own efforts and start learning to rely on God's unlimited power. Thus, even in the middle of the storm, once complete faith and confidence on an all-powerful God is achieved, the size of the storm becomes irrelevant. Readers from all walks of faith and life will surely appreciate this book.

Available in all leading bookstores nationwide.



Movie Review:

By Dan Abraham G. Guinigundo

The Christian drama genre finally goes mainstream with *Breakthrough*, a major motion picture released worldwide in early 2019. Produced by 20th Century Fox and distributed by Walt Disney Studios, the movie features Hollywood actors such as Topher Grace (*Interstellar*, *Spiderman*, *That '70s Show*), Chrissy Metz (*Kung Fu Panda: The Paws of Destiny*, *This is Us*), Mike Colter (*Luke Cage*), and Sam Trammell (*The Fault in Our Stars*).

BREAKTHROUGH

(VERSION FRANÇAISE INCLUSE)



Based on a true story, the movie centers on Joyce (Metz) and her adopted son, John (Marcel Ruiz), a 14-year old Guatemalan boy who was then struggling with his academics. One fateful winter day, John and a few of his friends headed out to the frozen Missouri lake, where John would suddenly fall through the ice. Although he would eventually be rescued, John had no pulse and no breath when he was rushed to the hospital; his exposure to the ice-cold water for 15 minutes proved near fatal. Upon closer examination, the doctors informed Joyce that John, in the unlikely event that he would wake up from his coma, would still spend the rest of his life as a vegetable. This tragic news would then drive Joyce to a frenzy, sending her into a difficult struggle between despair and her Christian faith.

Soon, Joyce would draw closer to God and rely on her faith to help her through the ordeal. She would meet people from her local church, who all prayed with her despite the impossible odds that medical science had stacked against John. *Breakthrough* is a movie that delivers hard on the emotions. Metz, who is known to be an excellent actress, plays the role of an aggrieved mother powerfully. The audience will be delighted to see her journey and how a mother's love and faith can bring a dead person back to life.

The film was executively produced by NBA Superstar Stephen Curry.

Breakthrough is rated 64% by [rottentomatoes.com](https://www.rottentomatoes.com).

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(Ptr. April Eve G. Guinigundo)

Greetings

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Recognition & Prayer
(Rev. Diwa C. Guinigundo, D D, Ministry Team)

Casting of Vision
(Rev. Guinigundo)

Closing Prayer
(Rev. Guinigundo)

Victory Song
(Worship Team)



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