

# Ugnayan

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## CFC and the New Politics



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# EDITORIAL

**Ugnayan** is a rich Filipino word that stands for fellowship, unity of heart and mind, relationship and friendship; it means bridging the gap, communication, linkages and understanding. It is also an official publication of Couples for Christ and its Ministries, seeking to follow Jesus Christ's instruction to bring God's message of salvation to all.

**E**lections are almost upon us. Those of us who marched to oust an immoral and corrupt government are anxious and hopeful that the benefits we gained by marching as one will be affirmed and strengthened by the results of these elections. Can we even contemplate a return to the politics of old? Can we accept politicians who will lead us back to the dark days of patronage and double dealing?

This issue focuses on **“new politics”** - what it means, how we as a people can practice it, how the 13-0 Movement aims to foster the gains of EDSA II and what we can expect from the politicians the movement supports.

Any electoral exercise, but particularly the coming elections in the light of recent events, is simply a decision based on informed choices. We pray that all of us may come to the election booth informed and, most of all, discerning of what God wills for us as a country.

**Let us all VOTE AS GOD WILLS!**



These are indeed exciting and challenging times. And once again we are plunging into uncharted waters.

First there was our Erap

# From the DIRECTOR



**Resign Campaign.** CFC was privileged to be at the forefront of this campaign, and being first at EDSA, CFC helped trigger EDSA II. This culminated with the ousting of President Estrada. Now we are at it again! CFC has initiated the 13-0 Movement, and it has started to snowball.

Both have to do with the fight for good governance, for stability and progress for the country, for moral values in and out of government. Both have to do with ousting and preventing the return to power of a corrupt and immoral regime. Both have to do with the very life and mission the Lord has given us.

So now we are into politics. Is that good? Is that proper for a spiritual community such as CFC? Of course the answer is an unequivocal yes! Our theme for the millennium is bringing glad tidings to the poor. Our work for the millennium is the work for total human liberation. This means we are concerned about both the spiritual and social dimensions of the gospel (if there is such a division). This means we are not just looking to help bring souls to heaven, but we are working for people to experience the fullness of God's life in the here and now. This means we are concerned about all the dimensions in the life of a people—social, cultural, spiritual, economic, political, environmental.

But should we be into *partisan* politics? Again yes, if the needs of the times dictate it. Politics has become a dirty word, and partisan politics has come to have an even dirtier meaning. As it is, politics simply refers to the life of a people, centered on governance. It is how politics is carried out that makes it dirty. A politics of guns, goons and gold would certainly be abominable. In the same way, to be partisan is to be strongly loyal to a cause or to a person. If by being partisan in politics it means we are blindly loyal, even to a morally corrupt cause or person, then that is deplorable. But if what we are loyal to, after studying the issues and discerning the mind of God, is a cause or person who is right and good and just, then that is good politics and commendable partisanship.

In fact, for us as CFC, being part of the body of Christ, our cause is not a political platform but the very cause of Christ himself, that is, to establish the reign of God on earth. And we are not loyal to any person, certainly not to the 13 candidates of the People Power Coalition, but to Christ himself. We are doing this because this is the mission that Jesus himself has assigned to his people, including CFC. Therefore, our involvement in so-called “partisan politics” is nothing else but discipleship!

**The Philippines continues to be in crisis—political, economic, environmental.** But there is a new wind blowing. There is a new opportunity. Might this be a part of the new springtime of Christian life prophesied by the pope, to be ushered in by the millennium? Can politics in this country be redeemed? Are we genuinely seeing the beginnings of what people are calling new politics?

Perhaps. But whatever is emerging, God’s call to us is simply to be faithful to the mission He has given us, launched during the Great Jubilee Year 2000, proclaiming liberation to all. Total human liberation. A profound experience of the reign of God in our midst.

**Let us continue to move on.** What happens in the future is unknown, but we are confident in whose hands the future is held. Let us do our part, and God will do the rest.

13-0 Movement. A proper response to the urgency of the times. A prime example of the new politics emerging in the Philippines. A mighty and forceful wave in the spiritual warfare being waged in this country.

**This fight is for the future of this nation.  
This fight is for the future of our children.  
This fight is for the future of the world.**

**This fight is for the glory of God.**



**For good governance :** PPC Candidates took their oath to institute the program of good governance and to serve the people once elected in office



**Fighting Spirit:** With clenched fists President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo sings Bayan Ko together with (from left) Bobby Tañada, Gerry Padilla and Liway Chato



**The children are our future.** Teach them well and let them lead the way.

# Politics in the Life and Mission of CFC

**G**od has dealt with us in CFC one stage at a time. For 12 years from 1981, CFC was only about couples (husband and wife). Only in 1993 were ministries established for the rest of the family. God was being deliberate. God's intent

is to renew the face of the earth. God had this end in mind, and so worked at the beginning. God renewed the couple, then their family, then the community (group of families), then the nation, then the world.

But the components of the above process were incomplete. The above involved the spiritual dimension of the gospel, the spiritual renewal of individuals. It was concerned about getting souls into heaven in the hereafter. But there was another dimension to the gospel, the social. This was concerned not only about spiritual liberation but also physical liberation. It was concerned about experiencing the reign of God in the here and now.

This social dimension of the good news of Jesus has to do with total human liberation. This includes not just the spiritual, but the cultural, economic, environmental and

political. The prime objective of government is to serve the people according to God's will.

Good governance will result in justice and peace in the land. With justice and peace, a nation will be a light to the world.

At the start of this third millennium, after 20 years of formation, our life and mission is already clearly spelled out. The **vision** statement of CFC is "Families in the Holy Spirit Renewing the Face of the Earth." God works with the basic units of society in order to be instruments of His Spirit in renewing the face of the earth. Our **mission** statement

Good governance will result in justice and peace in the land.

political.

The political dimension has to do with such things as campaigning and voting for the right candidates, safeguarding the electoral processes, running for public office, being vigilant about good governance, exposing corruption, engaging in legislative advocacy, evangelizing government officials, etc. The basic objective is good governance, in accordance with God's will. Since "there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God" (Rom 13:1), officials have to govern according to God's values. Since government "is a servant of God for (the people's) good" (Rom 13:4),

is "Bringing Glad Tidings to the Poor." We are to build the Church of the Poor. Our **strategy** is the work of renewal, transformation and liberation in the social, political, cultural, economic and environmental realms. This is the work for total human liberation.

Our life and mission, as it stands now, has to do with the proclamation of the full gospel. It has to do with true discipleship, with living as a Christian. It has to do with the universal call to holiness.





# The Impossible Dream

## The CFC campaign for 13-0 is an impossible dream.

The current survey (end March) puts the score at 8-5, in favor of the People's Power Coalition ticket. The 5 opposition candidates in the winning circle are well financed and still influential. Some of them are expected to stop at nothing to ensure victory, including resorting to *dagdag bawas*. But what makes 13-0 truly impossible are two realities: Noli de Castro of the opposition is No. 1 (so how do you topple him?), while Liway Chato of PPC is at the tail-end (how do you bring her into the winning circle?).

13-0 is impossible! Or is it? We need to remind ourselves that the fight we are now involved in is not merely political, but spiritual. The resources we count on are not merely human, but divine. The 13-0 campaign is not merely our work, but God's.

EDSA I was a miracle. EDSA II was a miracle. God is in the business of miracles. And we know that nothing is impossible with God! We have to realize that ***a miracle is not a miracle unless it is contrary to human wisdom and expectation!***

New politics has to be based on the wisdom of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. With God many things go topsy-turvy. The first is last and the last is first. The greatest is the least and the least is the greatest. 13-0 is foolish? Admittedly, but "the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom" (1 Cor 1:25). In fact, it is important that ***we leave something for God to do!*** And God delights in confounding the worldly wise.

While God can work miracles, we also do not just let God do all the work. We need to do our part. Our part is the 13-0 movement. It is then up to God to decide the fruit.

God can always decide to work a miracle, but then again He might not. At times having it too easy for us is not good for us. Look at EDSA I. There was no building of a solid foundation, and so after the euphoria, we were back to the same undesirable situation in our country. At times it will be necessary for us to continue to struggle and to plod along. Anyway, we in CFC are not dependent for our well-being on a 13-0 outcome. As long as we are faithful, we are already winners.

But then again, why not another miracle? Since this campaign is not just about politics but about things of the spirit, then another miracle is just what we all need. So then should it be that our ***"faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God"*** (1 Cor 2:5).

**“Iboto 13-0! VOT FOR THE CHAMMP!”** For Couples for Christ, this is no mere campaign slogan to promote the 13 candidates of the People Power Coalition— it’s a battle cry representing the fight between good and evil, between old and new politics.

## CFC AND THE NEW POLITICS (Or How the 13-0 Movement Was Born)

But why is CFC getting involved in politics? And why spearhead a movement that many people regard as quixotic? Is 13-0 even possible?

Tony Meloto, Family Ministries Director, is convinced 13-0 is where God is leading us. “God showed us His hand in EDSA II. It is our duty to ensure that the gains of EDSA II are not dissipated. The 13-0 Movement is a concrete way of making sure that our nation stays on track. We have to give President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo a chance to make good on her promise to give us good governance. We have to make sure that we

put into office only those leaders who will help her to achieve this goal. After our struggles in EDSA II, we cannot now turn around and put back in power the likes of Enrile, Honasan, Santiago and Estrada.”

As Tony sees it, EDSA II is over but the fight for good governance is not. It is just beginning.

Tony says “CFC is now getting involved in the political process not just as educator/ watcher (a role we took in previous elections) but as a credible conduit between government and the people. In the past, we worked for clean and honest elections as Namfrel and PPCRV volunteers but we were



**VOT FOR D CHAMMP**: The slogan was first shouted during the 13-0 press conference held last March 9 at the Club Filipino. It was later adopted as the official slogan of the People’s Power Coalition Senatorial ticket



# “I am voting 13-0 on a matter of principle”

involved only in the process itself. This time, we have the credibility and the high moral ground to make candidates accountable for their actions once they are elected.”

Is 13-0 possible? Tony thinks so. And he is not alone. While there are CFC members who cannot see the logic behind the 13-0 stand and who are skeptical of the discernment and consultation that CFC elders undertook before taking this stand, many others are convinced. Even Fr. Ben Beltran, who spoke at the Lenten recollection for ECG members last April 1, echoes the stand. “I am voting 13-0 on a matter of principle”, he said. “If I look at the 13 candidates of PPC individually, there will probably be some I will not vote for, given ordinary circumstances. But these are not ordinary times. Our nation is in the midst of a great moral crisis. The 13 candidates represent the change our nation needs, the moral regeneration that we need to put in place so that we can move forward as a country.”

There are many other believers in the 13-0 movement. As of this writing, 54 organizations and cause-oriented groups



Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at 13-0 Movement launching in La Salle Greenhills

have already committed to CFC that they will work for a 13-0 outcome.

The CFC has already reached critical mass and, on its own, could probably get the 13-0 result, assuming everyone is of one heart and mind. Tony has his math down pat: “Assuming only half of the 1 million individual CFC members go along with us on this, we would have 500,000 people committed to the cause. If each member commits to convince 20 others to go 13-0, we would be able to gather 10 million votes. Including the original 500,000 members, that would make 10 and a half million votes. That would be more than enough to put all 13 PPC candidates in the magic circle.”

That’s counting only the CFC members. What about the members of the 54 groups who are committed to the same cause? The mathematics gets even more positive.

Some CFC members have another concern. Are we now being coerced to vote as one? What about our individual right to choose according to our preference? Tony makes clear that no one is being forced to vote 13-0. “The elders are going around the country explaining our stand. Many members right away see the moral ground on which we



13-0 Movement Headquarters

stand and express their solidarity with our stand. If after all the explanations, there are some members who are not convinced and who cannot break away from their personal commitments to some candidates, then they are free to vote according to their conscience. What we simply ask is that, as elders, they should allow their members to make an informed choice by giving them all the facts. If they cannot do this, then they should ask other elders to make the presentation of the movement's principles."

Tony also makes clear that the movement is not a prelude to any political ambitions of the CFC elders nor a means to achieve personal goals. "None of the CFC council has motives other than to see this government succeed. We are not running, nor do we ever intend to run, for public office. We do not receive any funding for government for this movement. None of us has any business transactions with government, nor do we intend to make any political or economic capital from this movement. We are also not in this because of any personal loyalty to Mrs. Arroyo. We have put a great deal of prayer and discernment in this enterprise and we know where God is taking us. This fight is a fight for justice, honor, truth, good governance – values we fought for in EDSA II. Personalities do not enter into the equation."

## How does the 13-0 movement intend to make a difference in the political sphere?

The 13-0 Movement does not intend to stop at advocating the choice of the 13 PPC candidates. CFC and its allied groups would like to show the country and the world how Christians and sober-minded citizens conduct themselves in an election. First, the candidates and their partisans have vowed not to engage in any negative campaign, that is, no name-calling, no mud-slinging, no dirty tricks, no vote-buying or intimidation, no black propaganda. "That is what traditional politicians do", says Tony. "We want to bring



YFC leaders Vida Tale and Maybel Bangayan sing the national anthem at the PPC Proclamation rally. GMA and Sen. Rene Cayetano



CFC leaders meet with the senatorial candidates, (from top) Obet Pagdanganan, Juan Flavier and Winnie Monsod

this campaign up to a higher, more cerebral, more spiritual level.”

Second, on election day itself, the movement intends to move into the next phase of the work—vigilance and watchful waiting. Every CFC member committed to this cause will be at the precincts, watching that no untoward events happen. The ballot will be safeguarded from the time it is dropped into the ballot box up to the time it is counted and even up to the time it is delivered to the Comelec. And all of this will be done in the spirit of solidarity and joy. CFC members are urged to camp out at the precincts, bring their guitars and pass the time singing and worshipping the Lord.

After elections comes the real work – that of monitoring the winning candidates and making sure that our votes are not wasted. All the PPC candidates have been apprised of the movement’s expectations. All of them have expressed willingness to abide by such expectations. It will be our duty therefore to make sure that the winners become accountable for their actions and policies. By putting them into office, we ask not for material favors nor rewards in return – we simply demand that they perform according to our expectations, expectations rooted in Christian values and in love for the poor and the disadvantaged.

Tony Meloto sees other avenues opening for CFC even after the dust of these elections settles. He foresees that the CFC will enter into other alliances in order to foster and promote other causes that we believe in. We have already made one major alliance to empower the youth — the LAYA which was co-founded by CFC with the Ateneo Alumni Association (representing the academe), the ABS-CBN Foundation (representing private business) and the EDSA People Power Commission (representing government). (See related story on page 28.) CFC is now studying how we can form alliances with other organizations for the protection of the environment. The WWOW project (Women’s War on Waste) is one such project. Tony

says: “We will go shopping for credible and respectable partners, those with similar causes and philosophies and with a nationwide network so that we can more speedily achieve our objectives.”

In the meantime, the 13-0 Movement is THE cause of the moment. “Seize the moment” was one prophetic announcement in recent gatherings. CFC intends to do just that – to be soldiers in God’s army, and by our witness of our own lives, make a difference in our country’s political life.



The lion of the impeachment court, Joker Arroyo shares a very light moment with Tony Meloto and Frank Padilla



Mandy Ochoa at the 13-0 press conference in Club Filipino

# The Philippines –



**T**he Philippines has been prophetically spoken of as God's light in Asia. It was for a long time the only Christian nation in Asia (recently East Timor joined the ranks). Its 60 million Catholics comprise 60% of the 100 million Catholics in Asia. Millions of Filipinos are already dispersed throughout Asia and the world, enlivening churches. Its citizens speak English, the global language.

But for its light to shine forth and be a beacon to the nations, the Philippines has to first undergo renewal, both spiritual and social. Spiritually, it has to be an object of renewal before it can be an effective agent of renewal.

**Its Catholics and Christians need to be transformed into true disciples of Christ.**

This process is already underway, with CFC having a major role. CFC is already in all provinces and already counts 2% of all Filipino Catholics in the country as members. This decade will see a rapid expansion of this circle of renewal throughout the country.

But spiritual renewal is not enough. As it is, the Philippines, despite being a Christian nation for so long, still has a lot of crime, corruption, conflict, immorality, social inequity and injustice, pollution, and the like. These are what our neighbors see. As such, there is

nothing to attract them to our way of life. Christianity, by which the country is identified, likewise becomes unattractive to them.

What needs to happen, aside from spiritual renewal, is social renewal. Massive poverty needs to be alleviated, widespread crime needs to be eradicated, pollution has to be controlled. What our neighbors need to see are a people who have enough of life's needs, who can walk safely in their streets, who can care for their environment, who can be happy and content with life. These are what will spike their interest, since many are searching for these things, especially in today's troubled world. Then when they realize that our Christianity plays the major role in the good that is happening in our society, the door will be opened to their appreciation of Christianity.

## God's light in Asia



God once chose a people who were slaves in Egypt, liberated them, and built them up into a mighty nation. They were promised prosperity and long life, if they remained faithful to Him (Deut 4:40). They would be blessed, so that no one would be in need (Deut 15:4). In fact, they would lend to many nations and borrow from none (Deut 15:6). Would not such prosperity and blessing be great attractions to the surrounding nations?

**Unfortunately the Israelites, God's chosen people, ultimately proved unfaithful, and they lost it all.**

Now God has again chosen a people – enslaved in many ways to the things and ways of the world but beginning to experience liberation. The Philippines today stands at the crest of the Spirit's mighty wave. The Spirit of God is hovering over Asia and will do a mighty work of renewal in this continent in this millennium. Would the Philippines be privileged to be the Lord's light? If we are faithful and respond to the Spirit's workings in our lives, we will be so privileged.

What needs to happen? There has to be the foundation of spiritual renewal. But there also has to be the outward manifestation of social renewal. There has to be liberation and transformation in all aspects of life in the nation—social, cultural, economic, political, environmental. Justice and peace need to reign in the land.

With new politics and good governance, there will be stability and progress. With stability and progress, there can be prosperity with equity and justice. **Then can the Philippines truly shine out as God's light in Asia ☐. and to the world.**

**With our campaign for 13-0, is CFC now any different from a well-known sect that acts as a voting block by dictating on its members whom to vote for?**

Our situation in CFC is very different. Consider:

<u>Well-known sect</u>	<u>CFC</u>
1 Members are forced to vote according to sect's directions, without explanation	Members are educated, then left to make their own choices.
2 Choice of candidates to support is based on practicality, i.e., who is expected to win	Choice of candidates to support is based on principle, i.e., who would be good for the position.
3 Support presumes a payback of future favors.	Support is given without strings attached; only good governance is expected.
4 Sect participates in all elections.	CFC's participation now does not mean participation in future elections (this will have to be discerned).
5 Sect endorses candidates for many different positions.	CFC campaign is just for the Senate.
6 Support is a political act.	Support is a moral and spiritual act.



# Make Way for



## LIWAY

by: Myra Menguito

It must have been a tiring Monday for her, after going from one sortie to another and attending several meetings in a row. Yet she looked and sounded refreshed, her aura as bright as the pink outfit she was wearing.

*"Life has been good!"* It truly is, especially for Liwayway Vinzons-Chato who is all of these things — great mom, loving wife, dutiful daughter, loyal friend, public servant, lawyer, former commissioner of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and now senatorial candidate.

*"It's simply a matter of perspective. If you think that everything you experience is really part of learning, then life will always be good,"* enthused Liway, who believes that goodness always prevails. *"There is no need to discern if it's a choice between good and evil! We*

*have to fight for what is good!"*

### The lady can sing!

Fighting for what is good led her to join the campaign to oust deposed President Joseph Estrada and his crony, tobacco magnate Lucio Tan. She did this by joining protest rallies and belting out her now famous "love songs". *"Oh, I composed those songs!"* she proudly said, laughing as she recalled the times she sang them on national television and in protest rallies. There is a story behind those songs, as in any other "love song" and it begins with her struggle to expose the truth

about Lucio Tan and his tax cases.

*“The case stems from the payment of the taxes due on the tobacco manufacturer. There were taxes that were evaded,” she explains. “There was the excise tax which is the most important because according to the Tax Code, if a manufacturer of tobacco (who is subject to the ad valorem tax) would be selling to a corporation related to it or to ‘dummies’ in order to evade the payment of the excise ad valorem tax, then the tax will be based not on the pass-on cost or the wholesale registered manufacturer’s price (which comes from the manufacturers to the wholesaler who is a dummy), but the one from the wholesaler to the end user/retailer.”* Liway said this is the easiest way to reduce the tax to be paid. Ad valorem, on the other hand, is based on the selling price. *“So whatever the wholesaler registers as the selling price can be reduced in order to pay tax at a lesser amount. We discovered that there was such a ‘dummy’ arrangement in order to evade taxes. Since the excise tax was being avoided, definitely the income that was reported was also reduced. And the value added tax (VAT), being based on a reduced cost, also had an impact – that tax was also evaded.”*

They also discovered that, aside from the 13 dummy corporations, the evasion was most obvious with the sale to 2,000 individuals/dealers who were non-existent and fictitious.

*“They probably did not think that I would be as vigilant,”* Liway recalled. *“I asked our people to go to the provinces to ascertain whether these 2,000 dealers were registered as tax payers, but the investigators discovered that they were not. Our next step was to get certifications from the municipal treasurer whether they were registered in the municipalities/cities. If yes, they must have a mayor’s permit. They were not even registered. We even went to the barangay level, but it was certified that they did not exist, that there were no such people in their locality.”*

## Case filed

On the basis of these documents, Liway bravely went ahead and filed the case in the Department of Justice. When the DOJ investigated this case, the Fortune Tobacco respondents did not file an answer. *“They didn’t file their affidavit,”* the former commissioner said. *“What they did was just*



Former BIR Commissioner Liway Chato

*to skirt the whole complaint and say that there was no case! On that basis, the DOJ filed the case with the Court. Fortune Tobacco filed a motion to dismiss again which during my time went all the way to the Court of Appeals, then to the Supreme Court.”*

Liway remembers that it took a while for the DOJ to come up with a decision. When the Estrada administration took over, then DOJ Secretary Serafin Cuevas who saw all the

documents stood up for the case. Liway sadly related, *“And we know that Secretary Cuevas was dismissed simply because he was really standing up for that case, saying that the case was a very strong one. In the meantime, Commissioner Beethoven Rualo, who took over at BIR, said that there was no case and even asked for its dismissal. It was on the basis of the motion to withdraw by Commissioner Rualo that the lawyers of Lucio Tan asked for the dismissal.”* For Liway, that was the legal issue: can a commissioner file a motion to withdraw a criminal case for tax evasion in spite of the *“People can get real courage only when they know that they’re doing right, and that what they are doing are all for God’s glory,”*

fact that he was not the one involved and where a previous commissioner already endorsed the case to the DOJ?

The above case is still pending in the Supreme Court on a legal issue. If the SC says that there is a valid case, the motion to dismiss should not be given due course. *“Then,”* Liway said, *“we can go to trial for tax evasion. It’s very complicated and legalistic, but at the end of the day, we just go to the basic question: did Lucio Tan evade taxes? I’d say YES. We have sufficient documents to prove that.”*

## Graceful dragon

It is so amazing to see such courage and boldness coming from someone who possesses so much grace and charm, and a large dose of intelligence and wit as well. This Magna Cum Laude graduate from the University of Santo Tomas, who at 22 already had a law degree from the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, and who became a lawyer at 23, attributes everything to the Lord. *“People can get real courage only when they know that they’re doing right, and that what they are doing are all for God’s glory,”* she said.

Liway credits her parents for molding her and making her what she is now. “Wonderful

parents” was how Li described them. Her mother was a teacher and disciplinarian and her father was a businessman. Both were very much involved in church activities.

As a pre-schooler, she remembers being almost always asleep during class, yet she always passed the exams! She graduated from high school as First Honorable Mention, though she was the youngest in class at age 13. From Daet Parochial School (now La

Consolacion College), she went to U.S.T., then to U.P. for her law degree, where she found herself deep in student politics, running for a seat in the University Council.

## Liway’s pride

Li counts her family as among God’s greatest blessings to her. Her husband Willie conducted a very romantic courtship until they got married on May 9, 1970. Li said God led her to make the right decision in marrying her husband, someone who is so faithful and with whom she shares a marriage built on prayer. Her face glowed as she enumerated her husband’s qualities: the quiet type who didn’t appear to her as a girl-chaser, an intellectual who graduated in the Top 10 of his class, a Philippine Collegian Editor who placed number 5 when he took the Bar Exams, a good man.

Their five children likewise complete Liway as a fulfilled and contented person. Wilfredo, Jr. or Walli, 29, became a member of Singles for Christ, *“not on our own prodding,”* Li says, *“but on his own initiative.”* Walli eventually led his two other siblings into the renewal too. The second child is 28-year old Auralona nicknamed Arla, who recently came from the U.S. and is currently applying for a job. Next came Oliver, 26 years old who, together with Walli, built his own IT company. Twenty-five-

year old Victoria, is taking up medicine at the University of the East, a fact that amuses Liway for this is “a Lucio Tan university!” The youngest is Anna Maria who is 16 years old, a student at the Poveda Learning Center.

## Eroding corruption

Just like Levi, the tax collector in the New Testament, Liway did not think twice when called by her Master. At the B.I.R., although it was perceived to be the most corrupt agency of government, she stood as a shining beacon of her Christian values. She had a values formation program for all employees. It was a success, since after the values formation seminars, support groups were made available to those who completed the seminars. These were called the ALIVE (Action Learning for Integration of Values) groups, which were supposed to convince people within the group to eradicate corruption in the B.I.R. She also had Christian Life Programs for Catholics in the national office.

Liway sees the B.I.R. as a place where temptations to sin are abundant. That is why a weak person working for this office may find himself giving in to corruption, or helplessly being eaten by the system. *“I’d like to do something about it,”* said Li. *“I’d like to upgrade professionalism in the tax collection agencies including the Bureau of Customs. That’s why I decided not to go back to the B.I.R. even if I was offered the job by the present administration. We need to reform the system. We need to reform the organizational structure and to simplify the tax collection system, because as long as there are complicated tax laws with so many compliance requirements, we will always have corruption.”*

## CFC as a support

Liway considers Couples for Christ as a great support group. No matter how tight her schedule would be, she makes it a point to attend CFC activities.

Liway takes active interest in various CFC undertakings. She and Willie are Council members of CFC Angkop Foundation (CFC’s Work with the Poor ministry). Li is likewise a Council member of St. Thomas More and Associates in-charge of Advocacy. *“So I really have to be a Senator,”* she added smiling, *“for me to effectively advocate!”*

## As a senatoriable

So proud of CFC that she wore a CFC shirt in one of her campaign print ads, this woman of God and active CFC leader gladly noted that with God’s help she has been receiving good feedback even in the surveys. *“I trust the Lord completely that when the votes are counted, I would be, not no. 13 please! I will be up there, making sure I’ll not end up a victim of ‘dagdag-bawas’.”* As we assured her of our prayers, Liway replied, *“Aside from prayers, I need your votes! I need people to campaign with me and to help me get my campaign materials out.”*

Liway believes that this is the time for her to really go on mission, that in spite of all the obstacles she encounters along the way, she sees God’s hand leading her to go ahead and ignore the criticisms and negative talks. For



PPC senatorial candidate Liway Chato and Gerry Padilla

her, the fact that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo decided to put her under the administration slate is a miracle in itself. *“That miracle must not be laid to waste. Only God would have thought it wise to put me in that slate.”*

Other than legislation, Liway will focus on two aspects as a senator: the oversight function and the crafting of the budget/passage of the appropriations act. The former is a function of ensuring that the laws are properly implemented, and the budget is properly spent. Indeed, this is a way to reduce corruption. She also ascertains that with God’s help, the spiritual/moral reform she brought to the B.I.R. will also be carried out in the Senate.

On the now popular term “new politics”, Liway believes that it simply means going back to basics. *“For me, politics means good governance, bringing about public order and justice.”* New politics, she said, was coined because the word “politics” had been abused, giving it a bad name. *“Anything that is not right is not politics. It is ‘impolitics’. If a government fails to govern properly, and there is no public order and justice, then*

*its reason for being has been lost,”* she clarified.

### Great!

As a mother, wife, daughter, lawyer, public servant and follower of Christ, Liway describes herself in just one word. *“Great!”* Don’t mistake it for arrogance or conceit, though. She carefully explains, *“In all these roles, I believe the Lord is with me always, and I stand responsible before Him for all my actions and in all my relationships. I simply feel that I am doing okay. Whenever I lose direction, though, I feel He is there, shepherding me and bringing me back to where I should be.”*

Liway concluded, “I want to do what is right. I want to do what is good for the country and the citizenry. I continue to ask the Lord for guidance that I will be a good public servant, and I know He will not fail me.”



**T**he handshake was firm, the smile sincere. Even the noise that surrounded us did not disturb the serenity apparent in Manny Villar's demeanor. I had gone to interview him at his residence on a day assigned to media. He agreed to be interviewed one-on-one.

## MANNY VILLAR UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

It is no secret that Manny Villar was a major catalyst in the events that led up to EDSA II.

He regards that incident as God-driven and has no regrets. On this day, however, we would not discuss the incident, except in passing. Everyone has heard about it, regarding the man as the real hero of the hour. On this day, we would talk about his life in CFC, his relationship with his family and his plans for the country once he is elected senator.

Manny and Cynthia Villar, together with \_\_\_\_\_ other congressmen and their wives, had their Christian Life Program in mid-2000. Immediately, Manny and Cynthia became immersed in CFC culture, most probably a direction God wanted them to take in preparation for the tumultuous events resulting from "Juetengate".

Becoming a member of the Couples for Christ has, according to the congressman, changed his personal and political life. He notes that his daily prayer time and his listening to God's voice helped him in various decisions he

made. This would include his controversial act to pass the Article of Impeachment to the Senate. An unpopular move at that time, this put his speakership on the line. Such was his immersion in CFC culture that "I consulted my elders before doing this", he says.



According to the former Speaker, his relationship with his wife Cynthia has never been better. "CFC has further strengthened our marriage because it has helped us realize the Lord's role in the partnership between man and wife." What about his children? "When we became renewed, we realized that our

children are products of the love that we share as husband and wife. This has made me love and appreciate our children more." Manny and Cynthia have three children – ages 24, 22 and 16.

Renewal has even more changed Manny's relationship with his constituents. He says. "My deepened faith in the Lord has strengthened my resolve to serve the people better and to address their needs as much as I can. I find that my growing relationship with the Lord has made me, and even

Cynthia, more sensitive to the needs of others and more approachable.”

To Manny, his commitment to the Lord has made him realize many things, among them, that “politics is but an instrument to reach out to people, to touch their lives in a positive way. Hopefully, by this act of reaching out, the people may see God in the good that we do.”

“CFC is really God-sent.”, Manny avers. “Suddenly we were immersed in community life. My life as a politician saw me surrounded by many people but our life in CFC is vastly different. Here we are surrounded by brethren who practice the same Christian values. It comforts us that in this community, we all believe that being faithful to one’s wife is still a virtue. You cannot imagine how many people in other sectors of our society think otherwise.” Household meetings and prayer assemblies have strengthened their bond as husband and wife and their bonds with God. Manny and Cynthia’s partnership has found a new dimension.

Now that the catchphrase of the day is “New Politics”, what does he think of it? “It is a politics of consultation; of listening – a politics free from graft and corruption; of being a good example; a politics of good governance. It means integrity, commitment and transparency in public service. It means innovative, non-traditional approaches to solving the country’s problems. Most importantly, it means departing from old practices of traditional politics that have not served the best interests of Filipinos.” Manny concurs with the view of many that this is difficult to achieve. But he says, “It



Manny Villar and his wife Cynthia



YFC members cheering former House Speaker Manny Villar

can be done. It would take a lot of political will and spiritual strength but it can be done.”

How do we educate our people in the principles of New Politics? “We just have to be persistent and sustained. There has to be a reorientation of values. It would take time, but we have to start now”. Manny believes that Filipinos deserve a change for the better. **“There has to be a stop to the cycle of dirty politics.”**

As a senator, Manny sees himself as an advocate of economic growth by encouraging entrepreneurship. Manny is the perfect advocate if one were to go by the success he has made of his own life. Everyone knows by now of his humble beginnings in Tondo, Manila. How he became a real estate magnate is the stuff legends are made of, considering that he began as a simple fish vendor in Divisoria. “Think big and aim high” is his personal motto. Obviously, this challenge has worked for him. He intends to apply this same principle to his work as a senator.

And he fully intends to use his CFC life as support and strength in the hard work that may lie ahead of him. – Vic Gamo

# *Separation of Church and State*

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One of the more contentious issues in the work of total human liberation is the so-called separation of Church and State.

Whenever the Church speaks out about problems in the socio-economic or socio-political arena, government authorities are at times quick to dismiss the Church's intervention, citing the separation of Church and State. The civil authorities, perhaps in an attempt to put the Church on the defensive by bringing the argument into her own religious sphere, even cite Jesus' words in Scripture, "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." (Mt 22:21).

Does this passage not clearly say that politics is the area of the State and morality is the area of the Church, and the two are to be separate? This is a misinterpretation of the Biblical text. Jesus certainly is not espousing any political theory here. And Jesus is not advocating any strict dichotomy between State and Church. In fact, Jesus does not even actually answer the original question about the legality of paying the census tax to Caesar. Nor does he elaborate on what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God. What he does point out is that we have duties and obligations to the State as well as to God.

So what then is this separation of Church and State? Does such separation preclude the Church from getting involved in any way in the affairs of state?

## **Constitutional provision**

Let us examine the actual provision on the so-called separation of Church and State. Looking at the U.S. Constitution, we see that there is no specific provision about such "separation of Church and State." The U.S. Constitution does not require it, nor does it even say anything about it. What the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution says is that Congress may not set up a national church, nor may it pass federal laws against the free exercise of religion. The Founding Fathers of America were coming from a situation where the colonists had endured religious intolerance and persecution. They were determined not to create the same oppressive burdens on their new nation.

The Philippine Constitution is patterned in many ways on that of the U.S. However, the Philippine Constitution specifically provides that “The separation of Church and State shall be inviolable.” (Article II, Section 6).

What this means is spelled out in Article III, Section 5: “No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.” Thus both the U.S. and Philippine Constitutions provide for two basic clauses: non-establishment of a State religion, and the free expression of religion by the people. In other words, what both Constitutions seek to protect is religious freedom. They seek to prevent the State from getting involved or interfering in religious affairs. As such, the constitutional provisions keep the State away from the affairs of the Church.

But then, is the other way around also provided for? Is the Church supposed to keep away from the affairs of State?

## Realities of being Church

Here we need to recognize a few realities.

First, the Church is made up of people who are also citizens of the state. And since a person is an organic unity—mind, body, spirit — his life cannot be dichotomized into social and spiritual. The two are interactive. One misconception is to equate “Church” and “State” with *religion* and *society*, with the two having their separate realms. But again, the two cannot be mutually exclusive. Indeed, Jesus, though acknowledging that his disciples did not belong to the world, did not ask the Father to take them out of the world (Jn 17:15-16). Thus Christians, who are citizens of the state, live the one life that is influenced by both spiritual and social

dimensions. The Church, in taking care of her members, looks to their spiritual well-being as well as their social well-being.

Second, the goal of both the Church and the State is the promotion of the common good in this life. For the Church, we would add to that the promotion of the common good unto the next life as well. For the State, its political prerogatives are to be exercised within the limits of the moral order. Thus the Church and the State are to be partners, trying to work together to achieve their common



Prophetic Mission: Willingness to suffer for the truth in response to God’s call is the message of Msgr. Soc Villegas.



CFC Director Frank Padilla discusses CFC culture with members of the clergy.

objective of promoting the common good. Third, all authority comes from God. The authority of the Church certainly comes from God. But the authority of civil government also comes from God (Rom 13:1). And just like the Church, the government “is a servant of God for (the people’s) good.” (Rom 13:4a). God intends for the Church and the State to work together, being both instruments of His will, and thus will not be giving conflicting directions as to how they are to work for the common good.

Fourth, the Church acts as a prophetic voice in society and in the world. It is the task of the Church to speak about the righteousness of God and to denounce evil and injustice on earth. As such, the Church, whenever it speaks about the morality of economic or political acts, is merely acting in God’s place and carrying out its responsibility to do so.

These four realities preclude the Church from keeping away from the affairs of the State, and in fact mandate the Church to get involved. Since the Church is to be a Church of the Poor, and since economic and political decisions and actions of government will determine in a large way how the poor fare in a country, then the Church necessarily has to be involved in the affairs of the State. But then, what kind of involvement is right and proper?

## Affairs of State

To the State properly belongs the governance of a nation. The State, and not the Church, is the expert in civil governance. But in the area of morality, it is the Church that is the “expert,” or rather the anointed one. Thus, while the Church does not interfere in temporal affairs of state, she does have the duty and responsibility to give moral guidance to God’s people, some of whom are in government. And she needs to speak out about injustice and oppression, which at times are perpetrated by the State.

Such a posture of non-interference but of still being involved is illustrated in the example of Jesus himself.

*“Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me.’ He replied to him, ‘Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?’ Then he said to the crowd, ‘Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of*



*possessions.’” (Lk 12:13-15)*

Here we see Jesus not interfering in temporal matters, but then taking hold of the situation in order to teach people about moral principles. This is the model for the Church.

it is the work of the Church to foster unity and brotherhood among all.

So the Church does not tell the President whom to appoint to his Cabinet, nor tell the electorate which specific candidates to vote for, but the Church may give guidelines on the qualifications of a public servant, who is also a servant of God. The Church does not dictate to Congress what particular laws to enact, but she may speak against legislation which is anti-God, anti-life, anti-family, or anti-poor. The Church does not exert influence on the judiciary in favor of one person against another, or of one issue versus another, but she can give guidance on issues of justice to the citizenry, who are also members of the body of Christ. Thus the Church, as her proper role in society, must speak out on issues of morality, of injustice in society, of what is for the common good of all. When she does so, she does not violate the separation of Church and State. Rather, she is fulfilling her prophetic role, and at the same time acting as a proactive partner of government in taking care of its citizens.

But third, the Church encourages its lay members to actively participate in the political processes of the country. In the spirit of Jesus' prayer in John 17:18, Christians are sent into the world, in order that they might influence society, and government, for the better. In fact, one misconception about the separation of Church and State is equating "Church" with the hierarchy. But the Church is the whole people of God, of which only a very small number is the hierarchy.

## Temporal vs eternal

Both Church and State do need to be careful, on the one hand not to dichotomize, but on the other not to lose the distinctions. There are distinctions between the temporal and the eternal, between the secular and the sacred. Though there are overlaps, both Church and State have their own particular calling in the plan of God. Though there is no separation as such, we also need to be careful about going to either extreme.

In fact, since the members of the Church are all citizens of the country as well, they as citizens can participate in all aspects of the socio-political life of the country, including its governance. However, out of pastoral prudence, this is not what the Church does. The Church voluntarily inhibits herself from certain activities.

## One extreme is clericalism,

First, its clergy and religious are not to run for or hold public office. This is simply because they have been called to a special service to God's people, which does not include holding public office. They are not to substitute politics for the higher calling of the gospel.



Chita Puno shared how her relatives questioned her regarding her involvement with the 13-0 Movement

Second, the Church will not engage in partisan politics. Such is always divisive, and

where the State is absorbed into the Church.

This was the case in previous times such as the early Middle Ages in Europe. This is still the case in such Islamic countries today as Iran and Afghanistan. But the other extreme, and the greater danger today, is secularism, where the Church is absorbed into the State. This is the growing threat in the United States, where prayer in public schools has been banned and where Christian symbols in buildings or other places are being prohibited.

It is ironic that in the U.S., a land of law, liberty and human rights, the secularists are violating the very principles of the Constitution, and doing so backed up by the courts, including the highest court in the land, the Supreme Court! The U.S. Constitution says that the State is not supposed to prohibit any religion or religious practice, but Christians are effectively being prohibited from practicing their faith through the ban on prayer and Christian symbols. The State is not supposed to set up a state religion, but

the State has already done so. It is the religion of secularism.

## Being actively involved

The Church, both through the prophetic voice of the hierarchy and the political activities of the laity, does need to be involved in the affairs of the State. The State is merely God's instrument of governance over the land, which is supposed to be the kingdom which Jesus proclaimed to be at hand. The Church, as the very body of Christ, ensures that the world we live in does become more and more reflective of that kingdom. Such a kingdom is one which works for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Such a kingdom is one where every citizen can live in dignity as a true child of God.

*(Ed's note: This is taken from the book "Bringing Glad Tidings to the Poor")*



# POLITICS

## Old Politics

## New Politics

<b>Nature</b>	<p>Political opportunism and expediency</p> <p>Personalities</p> <p>Politics of addition</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Dominated by political parties</p>	<p>Principle</p> <p>Substance</p> <p>Politics of division and subtraction *</p> <p>Powerlessness</p> <p>Heavily influenced by civil society</p>
<b>Interests served</b>	<p>Pro-party</p> <p>Politician is lord and people are servants</p>	<p>Pro-people</p> <p>Politicians are servants of the people</p>
<b>Economics</b>	<p>Pro-elite</p> <p>Cronyism</p> <p>Look to vested interests</p> <p>Secret, shady deals</p>	<p>Pro-poor</p> <p>Level playing field</p> <p>Look to good of the people</p> <p>Transparency</p>
<b>Attitude of public</b>	<p>Leave politics to politicians</p> <p>Donors seek to gain favors</p>	<p>Active participation by civil society</p> <p>Donors just look for good governance</p>
<b>Nature of campaign</b>	<p>Guns, goons, gold</p> <p>Reliance on material resources and party machinery</p>	<p>People power (people, principle, prayer)</p> <p>Reliance on people power and the Holy Spirit</p>
<b>When in office</b>	<p>Corruption</p> <p>Patronage and connections</p> <p>Power and prestige primary; service secondary</p> <p>No accountability</p> <p>Immoral perks</p> <p>Focus on power</p> <p>Use of worldly wisdom</p>	<p>Integrity</p> <p>Competence</p> <p>Service primary; power and prestige an unsought by-product</p> <p>Accountable to the people and to God</p> <p>Morality in public and private life</p> <p>Focus on prayer</p> <p>Use of godly wisdom</p>
<b>Vision</b>	<p>Look to next election</p>	<p>Look to next generation</p>

\* see article on page 25

**T**raditional politicians cling to the wisdom of a politics of addition. This is to say that it does not matter what principles someone has, it makes good sense to enlist that person into one's party. This is why whenever there is a change of political party that is in power, many leave their respective parties and join up with the party in power. There is hardly any party loyalty, and political opportunism is rife. In the Philippines, these people are called *balimbing* (a fruit with many faces and a sour taste). But no matter how distasteful, every warm body counts, and so addition is the name of the game.

Even in the same family! Even between a parent and child! Following Christ has a cost. If we stand up for what is right in the Lord, we are bound to antagonize those who choose the other path.

For renewed Christians in politics, affiliations and partisanship should be matters of principle. They should not go with those who are corrupt, who look only to attaining power and influence, who do not have the interest of the nation at heart. They should be willing to have a smaller group of principled people, than a larger group with many unprincipled ones. If

## Politics of Division and Subtraction

The new politics, however, dictate not a politics of addition, but in fact a politics of division and subtraction. This type of politics is for renewed Christians, those who not only profess that Jesus is Lord, but who actually live out their discipleship. This is what the Master says.

***"I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."* (Lk 12:49,51-53)**

The coming of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will bring not peace but division! Why? Because there will be those who will accept him and the new life he brings, and there will be those who will not. In fact, the latter will resent and go against those who try to live a godly life.

need be, they should dissociate from those who hold values that are in contradiction with gospel values. If they do, it is guaranteed that they will have less associates or political allies. And that is why the politics of division is also the politics of subtraction.

In the final analysis, it becomes not a matter of political expediency, but a question of morality and Christian discipleship. The politics of division and subtraction may involve loss of power or influence or membership, at least in the short term, but is simply what is right to do in the Lord. It may seem like foolishness to the traditional politician, but it is the foolishness of God. And as it is written, "the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom" (1 Cor 1:25). In fact, "God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise" (1 Cor 1:27).

Traditional political wisdom dictates the politics of addition. But God has shown us another way, and this is the politics of division and subtraction. In the realm of new politics, this is the only way to go.

# Principles for Good Governance

**C**FC, as part of its mission, is involved in the emergence of a so-called *new politics* in the Philippines. Part of new politics is good governance, where government will act in accordance with its mandate from God and from the people, in order to build a nation where there is justice and peace.

For CFC, following are some basic elements of good governance.

## 1. Good governance

- \* Competence and integrity of public servants.
- \* Fight against graft and corruption. Strict implementation of anti-corruption measures (especially law on unexplained wealth).
- \* Transparency in government transactions.
- \* Suppression of crime and institution of law and order.

- \* Implementation of meaningful agrarian reform.
- \* Institution of prison reform.
- \* Suppression of human rights abuses.

## 2. Morality in public and private life

- \* Promotion of high moral standards for government officials.

## 3. Programs and legislation that are pro-God, pro-life, pro-family and pro-poor.

### a) Pro-God

- \* Promotion of spiritual renewal in government.

### b) Pro-Life

- \* Protection of life of unborn from conception (no to abortion and abortifacient contraceptives).
- \* No to contraception.
- \* No to forced or coerced sterilization.
- \* Abolition of death penalty.

### c) Pro-Family

- \* No change from traditional definition of family (thus no to same sex marriage).
- \* No to divorce.
- \* No to sex education in school (unless approved by individual parents).
- \* No to pornography in media.
- \* No to illegal drugs.

### d) Pro-Poor

- \* Work for alleviation of poverty.
- \* Legislation with preferential option for the poor.
- \* Revamp of judicial system.

## The Politics of Powerlessness

Coming hand-in-hand with the politics of division and subtraction is the politics of powerlessness. The politics of division is foolishness to the traditional politician, and results in weakness for his political cause. Or so he believes. But again, for renewed Christians, it ought to be different. In fact, “the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.” (1 Cor 1:25).

When we have power, political or otherwise, we tend to rely on ourselves. When we do, that often results in disaster. When we are powerless, however, but we realize that we have a difficult task to do, that is when we call upon the Lord, and when we do, that is when we are able to tap into God’s power.

We have had traditional politics since time immemorial, and those in political power come and go. Those in power now sooner or later fall from power. True power lies not in shifting allegiances that seek only what is personally profitable, but is founded on a relationship with the One who is the source of true power.

As we look to new politics in this third millennium, let us be mindful to look to “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor 1:24).



# CFC Servants in Congress Share Their Views on New Politics

## **ENRIQUE T. GARCIA, JR.**

(LDP, 2<sup>nd</sup> District of Bataan, husband to Victoria; father of 5; 3 terms as congressman)

Couples for Christ has changed my entire perspective on public service. I realize that the service I extend to my fellowmen is in effect service to God. Thus, I have become more responsive to their needs. Politics, being in the realm of power and influence, is actually an opportunity to serve better. It is not one of constant struggle for dominance but rather one of sharing and harmonious co-existence with one another for the fulfillment of common goals.

New Politics, as distinguished from traditional politics, is people oriented. The welfare of the people precedes the personal interests of the politician. Moreover, it is dynamic and more adaptive to the changing needs of the people throughout time. It encourages people participation in governance by opening alternative avenues for the unhampered exercise of their political and civil rights. Finally, new politics is God-centered. Morality and respect for human lives play a crucial role in shaping the policies of the government.

## **DIOGENES S. OSABEL**

(Party List: ALAGAD; husband to Marietta and father of 4; first term as congressman)

New Politics is discipleship and servanthood. We serve the Lord best when we look to the rights and welfare of the poor. I honestly believe that many of us continue to fail in this area. In the light of current realities, CFC must rally the nation to genuine renewal, reform and reconciliation. Let the courts take care of Erap. It's time we look at the situation more exhaustively, get a more complete picture of the damage to our society and understand our own role and responsibility to improve the same.

## **JOSE APOLINARIO L. LOZADA, JR.**

(Lakas-NUCD, 5<sup>th</sup> District of Negros Occidental, husband to Jessica and father of 4; one term as congressman)

My commitment to the Lord in CFC has strengthened my conviction that politics is only a tool for the people to choose leaders anointed by the Lord, servants who will guide the people to a much closer relationship with Him. New Politics is the politics of rejecting the evils of injustice and corruption. It is serving people according to God's will.

# L A Y A

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# Launch

by ANSELLE T. BELUSO

**T**he first time I heard about “Laya” was early last year when YFC-Campus gathered some 3,000 students from different schools and universities in Metro Manila for an all-night concert at Plaza Miranda. Breaking the interminable parade of campus bands were cameo appearances of movie stars Christopher de Leon, Dinky Doo, Jr. and Mandy Ochoa and inspirational messages from CFC Family

Ministries director Tony Meloto and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

To my then very cynical mind, “Laya” was nothing more than just a slogan-chanting type of movement, a youthful dream operating more in the realm of fantasy than reality. “Laya” said No! to anything and everything evil – poverty, bigotry, immorality, criminality, injustice, campus violence, pornography, abortion, government corruption, premarital sex, rape





of the environment, etc. etc. etc.

My cynicism was all the more fuelled by the quixotic (read impossible, unrealistic) words that CFC full-time pastoral workers and “Laya” coordinators Cocoli Javier and Jay Agulan gave me then when I interviewed them for a special episode of “In His Steps.” According to them, “Laya” aimed to jumpstart the process of change and transformation in our country. (“Yeah, right!”) It was a movement by the youth and for the youth, where young people were finally saying that they wanted their voice to be heard in deciding what to do with their life and their future which have been squandered and corrupted by the generations before them. (“Whew! Big deal, huh!”)

I did not realize then that God was already beginning to execute His plan of changing our life as a nation with “Laya”. How could I have known that a year later, the Lord would use the youth as His tool to topple a corrupt and morally bankrupt government?

Everybody now acknowledges that 80 percent of the people who comprised the

critical mass at EDSA 2 were the youth. EDSA 2 made us all realize that young people today can activate and galvanize themselves for a noble cause, contrary to popular perception that they do not care about their country or their future and that all they are interested in is texting their friends or going to their weekend gimmick. EDSA 2 has proven that they have the capacity to get out of their comfort zones and fight against forces

that wasted their past, perverted their present and debilitated their future.

Because of this, it was no surprise when, right after EDSA 2, Couples for Christ, the Ateneo Alumni Initiative for National Development and the EDSA People Power Commission convened to create a national youth movement that will harness the potent force of young people for the awesome task of nation-building.



Thus was how “Laya” – conceived in the womb of YFC-Campus – was finally born. There was no doubt that God was not only the father of “Laya” but also the obstetrician-gynecologist who masterminded its delivery. How else can one explain the seemingly endless series of miracles that happened all the way to the formal launching of the movement last February 24 via a three-and-a-half-hour, star-studded show at the People Power monument in EDSA, which was aired live on ABS-CBN.



There are two miracles right there. First was the perfect timing. “Laya” saw the light of day on the eve of the anniversary of EDSA 1. We now know that the gains of that revolution had been squandered by the very people who powered it because they slid back to their apathy, indifference and uncaring attitude after the dictator fled. The timing was an ominous warning for everybody that the victory God gave us in EDSA 2 can also dissipate if we don’t take care of it.



Second, ABS CBN Foundation-Bantay Bayan agreed to be a co-convenor of the movement. This meant that Channel 2 not only aired live the launching of “Laya” on their Saturday night primetime programming; the

**From top to bottom:**

**This is the way:** The man at right watches in amazement as some CFC members raise hands in worship during the Laya Street party

**The Pledge:** YFC leader Mari Oquiñena leading the oath of the youth for a more active role in nation building

**Laya membership registration.** Many of those who attended the street rally came to register and join the youth movement.



No. 1 network also lent the entertainment services of its stable of talents to make the affair a truly unforgettable evening.

**There were other miracles.** Like, the group assigned to mobilize the different campus-based, church-based, community-based and ideology-based youth organizations informed us at the last minute that they weren't able to do the job and there was the real possibility that no one was going to come to the LAYA party. But then, of course, only by the grace of God were there more than 50,000 people who jampacked that piece of heaven that night at EDSA.

When our CFC production group, headed by Tony (Meloto), went to ABS CBN to discuss the show's format and content with Ms. Chit Guerrero, VP for Special Projects, we anticipated that she would want name stars only to grace the show because, after all, they were going to air it. But Ms. Guerrero merely ran through our sequence guide and said everything was okay, and that they won't touch anything except add movie stars to perk up the show. So that was how the Chag Adonai and the Bagong Silang dancers (under the indefatigable team of Celso and Jean Magcalas), the Soul Divas (Bianca Dinglasan, Cherry Veal, Vida Tale and Maybel Bangayan), our full-time pastoral workers Mari and Luis Oquiñena and the youth



Fireworks lit the sky during the Laya Street Party in EDSA

leaders made their maiden television appearance. Most importantly, we got to deliver the "Laya" message which, we earlier thought, might be adjudged too heavy for a TV entertainment show.

### One miracle was how the Lord helped us manage our time.

We hardly had time to prepare for the "Laya" launch because we were also busy with the 8<sup>th</sup> SFC International Leaders Conference held in Bacolod City on February 16-18. That effectively meant we only had less than a week to tie the still many loose ends for the show. These included finding sponsors for the event; designing the trophies for First Laya Heroes of the Youth Cory Aquino and His Eminence Jaime Cardinal Sin; coordinating with director Maria Montelibano of the EPPC about the bands for the street party; finalizing show details with director Johnny Manahan; re-blocking

and re-choreographing the dances to suit stage specifications; arranging and rearranging the flow of the torch parade; finalizing the script based on the final sequence guide which was, in turn, based on the availability of ABS CBN talents; following up campus-



based performers for the show onstage before the telecast show, formulating traffic scheme; setting up the tents and booths, constructing and decorating the stage, etc. etc.

**But, lo and behold! Everything just fell into place. The show was great!**

Sourcing the food (congee, sandwiches, boiled eggs, bottled water) wasn't even a problem. Informed of the situation only the night before, the CFC leaders responded overwhelmingly and, long after the show was over, there were still more than a hundred boiled eggs and sandwiches left.

The group assigned to take care of everything for the celebration of the Mass also, at the very last minute, told us that they were leaving the task to us. ~~Still complaining because we just did the job~~ ~~complaining because we just did the job~~ was very happy with what we had already done so He decided to make us do some more.

The success of the “Laya” launch can be measured in many ways. For one, the mere fact that it was launched at all is already a miracle. For another, the launch was able to victoriously send the “Laya” message embodied in the seven covenants:

- (1) Freedom from Immorality, Commitment to Principles;**
- (2) Freedom from Corruption, Commitment to Integrity;**
- (3) Freedom from Iniquity, Commitment to Justice;**
- (4) Freedom from Inequality, Commitment to Equal Opportunity;**
- (5) Freedom from Poverty, Commitment to People Empowerment;**
- (6) Freedom from Crime and Violence, Commitment to Peace and Harmony;**
- (7) Freedom from Environmental Degradation, Commitment to Our Nature and Our World.**

But for me, the real yardstick for the triumph of “Laya” was when, a week later, some 60 youth leaders from some 30 different organizations trooped to the Ancop Center in Bagong Silang, Caloocan City for a seminar/workshop on socio-political empowerment and some relationship-building activities.

There, in the very heartland of poverty, first throbbed the vision of “Laya” – an empowered youth who dedicate themselves to being active instruments of change so that the Filipino nation may be liberated from corruption and social wrongs.

There, where the dregs of society live, first breathed the mission of this movement – to develop a social conscience in every Filipino youth so that s/he can become a force for social change, an agent for social justice, and a champion of our society's poor.

In the Erap Resign Campaign and now the 13-0 movement, we were and are moving into uncharted waters. There is no road (nautical) map; there have been no pioneers to blaze the trail. But we in CFC should be used to that by now. We have tried to follow the Spirit's lead, and the Spirit has indeed led us to and through uncharted waters.

## Trusting Your ELDERS

When in 1989 we proclaimed our mission of rapid and massive evangelization, there were the protesters, complainers and doubting Thomases. Why grow so fast? Do we have the resources? Can we take care of all those people? How about my comfort level? Well, we went for it, and now we have 1.2 million adult members, all being cared for and many being committed to the life and mission of CFC.

We also proclaimed our mission to be global, and we had the *chutzpah* to proclaim that we would be established in over 150 countries throughout the world by the year 2006, our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There were the usual doubting Thomases and even some hecklers. Where would we get the money? Should we not take care of Filipinos and the Philippines first before moving to other countries? How do we arrange our entry into an average of 10-12 new countries per year? Well, we again went for it, and we are now in 86 countries (as of end-March), very much on track in attaining our goal. And CFC in most of these countries is flourishing.

Then we split from our parent in 1993. Again there were the protesters, complainers and detractors. Can we make it on our own? Who will take care of our leaders? There was a smug prediction that CFC would disintegrate within 3 years. Well, it has been 8 years since that time and CFC is still going strong. No, that is an understatement. **CFC is today the most progressive family life renewal group in the Philippines and one among the most effective new ecclesial movements in the world!**

Then in 2000 we proclaimed our full entry into the social dimension of the gospel. Again there were the protesters and complainers. Do we have the time and energy? Do we have the money? Do we really want to seriously do this work with the poor? But the die was already cast. We had been building up to it, and the Great Jubilee Year provided the perfect launch for the work of total human liberation. Today, we can already see that our *Gawad Kalinga* is going to revolutionize the work of alleviating poverty. And with our Social Ministries, we are going to affect every sector of society, and make a tremendous

impact on the spiritual and social transformation of countries.

Then early this year we mounted the Erap Resign Campaign. Again there were the protesters. Why are we going into politics? Won't this be divisive? Are we digressing from our mission? Will we not invite retaliation from the powers-that-be? But we persevered and experienced the miracle of EDSA II. And because of our faithfulness, CFC was privileged to be the trigger that launched the 2<sup>nd</sup> People Power Revolution.

Now here are the CFC elders again with the 13-0 Movement. And here again are the usual protesters, objectors, doomsday prophets. Why are we getting into partisan politics? Will this not divide the body? Will this derail our evangelization?

We have been through many uncharted waters. And there will be more such occasions. **CFC is a trail-blazing community, sensitive to the signs of the times and the action of the Holy Spirit.** No one will argue that we need to follow the Spirit's lead. But perhaps the question is: how do we know that we are doing so? Well, God has placed elders over the community to care for it and to direct the fulfillment of its mission. It is a question of trusting these elders.

In all the above entry into uncharted waters, have the elders ever failed the community? Never! Of course, the elders can make mistakes. But even then, if there is openness to the views of others, if there is adequate consultation with other leaders, if there is prayer and discernment, if we move forward as one, then we will experience the blessings of God. God will protect us and prosper our work. And if we go astray but with purity of intention, God will make a way and make straight our path. This is why CFC is today the strong and vibrant community that it is. This is why CFC is today at the cutting edge of the Church's mission in this third millennium.

Trust the elders that the Lord has placed over the community. In trusting them, we trust the One who anointed them to lead.

# Why a CFC Member Cannot be Pro-Erap

The reason we went against President Estrada and worked for his ouster is simply because he stands for everything we stand against. His values are the exact opposite of the values we hold dear. He is a womanizer, a boozier, a gambler, a plunderer of the nation's resources, a manipulator of the poor. And what makes it worse is that as President of the Republic, he was supposed to be the father of the nation, caring for the people and acting as a good role model for the youth. His sins against the nation are not just due to his personal wrongdoing, but the fact that the country itself and our people are suffering so much because of his misdeeds.

President Estrada might be your relative, your friend, your neighbor or your *kumpadre*. He might have given you the title to your house and lot, or a *balato* from his gambling winnings. You might admire his acting ability or swoon over his macho image. You may therefore be thankful to him or feel a certain amount of loyalty to him. But as a member of CFC, you cannot condone the wrong that he does. Otherwise, you are effectively rejecting Christian values and thus Jesus himself, whom you have proclaimed as your Lord.

In like manner, we as CFC cannot be for the Senatorial candidates of the *Pwersa ng Masa*, the ousted President's ticket. Why? For the simple reason that they are pro-Erap, and blindly loyal to his cause. If they find their way back to power, they would try to bring Estrada back, and again condone if not support his wrongdoing. They defend him, they justify his actions, they even praise him to high heavens. As such, they are as much a part of the moral corruption that has pervaded our government and society. We ousted Erap; we should not allow his minions to return or get into the Senate.



With fervent idealism shown on their faces, these youth sang EDSA 2's most famous song - "Bayan Ko"

# Teodora Files

By *Teodora: In Defense of the Authentic Woman, Inc.*

## Women as Agents of Development

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What comes next after the ouster of President Estrada and the change of administration?

Last March 3, 2001, TEAMWORK, an alliance of women's groups (of which *Teodora* is a convener), held a "Women's Forum on Transparency and Good Governance" at the Poveda Learning Centre gym. The primary objective of the forum was to create an opportunity for the women's sector to hear and be heard on issues and programs of the government. *Teodora: In Defense of the Authentic Woman*, with its vast network of resources, played a vital role in organizing the event.

TEAMWORK invited Cabinet members and representatives to present to the women sector their first 100-day agenda of government in their particular department. Present were Presidential Security Adviser Roilo Golez, Agriculture Undersecretary Arsenio Balisacan, Labor Undersecretary Juan Espanol, Budget Undersecretary Cynthia Castel, Justice Undersecretary Merceditas Gutierrez, and MMDA Chair Ben Abalos. They represented the National Security, Economic Development Cluster, Social Development Cluster, Justice and Peace Cluster, Rural Development Cluster, and Infrastructure Cluster. The participating women were leaders in the National Capital Region (NCR) whose occupations vary from business, socio-civic work, professional practice, religious to students, homemakers and others. After each presentation by the government official, the women gave their feedback through a survey administered by *Teodora*.

The survey results indicated that women can truly be a reliable source of intelligent, insightful and objective feedback on government policies and programs – a manifestation of the feminine genius expressed in self-giving, intuitiveness, commitment to truth, ability to forge unity and attention to detail.

The survey results are as follows:

1. On Urgency: The women generally agreed that the 100-day agenda of the clusters were urgent. Housing received 98%. Social Development, Economic Development and Rural Development received equal rating of 97%. Justice and National Security got 96%, while waste management received 94%.
2. On Attainability: Although the women

*"In transforming culture so that it supports life, women occupy a place in thought and action, which is unique and decisive. It depends on them to promote a "new feminism" which rejects the temptation of imitating models of "male domination", in order to acknowledge and affirm the genius of woman in every aspect of life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence, and exploitation." - Pope John Paul II*

were optimistic, they were also realistic. Their confidence level on attainability was strongest for waste management - 22%, Justice - 21%, National Security - 16%, Housing - 15% and Social Development - 15%. The lowest confidence level was given to Rural Development and Economic Development - 10%.

3. On Degree of Planning: For the women, the well-planned agenda are Social Development - 92%, Economic Development - 91% and Housing - 89%.
4. On Compatibility to "People Power" Aspirations: The women perceived the top three "People Power"-compatible programs to be Social Development - 94%, National Security and Housing - 93% and Justice - 91%.
5. On Sensitivity to Gender Issues: The women gave Social Development 94%,

Economic Development 91% and Housing 89%.

TEAMWORK presented these survey results to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who expressed her appreciation to the alliance during a big gathering of women at the ULTRA last March 8.

The work of women as agents of development doesn't end here. We bear in mind that good governance also includes attention to basic factors such as the quality of life, the strength of the family, the freedom of our people, the protection of human rights especially of the helpless such as the children, the elderly, the infirm and the unborn. The absence of these factors can eventually cause our nation's moral and social disintegration. Good governance is total human liberation that is the holistic emancipation of a person, taking into account his physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual condition. And crucial to such emancipation is the contribution of women.



With women willing and able to work hand in hand for the common good, President Arroyo's vision for a bright future of healing, economic recovery, peace and unity becomes more of a reality than just a belief. Then, the *feminine genius\** would have served the country well. In His apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, Pope John Paul II gives thanks for all the manifestations of the feminine genius which have appeared in the course of history



## Cory Aquino Endorses 13-0 Movement

**F**ormer President Cory Aquino was the guest of honor at the Couples for Christ Elders' Gathering held last March 17 at the ULTRA in Pasig. The occasion was also the formal launching of the 13-0 Movement, a campaign initiated by CFC to ensure the victory of all 13 Senatorial candidates of the government's People Power Coalition.

In her speech, she expounded on the parallel events of People Power 1986 and EDSA II 2001. She shared the fear and apprehensions she felt during the first free elections held after People Power in 1986 and the efforts she and her government had to exert to bring the nation back on its feet. One of these efforts was the restoration of the democratic processes, particularly the election of representatives to the legislative branch of government. As president, she needed a legislature that could be relied upon so that her programs could succeed. As such she went all out for a 24-0 Senate campaign against the forces of the ousted dictator who were trying to take back the power the people had taken from them.



**Cory Appeal:** Former President Cory Aquino urges the CFC members at the Ultra to vote 13-0 to give the GMA administration's good governance program a better chance of success

Her party then won all the Senate slots except two, which allowed Senators Enrile and Estrada to be part of the Senate of that time. The parallelism is evident in the 13-0 Movement which CFC is now spearheading. Mrs. Aquino exhorted everyone to join her in a rosary crusade so that the miracle of EDSA II shall not be in vain. – **Manny Catabas**

# FIRST CFC

## OFFICE ON WOMEN

### LUNCH-FORUM

**S**till ablaze from its highly successful “Woman on Fire” at the beginning of the year, the CFC Office on Women held its first ever Lunch-Forum. This memorable event took place last March 23, 2001 at the Ima Restaurant in Pasig City. It was very timely since March is internationally celebrated by governments and NGOs as Women’s Month.

Senator Loren Legarda-Leviste graced the occasion as the Guest of Honor. Setting aside her prepared speech, Sen. Legarda spoke very candidly about how being a woman helps her in being a public servant, both within the Senate office and outside of her official work.

One unofficial task which is obviously very close to her heart is the peace initiatives she undertakes with rebel forces. Despite harsh criticisms, insults and lack of government support, she simply allows pure humanitarian reason to rule. She could not accept then President Estrada’s advice, “*Pabayaang mo na, trabaho nila iyan. Babayaran na lang ang mga asawa.*” [Let them be because it is part of their work anyway. Their wives will just be compensated.] How could she turn her back, she says, on the wives of army and police personnel who implored her help in bringing back their captive husbands. As a woman whose heart is made for caring and nurturing, Sen. Legarda would suffer sleepless nights thinking about passing up the opportunity to reunite families.

This is where being “*pakialamera*” [busybody]



Sen. Loren Legarda



Sen. Legarda autographs copies of *Mothers Magazine* for Tess Arguelles and other CFC wives.

served a good purpose. Turning a deaf ear to those who accused her of politically grandstanding, Sen. Legarda braved the physical and emotional stresses of the negotiations, spending her own money and using precious time otherwise meant for her own family. All these paid off, for she has been instrumental in the release of five captives so far. “My being a woman had a lot to do with it. If I were not patient, thorough, compassionate, humanitarian enough, the release of these five captives wouldn’t have been consummated.”

Finally, Sen. Legarda called on CFC support for her projects — the “Luntiang Pilipinas” and the “Libro ni Loren.” She urged every CFC chapter to have a forest park in their area, and all members to donate used or new books and school materials to help the poor through her foundation.

The message of the senator to go beyond what is expected affirmed the CFC women at a time that we are being called to be women on fire who will help build the Church of the Poor. The CFC woman of today is a woman who will give hope through her courage and integrity, a woman of courage because she knows that God will take care of her, and a woman who excels in whatever she does and thrives wherever she is sent.

— **Annie Q. Faustino**

# Medical Mission



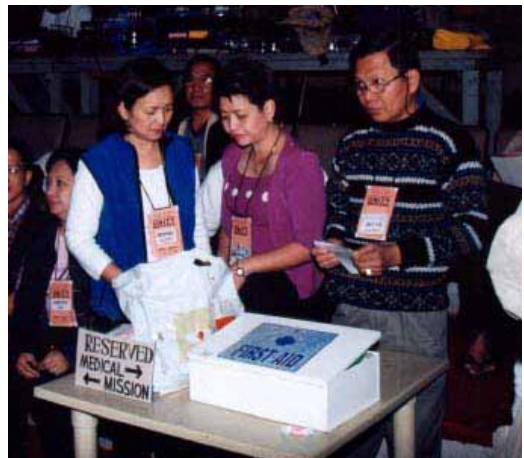
## Good to the Last Drop

The CFC Medical Mission has launched a campaign to encourage members to donate blood. Requests for blood donations have been increasing of late and the CFC Medical Mission envisions a systematic approach to address this particular concern.

**One component of a blood donation campaign is blood typing.** The CFC Medical Mission has, in the past, embarked on blood typing drives during CFC gatherings such as the Metro Manila Leaders Conference. Unfortunately, response from the members has been lackluster.

CFC MMF is now in the process of forging a blood banking agreement with the Philippine National Red Cross. The Medical Mission will soon come up with guidelines for the blood donation campaign and will schedule blood donation drives in the different chapters, clusters and sectors both in Metro Manila and in the provinces. This will ensure that the community is ready anytime any of our members is in urgent need of blood. Interested parties may coordinate such blood donation drives and other medical related matters with Gigi Maipid at the Center.

As a general guideline, just about everyone who is relatively healthy, from ages 18 to 60 years can be a potential donor. Excluded from the list are those with hypertension, heart disease, or currently suffering from any infection, allergies, or cancer. Those who had malaria and hepatitis are likewise exempted.



*I have been asked so many times regarding the advantage of donating blood and to all these, I say that blood donation is indeed beneficial. First of all, blood is vital to our life and donating this renewable commodity is a gift of life as it is. The donor should be affirmed that by giving something of himself he lives out the call to be a brother or a sister to another human being. If we talk of loving neighbor, donating our blood is one tangible and qualifiable act.*

*There is a second important reason why we should donate blood. While it is well known that the recipient of blood transfusion benefits the most and directly at that, less well known but just as important is the effect on the donor. Yes, blood donation saves lives but everyone should know that the donor might very well be saving his own life.*

*Sounds radical, isn't it? But hear this out! In the light of newly accepted medical concepts, studies have shown the relationship of excess stored iron and the incidence of serious illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Males are the group at greatest risk for excess iron storage because*

*they have no way of getting rid of iron on board. On the other hand, premenstrual women (bless them!) are protected by regular loss through menstruation and childbirth. So the explanation goes beyond estrogen and progesterone.*

*Our modern diet contributes to this condition. Just consider those iron-enriched foodstuffs: bread, breakfast cereal, snacks and yes, those easily accessible iron-fortified vitamin preparations. Don't forget excessive red meat.*

*Now, you know why you need to get rid of extra iron. Besides, blood donation is spiritually enriching and rewarding. — Joe*

**Yamamoto**

## You want to donate blood?????

1. Have you given blood donation before?
2. Have you ever had any of the following?
 

Kidney disease	Duodenal Ulcer
Cancer	Asthma
Rheumatic Fever	Hay Fever
Epilepsy	TB
3. Are you currently suffering from any illness, allergy or infectious disease?
4. Have you had tooth extraction in the past weeks?
5. Have you within the last six (6) months received any of the following treatments:
 

Blood Transfusion	Ear-piercing
Acupuncture	Tattooing
6. Have you within the last three (3) months received any of the following treatment:
  - Vaccination
  - Infections
  - Inoculation
7. Have you within the last twelve (12) months been to malarial endemic areas like Palawan, Mindoro or Cagayan?
8. Have you within the last six (6) months been in personal contact with anyone who had HEPATITIS?
9. Have you been pregnant during the past twelve (12) months?
10. Have you had babies affected by RH factor?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then you are not qualified to donate blood

## Test yourself!

**F**or almost a year now, an association of Christian businessmen and professionals has been meeting regularly every first Wednesday of the month at the Metro Club in Makati. Their objective is to promote a workplace centered on Jesus Christ. The association also provides a venue for economic networking among its members. The group is called THE TEKTON GUILD, a social ministry of CFC for socio-economic renewal.

## TEKTON GUILD - JESUS AT WORK



Gus de Leon

Prominent persons from the business sector as well as the government are invited to share their insights with the association. The talks generally focus on economic issues affecting the country in general and the business climate in particular, although other subjects have also been discussed, among them Christian parenting.

During the March meeting, Gus de Leon, the former general manager of the RFM Group of Companies, spoke on values in the workplace. Mr. De Leon shared how he rose to his present position through merit and not because of patronage. He narrated how he gladly accepted any challenge given to him because he values his working relation with

the company. During the long years he worked for RFM (RFM was his first employer), he was assigned to different departments including sales and personnel.

Mr. De Leon is now deeply involved with ERDA Tech Foundation, Inc., a group that is dedicated to assisting street children and out-of-school youths. It provides vocational training programs to these youths so that they become productive members of society.

(The Tekton Forum is open to all CFC members and their guests. For reservations, please call Ms. Malou Capalad at the CFC Home Office with telephone numbers 727-0681 to 87.) – **Manny Catabas**



**F**our thousand single men and women from different walks of life came together in joyful praise and fellowship for the 8<sup>th</sup> International Singles for Christ Conference at the Panaad Stadium in Bacolod City last February 16-18, 2001



A big production number – a colorful parade of athletes - opened the festivities on Friday evening.

Mon Fernandez (Four-time Most Valuable Player of the Philippine Basketball Association) led the Oath of Sportsmanship and the lighting of the Singgolympics Flame and gave the inspirational Go for Gold Talk. Speaker ng Bayan Manny Villar also shared how he succeeded in life through “sipag at tiyaga” (hardwork and perseverance).

A slight drizzle did not dampen the spirits of the participants as they gamely participated in the Cheering Competition. Special mention went to the South East Asia contingent who participated in the cheering competition complete with costumes but who amazingly conducted their practices through e-mail!

Day 2 saw an array of activities simultaneously going on in the beautiful Panaad Stadium. There were the different sports competitions such as basketball, volleyball, swimming, soccer and athletics and the workshops on Singles in Politics and Singles and the Poor. Those who had free time opted to go on either a city tour or the Magsungay tour (Gawad Kalinga Area) or simply went shopping for souvenirs.



The more serious stuff came in the early evening of Saturday when everyone gathered to listen to the talks and sharings lined up for the conference. Ansel Beluso discussed how his life revolved around “Fool’s Gold” and how he has now found the real gold. Mari Oquiñena was a hit as he talked about the “Agony of Defeat” through his experiences. Further through the night, Tony Albano shared how he experienced the “Joy of Victory” after years of living a miserable life.

The Arc Band provided entertainment during dinner. As the night wore on, the Singles partied hard with the Stage Crew Band as they sang hits from the ‘80s.

An early morning drizzle greeted the participants on Sunday morning (Storm Signal # 2 was up in nearby Cebu) as they participated in the Holy Mass. Tony Meloto capped the conference with his talk “Share the Glory” as he presented the avenues by which the singles can share their resources. Tony made the participants realize that they have a lot to share with other people and it is indeed time to make a difference in our society today. The SFC members were challenged to become a catalyst of change to renew our nation.

Everyone went home with renewed and joyful spirits – hopeful of great things to come for those who love and serve the Lord. Victory in Christ was everyone’s final battlecry.

# EFI Corner

## STAR TALK



### INVOLVE THE KIDS!

*“Maybe some other time. I think they’re too young to understand.”*

It is not uncommon for adults to take the younger members of the community for granted. Thinking themselves fully capable of wriggling out of sticky situations, they fail to realize that nobody is too young to help. That it is just a matter of molding children to become caring individuals, persons who are not merely “fence-sitters”, but able to take responsibility for others.

At this time in our political history, what do we need to teach our children? A lot! We need to tell them that we need God-fearing and selfless leaders in government. We need peace. We need reforms. We need justice. We need compassion. We need to look for opportunities to serve. We need to move. We need help from everybody, and this means no one is left out, not even our youngest children.

Will they understand? Why would they not? Getting them involved in the issues now will help them grow to become conscientious people later on. We at CFC Educational Foundation, Inc. apply the following principles aimed at making responsible citizens out of our children at the CFC School of the Morning Star. We hope these pointers help you too in shaping individuals able to make a difference wherever they go!

1. *Look for moments where you can teach kids about empathy, independent thinking, expressing oneself, and taking action.*

2. *Make a conscious effort in helping your children appreciate and be responsible with what they have, and contributing these to the world around them. If a child refuses to share something, grab that chance to tell him about fairness, sensitivity and generosity.*
3. *Encourage curiosity.* Young kids often look around and observe what’s wrong with their surroundings. Others even have eyes wide open to inequities which we, adults, sometimes take for granted. This is an opportunity for us to ask our children how they could help or





We relate well as children... if we are properly guided by adults

- contribute.
4. *Explain the issues.* In a way that will not upset your child, explain to him current public issues. Make it clear that for each concern that we have as individuals and as a people, there is an answer. Help him understand that any help a person gives, no matter how simple, will contribute to the solution of the problem.
  5. *Small children = Small steps.* Young kids will not always be in the "mood" to join you, but constant encouragement will help them go through the motions, and they end up seeing that indeed, good things eventually take place.
  6. *Tell not only a story, but also history.* History is not only found in books, but children can actually experience it. Try spending some time with a friend or relative of worthy character, those who take the time to serve the needy, or those who have had experiences where they exemplified courage. At the same time, remind them that the extraordinary people they see in books were also ordinary people like them (children) who found ways to help others. Examples of these people are the community helpers such as doctors, nurses, teachers,

firemen, police, missionaries, metro aides, etc.

7. *Welcome people.* Meeting people from a diverse culture, race and economic status develops young children to become socially active adults. Listening to adult conversations likewise gives these young ones a glimpse of the bigger world.
8. *Drive the kids to involvement.* Encouraging the children to help and be of service to others is still the key. Remember, though, that the best form of encouragement is to be involved yourself.
9. *Teaching values is valuable.* It is not enough to tell your kids about values. The best way to teach them is to live out these values. If you're aiming to pass on generosity or charity, let your child hand bread or biscuits to the street children. If you desire your child to grow up sincere, show him the value of always telling the truth.
10. *Reinforce the good.* As soon as you see a child do a good deed such as helping others, praise him generously.

(Reference: *Parents Magazine*, July 1999 issue; *Teaching Your Children Responsibility* by Linda and Richard Eyre)



Parents must involve themselves...to get their kids involved as well

# Virtue of the Month: **SINCERITY**

## What makes up a sincere person?

A sincere person makes full disclosure, where appropriate, to the right person and at the right time, of anything he has done, seen, thought or felt with regard to his own or another's situation. It also means admitting one's personal weaknesses.

If a child lies, obviously his parents are not aware of the facts they need in order to guide him. If a child is supposed to tell the truth simply because his parents laid down the rules without explaining it to him, he may lie just to avoid the punishment which he may regard as an act of revenge on the part of his parents for breaking their rules. However, if his parents explain that the purpose of sincerity is to allow him to improve and the child is aware of this, he may have fewer reasons for being deceitful, though he may tell lies for other reasons.

The following points have to be considered when imparting the virtue of sincerity to the little ones:

1. Lying comes from some need felt by the child. It is therefore important to find out what that need is and to eliminate it. Likewise, help the child face up to difficult situations.
2. As parents, be sincere yourself because lying is contagious.
3. Help the child grasp the reality of situations and to express himself. Expressing himself clearly will help the child avoid certain types of lies.
4. Show the importance of always telling the truth.
  - Always help the children see things as they are.
  - Help them realize that two people may see the same things differently and may contradict one another without lying.
5. Always stress the positive angle of things, those aspects which offer a chance of improvement.
6. When conflicts arise, ascertain the truth by asking for facts instead of opinions. Likewise, find a way to ensure that a similar situation will be avoided in the future.
7. If there is a distortion of reality (without malice) find ways that will make the child improve.
  - If he invents a brother or a sister – look for a companion for the child. If this poses a difficulty, do not break the make-believe world the child has created. Just see to it that the child distinguishes between reality and the make-believe situation. This is just a stage that the child will eventually outgrow.
8. If the child accuses somebody else of something, simply show the child that he has got it wrong. Make him realize that he is not telling the truth and that we are not going to punish him just because he did something.
9. As parents, make sincerity your **ABSOLUTE PRIORITY**. Otherwise, you will end up focusing on other aspects of the child's behavior without fostering sincerity.
10. Let the children feel your love and assure them that you are going to help them and not judge them. This confidence in our children will help develop the virtue of sincerity in them, and thus allow them to know themselves as they are and not who they should be.

Teaching the virtue of sincerity to our little ones is allowing them to discover that we are all children of God with a specific purpose. Though we recognize our limitations, we must also acknowledge our greatness as God's children. As we accept and love ourselves as God's creation, only then will we be able to love the rest of God's children.

# Sharing

By : Bing Hizon

## THE MIRACLE OF THE UGNAYAN COVER

**T**he maiden issue of the new UGNAYAN was ready to go to press except for one thing – the most important thing – we did not have a picture for the cover. Because the theme of the maiden issue was the miracle of EDSA 2, the editorial team was one in deciding that the cover must show the multitude at EDSA against the image of the Blessed Virgin with the CFC banner at its feet. However, notwithstanding the thousands of CFC members present during the four days of EDSA 2, no one could provide us with such a photo. The Ugnayan’s official photographers lamented that the crowds were never able to get into take this particular shot.

Someone suggested that we get in touch with the news desks of the print media and look through their photo files but nothing came out of it. We were getting desperate because our deadline to print was drawing near. Then, the miracle happened.

It was Thursday before the first Friday of February. I left the house at about 7 o’clock and patiently waited for the bus that would take me to office. I boarded the bus and was disappointed that my preferred seat on the shaded side of the bus was already taken.



so thick they were the right position to So I took a seat on the other side praying that somebody would alight from the right hand side. As is my usual routine, I first said a prayer and then I started to read the newspaper. God was quick to answer - the passenger across the aisle alighted and I hurriedly moved over to my preferred side of the bus. I was startled when the man seated by the window shook my hand and greeted me. This was something you don't normally expect to

happen on board a crowded bus. It turned out he is a member of CFC who recognized me. I did not know his name and his face seemed familiar but I was too embarrassed



to ask for his name.

**We started to talk about the miracle of Edsa and how blessed CFC was to have played a major role.** He mentioned that they had a member in their chapter working for a major newspaper who had taken a very good picture of the event and they even had it blown up and passed around the chapter. As he described the photo, it seemed like it was the exact shot we were looking for. I was simply stunned! I lost no time in asking for a copy of the picture. He gave me the name of his chapter head and alighted before I could thank him and ask him for his name.

When I got to the CFC Home Office, I immediately called Pete Del Rosario, the chapter head and asked for a copy of the picture. During the ECG gathering the following Sunday, we had the picture we wanted for the new Ugnayan.

### **But the story does not end there.**

The new Ugnayan came out with the beautiful picture on the cover but we forgot to say how we got hold of it. I was asked to write about it but I couldn't complete the story because I did not know the names of the most important characters in the story. Then the next miracle happened. At about 8:00 in the morning of March 27, I boarded my bus and was very happy that my preferred seat on the right side of the bus was vacant. Lo and behold, the man who gave me the info was seated by the window! This time I made sure I got his name and the name of the member who took the picture. My busmate and God-sent helper is Alex Ordiz; a unit head in North A-1B and the photographer is Jeff de las Alas, a member of the same chapter.

**May God be praised for brothers such as these and for events like this one that only serve to show how He watches and guides over all of us!**

## SUNFLOWERS

Sunflowers, sunflowers, yellow pure  
Golden orb calling attention to your core  
my eyes are riveted like bees to your flower  
head faithfully following the sun from east to west.

Sunflower, sunflower, created for today  
A message bringer, a vision bearer  
Of images...endless field of yellow golden  
orbs  
Flower heads at all times facing the sun as  
praising,  
With the wind of the Almighty, bowing, waving

What cryptic message do you bring?  
Whispering a song to my mind's ear saying  
the message is yours to ponder, the guide  
is in your heart, the truth is in your eyes to  
see visions and images.

Images and visions of millions marching  
Sunflowers, in sun-swept hills waving,  
spreading  
Like hands of EDSA millions on the march  
God's army golden and pure  
Visions and images proclaiming..

"We are the Lord's sunflowers, called to be  
Lamp carriers, Word bearers, an army of  
prophets  
sowing seeds in newly fertile soil with  
courage.  
Fearless pure land healers, reclaiming the  
fields of life for the Lord."

– by aagimenez, shared during the ECG  
gathering, March 4, 2001



# Sharing

By **Girllie Pastor Schramm**  
HOLD Berlin, Germany

## ONE GODLY EXPERIENCE

**L**ike a pop song often played on the radio or TV, a beautiful tune stayed with me after the POWER WEEKEND that was held in Berlin, Germany last March 9-11, 2001. It followed me to the streets, on the bus, in the underground railway station, to the supermarket, at home while slicing onions, while vacuuming dirt, at work nursing the sick, extracting blood from donors, or even while conversing with someone.

### ***My life is in You, LORD....***

kept ringing in my ears. After x-times of replay, I suddenly became aware of its meaning, its depth. The Lord, for sure, was telling me something.

From out of the blue, a question came: Have I done enough to please Him? I didn't quite know what to answer. One knows that the word *enough* can be relative, *a little* may mean *very big* while *too many* may just be *a few* to our humble God. At last, I came up with this line of thought: ***"nothing is scarce or a-plenty in the eyes of the Lord, as long as one is pure of heart and sincere in (his) intent."*** I began to work on God's message at my own slow pace. And, I suppose, that's where the CFC's objectives fit in.

Last November 2000, I attended a Christian Life Program, not to find God (for I found Him long, long time ago) but to strengthen my faith, to grow more spiritually and to change my somewhat reserved approach to Catholicism. I enjoyed early Christian teachings at home and in the schools that I attended. Still I closed my eyes and ears to charism for fear of being cultish — an erroneous thought, I realized. To be able to concentrate, I chose to pray alone. I love the quietness, solemnity and the atmosphere of churches and cathedrals. The more ancient it is, the better. For me, it has an aura of holiness, goodness and safeness. As if nothing could happen bad to you while in there. For a while, all the man-made

chaos outside is silenced.

As my age increases in number (!), I would like to make some personal changes, i. e., to bring that "church" with me everywhere to sing and praise the Lord ***with*** others. I am grateful and happy that through CFC, my simple wish is in the process of being fulfilled.

At the Power Weekend Conference, His Excellency, the Phil. Ambassador to Germany, Jose Abeto Zaide, warmly welcomed everybody: our speakers Nolet Ladrido with wife Mila, Caloy Yturzaeta, Bong Rabaja, Reggie Ragujos from CFC Manila and our own indefatigable chaplain, Fr. Erasio Flores, SVD, and the participants who came from all over Germany and Vienna. It was an enthusiastic crowd, praising the Lord, singing with all their might. My, I thought I was attending a Ricky Martin concert!. Only, Ricky wasn't present, but the center of the event was and ***is*** the "MEGASTAR OF ALL.....***GOD*** the Almighty!!!"

No doubt, the Power Weekend in Berlin left a positive impact in my life. I'm sure I ain't seen nothin' yet and am optimistic that the best is yet to come.

# Tagalog Edition



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