

A TRIBUTE TO OUR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

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Reggie McNeal, in his book *A Work of Heart - How God Shaped Spiritual Leaders*, quoted anxiously:

“We are desperate for spiritual leaders in all these various spheres in our culture. Our nation needs spiritual leadership not just clergy but also in our neighbourhood, our board rooms, our school rooms, our living rooms, our emergency rooms, our locker rooms, our art studio and our battlefield.”

The author was describing what he considered off-centre interest of spiritual leadership in churches. For years spiritual leadership have been exclusive to the clergy, meaning pastors, elders and a few church workers. They are expected to provide spiritual guidance and inspiration to all the members of the church community. They teach people in the church how to pray, how to read the Bible do evangelism and be a good Christian. This is spiritual leadership in its tradition.

But the world is hurting, needing comfort and healing. There is a great spiritual awakening in the world today. People are in search of meaning and purpose in life. The pastors cannot do it all. This, in the first place, was not the way Jesus intends his church to function as the salt and the light of the earth. He empowers all his disciples with the power of the Spirit to live within the realm of the Kingdom of God, to proclaim the gospel of life.

When Paul said in Ephesians 4:11, “He Himself gave some to be apostle, some prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers,” he did not mean a group or clergy that will carry all the burden of the church and evangelization of the world. Instead, he refers to the whole church community being endowed by God for work of service and edification.

This means the leadership gifts are given to doctors, athletes, lawyers, teachers, engineers, students and all the various segments of human society. They are endowed with these gifts for spiritual leadership in the various professions, businesses, education and other societal units. The gifts were not intended exclusively to operate inside the church, but it has the power to function in the offices, courtroom, board rooms, art studio, basketball courts and even in battlefield.

In this issue of the Chronicles we would like to honour and recognize the spiritual leaders of our church community.

May the Lord continue to bless Word International Ministry.

Rene Nepomuceno



God has been, and still is, so faithful. When He called me the first time and I did not listen, He summoned me with a jolt through my husband. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and personal Savior last February 14, 2003. Since then, the joy of knowing and serving God has given me strength to overcome all the trials in my life: suffering from a head injury, having a son stow away, and a daughter who committed suicide. But God is so great, He called up these kids of mine to His ministry. Now, my husband, myself, and my five children are serving the Lord.

Currently, I am a college instructor in one of the branches of a state university. I'm teaching mathematics, earth science, environmental science, and biology. God has always given me the wisdom to share His goodness as I give lectures and discuss things with my students. Relating God's awesome deeds in my biology and earth science lessons have never been a problem to me, and I thank God for that. In an academic environment where I work, God has given me the way to show His light in me with the things that I do and show to my colleagues and students. With sincerity and obedience to God's commands, I know that somehow, as God's vehicle, touching lives is a goal.

Looking back, I am in awe at how God has done amazing things in my life and my family, most especially for the children. From March to July of 2009, I couldn't sleep well because of what God has impressed in my heart - to set up the church's school. When it is in accordance to God's plan, everything will just fall into place. It doesn't matter that I was not equipped professionally as a preschool teacher. I graduated as a Bachelor of Science in Elementary and Secondary Education, majored in Math with M.A. Ed. Specialization in Reading and an Ed.D. diploma but had no experience in handling a school. However, God has given me everything to work with: the location, the supplies for a preschool classroom, the workforce, even the carpenter for the school fixtures! Everything just followed.

On November 2009, WIN preschool was set up. There were only three of us - myself, Sis Evan Cuizon and Sis Arriane Olvido who had just graduated from PNU Cadiz as a teacher. The preschool started with 7 pupils. The next school year (2010-2011), 18 pupils were able to enroll and were promoted to the next level. In school year 2011-2012, 65 pupils enrolled and were promoted. In the year 2012-2013, God gave WIN Cadiz an astounding 108 pupils and for the current school year 2013-2014, a total of 143 pupils, 36 of which are in grade one! Hallelujah!!

Currently, there are six teachers serving full time in the school. With God's grace, pupils in grade one will be proceeding to grade two this school year 2014-2015. WORD International School in WIN Cadiz is looking forward to offering complete elementary education in a year or two by God's grace. To GOD be the glory!!!

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God is Both in The Church and in The Marketplace

Sis. Cristina Estepa



It was on August 26, 1983, when I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ. I accepted Him as my Lord God and Savior. I was on my 3rd year as regular employee of Home Development Mutual Fund, also known as Pag-IBIG Fund. When God found me in the marketplace, I thought it was just an ordinary event of my life, not knowing that it was already God's ordained beginning for my life's journey with Him. As a person, I grew up in a simple and ordinary family. I used to imitate my father, who was my classroom teacher when I was in grade five. Although I was just an average pupil as far as class standing is concern, I needed to strive harder to prove my father's worthiness as a teacher.

I enjoyed my childhood days growing up in a remote town of Taytay, Palawan. My parents were not perfect parents but they were responsible. When my mother died on November 07, 1981, I was the only child who has graduated and has a job. But God was so gracious to us that after long years, all of us seven children became professionals and have jobs of our own.

Having loving parents with different religious affiliations, gave me the belief that I have abundant faith. We joined our father in the Catholic church regularly every Sunday and we also attended the protestant church with our mother when they have foreign visitors, visiting their church. However, this proved me wrong especially when I was already living by myself as a college student here in Manila. I got confused of my faith, freed myself by engaging in vices like smoking, drinking wine and enjoying night life in discos after class.

But when I was invited by an officemate and a close friend to attend a "fellowship night" at Intercontinental Hotel Makati, my intention was just to discover what was inside that well known hotel. I had no idea that it was already God's plan for me to know Him deeply. It may be a surprise and somehow a new experience for me but I recalled what I had discovered underneath my mother's pillow when her body was removed by the funeral staff from that hospital bed where she died - a small red Gideon Bible. I heard in the fellowship night the song, we usually sang in my mother's church, "Alive, Alive, Alive Forevermore". When I reached home, I immediately searched and brought out that small red Gideon Bible and started reading. I saw some

underlined scriptures that gave me some thoughts that *Nanay* was with the Lord.

From then on, I did not stop searching for God. In my workplace, I started to form small groups, conduct Bible studies, held midweek worship services and attended any available seminar related to spiritual growth and maturity, while at the same time actively involving in the church ministries at WIN Manila. With God's grace, He had sustained me so much, not because of my church and workplace involvement but because of the ministry I dearly loved, the prayer intercession. I am a "dawn watch prayer intercessor" - I only stop communing with God when I talk to people. God guided me to pursue my knowledge of him by enrolling in the seminary. I took up a Masteral degree in Christian Leadership and graduated after six years since I was taking classes after office hours. I was the only graduate from the government agency at ASCM during our graduation ceremony on 2003.

God continued to reveal His plans but always reminded me of His calling that I will be more beneficial to him in my secular job while I also serve him as prayer ministry head and associate pastor. After my ASCM graduation, God inspired me to start building a prayer house and a small sanctuary at the lot owned by father in Palawan. Today, it is operational as one of the outreach churches of WIN Manila, with designated pastors, faithful and committed workers and significant number of attendees. The church is blessed by two other outreaches in the town proper and another outreach in an outskirts *barangay*, a 4-hour walk from the church sanctuary.

On April 2013, when my Senior Pastor, Pastor Abel Raby accepted his missionary assignment to Korea, the leadership of WIN Philippines had assigned me as the new Senior Pastor of WIN Manila (Pedro Gil). I hesitantly accepted the mandate of God, but was humbled and assured that He will be with me.

On September 2013, God proved again His faithfulness to His promises and after 33 years in Pag-IBIG Fund, my promotion came as a full-pledged department manager for housing loan support, handling the conversion of mortgage titles at NCR branch. Likewise, He blessed our midweek worship service at

Shaw Mandaluyong City every Wednesday and the worship hour every Friday at lunch break. Employees came to know the Lord by joining the 30 hour praise and worship. And because my authority has widened, God gave me 93 people as staff under my direct supervision. I always pray for their salvation, not excluding my driver, who got born again while driving (for he has no choice except to listen while I was sharing with him the Four Spiritual Laws).

Finally, God entrusted to me the leadership and coordination for WORDWIDE Intercessors Network (W.I.N) which aimed to connect and intensify the praying movement at every local church of Word International Ministries. After my appointment as Senior

Pastor last April, I felt guilty that I was still working in the marketplace, but God reminded me of His word in Colossians 3:23 "Whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as working for the Lord not for men. Since you know that you will receive inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving". Today, I should serve Him more, for through my life, God reflects His nature and likewise reflects the reality of my faith. My work then is my worship, and my workplace is my mission field. As I continually lead WIN Manila as a Pastor, the organization as Prayer Intercessor/Coordinator and Pag-IBIG Fund as a department manager, I will remain faithful to my relationship with Him and continue to proclaim His goodness until He comes. All glory and honor belongs to God alone.

Ministering in The Last Hour

Sis. Berna Malillin

I grew up in a very religious family, wherein my faith was developed to follow religious rituals. What I believed was based on the background of my grandmother's religiosity. In my young adult years, I've learned that life was not just simply religiosity but far more complex than I thought. This developed my curiosity and I started to question myself what life is all about. I was then led to pursue a career that cares about human life - I thought of the nursing profession as a vocation to care for human life.

After I finished my Nursing Degree in 1996, I decided to stay in the most progressive part of Manila. When I passed my nursing board examination in 1997, I find myself unhappy of working in the hospital. Then, I sought more work in the different fields of nursing. In 1998, my life was led to work in the Christian Mission organization that helped sick and abandoned children. In my line of work I felt the fulfillment and joy in serving poor and needy children in the poor areas of Manila. I thought my life will be alright by serving the children. But I was wrong - the more I pushed myself harder to care for others, the more I failed. I found life more difficult to handle, and because of too much burden at times, I felt frustrated. In the long run the mission work became a burden instead of joy and I developed the tiredness in serving others because I can't do anything to change their situation. The more I worked with children, the more I felt bad that poor people became poorer and had to battle to live and survive from the difficulty of life. There were moments when I questioned God about His purpose for humanity and why humans need to suffer. Then I sought the help of our Pastor inside the organization, and he led me to receive the Lord Jesus Christ in the year

2004. Since then I felt lighter because I surrendered my burden to Him and felt the complete joy of serving Him and others deep inside my heart.

My joy was not for long because of a need to leave my work in the mission for a good job opportunity as a staff nurse in Ireland. My heart was deeply in sorrow of leaving my family behind and my work in the Philippines. However, I was comforted by God's promises in Jeremiah 29:11. On January 2006, I left the Philippines with God's promises in my heart.

In Ireland, I continued to seek the Lord - I thank God for a good friend who introduced me to the church of WIN Ireland. After eight months of my stay in Ireland, my husband's visa was approved and eventually my son followed too. The Lord is so faithful to His promises, and the Lord blesses my work as a nurse, and gave our family the comfort and prosperity of our life. The Lord even entrusted to us His ministry to care for a group of brethren in the church.

However in March 2009, my life was shaken when my father was diagnosed with cancer and within three months my father was placed in palliative care. In the last hour of my father's life I was with him and I led him to pray and eventually he died peacefully. Although I was struggling with the death of my father and with my walk in the Lord, still the Lord kept reminding me of His promises. In light of my father's death, I find that being present in the last hour of my dying father is very special in the sense that the Lord used my life to become a nurse to minister to him - this is also the same for the people in my workplace, at the

at the end of their lives. The Lord blessed my profession to further study palliative care in nursing. In 2012, I graduated as Master of Science in Palliative Care. Then, I was given an opportunity to be assigned to support people with learning disability. In the last hour of their lives, I am able to impart the Word of God, pray for them and lead them to Jesus Christ.

In Palliative Care, spiritual care is part of the quality care provided in view of the holistic approach model. However, based on my personal observation, the spiritual care of a person's life was not fully supported and developed by Palliative Care in respect to individual faith. But for me, this is an area of opportunity that God is showing me to further minister with unbelievers who are at the end of their lives, leading them to our Lord Jesus

Christ.



Looking back in my life, I never thought that the Lord will use my profession and my work place here in Ireland as my mission field. How amazing to think how the Lord used my struggle and difficult situation to be used by God for His own glory.

At present, by God's grace and through my WIN Ireland family, my faith is growing as I continue to seek the will of God in my life.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Thank you for being with us for the 2013 releases of Chronicles. If you have suggestions or would like to send in your contributions, please drop an email to sdcirujales@gmail.com and we'll make sure to consider them for the upcoming issues!

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God's Bivocational Calling

Ptr. Martin Rommel Cruzado

"Am I an engineer who happens to be a Pastor...or a Pastor who happens to be an engineer?"

This has been a baffling question for me since the day I was ordained as a bivocational Pastor—a layperson as some refer to.

Serving God in a bivocational ministry is life-fulfilling to me now, but in my early years of serving the said question has concerned me in terms of my pastoral identity. Maybe I would make more sense if I begin sharing the starting point of a journey of so-called "God's calling" in my life.

As best as I can remember, my faith journey started very early in my life. My parents were very active leaders of a Catholic Charismatic community (Cursillo). My siblings and I were deeply exposed to the religiosity coupled with high emotions expressed in this group. For me, belong-

ing to this community were happy childhood days. As kids, we loved this time because there were a lot of celebrations, happy singing, and my most-favored holiday outings. But then one day it suddenly ceased and was disbanded. I was very sad and intrigued as to the reason behind the ending of a festive community. So I've eavesdropped in one of the adult conversation and found out the cause was a scandal of immorality with the top leader of the group. At that early age, it already dawned on me that leadership was very critical in a group or organization. As John Maxwell states "Everything rises and falls in leadership".

My high school years came and my mother enrolled me in a Catholic School. The first day of class was exciting and as any young man trying to impress his new teacher and classmates, I had a very witty answer to a question posted that I never realized would propel me to new avenues I never thought even existed at that time.

"Why did you choose to study in a Catholic School?" asked my teacher.

"Because I want to be a priest. This is a preparation for my priesthood!" I replied.

Surely so, the whole class was impressed! But actually, the real answer was that the school was just a walking distance to our house! And it was actually my mom's decision since she was afraid that I was still too young to travel far (I was actually two years younger than the others in my batch). And so this boasting resulted in me being selected as an altar boy.

Obviously, my priesthood plans did not materialize. NOT just because I got born again during my junior year but due to the realization that I don't possess the great gift of celibacy (I already had a girlfriend in my second year in high school)!

Junior year was another different experience as the Lord came to our lives. My father got born again in the Middle East and in one of his annual vacations, he introduced the Gospel to us. It was not an easy acceptance. There was a spirit of awkwardness, and sometimes even subtle debates filled the house! I scholarly ar-

gued on our church traditions while my father anchored his arguments from the words of the Bible... How could I win??? And so I lost the battle and so our Papa won the whole family to the Lord! Praise God!!!

Since then I was on fire in serving God in the ministry! I quickly learned the musical instruments to join the Music team. I also became a leader in our youth group. In one of our youth outdoor meetings, I remember the pastor preached on the story of Daniel who served God faithfully in the midst of a corrupted Babylon. At the end, I saw myself responding at the altar call of whoever wants to serve the Lord as a "full-time" pastor or missionary. I did not have the full understanding of what was I responding to at that time but believe me, our God takes our vows seriously.

College graduation came and I immediately landed a job as a cadet engineer in a local Telecom company. Then a pastor reminded me of the forgotten calling and encouraged me to enter the Seminary. The idea totally scared me, and so like a typical Jonah, I ran away to go abroad and worked in Taiwan. With the same folly of Jonah thinking that I can run away from the calling of the Almighty, I fell in the same trap.

On the first fellowship I attended, I was so glad at first that no one knows me. At last, I can just be an attendee...so I thought. But I found out the hard way that we cannot contain nor extinguish the fire of God's call in our hearts. I controlled myself for the longest time but I could not withstand that feeling of seeing no one playing the guitar, so I volunteered to play. I also could not withstand the out-of-context interpretation of the Word, and so I preached. And most of all, I could not withstand the feeling of the seekers and the lost trying to find their way to the Lord with no one to guide them, and so I led.

At the end of my stint in Taiwan, after almost 3 years, we were able to start a church that grew to about 400 in a couple of years! From then on I recommitted myself to God that I would rather be a

faithful Daniel than a runaway Jonah!

When I went back to Philippines, I enrolled in the seminary, and served in our local church in full-time ministry. After a year, I got married and had our firstborn. But after a year and a half, I had to stop my schooling due to financial needs and had to get back to secular work to support my family. I was so sad at this point as my commitment to God's calling did not turn out the way I planned. At that time, I felt that I failed God's calling in two major ways – in getting married and in getting a job! But God comforted me through the life of a husband-Peter and a tent-making Paul. Yep, nobody's perfect!!!



But God has His perfect plan. Praise God for He has corrected my spiritual eye lens and saw it clearly now that "NO bivocational minister should allow himself to feel or be treated as a second-class pastor!". **You are where God has led you and you can lead where you are!**

I've seen this truth happen again and again in my bivocational ministry to God. When I found a job and moved to Singapore, miracles of salvation happened. Two of us in our company are believers and God was able to use us to connect our colleagues back to God. Most of them are now faithfully serving as leaders in our church.

Also, just two years ago, when another recession hit our industry, my company management decided to shut down the Singapore plant to transfer the factory to Taiwan, where operation cost is way much cheaper. My team and I were one of the selected few that was offered an assignment to facilitate the transfer. The

job assignment was for at least six months. After that, will it be the end of my secular job? In my mind at that time, was a thought provoking question, "Is this the Lord's sign to go full-time?" But the Lord had a more exciting plan. He opened an old door of mission opportunity in the midst of this crisis.

Still remember the church we planted 17 years ago? Guess what? It's still there standing strong! It was not a coincidence that the church sanctuary was relocated just a walking-distance away from the Taiwan factory where we'll be working at!!! And so I was able to start a mid-week Bible study, visited factory dormitories, and preached on Sunday services. Indeed, God leads us to lead where we are!

On the last few months, I was also able to bring my family with me to Taiwan. My wife was also given the opportunity to conduct a worship seminar entitled the "Heart of an Artist".

There are many more testimonies of how God used my vocation to reach out to people in my workplace. For God, there are no secular or spiritual boundaries in our vocation - whether at church, home, or workplace, the truth is ALL belongs to Him. "Your calling" said Meister Eckhart to the clergy of his day, "cannot make you holy; but you can make it holy." A call to the ministry is not a call to be holy, as if his being a minister would sanctify a man; rather, the ministry is a calling for a holy man who has been made holy some other way than by the work he does. The true order is: "God makes a man holy by blood, and fire, and sharp discipline. Then He calls the man to some special work, and the man being holy makes that work holy in turn..." – A.W. Tozer

I've realized that my so-called "bivocational calling" was all the doing of our Sovereign Good Shepherd patiently guiding me through it all. **Indeed, "God does not call those who are equipped; He equips those whom He has called" -Smith Wigglesworth.**