

ONE VOICE magazine.

WHATMAG

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FREEDOM

RELEASING THOSE WHO ARE BOUND

WHY PRISON MINISTRY?

A Wrecked Life made
W H O L E

WHERE IS JUSTICE?

Our Pandemic Dream Wedding

**HIGIT PA SA KALAYAAN
SA REHAS NG BAKAL**

isang kwento ng
pagtitiwala

HAVING AN
INMATE FATHER

UNSTOPPABLE EVEN AFTER
RAPE AND IMPRISONMENT

THE INVISIBLE
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“

Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.

John 16:22

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Touching Freedom

When Jesus walked the earth, many people expected Him to mount a revolution and overthrow the Romans. He didn't. He went on a revolution of love instead; one that caused freedom to flow in the hearts of many. Jesus radically shifted society with His actions and words without once grabbing a sword to kill a soldier, critic, or religious hypocrite.

Today, Jesus invites us to join Him in this revolution. He invites us to demonstrate love towards those who need Him the most.

We're forgetting that Jesus did not only give sermons. He also healed the lame and the leper. He dined with tax collectors and sinners. He did not mind if He was in the presence of a Samaritan woman, or if He helped an adulteress rise from a near-stoning by an angry mob.

He was a Light unto a dark, dangerous world. Even now, this conversation is found in the Bible:

"Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?' And the King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.'" --Matthew 25:37-40

Jesus identifies with the broken, the sick, and the forgotten. He identifies with the one behind bars, the hungry, and the desperate.

One Voice Magazine: FREEDOM

In this second issue of *One Voice Magazine*, we explore what freedom truly is, and how Jesus can set the captives free. We dive into stories where Jesus deals with the abused, the depressed, the fatherless, and the imprisoned. In fact, we make it a point to give a voice to those whom society refers to as “Persons Deprived of Liberty” or PDL. What is their story? What are their yearnings? How do we reach them?

We also turn the relevant page in this season of sickness and death to find out how God can bring freedom to a struggling business in this pandemic, or how life can be birthed even with all the complications of a deadly virus. In this magazine, we find out how benched dreams can take wing, and how romance can find a way even in lockdown. Furthermore, we read the thoughts of a battalion commander strengthening his troops against the invisible COVID-19 virus.

For us Christians, lockdowns should not stop us from showing love. In fact, *One Voice Magazine* was able to launch an endeavor last July called “Biyayang Bitbit” to reach out to the PDL of Cainta and Manila. We made the most of our new normal by extending kindness toward the PDL through the initiative of giving. By purchasing grocery goods for the PDL via our mobile phones and laptops, the team and campaign partners/readers creatively bent bars and lockdown restrictions!

I sincerely hope that this magazine issue makes you excited to behold Jesus more as He sets His people free. We are called to be a LIGHT unto the world; to be just like Him. Lockdowns should not stop us from shining. We cannot chain ourselves to fear. No, the Lion of the tribe of Judah must roar among us in FREEDOM!

It is my prayer that you enjoy this magazine and reflect on your own responsibilities as a light-bearer and world changer. May you have the freedom to live with courage!

One with you in this journey of life,




Janina Marie Rivera
EIC, *One Voice Magazine*



ONEVOICE

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Jan-April: A New Direction

Community thrust: Encouraging the Medical Frontliners

May-August: Freedom

Community thrust: Sharing Grocery Items with Prisoners

September-December: Home & Away from Home

Community thrust: Blessing the Tribes and the Displaced

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Our pandemic Dream Wedding

The testimony of John and Debbie Limcangco
As told to Nicole Gusto

Wedding Dreams

Weddings are joyous occasions. For a woman, it is the manifestation of her dreams and fairytale happy endings. Weddings celebrate the promise of love, setting it in a grand display with cherished friends and family.

Unfortunately, the pandemic changed the face of weddings.

For John and Debbie Limcangco, marrying during the pandemic became a whirlwind experience full of disappointments, heartache, and surprising twists. But as they banked on God's grace, their wedding became a miracle, a testimony forged from the difficulties of the national lockdowns.

The Pandemic Postpones the Dream Wedding

"When John proposed in March 2020, the pandemic wasn't serious yet," Debbie shared. "On the night we got engaged, Duterte announced that there would be a lockdown."

The couple thought that it wouldn't be a huge problem. They still had time since they were planning to get married in a year. But the pandemic continued, and quarantine measures stayed. Weeks turned into long months. Soon, a year was about to pass since the proposal, making the couple feel frustrated. The pandemic wasn't ending. By this time, financial constraints added to their challenges.

"I couldn't prepare funds for the wedding," John shared. "In the first months of the lockdown, my savings were spent on necessities and food. What made it even harder was that we didn't see each other for months."

Debbie was from Quezon City, while John was from Bulacan. Checkpoints were strict, and it would take around six months before the couple could physically see each other.

"Inisip ko na lang na at least nabigay ko na yung singsing (At least, I was able to give her the ring)," John said, remembering his worries.

Planning for the Pandemic Wedding

Fortunately, the couple persevered, and after months of waiting, they finally decided to plan the wedding seriously despite the national circumstances. However, weighing dreams against the practicality of a celebration became a struggle.

"We wanted a big wedding, but we couldn't have that," Debbie shared.

"Options and resources were limited," John said. "Guests and venue options were limited; planning was limited in all aspects."

It came to a point when the groom was willing to splurge all his savings for a grander wedding, so that his fiancée wouldn't be disappointed.

But expectations had to be trimmed down.

Surrendering the Dream to God

Debbie shared, "I prayed to God. *Habang tumatagal [yung pandemic], tinatanong ko kay God na kung ang gusto ko ba ang mag goglorify sa Kaniya, kasi lahat ng gusto ko ay hindi nangyayari.* (As the pandemic continued, I asked God if the wedding dream I had in mind was going to glorify Him; if that's what he wanted. I wondered because all the things I wanted for the wedding weren't happening.)"

Debbie decided to surrender her wedding dreams to God. She prayed that He would be the One to make the celebration come to pass in His own way--in a way that would bring glory to Him.

Originally, the couple intended to marry in December 2021, but after a *pamamanhikan* with their families, it was decided that they would marry in April 2021. They realized that circumstances could change, and it would be better to marry as soon as possible. When they received the confirmation from their family members to wed earlier, the couple experienced peace.

Another Roadblock

Unfortunately, COVID-19 cases shot up once more in the summer of 2021, plunging the nation into another season of stricter quarantine measures.

The couple had already gotten a gown, confirmed a guest list, paid a venue, and booked suppliers for the April wedding. Then less than two weeks before their date, the Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine was enforced. Their original guest list numbering to 30 was not allowed. Only 10 people at a time were allowed to gather, which meant that the couple could only invite around 8 guests.

“Bayad na labat (Everything was already paid for),” Debbie shared. We hoped instead that it would all be better after a month.”

“Lord, bakit ganun (Lord, why is it like this?),” John shared how he prayed to God in desperation. *“Akala ko gift mo si Debbie* (I thought Debbie was your gift for me). When I prayed for a partner in life, You gave me her. Why is it so hard to be with her?”

They managed to get some refunds from the suppliers, but plans and guest lists had to be adjusted again. For the third time, they were going to change their wedding date, and they had to accept that their wedding would be whittled down to an even smaller celebration.

“Willing na ako mag-civil wedding (I was already willing to have a civil wedding). Anything to be with her,” John said.

The couple almost fought. The bride wanted to maintain a standard—at least to have a beautiful wedding celebration they could be proud of. Meanwhile, the groom admitted that he became too practical, only prioritizing a successful union.

The couple managed to resolve these issues by meeting halfway. They decided to make



a compromise on their individual expectations. As Debbie surrendered her wedding dreams to God, she decided to be content. Meanwhile, John decided to trust in God’s timing and provision.

“Stepping out in faith became a deeper meaning for me,” said John, as he surrendered to God’s guidance.

God’s Blessing in the Midst of Postponements

Despite the many roadblocks, the couple recognized God’s redeeming hand in the details. What turned out to be a disappointing time became an occasion with silver linings outweighing the heartache of postponed dreams.

“We wanted an indoor air-conditioned wedding, but because of the restrictions, we moved to an *al fresco* venue from the same venue,” Debbie shared.

It turned out that the garden setting was more beautiful than the indoor area they first wanted.

As the busy bride coordinated with her suppliers and wedding guests, John was working on finding a suitable place where they could live. Despite the financial constraints brought about by the pandemic, miracles occurred.

“Someone gifted us with a car,” John said. The couple only had to pay for mortgages, but they were so happy they could move around more independently.

Originally, John found an apartment in Sucat, but because they suddenly had a car, parking expenses forced him to scout for another place. A business project opened in Bulacan, the groom’s home province, and so they looked for a house there.

They drove around subdivisions, looking for available homes. At the end of the day, Debbie urged John if they could check out one last house. “*Isa pa* (One more),” Debbie said. “*Tignan lang natin* (Let’s look at the last house).”

The last house they saw was spacious, clean, and it had a garage. Sadly, the rent per month was more than what they could afford.

After meeting with the owner of the house, they drove away disappointed once more. Then their cell phone suddenly rang. The owner of the house was calling them!

“*Tawaran niyo ako* (Bargain the rent with me),” the owner of the house said. Apparently, he liked the couple very much. “*Kunin niyo na. Mas gusto ko na kayo ang makakakuba.* (Please rent from me. I’d prefer to have tenants like you than entrust this house to someone else.)”

The owner knew that we were just about to get married, and that Debbie was an executive producer, while John was a pastor. Despite the odds, the Lord had provided a car and a home for the

couple.

The Wedding Day

Finally, the couple’s wedding day fell on the day after the bride’s birthday on May 9, 2021.

The couple was surprised. Beautiful flowers and decorations transformed the intimate garden venue. *Ninongs, ninangs*, a few friends, and immediate family members came. The couple only had 20 on-site guests, but God Himself filled their ceremony, making it a gorgeous event they could be proud of.

Debbie said, “It was as if God was confirming that I was marrying the right person. His provision and guidance followed us.” Every good and perfect gift really does come from Him.”

John agreed, “God is the Great Provider. We didn’t have a budget for a wedding, but everything was paid for. God made that day very beautiful. We cannot underestimate God’s grace. You can always settle for ‘*okay lang*,’ but God will give you something that will wow you—something amazing for you.”

The stressful season of wedding planning became a glowing testimony of God’s faithfulness. Despite the challenges, God can still make weddings a grand display of His love—as long as He is at the center of it.

For Debbie and John, surrendering their expectations allowed God to paint His own version of what the “best” wedding could be.

John took up pastoral studies in FEBIAS College of Bible. He has been serving the Lord as a pastor in various ministry fields and missions for the past 9 years.

Debbie has a bachelor’s degree in communications. She works as a professional digital marketer.

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Nicole is part-nerd and part-artist. She’s a passionate speech pathologist, writer, dreamer, occasional ventriloquist, and a total geek for stories. She dances through words and writes to speak life to readers. She also regularly blogs at

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A Psalm in This World's Pain

By Jackielyn Beray Caña

"Giving birth should be your greatest achievement, not your greatest fear"-- Jane Weideman.

An Anxious Pregnancy

How can you set aside fear when you know that you will give birth in the midst of a pandemic—a time when you see death all around, and when cases of COVID-19 patients rise every single day? Staying at home is the new normal, while going out is strictly prohibited--especially to a pregnant woman!

Three months before my scheduled delivery, the government released an order to place the National Capital Region under lockdown. At first, I was alright with this restriction because I'm the type of person who loves to stay at home. However, as time went by, I started to be anxious about my pregnancy. I had a dermoid cyst in my left ovary, and it was growing alongside the fetus in my womb.

A dermoid cyst is a benign tumor (usually) composed of a diversity of tissues which include hair, teeth, bone, thyroid, etc. I knew I had something wrong in my left ovary even before I married because of the irregularity of my menstrual cycle and pain on my left side. Also, I married late—I was already in my thirties and feared I'd never give birth. However, I had a desire deep in my heart to have a baby.

Grabbing Hold of a Promise

My husband and I took this desire to the Lord. One morning, during my devotions, the Lord spoke to me through the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1:20:

The LORD remembered Hannah. So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

I told God, "Lord, if you remembered Hannah, then you will remember me!" I held on to this verse as God's promise for me that truly, I would bear a child, and that I would offer this child to the Lord.

True enough, I conceived. There were still concerns that plagued my heart, such as the position of the baby and the dermoid cyst in my womb. In an ultrasound, we found out that the position of the cyst prevented the baby from properly moving to the birth canal. My

husband and I prayed every night for the baby, laying hands on my tummy, and asking God to switch the position of my cyst and the baby.

God miraculously intervened. In one check-up, the doctor exclaimed, “Wow, ang galing! Nagpalit na sila ng puwesto ni baby. Grabe ang tapang ni baby at parang kini-kick niya ang cyst mo pataas para makaayos siya ng puwesto sa labasan niya.” (Wow, this is great! The position of your baby and the cyst have switched. Your courageous baby has kicked the cyst upward to fix her position for her birth.)

I told her, “Praise God! Answered prayer tayo, Doc. Ang amazing talaga ni Lord! Wala talagang imposible sa Kan’ya. Gabi-gabi po kasi, habang nagdarasal kami mag-asawa at kinakausap si baby, nararamdaman po namin na nagre-response po talaga si baby. Grabe pa nga po yan pag nagbabasa ng Scripture si husband, si baby akala ko sumasayaw at pumapalakpak sa loob, umaalon-alon talaga ang tiyan ko.” (This is an answered prayer, Doc. God is amazing! Nothing is impossible with Him. Every night, when we pray for our baby, we feel her response. When my husband reads Scripture to her, I feel the baby dancing and clapping in my womb. My womb is alive with movement.)

The Need for Reassurance

Yes, I do believe in God. I pray. I know that He will not leave me nor forsake me, and that everything will work together for my good; but deep within my heart, I still needed reassurance from God that my baby was going to be fine.

There were so many nights and days I found myself crying because of the many what-ifs. What if I went for a regular check-up or ultrasound, and I came in contact with someone who had COVID-19? What would happen to me and my baby? Would we both survive? What if I did, but the baby didn’t?

Thanks be to God because His Word never fails to empower and encourage us to put our trust in Him! My husband and I consistently prayed for God’s protection and assurance. These verses spoke to our hearts:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and

Your staff, they comfort me.—Psalm 23:4

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. —Psalm 91:1-6

Psalm 23 and Psalm 91 became our daily declarations of faith. As we continued to develop intimacy with Jesus, I felt the complete assurance that God had the best plans for us and our baby. His plan was to bless us with a child as He had promised.

His thoughts have always been higher than ours, and His ways far better than ours. With this assurance of God’s protection, I proceeded with my regular check-ups.

Birthing Psalm Olivia

I smiled and answered, “Seven is the number of Jesus. It means ‘grace and completeness.’ This baby belongs to God. I know for sure that He will protect my baby.”



Three days before my expected normal delivery, my husband and I went to the hospital for a check-up. My obstetrician told me that there was a high possibility for me to undergo a cesarean operation instead of a normal delivery. The dermoid cyst had become bigger than expected, and I was not showing any signs of contraction—which I should have had by that day.

I felt how worried my doctor was, but my heart was so calm and peaceful. I vividly remember telling her, “Dra., *nag-usap na po kami ni baby na sa June 7 siya dapat lumabas dahil iyon ang pangako ni Lord.*” (Dra, I’ve spoken to my baby. She and I agreed that she would come out on June 7 because that is the promise of the Lord).

I saw the bewildered look in her eyes as she asked, “Why June 7?”

I smiled and answered, “Seven is the number of Jesus. It means ‘grace and completeness.’ This baby belongs to God. I know for sure that He will protect my baby.”

Lo and behold, on June 7, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., I gave birth to a beautiful and healthy baby girl. We named her Psalm Olivia Beray Caña, declaring that she would be an anointed worshipper of Jesus whose heart was to spread the Gospel and make the name of Jesus known. She is the promised child to me and my husband and to the family, and like Hannah of the Bible, I have offered her to the Lord. With God’s grace and favor, I am certain that she will grow in the wisdom and knowledge of Christ, and that she will be a blessing to many.



God’s Goodness Amidst Challenges

It was not easy to be pregnant and to give birth to a child during the pandemic. A lot of procedures and safety protocols were administered, which resulted to my waiting in the hospital lobby for about 6 hours or more for my COVID-19 test results—while having my contractions! Our bills tripled. No visitors were allowed; not even my husband was allowed in the labor room. I was on my own, experiencing the greatest pain I ever had. But God was there. He was and will always be by my side.

We experienced God’s miracle after miracle. He provided for all of our bills. He saved my baby from complications, even though she released her waste already while she was still in my uterus. And even if I had a cesarean operation instead of a normal delivery, my dermoid cyst was removed because of the operation. God was with me in the hospital.

I am reminded of the goodness and love of God. If God the Father did not withhold His Son Jesus Christ to die for us who are sinners, what else in the world will He withhold from us? Is there anything too difficult and impossible for God?

Right now, my daughter is 1 year and 2 months old. She is a constant reminder of God’s grace, love, and faithfulness to me and my husband. Her birth in the midst of death all around is God’s assurance of protection and consecration. For me, my daughter is a sign of hope to the hopeless, a joy to those who are mourning, and a psalm in the midst of this world’s pain.

Jackieelyn Beray Caña is the mother of her miracle baby, Psalm Olivia. She is happily married to Neil Oliver who is a youth leader at the Shekinah Global Harvest Church. Jackie is a missionary by heart and a teacher by profession. Her vision is to reach more people for God and make Jesus known in her classroom and in the mountains. She is also the Founder of Called to Bless—an organization whose advocacy it is to educate people on how to honor God through health and finances. She is a nature lover, wedding planner, and “Mompreneur.”

ISANG KWENTO NG PAGTITIWALA: AKO AT ANG PANGINOON

By John David Bautista

Noon, akala ko ang pag-asa ay namamana. Kumbaga, kung nasa maayos na relasyon at estado ang mga magulang mo noong isinilang ka, napakapalad mo. In my younger years, ganyan ang perspective ko, na iyonong mga ganitong tao, sila lang ang may karapatang mangarap at magkaroon ng pag-asa sa buhay. Ngunit kung ang pamilya ay sira, hindi na ito maayos at forever ng broken ang relationships.

Ako si John David, dalawampu't-limang taong gulang. Bunso ako sa apat na magkakapatid at lumaki akong walang tatay na kinagisnan. Noong bata palang ako, palagi ko nang naririnig mula sa aming mga kamag-anak ang kanilang sinasabi na kawawa daw kami o kaya'y wala na daw kaming pag-asa. Bakit daw naman kasi ganon? Kami raw ay mga born-again pero nambabae ang tatay. Born-again nga naman daw pero ang gulo-gulo ng pamilya at tila wala ng magandang kinabukasan para sa amin. Born-again na kami at sa kabila ng aming sinapit, nanatili ang aking ina sa pagiging Kristiyano at tagasunod ng Diyos. Palagi niya kaming sinasabihan na magpatawad sa aming ama at palaging magtiwala sa Diyos. Hindi ko kailaman naramdaman ang kalinga ng isang ama ngunit sa totoo lang, hindi ako nahirapang magptawad. Gayunpaman, nakikita ko sa mga mata ko ang epekto ng pangyayaring iyon sa aming pamilya. Naranasan ko rin ang hirap na naidulot nito kaya ang pagtitiwala sa Diyos ay hindi ko mapanghawakan ng maayos

Ang Aking Kabataan

Nasaksihan ko ang mga epekto ng pagkakaroon ng isang sirang pamilya. Totoong mahirap ang buhay kung wala kang ama na magtataguyod upang magkaroon ng pantustos sa iyong pangangailangan. Kaya ang aking ina ay

nagdesisyonang maghanapbuhay para sa amin. Kahit mahirap iyon para sa kanya, ginawa niya ang lahat nang pagsusumikap at pagsasakripisyo upang maibigay ang lahat ng aming pangangailangan. Kahit bata pa lang ako, masakit para sa akin na makita ko siya noon na umiiyak sa dami ng problema at hirap ng responsibilidad na kanyang kinaharap. Sa tuwing magtatanong kami kung bakit siya umiiyak, ang palaging tugon niya ay "Mag-pray nalang tayo anak." Hindi lingid sa aking isipan ang mga pasakit na pinagdaraanang ng aking pamilya, at alam kong ang lahat ng iyon ay epekto ng pagkawala ng aming ama.

Naaalala ko rin na noon, nagtatanong ako sa Diyos kung bakit lahat ng heartbreaks, kakulangan, at mga struggles ay nangyari sa amin. Pero wala naman akong ibang alam na sagot kundi dahil sa iniwan kami ng aming ama.

And then nagsimula akong maging sakitin. Palagi akong hinihika at sobra itong nakadagdag sa problema ng aking ina. Halos gabi-gabi akong nahihirapan sa paghinga dahil sa atake ng hika. Naaalala ko noon, nakikihiram lang ako ng "nebulizer" sa kapitbahay o kaya ay sa barangay health center. Minsan ay wala pa akong iinumang gamot. May times naman na humuhupa ang aking hika kahit na walang gamot o kaya ay nebulizer. During those moments, sobrang naaawa ako sa aking sarili at sa aking pamilya,



lalo na sa aking ina na lahat naman ay ginawa upang kami'y mabigyan ng pantawid sa araw-araw at matustusan ang aming pangangailangan. Natatandaan ko rin noong Grade 3 ako, pinili ng aking ina na manirahan kami sa aming bahay-sambahan o simbahan. Naging tagalinis siya roon at ninais niya na mailapit kami lalo kay God at sa ministry. Kapag doon nga naman kami nakatira, wala kaming choice kundi umattend sa lahat ng mga "church fellowships," "prayer meetings," "bible

“Hanggang isang araw, ipinatawag ako ng aming senior and founding pastor sa church office upang ako ay kausapin. Sinabi nila sa akin na matagal na silang nagpi-pray para sa isang church minister na papapasukin sa seminaryo upang mag aral at maghanda sa pagpapastor. Sinabi nila na parehas silang nananalangin at ang naging kasagutan sa kanila ng Diyos ay ako.

studies,” “discipleship meetings,” and “Sunday services.” Subalit dahil sa sitwasyon na nagdulot ng problema sa aming buhay, tumatak na sa utak ko na wala na akong pag-asa. Wala akong karapatang maghangad sa buhay dahil ramdam ko ang hirap, sakit, at problema na naging parte na ng buhay ko. Natanim sa aking isipan na ang mga problemang iyon ay hindi ko matatakas at hindang-hindi na ako makakaalis sa sitwasyong iyon. Iyon ang dahilan kung bakit hindi na ako nangarap at wala akong pakialam kung anong magiging hinaharap ko. Noong high school na ako, palagi akong lumiliban sa klase. Hindi ko na rin masyadong iniisip pa na magko-kolehiyo ako. Christian na ako noon, pero wala akong pangarap at pakiramdam ko wala naman akong dapat ipagkatiwala sa Panginoon. There was a part of me that was dead. Hope was nothing but a dead thing to me.

Simula ng Pagbabago

Madalas mo akong mariranggan ng mga word of God kasi Kristiyano nga ako. Umaawit ako para sa Panginoon, nagli-lead ng worship, pero deep inside, hindi ako nagmi-minister. Kulang ako para sa sarili ko. Nakatatat na sa isip ko na dapat limitado lang ang aking pangangarap kasi walang tutulong sa'kin. Kaming magkakapatid, wala kaming maa-accomplish kasi sa simulat simula palang, nadetermine na ng mundo kung sino ako, sino kami: walang pag-asa at kawawa. Gayunpaman, hindi nawawala sa akin ang pananalangin at ang connection kay God.

Pero may mga instances na hirap na hirap talaga akong ipagkatiwala sa Diyos ang aking future. Tila walang pinupunto ang direksyon ng buhay ko at kung saan na lamang ako ipadpad ng hangin ay doon na lamang ako susunod. Pilit kong pinaniniwala ang aking sarili na dapat na akong mapanatag sa pagiging kontento sa buhay pero ang totoo, kawalan yun ng pagtitiwala na kayang baguhin ng Diyos ang aking buhay.

Hanggang isang araw, ipinatawag ako ng aming senior and founding pastor sa church office upang ako ay kausapin. Sinabi nila sa akin na matagal na silang nagpi-pray para sa isang church minister na papapasukin sa seminaryo upang mag aral at maghanda sa pagpapastor. Sinabi nila na parehas silang nananalangin at ang naging kasagutan sa kanila ng Diyos ay ako. Sa oras na 'yun, nag-oo agad ako sa kanila kahit alam ko sa sarili ko na hindi ako handa. Pero naalala ko ang kwento ng aking ina. Ayon sa kanya, marami na daw mga taong nag-prophecy sa kanya na isa sa mga anak niya ay magiging pastor. Noon, dahil nga wala akong pangarap, palaging sumasagi sa isip ko na mag-pastor na lang kaya ako. Nakakatawa pero totoo. Kumbaga, magpapastor ako dahil sa wala akong pag-asa sa buhay. Ganoon ang nasa aking isipan sa pag-miministry dati. Iyon ang tingin ko noon sa pagpapastor. Nag-miministry ako as a replacement sa aking kakulangan. Kaya naman, ang dali para sa akin ang mag-yes noong sinabi ng aking pastors na mag-aaral ako. Sa loob-loob ko, sinabi ko sa Diyos, “Panginoon, gusto kong sumunod, pero huwag N'yo pong hayaang makahanap sila ng school habang hindi pa ako



handa.” During those times na naghahanap ng Bible School at inihahanda ako ng Panginoon, I started to realize the real meaning of ministering. I started to see what it means to truly offer your life to God for ministry and to trust Him that He has prepared something great for your life for a greater cause--bigger than my life, bigger than me. In those times too, I started to fully rely on God and believe that indeed, He knows the plan He has for me, to prosper, to give me hope and a future. I came to realize na lahat ng happenings at experiences sa buhay namin ay ini-allow ng God upang mas makita ang Kaniyang Glory sa aking buhay. My mindset started to change. My perspective in life started to change, and I started to faithfully believe in God more and become hopeful in life.

Proseso ng Paglago

In 2015, I found the Asian Seminary of Christian Ministries (ASCM) through one of our pastors from another outreach. Sa ASCM, mas nag-grow ako as a minister. Sa tulong na rin ng aking mga professors and teachers, madami akong natutunang learnings and life lessons na aking nagagamit sa ministry. Nakita ko ang kaibahan ko noong akala ko wala akong future kaysa noong ako ay nasa ASCM na. It was better. I began to strive for excellence for the Lord, both in ministry and academics. I was inspired at nagkaroon ako ng stronger na pagtitiwala sa Panginoon. In May 2019, I finished my course, Bachelor of Theology, as cum laude and received special awards, such as the Leadership and Service Award and Outstanding Student Award. Noong oras na iyon, ang daming ipinaalala sa akin ng Diyos. Ipinaalala Niya sa akin na hawak Niya ang aking buhay at anumang mga nangyari sa aking nakaraan, hindi ito hadlang upang may maabot

ako para sa Kaniya. Another is, ministering is a very noble job. Ministering and serving the King of kings and Lord of lords are things to aim in life. Hindi ito para sa mga taong left with no choice or walang pangarap sapagkat kapag tinawag ka ng Panginoon, gagamitin ka Niya for a greater cause. Lastly, it is better to entrust our lives to God rather than to ourselves. That is because when you start to trust God, He will show you His purpose for you. Truly, all things work together for the good for those who love God.

Ang Kasalukuyan at ang Hinaharap

Today, I am ministering in our church, which is Christ Charismatic Fellowship International Inc., in San Pascual, Batangas, as a worship pastor and director. Now, I can freely trust God throughout my life. Ang aking sitwasyon sa buhay ay hindi kailanman magiging hadlang upang Siya ay kumilos at gumawa ng mga kamangha-manghang works and wonders in our lives. Whatever God has prepared for the future, I know, I am secure in Him so I will put my confidence in Him alone. I will continue offering my life to Him.



Si **John David Bautista**, kilala din bilang JD, ay naka-pagtapos ng kursong Bachelor of Theology sa Asian Seminar of Christian Ministries. Nasa puso niya ang pagsusulat ng mga tula at mga awit patungkol sa buhay. Isa siyang Worship Director sa kanilang bahay sambahan sa Batangas.

A WRECKED LIFE MADE WHOLE

By Mariel Famulagan

My Childhood

I was born and raised in a typical family in Cebu City. My mother was a housewife, and my father was a carpenter. We lived together with my two sisters, one older and one younger than me. We lived a simple life. Sometimes we had enough, and at other times, we had none.

My parents always told me that the only inheritance they could give me was education. My older sister was an achiever, and my parents compared me to her. So I strove hard to excel and perform in school, unaware that deep inside, I just wanted my parents to affirm me and tell me that they were proud of me.

While my father was physically present in our family, he was emotionally distant. I never talked to him about my crushes, or how my day went, or how I actually felt.

This feeling of loneliness grew and reached a tipping point when I was six years old. I rode a bike with a male friend. He was behind me and during the ride, he forced himself into me. I felt harassed and ashamed. I didn't know how to process this incident alone, and I also didn't know how to open this up to an adult. There was no one I could talk to regarding this incident.

Sinking into Thoughts of Suicide

Since then, I felt that I needed to protect myself. As a result, my action became manly because I thought that if I showed people I was not girlish in action, they wouldn't harass me or do anything to me that wasn't pleasing. This led me to believe

that I was a lesbian. Since no one affirmed my identity, I looked for affirmation and acceptance from friends--most especially from a grown man. I was still in high school. When my parents found out about our relationship, they were so disappointed with me. They told me that they would not let me go to school anymore. I was so devastated. I got so depressed that I eventually turned suicidal. In three separate incidents, I cut my wrist with a razor blade.

I thought that I couldn't please my parents anymore, and so I broke rules. I became rebellious. I entered another relationship. I purposefully did not do well in school, and I spent most of my time with friends. I did these on purpose to rebel against my parents.

Partying to Escape

When I entered college, my rebellion continued. I frequently partied and drank a lot with my friends. After graduating from the University of the Philippines-Cebu, I fell deeper and further into sin. I entered an adulterous relationship. I thought that I could get acceptance and affirmation from this relationship, but still, it didn't end well. It only intensified my longing for acceptance and affirmation.

The desire to be accepted and affirmed grew deeper and deeper, so I looked for it elsewhere. This time in business. Unfortunately, just like my past romantic relationships, the business didn't work out well, too.



My First Encounter with God

It was at this point that I met an African guy from a dating site, and he led me to a Christian church. He invited me to a prayer meeting and I agreed to go, seeing that there was no one I could talk to about my struggles. At the prayer meeting, I had two visions from the Lord. In the first vision, I stood on a mountain, and as I looked at the clouds, I saw these big arms open to me, beckoning me for an embrace. In the second vision, I was at a place that was so bright and full of light. There, I saw a man who stood in front of me. I cried on His shoulders. I believe the man was Jesus.

My friend led me to pray the prayer of repentance, and I followed. However, the turning point wasn't at that moment. Not yet at least. In fact, I still committed more sin. I entered a homosexual relationship and thought that this relationship would answer all my longings. Instead, my partner rejected me. At this point, life was just too painful for me. I felt so devastated, rejected, and alone. All options failed, and everything seemed hopeless.

In retrospect, God didn't create me a homosexual; He created me a woman, and so the relationship naturally didn't work out. I sensed that God used this painful experience to tell me that He allowed such pain to be felt so I could get to the realization that this was not His purpose and will for my life.

God Continues to Pursue Me

The pivotal moment of my life occurred when I attended a conference organized by Cebu House of Prayer called OneThing. The conference filled my heart with so much conviction that I truly repented of my sins. I turned to Jesus and I accepted Him as my Lord and Savior. I surrendered my life to Him and made Him the King of my heart. Moreover, I had a glimpse of my assignment and purpose on earth as I beheld Jesus.

The more I beheld Jesus, the more I got to know who I was. I discovered that God would use me in the prayer movement. This came to me as a revelation from the Lord, confirmed by a vision that I received from Him where He showed me the terrible condition of our nation. He invited me to partner with Him in prayer. When I heard about the prayer movement, I got so curious and immediately

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wanted to become a part of it. A few months later, I went to the prayer room. Consequently, I joined the OneThing Internship and started my journey with the Lord.

A Changed Prayer Warrior

My exposure to the prayer movement caused me to pray, read the Bible, fast, serve the Church, and give offerings to the poor. God accelerated my growth in Him as I sat at His feet and listened to the beating of His heart. I was consumed by His affections and desire toward me.

I have never felt so satisfied, fulfilled, and pleased in my whole life. I found all these and more in knowing Jesus. Jesus accepted me for who I was as a sinner -- a drunkard, an adulterer, and a homosexual. He transformed me into a new person and restored me to my identity as a daughter of God, and therefore His beloved. He fully satisfied the longing in my heart because--as I realized in my journey with Him--He put that longing only to be fulfilled by Him and Him alone. The wrong relationships that I entered to get a temporary fix were nothing compared to the joy, peace, and love that I found in the person of Jesus.

Now, my assignment is to be an intercessory missionary—a missionary who focuses on prayer. I am currently serving as a staff member in Cebu House of Prayer, and I will soon be transitioning to Thailand to build a house of prayer there as the Lord would lead me.

Marief Famulagan is a graduate of Business Management in UP Cebu, but above all achievements, she finds joy in interceding and contending on behalf of her city. She believes that if there are 24/7 drug dens and human trafficking transactions, a 24/7 house of prayer is possible, too! She serves as a staff member in Cebu House of Prayer, and has been there since 2018. She is an intercessory missionary under YWAM (Youth With a Mission). Her heart is for Thailand and this year, she is planning to go back there to build a house of prayer by God's grace. Lately, she has been working and partnering with a ministry in helping and discipling homeless people in Cebu City.



THIS IS NOT ABOUT YOU

By Luke Seibert

In March of 2016, I was a pretty typical nineteen-year-old: I went to church regularly, worked hard, and had dreams of the future. Although things were rough with my family at times, I had a great group of friends I hung out with, and my job was becoming my life. I worked in a cabinet shop during the day, but I did my own jobs with a friend on the weekends. In short, I thought life was going great, and I couldn't imagine how it could get any better.

This all changed one night while driving home from a revival crusade. A moving van crossed the center lane of the road and hit me head-on, breaking my left arm, crushing my face, and causing instant blindness.

At first, no one thought I would survive—not even the paramedics. Yet the Lord had other plans. My condition stabilized, and after a week of surgeries, I was released to a local rehabilitation facility. The doctors had set the bones in my arm and did an extensive facial reconstruction on me, but there was nothing they could do about my vision.

Since I had no memory of the two weeks after my accident, I didn't find out about my blindness until I was already in rehab. When I did learn that I would never see again, I didn't even know what to think. One minute I was angry, the next bewildered, but slowly, a feeling of despair began to settle over me as I realized the work and dreams I cherished were gone.

Over the next few months, I really wrestled with my emotions and trust in God. I knew that He was in sovereign control of my situation, but I couldn't understand why He had let this happen. I had done nothing wrong the night of my accident, but I felt that I was being punished for something. Knowing my family had a lot to deal with already, I tried not to let my struggles show. In those months, I learned to go around with a cane, read Braille, and even play soccer with a ball that had bells in it.

Yet no matter what I did, I couldn't shake the question that haunted me. Finally, while sitting out on my porch one day, I raised my head towards the sky and cried, "What did I ever do to deserve this?"

No booming voice came from heaven, but God responded in something just as shocking to me. He quietly whispered to my heart: "This is not about you." I tried to object, but He gently responded, "Just trust Me, I know what I am doing. This is not about you."



He reminded me of Philippians 4:6-7, which tells us that He would give us peace, but we had to pray and give thanks to Him right now. It was hard to do that for a while, but as I began to praise Him for who He was and for the blessings He had given to me, He changed my entire world. I had been focused only upon myself, but when I looked to Him, He gave me the peace He promised. No, my situation didn't change, but my mindset did, and that made all the difference.

As I continue to keep my focus upon God, He has opened opportunities I would never have imagined. For instance, He has given me dozens of opportunities to preach at local churches, enabled me to finish my degree in preparation for seminary, and has given me opportunities to share the Gospel with people I would never have met—had I not become blind.

None of this came about because of any strength I had, or because of any power of positive thinking. Rather, it all came from the Lord and the Holy Spirit. I had to get my "eyes" off myself and onto Him, and as I did, He gave me His perfect peace and assurance that He would always be with me, no matter what. I am so grateful for what He has taught me through this journey, and I can't wait to see what the future holds.



Luke Seibert lives in the small town of Ardmore, Alabama, and holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Integrated Studies from Clark Summit University. He enjoys spending time writing, studying the Bible, and playing bluegrass music with friends. You can find Luke's website featuring his blog and books at <http://www.lukeseibert.com/>

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