



AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Shall We Not Go in So Great a Cause?

2011 was a remarkable year. A Jubilee Celebration of 50 years since the first four missionaries came to begin the work among the Filipino people. Those 50 years have been miraculous. We have seen hundreds of thousands accept baptism in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We all stopped in May 2011 and contemplated the marvelous work and a wonder that has happened as God has set his hand to the work in the Philippines. We have had great feelings of gratitude for all of the missionaries and leaders who have worked so diligently to establish the Church here in the Philippines. Those missionaries and leaders have set a pattern of service and sacrifice for us to follow as we now begin the next fifty years.

The Jubilee Celebration was not the end of the work, but the beginning. With all that the Lord has provided to us in the Philippines, we need to continue to keep our minds set on accomplishing His work among the people of the Philippines.

As an Area Presidency, we have been deeply impressed that we all must move forward with faith, unified with a vision of what we must do to establish the Church. The question we would like

you to ask is, “what can I do to be part of this wonderful work?”

MAY WE SUGGEST THAT YOU DO THE FOLLOWING:

1- Feast upon the words of Christ.

We all must learn and understand the doctrine. We do this as we obtain our own scriptures and then read them.

2- Strengthen your own family. We all have a family. Whether we are married or single, widowed or alone, we all come from and are part of a family. We encourage you to strengthen your own family by having daily prayer and scripture study together. Holding weekly family home evening and having a current temple recommend and using it.

3- Help establish the Church. Come and participate in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Find yourself each week in sacrament meeting with your family. If you are a male, prepare yourself to receive the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood. We then must serve each other. Accept a calling, home teach and visit teach, sustain your Bishop or Branch President. If you don't have



By Elder
Brent H. Nielson
Philippines Area
Presidency

We have had great feelings of gratitude for all of the missionaries and leaders who have worked so diligently to establish the Church here in the Philippines.

a calling in the ward or branch, go tell your leader that you would like something meaningful to do so that you can serve the members and establish the Church.

4- Save the rising generation. Our hope for the future in the Philippines is found in our children. We must teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ and prepare them for missionary service and the ordinances of the temple. Look around your ward or branch and help the young men and young women. Encourage them to be faithful and strong. Let them know you care. You can have a great influence as we get more young men on missions and rescue our less active young single adults.

5- Rescue the one. This is where you can really make a difference. Ask the Lord to direct you to those who need your help. Go to those who are less active and ask them why they are not with us. If they have been offended, apologize to them. Invite them to come back and then offer to go and get them and actually bring them with you

to Church. It is our hope that every member will rescue someone this year. In order to assist in this work, you will have to act. You will actually need to go and do something. You can be the person who makes the difference in the life of another.

It has been wonderful to see what has happened so far in 2012 as our members have become involved in accomplishing the vision for the Philippines. Hundreds more editions of the scriptures have been purchased and read; many more members have a temple recommend; sacrament meeting attendance has increased dramatically; we have more young men serving missions and we have brought back thousands of less active members in just the last few months. Thank you for your efforts. The true miracle of the Philippines is you. With all that lies ahead of us and with the great blessings the Lord has given to us, Shall we not go on in so great a cause? It is my prayer that you will become personally engaged in establishing the Church here in the Philippines. ■



Tagalog Hymns: Giving Old Words a New Meaning

By Sariah Guanzon

"Ako ay anak ng Diyos" ("I am a Child of God"), sings a lovely primary choir, their angelic voices filling the Araneta Coliseum during the Jubilee Celebration last April 2011. The congregation smile as they hear a favorite hymn sung in their native tongue.

For years, the members of the Church in the Philippines have been used to singing hymns in English. With the introduction of the Tagalog translation of the hymns in 2001, many were delighted to finally be able to sing the hymns in their native tongue.

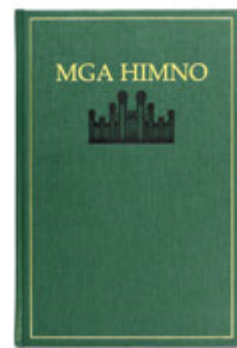
"There is just a special tug at one's heartstrings when one hears a favorite hymn sung in one's own language," says Deo Divinagracia, one of the translators of the hymns into Tagalog.

According to Brother Divinagracia, one of the challenges of translating the hymns into Tagalog was making sure they interpreted all of the concepts and ideas present in the original hymn and still have the Tagalog words short enough to fit the number of syllables or notes available in each line. This was

sometimes very challenging because of the length of Filipino or Tagalog words. A classic example would be the word "faith" which is just one syllable in English but, when translated into Tagalog, has seven syllables ("pananampalataya"). The shorter word "pananalig" may also be used but such a term is not always applicable.

The process of translation entailed lots of time and effort on the part of the translation committee. "Not only did the original translation and the proofreading of the hymns take a long time, the hymn review committee also took more than three years of meeting two to three times a week to finish reviewing all of the songs that were submitted to them," says Brother Divinagracia upon recalling the meticulous and thorough process of translating the hymns.

Their hard work has certainly borne remarkable blessings to the Filipino Saints. Many members have developed a new sense of appreciation and a deeper understanding of the messages of the hymns since they have been singing it in their own language. ■



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Two Wards Find New Meaning in Singing Hymns in Their Own Tongue

By Eda Brojan Calimlim

Members of the Guinobatan First and Second Wards began singing Tagalog hymns in their meetings last year. In response to a visitor's comment about the hymns being in English, Bishop Dexter Orlina of the Guinobatan Second Ward shared the idea of using Tagalog hymnbooks in the chapel. He and Bishop Vincent Calimlim of the Guinobatan First Ward then began ordering Tagalog hymnbooks. The ordered new hymnbooks came in batches so the members of both wards practiced singing hymns in their individual auxiliary classes before singing them in sacrament meeting.

Members found that singing hymns in Tagalog required some practice and that some of the English hymns had titles that did not translate directly or literally in Tagalog. The latter concern sometimes required the pianist to play the music first to find the specific Tagalog counterparts of favorite English hymns.

"It was difficult at first but the response has been wonderful," says Bishop Orlina. Individual members expressed their newfound appreciation for the hymns as they began singing them in Tagalog. According to Cleo Niebla of the Guinobatan Second Ward, the hymns in

English were beautiful but when sung in the native tongue, they became very meaningful. Citing the hymn "Ako ay Namangha" ("I Stand All Amazed"), Sister Niebla tells of how the message of the hymn became clearer when she sang them in Tagalog. "In comparison, it seems that I used to sing the hymns passively in English, but now that I really understand it, the message behind the words really sinks in," said Sister Niebla.

In the Guinobatan First Ward, the youth became more involved in selecting Tagalog hymns to sing in their Seminary and Sunday school classes. Adults in the same ward found that singing "Lakas Mo Ay Idagdag" ("Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel") helped them renew their commitment to serve diligently in their callings. "The line walang dapat magpabaya, lakas mo ay idagdag is very meaningful. That hymn has become a favorite in our ward council meetings," according to Bishop Calimlim.

Missionaries serving in the area also found the Tagalog hymns to be very useful in their work. Sisters de Guzman and Siraj, who serve in the Guinobatan Second Ward, said that the Tagalog hymns are very effective in reinforcing the lessons. "When we teach about our Heavenly

Father's plan and the Restoration, teaching and singing the hymn "Ako Ay Anak ng Diyos" ("I Am A Child of God") and "O Kay Ganda ng Umaga" ("Joseph Smith's First Prayer") really delivers the message. The simple and direct wording in the hymn "In Our Lovely Deseret" is a good tool in helping investigators learn and remember the Word of Wisdom. Since the hymns are in Tagalog, the people we teach, especially children, are interested in learning and singing the hymns," Sister de Guzman said. She adds that investigators also find the Tagalog hymns comforting when they go to Church, helping them feel that the Church is not a foreign Church, even if some missionaries are foreigners. Foreign missionaries like Sister Siraj, who is from Pakistan, found singing the Tagalog hymns a good tool in learning the Filipino language.

In the scriptures we read that in the last days, every man shall hear the fullness of the gospel in his own tongue, and in his own language (D&C 90:11). The hymns in Tagalog are helping to fulfill that scripture. As these members and missionaries in Guinobatan have found, singing the hymns in Tagalog are helping them understand and teach the gospel more fully. ■

Filipino Saints: Music and the Gospel

By Ma. Teresa C. Pangilinan

MIA MAID SOLOIST

Renzl Oline Angeles On is a Mia Maid from Imus 2nd Ward Cavite Philippines Stake. She is presently the president in her young women class. She is also in her third year in Seminary and had received an award as Gold Master Scriptorian for the past two years.



“Her passion in singing was innate, she loved watching music videos at age 2 which most kids do not watch, but she does,” said Liezel, Renzl’ mom.

Renzl started her voice training at age eight. She continued to develop her voice projection and singing dynamics as she gained confidence performing on stage.

She joined a TV network’s singing competition and was included 31st out of 4,000 who auditioned. She also won third place in another nationwide competition winning a scholarship grant.

“Her dream is to become a modest singer, she still observes modest clothing even during concerts, events and guestings to show to the world that an LDS youth can make a difference inside and outside the church,” Liezel added.

Renzl is preparing to serve a full-time mission. She believes that things in life happen for a purpose and living a balanced life leads you to success.

DANEL BERIONG ON UNITED, THE JUBILEE SONG

“It was the summer after I returned from the mission. I heard about the contest and worked on the lyrics right away. I pondered on the condition of the Philippines, how it is divided into thousands of islands and languages, and yet through the Gospel, it is slowly becoming unified. The inspiration for the melody came when I was in

the chapel, just before sacrament meeting. I was in the sacrament hall, humming tunes and thinking about lyrics. Then suddenly the music came. I thought it sounded great, so I hummed it over and over again so I wouldn’t forget. It took me about a month to finish the whole song.”

Danel October Beriong is an electronics and computer engineering graduate serving as a ward clerk in the Quezon City 1st ward.

His mother used to be a disc jockey (DJ) which is where he got the music influence. It was his grandfather who first invited him to join the choir at age of nine where he became more exposed to the element of music.

“I think I got the ‘composing’ talent from my dad,” Danel said. His dad taught him how to play the piano and guitar. He practiced on his own. Every Sunday he would go to Church early so he could practice since they do not have a piano at home.

Some of his other compositions are about missionary work, atonement and the Restoration.



THE JUBILEE QUARTET

“The Jubilee Celebrations were in full swing and then Area Director of Public Affairs Leni Pilobello asked for my help in directing the Jubilee VIP Reception Dinner hosted by the Area Presidency for the Church’s VIP non-member friends from government, business, media, the academe and the community. She also asked me to put together a quartet to provide some musical numbers and also to sing the Jubilee theme song ‘United’,” Deo Divinagracia related.

The Jubilee celebration in 2011 was also the birth of the LDS Jubilee Quartet. Composed of four talented men: Deo Divinagracia, Danel October



Beriong, Adam Seth Teh and Paolo Antenoracruz.

Deo, from Tandang Sora Ward, is the voice coach and put the group together. His musical talent started in primary and continued until he eventually became a choir master and stage director. He is also a semi-professional singer, actor, dancer, choreographer and director. He is part of the production group in the university where he graduated and remained active in a top university's Samaskom (Samahan ng Mag-aaral sa Komunikasyon).

Adam, 21, is a multimedia arts student. He serves as a Sunday school teacher in Masagana 2nd ward. Disney movies and songs were Adam's first influence outside of the Church.

"My family was one of the biggest influences for me, particularly my dad's sisters. They sing like angels on Christmas day," Adam said.

He plays the guitar, piano, and is starting to learn the ukelele. He remembers when he was in primary that singing on mother's day at the sacrament hall with his favorite teacher was such a great experience for him.

All those songs about values and God's love really made a difference for Adam. "I believe that music can touch lives and can make us feel the Spirit. Songs are testimonies with melodies and because of that, they are more likely to touch our hearts," said Adam.

Paolo, 21, choir member, is from Novaliches Philippines Stake. He joined a TV network's singing competition and went on to become one of the finalists. He is also a member of the singing group of one of the top musical composers in the country.

Paolo hails from a family of performers, plays musical instruments and performs in variety shows and out-of-town engagements.

Danel, composer of the Jubilee theme song, is also part of the Jubilee Quartet.

DAD AND HIS DAUGHTERS 5

Maria Luisa and Juanito Villanueva came from a family of singers and musicians. They were baptized in the Church in late 1980. They were blessed to have five gifted daughters.

It was in 1996 when Jun taught his daughters to sing and play musical instruments. They are from San Fernando 2nd Ward, Angeles Philippines Stake. July, 29 plays the keyboard. She serves as ward pianist. April, 28 plays the lead guitar. She is a primary teacher, was married in the temple and a mother of two. Apple, 25, is a family history consultant and plays the base guitar. Queency, 23, plays the drums. She fondly teaches Sunday school for Youth. Twinkle, 22, the youngest, serves as



music director and plays violin.

They were formerly known as "Assets Band," for Twinkle was too young then. Years later "The Daughters 5 Band" was formed and started to perform professionally in local gigs around Metro Manila and some out-of-town shows.

Their busy schedule did not hinder them from going to Church on Sundays. They also see to it to have regular family home evenings.

"I see to it that my daughters wear modest clothes when they perform," Jun shared. He said it is better that they starved than to break the Church standards.

"Heavenly Father Loves Me" (*Children Songs*, 228) and "I Know that My Redeemer Lives" (*Hymns*, 135) are their favorite Church songs, which they often sing together as family. ■

PHILIPPINES AREA GOALS RESCUE THE ONE

The Errand of Angels

By Ayo Gutierrez-Abanggan

For a culturally-diverse ward such as Talamban Ward of Cebu City stake, where transient members are coming every year, one can ask: Is it possible to build solid bonds of friendships and lasting cooperation among its members?

Some sisters live in affluent villages. Others live on top of the mountains where lack of transportation is a hindrance in coming to church. And there are others who live by the riverside or under the bridge whose circumstances are dire and bereft of basic necessities.

When Sister Merlyn Matthews was called to be the ward Relief Society president three years ago, she instantly felt the need to improve the fellowship among the sisters. She and her family lived in Australia for 13 years and although a Filipino, she never learned to speak Cebuano.

One thing she understood, though, is that the universal language of the gospel is love. And this love has brought a number of sisters, including Sister Matthews in unique situations where their rescuing efforts were needed beyond what they could imagine.

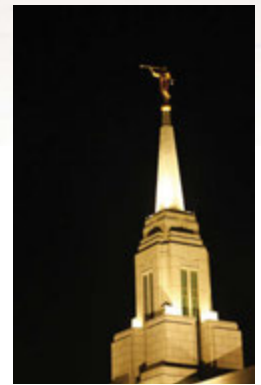
They found themselves at the errand of angels.

Sister Malou Gallarde was a struggling mother of two teenagers when her husband left. She stopped coming to church for two years. At the time her visiting teachers showed up, Sister Gallarde could not make up her mind whether to come back to church or relive her old faith. Her emotional state was in shambles. Her busy work schedule prevented her from doing anything else.

"I made it too difficult for my visiting teachers to reach out to me. I made many excuses," she related. "One day, I was deeply moved when one sister took the effort to leave a note on my desk at school just to say hello. It did not stop there. I was greeted on special occasions. They listened to my problems. They were just there when I felt nothing but emptiness. I could not believe that the sisters actually cared for me. I felt loved and remembered."

A few months of visits and constant nurturing, Sister Gallarde not only came back to church with her children but was very busy fulfilling her duties as the new teacher in the Relief Society class. Recently, she received her own endowment at the Cebu City temple. Her next goal is to have her family sealed.

As one of the counselors, Sister Ester



One thing she understood, though, is that the universal language of the gospel is love. And this love has brought a number of sisters, including Sister Matthews in unique situations where their rescuing efforts were needed beyond what they could imagine.

“As the hymn goes, ‘the errand of angels is given to women and we must fulfill it in Spirit and love’. I know that it takes a lot of effort, hard work and most of all charity to be able to carry this call.

Browning has delighted the sisters with fun, engaging and even profitable enrichment activities. One activity, never to be forgotten was the “Fascinating Womanhood” workshops. At sunrise in the beach, one sister cried her heart out. In spite of her grueling circumstances, she remains the most cheerful sister in the class. “The Church is my strength, my refuge. If not for the support of the sisters, I could have given up a long time ago,” she said.

“It was the time when the sisters opened up about themselves and the challenges they faced. It was actually our hope that with such positive ambiance and good company, the sisters will open up and they did. It became apparent that as women, we have different issues but with the gospel in our lives we can overcome anything,” explained Sister Browning.

Sister Helen Mejia was yet to overcome the greatest challenge of her life in 2011. After a long period of denial, she accepted the fact that her breast cancer was already malignant and that her only options were surgery and chemotherapy. “I received every conceivable help I knew from the members especially the sisters. They took care of me and my family during my treatment,” she said. True enough the sisters took turns providing

meals and visits at the hospital.

When Sister Mejia consulted her doctor after five sessions of chemotherapy, the doctor announced that she was cancer-free. Even her illness could not stop her from doing her visiting teaching again. In fact, she is regarded by many sisters as the most diligent visiting teacher in the ward, most especially by Sister Gallarde who returned to activity because of her notes on the desk.

“There is a sweet spirit I feel among the Relief Society sisters in this ward. You truly care for each other. You help each other. I knew it when I first came here and I have felt it since,” declared by a transient sister from Utah.

Because of their efforts, several less-active sisters have returned to the fold, many have received their endowment and patriarchal blessings and are doing their family history.

“As the hymn goes, ‘the errand of angels is given to women and we must fulfill it in Spirit and love,’ (“As Sisters in Zion,” *Hymns*, 309). I know that it takes a lot of effort, hard work and most of all charity to be able to carry this call. And when we do, we will witness miracles,” Sister Matthews concluded. ■



Special Day for Widows and Single Moms with Sister Malou Gallarde (center).