



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MOUNT ZION FILIPINO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Beacon LIGHT

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden... In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

MATTHEW 5:14-16 ESV

Spring 2015

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Christianity and My University Experience

by Kate Britanico

[Fortifier]

Editor Note: This is a series highlighting the experiences of our young adults on their journey through higher education in non-Christian institutions.

I started university last September and found my experience so far has helped me grow as not only a Christian, but as person in general. Throughout elementary and secondary school, my closest friends were from Church. Christianity and religion were never touchy subjects because for the most part, we shared the same views and beliefs. Looking back, I realize I had little opportunities to grow in my faith because I stayed in the same, comfortable environment.

However, arguments raised by my peers about religion, Christianity, Creation and God did not discourage me in times I felt I didn't have the right answers. These uncertainties stimulated me to learn even more about my faith.

My first week at university (away from my church friends) made me reevaluate and re-explore many of the beliefs I previously accepted without question. That's not to say I discarded my beliefs but instead I felt the need to relearn and ask more questions about my faith. Classes I took gave me new perspectives. Learning about the complexity of life in my biology class, for instance, gave me a new found appreciation for God's creativity and handy work. To my surprise, I found religious debates occurring more often than I originally anticipated. However, arguments raised by my peers about religion, Christianity, Creation and God did not discourage me in times I felt I didn't have the right answers. These uncertainties stimulated me to learn even more about my faith. University introduced me to kind people of different faiths and gave me an opportunity to share my faith while learning about theirs. There's still questions I don't yet have answers to but the most significant thing my university experience has given to me is the consistent challenge to learn more about my faith.

Kate is currently a biology student at York University. She enjoys long walks on the beach.



Photo - Judy Gamez

Single and ready to mingle?

Rebecca Burishkin explores why our Single Young Adults tend to avoid church, and how we can get them engaged, in church life.

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It wasn't just sun and the beach

Bro. Rosendo Cuizon recounts his adventure to the Dominican Republic in *When Mission Trips are Meaningful*. Photo - Rosendo Cuizon

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AROUND MT. ZION



Director Vangie Retires

Sort of. After 10 years of service, Sis. Vangie Lagazo has transferred the directorship of the Marharlika Pathfinder Club to Orville Rey. We are thankful for all her years of service, dedication, and sacrifice, as she raised a generation of Pathfinders up the ranks into adulthood. Auntie Vangie will still be quite involved with our Pathfinder club, but at least now she can rest a bit. Photo - Lemuel Salandanan



Mackenzie Grace Dedicated

Mackenzie Grace Tortal was dedicated March 16 at Mt. Zion, along with her parents Melanie (Pallasa) and Walter Tortal. Photo - Rhodney Regoso



Like taking candy from a baby

Nenette Robes tries to get a sour candy from Malou Aradanas with only a straw. One of the many games played at the Pathfinder's year end celebration. Photo - Lemuel Salandanan

THE FIVE "F'S

- Faith – Reaching UP (Exalting)
- Friendship – Reaching ACROSS (Service)
- Fellowship – Reaching IN (Edifying)
- Fortifier – Reaching DOWN (Equipping)
- Frontier – Reaching OUT (Evangelizing)



Emese and Trisha leading out in praise time. (Photo – Rhodney Regoso)

[Fellowship]

Why Some Singles Avoid Church

by Rebecca Burishkin

I stopped going to church, not because I no longer believe, but because as a single young adult in my late twenties and early thirties, I felt different from everybody else at church. I no longer felt as if I belonged. I have attended many Adventist churches and found that often they do not even have a young adult Sabbath school or small group of any kind. Imagine being a young college graduate who gets a job in a town away from a college or university and attends the local church to meet new people and gain support from fellow believers but instead feels more isolated and alone.

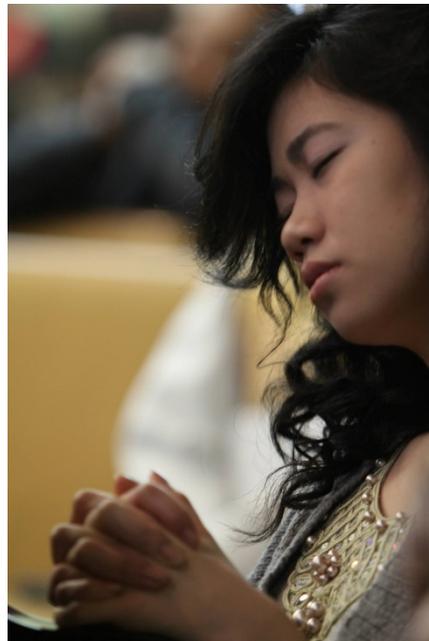
study group and getting involved in outreach activities or in ministries where their skills and talents are utilized. When single young

I have attended many Adventist churches and found that often they do not even have a young adult Sabbath school or small group of any kind.

people find no place or connection in a church, it is difficult for them to feel that it is their church too.

I wanted to write about this issue for a while but was afraid that people would feel sorry for me, which is not my intent. My intent is to create awareness about how it is possible for single Adventists to feel alienated from their local church. It may also give married church members another perspective on their single friends. While many churches foster a wonderful environment for married couples, especially those with children, they sometimes do not realize the need for single young adults to feel that they, too, belong there.

Here are some tips that may help church



Dessa Docil in prayer (Photo – Rhodney Regoso)

members better understand and connect to young single church members. Everyone goes through a time in their life when they are single so there is no need to pity or pressure them to change their single status. Keep in mind that an individual may not be single forever. If you treat your single friend as if singleness is not a problem that needs to be fixed, then that person will feel

A church feels like home when people experience a sense of being connected with other church members in mutual friendship and acceptance. This connection is usually achieved when members feel that there is a place for them such as being in a small Bible

accepted as he or she is right now. Sometimes it can be harder to relate to

someone who is different from you, but it also can be a blessing. Paul explains, "I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God" (1 Cor. 7:7 English Standard Version). A regularly participating young adult can be an encouragement for other young people to also begin attending church, especially when plans are made to include everyone in church activities.

What some singles may not tell you is that even if there is a Sabbath school class for them, it can still be embarrassing for a young person to sit alone during the church service.



Some of our young adults: L-R Jollyne, Jacqui, Ritchelle, Astrid, & Dawn. (Photo - Bleigh Adap)

I remember attending a Sabbath school class and then slipping out between the services. I noticed that I was not the only one leaving; other singles and even young married couples were slipping out too. If you notice someone sitting alone, why not ask to join him or her?

I would like to point out that many churches do make real efforts to reach out to the single members by having young adult Sabbath school classes, outreach activities, and/or singles events. When I attend a young adult Sabbath school, even if the attendance is small, I appreciate the church's efforts to acknowledge and accommodate someone like me. The Adventist church does have some matchmaking events for singles, but some young adults hesitate to attend these events because they may want to find someone on their own. They don't want to feel singled out from the other church members. It is better when churches just offer fun get-togethers, Sabbath afternoon activities, or outreach ministries for young adults. They appreciate the opportunity to socialize without pressure to find a romantic relationship. If there are not enough single young adults at

one church, consider a group to include those in the surrounding area churches. After all, why does a church have to be confined by its walls?

The connection between church members and young adults goes both ways. Singles, you can't just expect your church to provide for all your needs right away. I know it is easy to stay home Sabbath mornings sleeping in or watching sermons on YouTube, just assuming there will be no place for you or that you won't fit in. But if you do attend, it helps keep the young adult groups going and pro-

vides a place for more people like you to come together. If the current group doesn't fit your needs, consider helping out or taking a leadership role to make it a better fit for you and others.

While it is wonderful to have a group of young adults of similar age to socialize with, making friends with people who are married, older or younger than you, can also be a real blessing in your life. Keep an open mind when attending a church because the church members may surprise you. In addition, you can get involved in outreach activities or find ways to benefit the local church, which will grow your talents. If there are not many single young adults at your local church, consider starting a young adult group from other churches in the community. If you feel as if you don't belong, make a place for you and others to belong in your local church!

Over the last few years I have moved around several times and tried attending a variety of Seventh-day Adventist churches. This made me aware of the problems: not many young adults attend and many churches have no young adult meetings or groups of any kind. I

now live near a church that has a young adult ministry. Let me tell you the story of this church where a young lady began a young adult Sabbath school class. She was surprised at the turnout; more and more started attending. Now this Sabbath school class has been established for several years, and when new people come, they feel there is a place for them. Then another young lady in that class began a young women's singing group, which supported them when they went through tough times. In turn, this singing group has been a blessing to many people in the community. When a local church has an activity like this, I feel more comfortable attending, so I am going back to church now.

It is good to keep in mind that there is a place for everyone at church because people who are different from you can be a real blessing in your life. I think the solution is the working together of both single and married church members to create a place in the church for single young people, which will grow the church. This joint effort will create a connection by diversifying the membership so singles feel at home because they belong.

Rebecca Burishkin has a bachelor's degree in film production from Southern Adventist University and a minor in Psychology. Article originally appeared at Advindicate.com, re-printed with permission.

FAST FACTS

71%

Of young adults attend church at least once a week. ¹

8%

Attend small churches (50+ members). Young adults prefer medium to larger sized churches (350+ members) ¹

WE NEED WRITERS

Got a gift of words, need a concern raised, have a story to share, itching to testify with your testimony? We'd love to hear it, so please send your stories/experiences to:

GLENN MARIANO
mzfc.beaconlight@gmail.com

1. Adventist Connection Survey Research Report, <http://www.cye.org/assets/resources/icm/Research%20Data/Adventist%20Connection%20Survey%20Research%20Report.pdf>

Pathfinders Experience the Bible

by Darlene Rey

[Fortifier]

Editor Note: Fresh of their success at the NAD, we will have two perspectives of the adventure that is the Pathfinder Bible Experience. Team 2 Captain Dysphan's experience is featured on page 7.

Around May last year 12 Pathfinders: Aimee Anunciacion, Anthony Servito, Destiny Salandanan, Dysphan Lumbangaol, Gladelyn Hongo, Josiah Anunciacion, Jason Servito, Jensine Aure, Kristine Aradanas, Michelle & RM Solijon and Tyler Ninalga, decided to be part of the two Maharlika PBE teams. The book of Matthew and portions of the Bible commentary were assigned and training began in June. We gave ourselves an August 31 deadline to memorize everything in our sections before the start of school. It was hard and everyone did not finish memorizing. In fact some were still scrambling with



(Photo - Mae Anunciacion)

the material up to the last week before Texas. Most of my morning and evening devotions were spent writing questions and reading the commentary to be able to answer the many questions asked by these amazing pathfinders. It really enriched my own personal relationship with God.

Each time we practiced I always asked God for wisdom and patience as I would like each practice to have an impact with each of the participant's life – that they will see the love of Jesus through the words they are memorizing. I have to be honest, there were times I've lost my cool and I am thankful these pathfinders were patient with me and didn't give up.

There were 128 teams that made it to the NAD level, 11 teams (five from Ontario and six from Quebec) from the Seventh day Adventist Church in Canada and three from South England. Ten teams from Canada got first place and one in second place. To God be the glory!

Looking back at all the time spent memorizing, each parent driving to practices, and each hour coaching one on one was time well invested. Was it worth it? Was the money spent going to Texas put to good use? Absolutely! All of us have invested in each of these Pathfinders' relationship with God. Our investment is eternal. PBE is a great experience and it is my prayer that each pathfinder will have a chance to join even just once in their Pathfinder life.

I enjoy studying the Bible especially with young children and the youth. I have never expected anything in return. These Pathfinders invited me to a meeting on Sunday night and surprised me with a thank you Tshirt, a box of chocolates, a cool bag and some good luck money to go with it. My heart was so warmed and I felt so appreciated. It is so touching especially when you don't expect it.

Together with the Pathfinders I am so thankful for the financial support and prayers coming from our Mt. Zion family and all our extended friends and relatives. The support of parents and staff of Maharlika Pathfinder Club made my job very easy. I would also like to thank my brother Louie and the Tamaraw Pathfinder Club for sharing their review questions with us and providing us with our Sabbath lunch and dinner.

Will I do it again? You bet! It is not winning first place in NAD, it was the journey to NAD that I believe will be treasured by me and every Pathfinder that had this experience.



Darlene Rey is the coach of both PBE teams. If you ever had tasty pizza at our potluck, chances are she made it.

Global Youth Day

[Friendship]

by Dessa Docil

It was a fairly nice spring day to be outdoors, although it was chilly and windy, the sun shone bright and gave us much warmth. We were supposed to be the sun that day, to be the light and give warmth to this dark and cold world. It was Global Youth Day, held on

March 21, 2015, which is all about being the sermon rather than just hearing it. Instead of sitting comfortably warm on the pews inside the church, we were to go out and live by the words that which we speak of, spread the good news of the gospel, and accompany it with some sort of service towards our community friends.

Our Mt. Zion youth members were assigned to the intersection of Keele and Sheppard where we picked up trash and handed out "Glow" tracts, which were small and short reading materials for people on the go. These tracts were handed out with the hope that it would lead and encourage them into more reading of the Bible.

As much as it can be intimidating to come up to complete strangers, if you make them aware of your good intentions towards them, by letting them understand that you care about them first before telling them about the truth, they will also care to understand the message you're trying to send across to them.

That's what we aimed for, because just as Jesus built his relationships with others in order for them to believe in Him, we should do the same so that they can see Him through us. Our goal was to bring others in knowledge of God.

This was a perfect way to end a Regional Youth Week in Spiritual Emphasis which was done through an evangelistic series, "Faith vs. Reason" featuring Andrew Fuller, a speaker from London, England. He urged our youth to "get up and rise," to basically "walk the talk," and that's exactly what we did that Sabbath day. What's even greater about this is that it's also happening all over the world at about the same time too!

When we were done, we gathered to discuss our interesting stories and the experiences we've had. At the end of it all, we concluded that we didn't only share the blessings to others around us but we also received the blessings in return from the joy of doing it, and the good results that came after it. Overall, we realized how great God works in and through us when we do His work for His glory.

Dessa is a Worship Leader for our Youth Council. She loves to play basketball and is known to break ankles with her patented DD crossover. Just ask Pastor RJ.



When Mission Trips are Meaningful

[Frontier]

by Rosendo Cuizon

As I signed up for a 10- day Maranatha mission trip to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, I was faintly aware of the impact it would have on my life experiences. I was likely just thinking of the sun and sea and a little work here and there especially after a dormant and cold winter season in Toronto.

After a 4-hour flight to SDQ airport on March 19th, 2015 I was joined by other volunteers at the airport lobby, mostly by young academy students from different parts of the USA with their chaperons/teachers. Some came with their entire families; including grandparents, mom and dads and kids. In total we had 87 volunteers from all over the USA, one young doctor from Trinidad and one Canadian (me). Everyone was happy to be there, and I mean everyone. Friendly faces and handshakes were shared by all as if it were a big camp-meeting.

Our chief organizer, Pastor Steve Case from California wasted no time in organizing everyone into 5 teams: 3 for various construction project, 1 medical team, 1 VBS team and the rest for kitchen duties. We were housed in a spacious compound owned by the local Pentecostal conference in dorm and hotel quarters. The following day (Friday), after breakfast, we were taken by buses to our assigned projects.

Our team of men were driven to a modest part of town where the brethren already had the cement floor of the church all properly laid out. Our task that day was to put up the steel structure for the roof. The pre-cut steel beams shipped from the USA were quickly assembled as we laid out a plastic tarp over it ready for the following day's Sabbath Services. One member was emotional to reveal

that they waited 15 years for this structure to go up. Amid the din and noise of the outside street, the praise of singing voices of the members could be heard above it that day. Many children and folk from the neighborhood were curious and joined in the worship services that day.

Each evening at camp worship, Pastor Steve would ask an assigned member of each team to report on the day's activities. Each report was as inspiring as the next one. Another building project was located next to a local elder in his late 80's who was instrumental in building and organizing many churches around the area but was unable to complete his own which sat unfinished next to his property for 17 years. His time was running out so one team was eager to complete this building. During the last Sabbath a metal plaque was presented to his church to honor him. Our last Sabbath at the Villa Carmen church was a bit bitter-sweet as we left brand new chairs and other goods to help in the local ministries.

Of course it was not all work for the volunteers that week. We had 3 excursion trips; 2 half days (Sabbath afternoons) and one full day at a local island. Although physically tiring, the emotional and spiritual fulfillment were priceless. Meeting new people from other churches, tasting a different culture, and serving the local churches are something that you take home with you.

Rosendo Cuizon is our Prayer Ministry Leader at Mount Zion and is involved in several of our community service initiatives.



Bro. Cuizon with the team. (Photo - Rosendo Cuizon)

AROUND MT. ZION



Pastor Schwings by Mount Zion

Pastor David Schwinghammer was the speaker of the weekend during our Stewardship Emphasis Weekend in early March. He along with his praise team ministered to the congregation starting with the vespers program all the way through to Sabbath afternoon. Photo - Rhodney Regoso



CRDP Tax Clinic

Sunday, March 1, 2015 our CRDP Committee hosted a free Tax Clinic for caregivers within our community. Services were provided to help our attendees file their income taxes and help them gain a better understanding on Canadian Taxation. Thank you to our wonderful presenters: Darlene Rey, Connie Bynoe, and George Solijon as well as our volunteers! Photo - Olive Rey



Maharlika`s teams earn 1st place

Both of the teams representing the Maharlika Pathfinder club achieved 1st place awards at the Pathfinder Bible Experience (April 2015) finals in Dallas, Texas. Congratulations to the team members and volunteers who worked hard to prepare for the event. Previously, both teams earned 1st place finishes in both the local and regional levels before qualifying for the finals. Photo - Mae Anunciacion

Food Bank deposits 13 Years of Service

by Eden Vizcarra

No one would have anticipated that the Mt. Zion Food Bank opened 13 years ago would have lasted this long. This was first conceptualized by then elder Joy Cuizon who saw this from a sister church in downtown Toronto and brought it to the attention of Sis. Jocy Camato, who was then our Community Services director. She then worked with Bro. Ben and Sis. Evelyn Regoso on the details of application with the North York Harvest Food Bank (NYHFB) agency to authorize us as a satellite agency. Following after, Ben developed a structure and compiled a working manual for Mount Zion Food Bank.

Due to some circumstances Sis. Jocy resigned and Sis. Lani Aguinaldo took over for sometime. Currently, our Community Services Director is Sis. Belle Ganzon. I work with her and a handful of truly dedicated volunteers. This ministry continues by serving every 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. We average around 65 families

served each time, an increase of about 160%, since our early days when we served 25 families on average. Although most of our goods are supplied by NYHFB, the church and each



Photo of some Hospitality members (Ken Esch)

member also share in supplies and monetary donations in which we are really grateful.

Hundreds of families have been served in our community year in, year out. Although this part of our ministry is not expected to gener-



[Friendship]

ate baptism as it is purely a service to the community, a few of our clients have attended our church and fewer still have accepted our message in baptism. Thanks in part to the few dedicated and willing church members volunteers who are dispensing not only food items to our clients but also show the spirit of true Christian witness as commanded by our Lord Jesus, Matthew 25:40, "Verily, I say unto you; In as much as you done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto Me"

We solicit your continued prayer and support in this ministry and we hope to inspire those coming up behind us in the spirit of volunteerism. Remember that we are the only tools (hands) that Christ can use to reach to our community.

Eden Vizcarra is a long-time supporter of the church's community services ministry, and a proud grandmother.

I sold my Seoul for a year, you should too.

by John Joseph Sunio



Somewhere in Asia. (Photo – Jacqui Mariano)

In 2013, I was given the chance to do Missionary work and teach English in South Korea. For those who may not know, I have had some experience teaching English and evangelizing in Japan for a total of approximately 2 years, and it was such a huge blessing for me. But for some reason, I was having my doubts about going to South Korea.

I was making up excuses like, "I'm too old, I can't speak the language, I don't think it's a safe place," etc. Also, I had this impression that South Korea doesn't need my help with the evangelical side of things because Christianity is very strong in the Korean community. I've met and interacted with so many Korean Christians in North America, and I would assume that it would be the same in South Korea. So why should I go? I was thinking, and praying hard about it, and in the end, I eventually decided to give it a shot.

I am so glad that I made the decision to go. Not only are you able to help and share your experiences to others, but you also feel a genuine closeness with your relationship with God. Sometimes you shouldn't lean on

[Frontier]

your own understandings and simply let God take control.

No matter where you go, there is always work that needs to be done; whether it be a first world country that meets all of your provisions and more, or a poor nation where living conditions are unimaginable through our perspective. Even if you aren't confident with your Biblical knowledge, you can still be a good example towards the local people. Even a simple act of kindness such as greeting someone can make the biggest difference. If you have a burning desire do missionary work, I'd recommend to go out and do it. Every missionary experience, no matter the length and difficulty will always be a blessing. And as long as you put it all on God's hands and let Him lead, he will protect you, and even help you to grow and mature.

Jay currently teaches English to international students. He likes Pina colodas and getting caught in the rain.



[Fortifier] My PBE Experience

by Dysphan Lumbangaol

Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE) has been one of the greatest things I have ever experienced in my short lifetime. We've been preparing and studying since last May. It is almost a year of preparation, which definitely paid off as along with every other team in Ontario, we received first place at the North American Division (NAD) level. There were so many memories and experiences I have gained over the past year. It's been a long way to the NAD, but it's been worth it.

Preparing for PBE was a little difficult at first, but it was mostly enjoyable. We all got assigned around five chapters each to memorize. I will have these chapters memorized for the rest of my life. Memorizing things usually isn't fun, but memorizing God's word is enjoyable. Although I am required to memorize, I'm not just memorizing because I have to, it was because I really want to know more about God.

Our coach, Auntie Darlene amazed me as she is so knowledgeable about the Bible. She made it easy to remember and understand everything.

She knew the history behind people, what certain items were used for and small things that we would usually not even think twice about when reading the Bible. We definitely owe our success to God for blessing her, and giving her the strength and wisdom to coach us. Even though we did the memorizing and studying, she was

the one who guided us along the way. At times, some of us did get lost as it was difficult and were even considering leaving, but Auntie Darlene and God is what kept us going. She always reminded us about who we were doing all this for, not ourselves or her,



but God. This allowed us to stay humble, which I think is very important in PBE.

We had practices every Saturday, and we started having Friday practices around December. These practices were always the highlight of my week, as I got to see my friends, and more importantly, learn more about God. Another reason why PBE was so amazing was because you not only strengthen your relationship with God, you got to strengthen your relationship with your friends. Of course, friends should not come before God, but if you have friends who can help guide you and keep you on the right track on your walk with God, you can only benefit from that. There is no better way to strengthen your relationship with friends than through reading and studying God's word. All these practices, and all these studying allowed us to attend the NAD level testing at Southwestern Adventist University in

Keene, Texas. There were hundreds, maybe over a thousand people. Everyone was very friendly and you can talk to and approach almost anyone. I made a few friends from Chicago, Michigan and Texas. It was great seeing so many pathfinders as it reminded me of the Oshkosh Camporee in 2014. The competition was long and it was sad as this was the last time we were tested in the book of Matthew. Although the season is over we know that we should still continue to read

the Bible and keep studying Matthew.

After the competition we all were excited but tired and we ended up all sleeping in the same room, with adult supervision of course, and this was one of my favourite memories

from Texas, other than the actual competition. The following day we were able to see the Dallas Museum of Arts, and went swimming at our hotel. We swam outside for hours until our nails were blue, but it was really fun to be able to bond, relax, and



PBE teams with parents. (Photo- Mae Anunciacion)

spend time with my team mates.

The worst part was definitely leaving, as I wasn't ready, and wanted to spend more time with my friends in Texas. Although I wished it never ended, it was an amazing experience that I won't ever forget, and I can't wait for next year. PBE is a very fun



(Photo- Mae Anunciacion)

non-competitive way to encourage kids to learn more about the Bible. It has encouraged me to start reading the Bible more in-depth, and truly give my life to God. I want God to be a bigger part of my life, the biggest part, and PBE is helping me to accomplish that by encouraging me to read my Bible. PBE has been a big impact on my life and my relationship with God. I am so thankful I got to experience it.



Dysphan is 14 and served as the Maharlika PBE Team B Captain. (Photo in centre: Glenn Mariano)

The home we almost didn't buy

[Faith]

by Glenn Mariano

We just moved into a home that we almost missed out on. Good thing we had God as our partner. I'll let you in on a little secret, I've been taught early on the principles of tithing, and have been doing so since I earned my first pay cheque. When you give back to God, you make him your Partner, and with Him on your team, things just seem to fall into place. This story is just the latest example in my life.

Just before Christmas, I've began having this itch that we needed to get out of the condo. After getting married, the unit was getting a little bit too cozy for the three of us, so we began looking for a new home. Being in the real estate business, I knew that the condo market was well supplied, with detached homes becoming quite the hot commodity. Selling the condo, while finding a house in the City, wasn't going to be easy. After prayerfully weighing our options, we listed the condo and began looking in earnest. We prayed that God would have a home ready for us. He didn't disappoint.

With our agent, Nestor, we hopped from house to house, looking for the ideal home to settle in. Some were nice, others not so. As with the market today, some properties we liked were often snapped up in a matter of days, or were bid up to \$50k to \$100k over asking, putting them out of our reach. I was almost heartbroken to hear that a home we were considering making an offer on was sold below the asking price. It was the best house up to that point and also at the low end of our price range. We kept pushing on.

Finally, Jacqui pulls up a listing of what is to be our house, and we made a schedule to visit it among a bunch of others in the area. I was actually in a fairly sour mood when we got to the home. The previous homes we saw weren't close to what we expected, especially compared to the home we liked, and I was beginning to lose hope. Then we see THE house. It needed some work, but I knew we had to make an offer. It was the best house we've seen so far, and it was also one of the cheapest too. After all the viewings that day, we knew we wanted that house and planned on bidding on it.

We almost never did.

The selling agent had set the offer date, the day when they start accepting offers, sometime the following week. The day before the

offer date, something told me to look through the listing and do some research on the property so I can come in prepared. It was at the end of the workday and I just wanted to print off stuff to review at home. While looking at the listing, I noticed something odd. It said the offer date was that very day. Puzzled, I called Nestor to check and we ended up rushing to the realtor's office as it was indeed the offer date. For some reason, we all thought it was scheduled for the next day.

When you give back to God, you make him your Partner, and with Him on your team, things just seem to fall into place.

We arrived after 7:30pm, and noticed there were several other potential buyers at the office. Jacqui and I weren't expecting anything to happen given that we were 1. Unprepared. 2. Unwilling to engage in a ridiculous bidding war, and 3. Really unprepared. Little did we realize that we had 4. God on our side.

We went in with the game plan of seeing how far we can go, with our max price matching the sale price of the other house we missed out on.

It's 10:30 pm and we're still at the office. 3 of the 5 bidders have left, and Jacqui and I are starting to get scared. Why? We were: 1. Unprepared. 2. Condo hasn't received a single offer yet. 3. The fact we might actually win the bid was freaking me out.

It's like bidding on an item on eBay for fun, and then you realize you might actually win the item, and secretly hoping someone would outbid you. The only difference being that we were bidding on expensive Toronto real estate that we were totally ill-equipped for.

We made one last final bid, thinking it wouldn't be enough. It was still well below our budget and well below what similar properties in the City sold for. I was confident it wouldn't be enough.

So when the lady came in later with a smile on her face, the thoughts "Oh No," crossed my mind. "This is actually happening."

It turns out that our final offers were close, "marginally close", according to the listing agent. We were told that their family, had a wonderful Filipino nanny for many years, and they had a soft spot for our people because of her. Being a young Filipino couple must have swayed their decision to our favor. Thank God for awesome Filipino nannies.

Long story short, after signing the papers to buy the house, we actually received ONE offer on the condo in the following week. We must have shown the unit to a million people, yet it was providential that the lone offer came in, just when we needed it.



One last photo in the empty condo

Looking back through this experience, I can see that God had foreseen our need, and had the ideal home in mind for us. The house we ended up with was the best we've seen, even better than the ones we missed out on. He even made it possible when we weren't ready and serious enough to go through with it. I felt that I should share this story as another example of God answering our prayers, even before we ask for it.

Both Jacqui and I tithe regularly, making God a partner in our lives, and this is another reminder of God's promise of abundant blessings. When we make God our partner, He makes sure he takes care of us, even if we don't ask for it. So go out there, make God your partner, keep trusting in Him, and praying for his continual blessings. You never know what God has in store for you.

Glenn is a commercial real estate appraiser. He has two pet orchids that he enjoys taking care of.



Beacon LIGHT

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