



The 150th Anniversary of Protestant Missions in Japan



DECLARATION

“One in Christ” –as witnesses of the Lord Jesus –

First, we give thanks from the depths of our hearts to God who allowed us to welcome and celebrate this memorable 150th year of Protestant Missions in Japan. Second, more than anything, we want to pay homage to those missionaries who came to Japan 150 years ago before the lifting of the ban on Christianity, bringing God's Word as fishers of men and overcoming countless hardships, as well as to show our respect to the churches around the world, starting with the United States, that sent them to us with prayer and support. These people continued in their mission for the sake of the salvation of the Japanese people and had considerable influence on Japanese society in terms of education, culture, and ethics, among other things.

Also, when we think of the grace of this 150th year of Protestant Missions, needless to say, we cannot be unaware of the weight of what happened 460 years ago when Francis Xavier planted the seed of Christian faith in the soil of Japan. Furthermore, we cannot forget the fact that 163 years ago the Protestant missionary Bernard Jean Bettelheim carried the Gospel to Ryukyu, partially translated the Bible, and opened the road to Protestantism. When we think of the faith of these pioneers who carried the Gospel in spite of so many hardships and challenges, now we humbly repent, being inspired by and reflecting on the faith of those who brought us the Gospel, and deeply regret our negligence, that we did not respond enough to their example, taking for granted the grace given by God through them. Numerical decline and the lack of candidates for church ministry cause Japanese churches to feel a sense of despair and this air is surrounding Japanese churches now. We, the Japanese Christians who want to participate in the grace of this 150th Anniversary of Protestant Missions, want to move forward by being awakened to the proclamation of the gospel.

This time, prayers for celebrating the 150th Anniversary were raised in the unity of the Lord. It was the magnificent grace of God that we could pray and work together beyond walls of denominations (such as the National Christian Council in Japan, Japan Evangelical Association, Nippon Revival Association, and their member churches as well as independent churches) from the first stages of preparation. This memorial event adopted the slogan ““One in Christ”—as witnesses of the Lord Jesus—.” This is an opportunity to make this slogan a reality. From now, each

Public Witness Of Our Unity In Christ



Rev. Dr. Richard Howell
AEA G.S.

What was your experience of participation in the celebrations of 150 years of Protestant missions in Japan? My answer to this question posed to me is hard to locate in words for it was an experience of a life time. I witnessed the prayer of Christ answered as this was indeed a united celebration as the declaration states. The public witness of our unity in Christ has a purpose, as Jesus said, so that the world may believe” John 17:12. The celebrations were efficiently carried to the finish. It was special joy to hear testimonies of how faith in Christ transformed lives of public personalities. There was also a challenging reminder of the task of mission in Asia and our united engagement in it. We all pray to the Lord: “Thy kingdom come.”

denomination will move forward in unity, passionately making the best use of its distinctive characteristics for the common mission of the proclamation of the Gospel.

Now, fifty years after the 100th anniversary of Protestant Missions, Japanese churches have also undergone big changes. On the one hand, we officially announced our Confession of Responsibility during World War II. On the other hand, churches struggled violently to define their relationship with Japanese society and how to reach out to it. However, many seeds of the Gospel have been planted through our evangelism.

The relationship of Christians, who walk toward the Kingdom of God, with the society is through the Gospel and by the rich grace of God. It is further expected that we will live in the words of the Bible and accomplish our task of evangelism.

Today an economic crisis which has been said to be of proportions that are seen only once in 100 years is striking the world including Japan. It is in this situation that we are commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Protestant Missions in Japan. We will pass on to the future the baton that was passed on to us from the pioneers of the faith and we will anticipate the vision of missions for the future through the help of the Holy Spirit from the richness of the life that Jesus Christ gives. Taking this opportunity of the 150th Anniversary, we declare our commitment for working together in unity for the sake of proclaiming the Gospel of the cross and resurrection. We declare this "150th Anniversary Declaration" to be the statement of this convention together with all the prayers of the participants.

May the Lord God, the Lord Jesus Christ use us well. Amen.

July 9th, 2009 – All participants of the 150th Anniversary of Protestant Missions in Japan



– Executive Committee –

Asia Mission Forum 2009



Some Leaders at the Celebration



Introducing



Bishop Bro. Eddie C. Villanueva
Little guy preacher from the Philippines

Humble beginning

Then newly converted into the Christian faith, Philippine College of Commerce (now Polytechnic University of the Philippines) finance and economics professor Eddie Villanueva, relinquished his long-embraced communist creed of Carl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and Mao Zedong, for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was his elder sister, Leni, who convinced him “to try Jesus” after he miserably failed to nail down the vicious land-grabbers that victimized his family and his other little townfolk – despite his demonstrated intellectual brilliance, charismatic eloquence, and contagious passion.

It was at the end of his rope that Eddie found hope in the God of the Bible; it was the humble beginning of a beautiful life story.

Teacher to preacher

The classroom that once served as venue for Eddie to educate his students about the evils of society became avenue for him to reach them and teach them about the grace of God.

Soon, there was a clamor from his students for prayers beyond the ones he said before the start of each class. The prayer gatherings turned into Bible study meetings. And the Bible study meetings of 15 college students grew into a phenomenal Christian movement that is now the Jesus Is Lord Church.

After thirty years, God has brought the Jesus Is Lord Church at the forefront of global Christian ministry. Today, there are JIL Churches in every province all over the Philippines as well as in 44 countries around the world.

Modest recognition In recognition of his achievements, Bro. Eddie has been the recipient of various international and local honors and citations. He holds a Doctorate Degree in Divinity from Promise Christian University in Los Angeles, California (2008). He has also received various honorary degrees: Doctor of Education Management from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (2003); Doctor of Philosophy in Humanities from Bulacan State University (2003); Doctor of Divinity from Christian International (CI) based in Sta. Rosa Beach, Florida (1997); Doctor of Divinity from Vision Christian College in Romana, California (1995); Doctor of Divinity from Thailand Bible Seminary (1994).

Bro. Eddie was voted worldwide as "Pastor of the Year" in 1988 by Dr. George Otis' High Adventure Ministries. He was Ordained Minister of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (1979) by Dr. Michael McKinney of the Victory in Christ Church and International Ministries based in California and who is now the President of Promise Christian University.

OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

Seventeenth June 2009 is a historic day in the ecumenical journey of the Church in India when the three bodies, the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI), National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI), signed a memorandum of understanding at the Joint Working Committee meeting at Delhi Bible Institute, Delhi.

Preamble

The National United Christian Forum invites us to a journey of faith, and confidence in the guidance of the Spirit to lead us into new relationships of trust and cooperation. We are committed to celebrate, enter into dialogue and act together to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We seek to broaden and deepen encounters to foster mutual respect, to explore and address together common challenges. We share common goals and establish a cooperative arrangement to strengthen the Church in India and the church's engagement with the poor and the oppressed.

Now therefore, we mutually agree as follows:

1. Aims & Objectives

1. To foster and promote the spirit of intra-faith harmony
2. To dispel the prejudices created against the Christian and other minority communities and to actively engage in the promotion of better relationships between the communities.
3. To encourage and actively promote the prophetic engagement of the Church in the socio-political economic life of the nation.
4. To respond to specific instances of atrocities against the Christian community and other minority communities.
5. To educate the community towards the various provisions safeguarding their rights and privileges and opportunities designed for their development.
6. To work towards bringing various Christian organizations of service together for a more coordinated action and effective witnessing
7. To safeguard and promote human rights and in particular the rights of people belonging to Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and Backward Classes, minority communities, children, women, the poor and the marginalized.
8. To address and respond to issues concerning Christians of Dalit origin, in particular the

Bro. Eddie has also completed various special studies: Integrated Bible Course, Harvestime International Institute (1987-1988); Morris Cerullo School of Evangelism, Philippine International Convention Center (1984); Special Studies, Rhema Correspondence Bible Training Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma, (1983); Basic and Advanced Bible Courses under Dr. E.W. Kenyon (1979-1980); Complete Bible Course, Daoud Correspondence School (1978); 14th Managers' Course, University of the Philippines-ISSI (1977);

Dr. Billy Graham School of Evangelism, Philippine International Convention Center (1977); Regular and Advanced Speech Courses, Speech Training Center (1970).

Present involvements

Aside from being JIL President and Spiritual Director, Bishop Bro. Eddie presently serves as Chairman, God's People Coalition for Righteousness (composed of Catholics, Evangelicals, and Muslims), Vice Chairman of the Executive Council of Christ for Asia which is formerly Charismatic Fellowship of Asia, National Chairman of the Philippines for Jesus Movement, Member of the Board of Trustees of the International Bible Society – Philippines, Chancellor of Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, and President and Chairman of ZOE Broadcasting Network (franchise holder and licensee to operate VHF Channel 11 and UHF Channel 33)

Apart from being a deeply spiritual man with strong moral convictions and high ethical principles, he is most of all a Filipino who loves his country and his people and a man who is committed to leading the transformation of the Philippines into a prosperous and respectable nation through the Bagong Pilipinas, Bagong Pilipino Movement which he also heads.

He hosts his weekly programs, Jesus The Healer and Diyos At Bayan (God and Country) television programs aired over mainstream stations GMA 7 and QTV 11. He also writes his weekly column for two Tagalog national newspapers, Abante and Abante-Tonite, and monthly article for magazines in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Family man

Bro. Eddie is married to Adoracion Jose Villanueva, who holds a Doctorate in Theology from Promise Christian University in Los Angeles, California, USA. She is currently Executive Director of Jesus Is Lord Church Worldwide and President/Director of Jesus Is Lord Colleges Foundation, Inc.

The Villanueva's have four children, all married and all achievers in their own right. Eduardo Jr. is the incumbent Mayor of Bocaue, Bulacan, Emmanuel Joel is a third-term anti-corruption partylist Member of the House of Representatives, Eleanor Joni is currently Executive Vice President of ZOE TV-11 and Director for Administration of Jesus Is Lord Church Worldwide, and Edelisha Jovi is a Youth Advocate and Educator.

Asia News

Indonesia: Members of several Muslim organizations joined a demonstration on June 27 to protest construction of a Huria Kristen Batak Protestant (HKBP) church building in Plaju, outside of Palembang, capital of South Sumatra Province, Indonesia. The deputy mayor of Palembang, Haji Rom Hertan, issued the May decree ordering a halt to construction because of incomplete documentation

Laos: Following the confiscation of livestock from Christian families earlier this month, officials in a village in Laos on Saturday (July 11) called a special meeting for all residents and announced that they had "banned the Christian faith in our village." The chief of Katin village, along with village security, social and religious affairs officials, warned all 53 Christian residents that they should revert to worshipping local spirits in accordance with Lao tradition or risk losing all village rights and privileges – including their livestock and homes, according to advocacy group Human Rights Watch for Lao Religious Freedom (HRWLRFF).

Pakistan: Well-known Pakistani minority rights activist Joseph Francis and two others were jailed on Sunday (July 12) in Lahore, Pakistan for forged documents in connection with false charges of assaulting a woman who visited his office in 2006, their lawyers said. Francis, national director of the Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS), which for more than two decades



discrimination against their constitutional right to legal protection.

9. To critically observe and evaluate the socio-political developments within society and to effectively respond to the same.
10. To take up research on issues affecting the Christian community and other minorities.
11. To promote communication within the Christian fold and outside
12. To make meaningful interventions in areas of policy making/opinion shaping and to make appropriate representations before the government and other concerned bodies on issues as mentioned above.
13. And to engage in any other emerging activities for the fulfillment of above objects with the inspiration and motivation from the Lord Jesus Christ and His teaching.

has defended Christians and others against spurious charges by Islamists, was arrested on Thursday (July 9).

Vietnam: Police, employing the use of local thugs, have arrested a Catholic Dong Hoi on July 28 in Vietnam. Reports indicate that the police and thugs are "roaming the streets and attacking those who visibly wear catholic religious symbols" - I the service of law enforcement- shout death threat against the Christians.

China: Police Security Bureau (PBS) and religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) officials on July 23 raided a Christian youth camp in Henan, China. Before being released back to their homes, Police interrogated the students, who were all under 18. Two instructors have been sentenced to administrative detention.

Uzbekistan: Uzbekistan's Baptist Union is facing criminal charges brought by Tashkent City Prosecutor's office for allegedly unlawfully teaching children religion and for supposedly misusing their property in a resort area as a summer camp, Forum 18 News Service has learned. As a result, Baptist Union Chair Pavel Peichev faces huge fines, the confiscation of the property, imprisonment or some combination of these penalties. No official from either the state Religious Affairs committee of Uzbekistan Ombudsperson's office were willing to discuss the case with Forum 18 on 28 July.