JANUARY BIBLE FESTIVAL AT PICC: SOMETHING DIFFERENT

To coincide with the annual celebration of the National Bible Month every January, ACSI Phils held the 2017 BIBLE FESTIVAL, “Let’s Celebrate God’s Word” last January 27 & 28 at the Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City. 165 students from 14 Christian schools participated in the different events in the two-day festival. A special inspirational message was shared by Rev. Eugene Hao, Associate Pastor of Jubilee Evangelical Church, Quezon City. He asked everyone to find encouragement in God’s Word because as the Bible Fest theme says “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever (Isaiah40:8).

Aside from the highly-anticipated Bible Quiz, there were on-the-spot essay writing and art competitions. Sophia Ellise T. Chua, Grade 10 student of MGC New Life Christian Academy, won first place in the essay writing and Waren Daniel Lee, Philadelphia School, was first place in the art contest. Their winning works are published in this issue. A number of students shared their testimonies on how Jesus Christ became an integral part of their lives and how they will continue to seek His wisdom each day.

A one-act play was presented powerfully by Christian Academy of Manila whose students interpreted the Parable of the Sower. Their Club trainor, teacher, and Director, Mr. John Elizier Beguirras, took part in a touching rendition of their finale songs. Philadelphia High School and Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy led in the praise and worship for the two days. The Bible Fest was supported by some young lady professionals who acted as judges, among them were Rebecca Lee and Danica Tiam-Lee. The event was supported by Phoenix Publishing, Cosmocare International, Inc., Profood International Corporation, MGC New Life Christian Academy, and Rex Publishing. Visit www.acsiphils.org/2017-acsi-bible-festival for more details on the Bible Festival.


“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2 (NIV)

DIRECTOR’S NOTES

PERSPECTIVE: the way one looks at something.

How do we look at the challenges that we face? Do we look at our lives, professional and personal, through the eyes of our Lord and Savior Jesus? Has our faith been strengthened by a change in our perspective? Have we realized that all our words, thoughts, and actions need to be viewed from a Biblical perspective?

We assign a name to our ACSI Philippines Newsletter to emphasize what your ACSI desires; that is for all members of every school community see Jesus Christ in every person, every event, every child we meet in class, every life we touch, every parent, every member of the academe, in every opportunity, every struggle and triumph. ACSI Philippines opens all possibilities of helping others grow in their faith in God and excel in every aspect of life for the glory of God.—EMB

ACSI strengthens Christian schools and equips Christian educators worldwide, as they prepare students academically, and inspire them to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Be a PART of your Association and enjoy numerous membership benefits.

Visit www.acsiphils.org or call 02 7472973.
TWO ACCREDITATION VISITS CONDUCTED

Accreditation by a well-organized agency is a seal of quality on an educational institution. ACSI promotes the value of accreditation to all the Christian schools in the world. Last September 2016, a Midterm Visit was conducted for Faith Christian School, Cainta, by Debbie MacCullough, Professor of Math and Math Education at Cairn University and a regular ACSI Global consultant and Evelyn M. Bumatay, ACSI Phils Country Director.

In January 2017, a full accreditation team visited MGC New Life Christian Academy headed by Alan Farlin. The accreditation team was composed of —

Alan D. Farlin, Chair
SIL TCK Care & Education Asia Coordinator and Global HR Strategic Specialist
Minden, Nebraska USA

Maria Rosario Alfafara, Ed. D.
School Directress, Mandaue Christian School Inc.
Mandaue City, PHILIPPINES

Evelyn M. Bumatay
ACSI Philippines Country Director

Luz Isobal
Principal, Bethel International School Tacloban, PHILIPPINES

ACSI Philippines CORE TEAMS ORGANIZED

The concept of creating an ACSI CORE Team was received well by a group of school heads in Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao, and NCR. The objective of its creation is to identify significant needs of schools in a particular region and plan strategically on how ACSI Philippines could help the Christian schools meet and answer such needs. Initial meetings were conducted through web conferencing using Zoom Video Communications in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao to minimize travel concerns.

Only the NCR Core Team met personally at the Fort Legend Tower, Bonifacio Global City. All meetings were conducted successfully from March 15 to 20. Among the expected outcomes included ACSI Philippines line up of activities for May 2017 to February 2018.

Who doesn’t want students excited about learning?

ACSI/Purposeful Design Publications has young people in mind with the release of Life Science. In it, students experience the joy of discovery through student-led activities like this one on cell transport:

Use a microscope to examine the cells of an elodea leaf. Look at the vacuoles, walls, and chloroplasts. Then drop saltwater on the cells. What happens? Why?

By applying the concepts taught in the lesson and being encouraged to experiment, students can aptly analyze and conclude by implementing critical thinking skills. Here’s another example from the teacher edition. To help teachers explain the function of enzymes in cellular activities, Life Science provides this metaphor to share with the class:

The entire class is asked to climb over a high stone wall. Some students can rock climb up the face, and a few others can boost each other up over the wall, but the rate of students making it over the wall is very slow. A set of stairs is placed in front of the wall, and another set of stairs is placed on the other side. With two sets of stairs in place, the rate of students climbing over the wall increases dramatically. Emphasize that in cellular activities, enzymes act like the stairs by greatly speeding up reactions.

Here’s what one teacher had to say about this science series:

“I’ve taught for 30+ years, and this science series is a winner. The discovery approach creates interest and excitement. [The series] meets our science standards from a biblical worldview.”
- Susan I. in Woodland, California

Order your Life Science books today. Print evaluation copies are available at the ACSI Philippines Office or you can visit www.pdp.acsi.org for online orders. A book sampler is available in the Purposeful Design Publications website. You may call ACSI Philippines office (02)747.2973.
**JUBILEE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF QUEZON CITY CELEBRATES 50TH FOUNDATION DAY ANNIVERSARY**

Praise God for His grace and faithfulness to Jubilee Christian Academy (JCA) for the last 50 years.

It is because of the guidance and protection of our Lord God that JCA has grown through the years. JCA is what it is today by His Grace.

With a heart and a spirit of praise and thanksgiving on the 50th Foundation Day anniversary, JCA launched its expanded motto: **SAVED TO SERVE WITH LOVE AND EXCELLENCE FOR THE GREAT COMMISSION**.

The first offering is "Once Upon A Parable", an evangelistic musical presentation written by Thomas Long and Allen Pote and performed by students from the Elementary, Junior High School and Senior High School Departments. JCA scheduled three performances for three different groups of audience at the Henry Lee Irwin Theater at Ateneo De Manila University: March 11, 2017, 3:00 PM for Community Care recipients; March 12, 2017, 3:00 PM for Students and Personnel; March 12, 2017, 8:00 PM for Parents, Alumni, Christian and educational institutions, sponsors and special guests. All seats in the three performance were taken, with many at standing room.

JCA thanks all who have prayed for the School through the years and have helped JCA do the work which God has set for it to accomplish.

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24.

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**CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF MANILA: Celebrating God’s Goodness at 50**

"Many, Lord my God, are the wonders you have done, the things you planned for us. None can compare with you; were I to speak and tell of your deeds, they would be too many to declare."

Christian Academy of Manila will always stand in awe of how the Lord has brought us through all these years. Our journey began when a group of Christian businessmen and missionaries, led by Mr. John Z. SyCip, started praying for a Filipino Christian school in Manila. Their desire was to establish an education-al institution that will produce young men and women who excel in every aspect of life, and at the same time raise a generation who knows the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was July 1967 when classes first commenced. From an average of fifteen students per class, the number of enrollees increased eventually. More members of the faculty and staff were also added. In time, what was known to be a small group of educators and learners on Nagtahan Street became a growing family of unique and promising individuals.

But even the strongest of people experience difficulties. The succeeding years witnessed tremendous times of troubles and hardships for the whole school.

February 14, 1984, the crackling sound, smell, and sight of burning wood alarmed neighbors nearby. Firemen and spectators came in. Tearful students and teachers rushed to the scene. The CAM building and everything in it caught an unforgiving fire. The structure that held our accomplishments and aspirations may have sadly burned to ashes, but the Lord we hold on to graciously helped us recover.

Five years after this fateful event, the school encountered another trial. A serious problem shook us all and brought us to a point of an eventual close up. Still, the Lord has been good. The Lord has been faithful. His blessings have continued to fill our lives through ups and downs. His ways have taught us to value things that matter not just in this life, but also things that matter even for the life to come.

Looking back, we will always be grateful for His love, His goodness, His faithfulness, and His grace. Indeed, without the Lord, we will never be able to surpass everything that came our way.

Fifty years have gone by, and we are just humbled at the marvelous deeds He has done. He is doing, and is about to do.

So in response to His overwhelming magnificence, we are taking this opportunity to offer ourselves back to the Lord. It is our prayer that, for the years to come, He would lead us every step of the way as we pursue His call of utmost excellence and undivided devotion to the King.
Faith Christian School

The FCS Board of Directors and Administration, through its School Director, has a great desire to provide excellence to its constituents, whether it be in customer service, government reporting and primarily providing quality holistic Christian Education to the young generation of the Municipality of Cainta and the surrounding municipalities.

In between the two executive villages in Cainta stands Faith Christian School. Here, teachers are Christians who are ingrained with the Word and while they are all active members in their respective churches, they are professionally prepared and ready Christian educators. Christian values in the basic foundation of the lessons taught here that all the academic subjects are enhanced with biblical light. Learners are seen refined and the Christian principles they have been brought up with have subliminally been part and parcel of their beings.

It is known in the whole Province of Rizal the ideals that graduates of this institution bear for they more often would excel because of the effort that they have chosen to pursue. Worth noting are the occasions when they’d come back to their Alma Mater bringing good and encouraging reports. On the part of the returnees, that’s a way of bringing back their gratitude to the school authority. While the educators here feel pleased and wanting to do even more in leveling up with the current pacing of education.

Education is expensive, it is a common knowledge. Parents are willing to spend that good earned money to finance the education of their offspring. Some would even think that when they enroll their kids to an institution of the affluent ones, never mind if it is more expensive there, it would be worth it anyway.

Normally, the quality of education provided is equivalent to the price paid in Tuition and Fees in an educational institution. However, here at Faith Christian School, thru its School Director, along with the School Leaders, are determined to provide quality Christian Education regardless of the economic status of its constituents.

The FCS community consists mostly of families falling under the middle class, based on the Philippine standards. It’s a great challenge and it takes careful planning of the distribution of limited resources to provide an enriched Faculty Development Program and to provide above-average facilities to our students.

Since the institution joined ACSI Accreditation Program in 2009, Faith Christian School has dramatically increased its performance in all areas of school operation. The Board, supported by the School Leaders and the FCS-PTF, are unwavering in their decision toward the Continuous School Improvement Program.

As it has been observed, adolescent learners would be easily influenced and persuaded by a lot of attractions. But certain standards set by the school have to be met and holding them on focus would be a predicament if not well-planned. With major subjects like Mathematics, English and Science, a Collaborative Learning Class (CLC) is opened on Saturdays and it was found effective.

Students have to enjoy while they learn, so these classes that meet on such a day away from their usual classes have been termed a forum to do Enrichment Skills. Proof of the positive results the number of low performing students are dramatically reduced.

The alumni of Faith Christian School are believed to have grown up in an institution where kids are marked by their gait, speech and manners, not to mention the development of their multiple intelligences.

In the high school department, they all pass entrance exams given by the good and known universities, others would even have collegiate scholarship.

Those lawyers, medical doctors, engineers, others are teachers and a number would come back to teach here, saying, “...this is one simple way of returning the favor to their Alma Mater."

The practice of integrating biblical principles has even been enhanced when FCS has been accredited by ACSI. Teachers would attend in full force at seminars conducted by ACSI, FCS being the biggest delegation in the last few years.

The changes toward improvement happen gradually and continuously. The new four-storey building for the Senior High School which was recently inaugurated has a Multi-Purpose Hall where Art Exhibits are done, along with some plays and recitals. Art as we know will make study bearable or we might say, more conducive and encouraging.

Currently, FCS is preparing for the 2019 ACSI Re-Accreditation using the REACH 2.1 Rubrics Manual. With the use of the standards checklist, we are able to gauge and bring improvement in all areas of the school operation in “Reaching for Excellence through Accreditation and Continuous Improvement for Higher Education”.

Accreditation: Our Journey to a Better School

How can we put into words the feeling of completing a two-year long project? How do we adequately thank all the people who poured out time and effort for such a school wide endeavor? More importantly, how do we adequately thank the Lord who saw us through such an exhausting but fruitful ordeal?

The end of an accreditation process is a beginning. We, the workers of MGC New Life Christian Academy, spent the past couple years preparing for re-accreditation. Now that the two-hundred-or-so-page write up has been completed, we look ahead and see that there is still much work to be done. Through it all, however, God is not stopped working in our hearts and lives. In fact, as we recall where we were twenty-five years ago, and see where we are today, it is clear that God has always been our sustainer and deliverer. This is a great motivation for us to both worship Him and serve Him better as stewards of His graciously given resources.

Albeit tiring at times, the whole self-study process was God’s gift to us. It allowed us to see and appreciate all the work that goes into making the school run. We were able to learn about the methods and strategies of the different academic departments, the new facilities available thanks to God’s provision, and the demographics of the school, to name a few. It showed us the areas we need to grow in, pushing us to strive for greater excellence in our craft. It showed us the need to rethink and revamp to meet the particular needs of our students. And above all, it showed us that without God’s enabling grace, we are nothing. Our need to depend on the Lord daily has only become more apparent during the process to get re-accredited.

The four-day visit from the visiting team, headed by Mr. Alan Farlin, the Asian Coordinator of SIL TCK Care and Education team, composed of Mrs. Evelyn Bumatay, Country Director of ACSI Philippines; Mrs. Paula Newell, Counselor at Bandung Alliance Intercultural School; Dr. Judy Go Tan, Principal of St. Stephen’s High School; Dr. Maria Rosario Alsfara, School Directress of Mandaue Christian School, Inc.; Mrs. Luzviminda Isobal, Principal of Bethel International School; and Malcolm Pirie, Principal of Hope Christian School, was another gift. During their visit, we got to dialogue with them about the areas we, as a school, are excelling in, areas where we need to grow, and suggestions for new methods that we had not considered or had not even been on our radar. Having experts in the educational field come and see the school with fresh eyes, and then give their input and feedback was invaluable. The steering committee even had opportunity to interact on a deeper level with the team as they ate together during the visit.

So what do we feel? Relief is not an adequate word; relief tends to indicate the closure of something negative. Exhustion? That carries a negative connotation too. Perhaps a better word is challenged. We have been challenged to grow. We have been challenged to keep learning. We have been challenged to maintain our integrity as Christian teachers. And, finally, we have been challenged to trust God all the more for the strength and empowerment that comes only from Him and His grace. One more word that could sum up this journey is not an adjective, but a command: worship. We have seen new more than ever the need to offer our work, our hearts, and our lives as worship to Lord. May He be glorified no matter what the outcome of the accreditation visit is.
NOT JUST A CHRISTIAN; BUT, INSTEAD A COMpletely COMMITTED FOLLOWER

SOPHIA ELLYSE T. CHUA, GRADE 10, MGC NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

First Place, Essay Writing Contest 2017 ACSI Bible Festival

“I am a Christian.” That’s what everyone says – and I have to admit that I belong to that population of people. I can easily tell my peers, my cell group leader, or my teacher that I am a Christian. But I have learned my ways to be incorrect and shameful. To follow Jesus Christ means that we surrender everything to Him. Completely to Him.

It is never easy to commit to a relationship, let alone with Christ. We never see him or even make physical contact with him – this is what makes it very difficult to follow Christ as a Christian steward. The world offers us many things that can bring us farther and farther away from him. Thus, the real challenge that a true follower faces is how to be a completely committed follower.

To follow Jesus Christ means to completely surrender to him. As humans, it is in our sinful nature to take pride in being capable of doing everything independently. When we encounter problems, we see to it that they be solved by our own means and in an instant. Sadly, our deceitful hearts sometimes lead us to the path of greater harm when we easily follow the path of no harm at all. Imagine a man. He’s an avid hiker. The map after a long day of hiking. One starry night, he camps and in the dark of night, his instincts draw him to a beautifully-curved cliff near his camping site. In the blink of an eye, he starts climbing the cliff with his gear and up he goes. Unfortunately, his rope slips and falls down to the hundred-foot space beneath him. As he hangs on for his life, God calls out to him and tells him to let go and let God save him. But, he doesn’t listen and keeps hanging on, unwilling to let go. The next day, he is found dead – still hanging on to that piece of rock.

We have to admit that we are incapable of saving ourselves from the outcome of our own decisions. We don’t realize we need Jesus Christ and to follow him. We burden ourselves with our own concerns and challenges and we are face to face. But when we completely surrender everything to him, it would feel as if a heavy load is lifted from our backs. When we finally admit that we surrender to him, he will share his yoke and make our burdens lighter.

To follow Jesus Christ also means to sacrifice our lives for him alone. As a student who aims to make it to the top 4 ranking of batch Patmos, it is easy for me to study just as it is easy for me to relax and do what I please. However, it is easy for us Christians to let go of our commitment to sacrifice, which is essential to truly following Christ. In our world today, mundane things are offered to make us enjoy life and unknowingly lead Christ. These worldly things are some of the forego and sacrifice to be able to follow.

Likewise, we need to sacrifice one important aspect in our lives – time. There are 24 hours in one day. An average person typically allots 8 hours for sleeping. The remaining 16 hours are for us to spend wisely. Christ does not require us to spend all day for him, but he wants us to spend time with him. There are many excuses to make when it comes to spending time with him. “I forgot” or “I’m busy, maybe I’ll do it tomorrow instead.” Or the common “I’m too busy and I haven’t gotten a bit of sleep in two days.” All these excuses make us miss a lot of time that we could have spent with him.

To follow Jesus Christ means to commit to follow. It is an undeniable fact that we have our wants and our dreams. These are the things that we want to pursue. But I have learned personally that pursuing without consulting is not what we must do. Next school year will be my Grade 11 year. I need to make a choice that will determine my future. I told my parents that I wanted to study abroad for college. The first step is usually entering and pursuing the IB Diploma program in order to qualify for international colleges. When I took the admission test and sat in for an interview, I convinced myself both times that this is my dream. A week later, a call came saying that I have been offered a slot at one of the prestigious schools in the Philippines, British School Manila. Along with the offer came a deadline of two weeks to confirm my slot. For two weeks, I felt that it was as if God was telling me that I was going the wrong way. Devastated, I finally told my parents that I had to turn down the offer. I walked to the police station and gave a record of the incident. The next day, two people were found dead – still hanging on to that piece of rock.

What I was not seeing at that time was the fact that he made a wonderful promise in Jeremiah 29:11. He has a wonderful plan for me, just as he has for all others like me. As his people, all of us Christians are all the more expected to commit to follow. Where he calls, we will go and follow. Christ puts these obstacles in our way to teach us that we will never leave us nor forsake us. His love endures forever and when we follow him completely, we show him that we are being true followers as Christian stewards.

When I was still studying in Jubilee Christian Academy, we had guidance counselling sessions. In K2, I decided there and then to make a decision to follow Christ. However, I did not know for the next nine years that I was missing something while I lived my walk with God. Last December, I was faced with the question – “Are you a fan or a follower?” I was a fan. All the qualities and commitments a follower must make, I never made. After four days of camp, I realized that I wanted to be a follower. It was then when I knew that he had a plan for me. Along with that promise, I am required and obliged to serve God. This way, I have shared with others the gifts God has given me.

God’s gift to me is the gift of music. As a child, I have been part of our Church’s children’s choir. I served for seven years before deciding to quit because I was too old. Before I left, the coordinator left me with one very powerful statement. She told me that she prayed that I would find another ministry to serve Him in. The search began and it took two years before I found another ministry where I can share my God-given gift. WHALES, our school band, leads praise and worship time for Coral Reef Fellowship. When I play the piano for the week’s service, I feel as if I am serving the Lord while at the same time calling others to come and worship the Lord. I take pride in the knowledge that I serve God through the gifts that he has given me and that this is the plan he has called me to.

To follow Christ means to be a completely committed follower. The road that leads to the finish line will not be easy but it will be definitely rewarding.

Looking back at the years where we were It’s amazing that we even made a stir Cruising the academic byways in our tiny school bus Students kept riding; hence there was the buzz.

Looking into what we have, everything seems fine That is only if life is all about “I, me, mine.” Then came the call, “Dig deep. Dig some more. Look hard to find the proverbial gold ore.”

The accreditation challenge caused quite a stir Many asked, “Can’t we just stay as we were? Bigger and better is not what we aspire, For it is God’s smile and nod we truly desire.”

Looking up to God as our BIG Boss “Step up,” He says, “Ye soldiers of the cross” With much reluctance but with eager hearts; Minds out of the burrows and books in the cart.

Laptops were bought, files unearthed More files were made, documents birthed. Busy bodies then buzzed and churned Making sure no stones were left unturned.

Looking closely to what the standards say, To most we say “Yes!” to a few others, “Nay.”

Craning our necks in pursuit of possibilities Our hopes are now up as we see feasibility.

Looking past “ways and means” as topics beyond our care, We now closely look into, eat and breathe like air.

Thinking has become a way of life; It’s now taken up as a challenge, not a strife.

Looking through frosted glass used to be our stance, But accreditation invokes to give change a chance.

Caucus time was time well-spent; After all it is what “family” really meant.

Sleepless nights are not for naught, Since we are now enjoying the “ought.” Volumes of papers are not seen as waste, As they are the road signs showing the ways.

Looking forward to the years ahead, Comforted to know by God’s hands we are led. Busy as we are, we can’t just leave things be, For all these excellence are for God’s sole glory.

As another accreditation season beckons, We are excited for another opportunity to say, “I reckon...”