

Church of God, The Eternal

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A Sketch of This Remnant Group's Establishment in the Philippines

August 2001

Dear Brethren:

Here again I am greeting you all on behalf of the brethren in the Luzon area, Philippines.

It is sad to know that our Church Director, Mr. Raymond Cole, is ill and suffering difficulty in his speech. We are all united in prayer for God's divine intervention. From here we entrust him to our great God whose ultimate wisdom, mercy, and love may bring to pass His will.

In my last letter in April, I mentioned my intention to write about how the Church of God, the Eternal reached the Philippines. This coming Feast of Tabernacles October 2–8, 2001, will be the ninth year of the remnant church in the Philippines. I endeavor to write just a thumbnail sketch of what transpired leading to the establishment of our group in the Philippines.

A Brief Background

For a brief background, I would like to mention those days when growing stress and doubts put me in a general feeling of uneasiness and uncertainty until such a time that I had no other choice but to step out of the mainstream organization where we once belonged—the Worldwide Church of God. Little by little, in a very cautious way, our ministers were explaining, one by one, the changes in a very scholarly manner impressive

to our physical thinking minds. But using Greek roots and terms as a basis to explain the changes did not help me spiritually, for they just reminded me of the way my professors in a theological seminary exposed me to those disciplines. I was then aware of the direction the church was being led.

The last Feast of Tabernacles that I attended was in 1992. Those were days of trying times. Although I was attending services and Bible study regularly, my questions, according to our minister, were becoming difficult to answer and so were put aside or ignored. Many were experiencing anxieties and stress such as mine but we were brought up in the church to obey authorities. Those were very difficult times.

An Answered Prayer

My prayer for God's guidance to come in contact with an ordained minister who upheld the faith once delivered was answered. Someone handed me a name and address of a minister. A few months before the Passover of 1993 I was writing with that minister, Mr. Raymond C. Cole. I called him on the phone to ask how I could partake of the Passover in absence of a faithful minister to officiate. Before the Passover came, I received taped instruction from him. That day before sunset I wrote my friends in the church and our minister bidding them goodbye for I could not celebrate Passover with them anymore. Four other baptized members came into my house that afternoon and joined me to celebrate the Passover through the taped instruction from Mr. Cole. That was our first time to partake of the Passover with Church of God, the Eternal and it was great.

The First Feast of Tabernacles

In the early afternoon of September 29, 1993, there were six adults and two youths boarding with me a motorized boat bound for an island resort in Cangaloyan Island in Carot, Anda, Pangasinan. That was the site of the first Feast of Tabernacles in the Philippines as the Church of God, the Eternal. The sea was calm but there was an overcast sky. We barely left port when thick clouds began to build up. On the mainland to our right visible heavy rain was already falling, moving toward a group of islands that we would pass through. About a mile away, at our backs, rains were visibly pouring that seemed to be catching up with us. Our slow moving boat had barely gone about four miles, following the shoreline on our right, when thick dark clouds overhead threatened a heavy downpour. Visible to us about five hundred meters away among the islands was

a whirlwind carrying columns of water to a considerable height. All eyes were focused in that direction. No one uttered a word. Fisherman nearby were rushing toward the shore. While breathing a prayer with a song in my mind, *In Thy Loving Kindness Lord Be Merciful to Me*, I beckoned the boatman to swerve our boat toward the shore on the right. In a few seconds the whirlwind vanished away and there was a common sigh of relief and thanking of God. It could have twisted this boat erect if it had come upon us, commented the boatman. A gentle breeze brought us to our island resort in half an hour.

That night we had our opening service with hymns and a short message, a sort of exhortation that I gave to the brethren. The following morning Mr. Ben Ortiguero and his wife arrived. They expressed their happiness to have found us and stayed with us the rest of the Feast.

An Ordained Minister Arrives

Before the Feast my wife and I agreed that she would attend half of the Feast in Baguio with our former brethren and join me in Cangaloyan the second half. Her purpose was to bid her friends goodbye and to tag along with Mr. and Mrs. Pedro Ortiguero, should they agree to accompany her. So at the middle of the Feast they arrived in the afternoon—Mr. and Mrs. Ortiguero and my wife. We were all happy to have an ordained minister with us. Mr. Ortiguero was not happy with the changes going on in Worldwide Church of God and could not accept the new teachings. But still he was not ready to join us for he still had some account to settle with Worldwide Church of God—to pay the last installment for his jeep. I communicated with Mr. Cole after the Feast.

Branch Office Formally Established

Mr. Cole arrived in the Philippines about the end of September in 1994 and on October 3 we filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission an application for a license to operate a branch office in Manila. This was approved October 14, 1994.

That year our Feast of Tabernacles was held at Pangasinan Sea Breeze Resort in Saul Town. We had a dramatic increase in attendance as a number of families joined us that Feast with their children. There was enthusiasm in the group and Mr. Ortiguero was motivated to leave for Mindanao the second half of the Feast to contact Mr. Mario Roque and the brethren there. So he gave me instructions to take charge for the rest of the Feast and left for Mindanao. It was a very successful Feast in Pangasinan and in Mindanao, a

timely and acceptable visit by Mr. Ortiguero. For Mindanao and the rest of the story, perhaps our brother, Mario, will relate this to you later. Brethren, the Church in the Philippines is still undergoing some trials and cleansing to manifest those who are really called in these last days.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him (James 1:2, 4, 12).

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:26, 27).

Let us unite in prayer for one another manifesting the love of Christ that binds us all.

Faithfully yours in Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corsino C. Canta". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Corsino C. Canta