

JØRN CATO
ANDERSEN



LIFT YOUR
EYES

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Printing:

Bergersen AS by Arthur Taubo & Dag Taubo

© Harvest Asia, March 2020*

8th Edition

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Chapter 1

Everything has a Beginning

How it started

As a young man I have always had a burning passion for mission. Mission is not supposed to be just a hobby or an activity for especially interested people. It is at the core of true Christianity.

The commandment of Jesus is clear (Mark 16):

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature....”

This is a responsibility for every believer. The question is whether we allow this to touch our hearts, so that we have a desire to reach out to people. It may be our neighbor, our colleague at work or our fellow student. The statement of Jesus includes our villages, our cities and our nation. Even the entire world as a whole is comprised in this calling.

In my congregation there is a nice Filipino couple, with whom I have had the privilege of fellowshipping with many times. One evening when we

were talking about the Filipino economy and the spiritual and political status quo, I felt God's presence strongly.

The Holy Spirit spoke in my heart and said to me, "*Make contact with Christian leaders in the Philippines.*" This was the beginning of Harvest Asia and our commitment to the Filipino people. After a time of seeking the Lord and praying over what His Spirit had communicated, a team was sent out from our congregation in 1999. We did not know much of what to expect or what we should do, but we knew that this initiative was God's will and that the Holy Spirit wanted us to travel. Before we departed from Norway, God had spoken very clearly through Isaiah 61,

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

It was therefore with great joy and peace we left Norway to travel half around the globe to visit this beautiful country.

We prayed that this would be a feast in the supernatural, and it truly turned out to be a celebration that we would never forget. When we woke up a bit exhausted after the travel at a hotel in Manila, we prayed that we would be in God's perfect will and protection these days. This was a prayer meeting that was special. God's presence filled the room and we felt that we were at the right place at the right time. It was like God wanted us to be bold with the message to the Filipino people.

Inspired by this we traveled to Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao the next day. Here we would meet various Christian leaders, build relationships and listen to the desires of their hearts.

These leaders showed up to be tested people who burned for the Kingdom of God. They loved their people and longed to see their country come into God's purpose. It was especially interesting to note how the Spirit of God worked in the conversations we had. We felt that we were among good friends even though we had never met before. Soon our hearts were bound together and a deep relationship was established. We left as close friends. True relationships had been established between people from Norway and the Philippines.

The vision

The Spirit of God speaks to us through the written word. At the same time, we believe that the Spirit speaks to His children through dreams and visions. This is the supernatural language that God wants us to be familiar with. Acts 2:17 says,

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

This is something we believe in very strongly. As believers and leaders, we have to be open to God's supernatural leadership, and sometimes he speaks to us through visions.

I will mention an incident which made a very strong impact on me. This took place in a hotel room in Cagayan de Oro City. We prayed for the country and the people and the Spirit of God gave me a vision. It was like a movie that took place on the inside. A lush tree grew up with strong branches moving out from the trunk. On the branches was an abundance of ripe fruit and people from different nationalities came walking towards it. They began to eat of the tree's fruit. This was one of the many strong impressions that we took with us back to Norway.

Sometime after we had returned home, the Spirit explained this vision. The large trunk is the relationships and ministries we were about to come in contact with and cooperate with on Mindanao, Philippines. The branches represent God's life stretching further and further out, and all the people who came to eat the fruit are individuals who will experience salvation, healing and restoration because of the life-giving fruits. In this way, the Filipino people will be like a fruit-bearing tree, spreading blessings to the whole of Asia.

This is the way our work in Harvest Asia started, and it was very engaging. God had given birth to His dreams in our hearts. We could really sense God's love for his people. His dream is that the great calling that rests upon you – the Filipino nation – shall come to life and be manifested. It is not just one city or one country that will be won for the Gospel. God

is now mobilizing a whole army to bring the good news out to a hungry world. This is your future as a Filipino leader. This is your divine destiny. The Lord of the harvest has put a calling upon you. This dream has taken hold of our lives – the dream of Asia's billions being touched by God's power and love through the Filipino people. For us it is truly a great honor to stand together with you.

The calling

God calls individuals and churches to do certain things. In the same manner, God also calls whole nations into His plan. The Bible portrays several persons who changed history. Just think of Abraham, Moses and Joseph. They were characters who God raised up and used mightily. At the same time, it is interesting to read how God governed and protected the nation of Israel. They were never meant to be held captive in Egypt. No, God's plan was to lead them out of Egypt into a land of milk and honey. God's plan for them was to let them conquer territory after territory so that they could enter into the fullness of all the blessings that were reserved for them. They were keepers and carriers of God's revelation and presence, and He wanted them to glorify Him among the nations. Again, this was not about one or two persons – like Moses, Joshua or Caleb. No, God wanted a whole nation to enter into its purpose. That purpose was not only to lead the people out of bondage and degradation, but also to bring them into the profusely abounding blessings in the promised land. In the same way, Jesus through his sacrifice for us on the cross not only defeated death and brought us out of the dominion of sin and eternal condemnation, but also provided for us all kinds of blessings to enjoy, such as peace, joy, health and provision.

When we read the Bible, we see that there is a master plan behind it. God always wants to lead His people in a direction that fulfills His plan. That was the case when God made a covenant with a man – Abraham. Later, the people moved into Goshen, Egypt. Here they became a great nation. This people had God's blessing on them and turned out to be so numerous that Pharaoh was afraid. It is estimated that between 2 and 3 million people went out of captivity on their way to the promised land. Out from this people was Jesus born – the redeemer for an entire world. Here we may see a principle in the Bible. God wants to bless us to such an extent that we may become a blessing to others. In other words, the final goal is to make us so blessed that we become a blessing to other people around us. This applies to our individual lives as well as to nations as a whole.

Without a doubt you (the Filipino nation) have a strong missionary vocation abiding on you. This calling has been written in your hearts. We wish to point to what already exists on the inside of you as a Christian Filipino leader. We want to see Jesus wake this up and mobilize an army of soldiers for the harvest. In this way we can stand together, shoulder by shoulder, in God's purpose for this country. You have all the harvest workers that will be sent out. We will contribute with what has been entrusted to us. It is not about reaching out to merely one country, but to an entire continent – Asia! We are convinced that the entire South-east Asia and Asia as a whole in a very special way will be blessed by the Philippine harvest workers.

The Philippines' strategic position

Spiritually

The Philippines is a country that has met with God's love and power over many years. The Christian message is not benign to the population. The gospel is well known to most of its inhabitants even though many suffer under poverty and violence. Especially in the postwar era has the kingdom of God advanced rapidly among you. You are indeed in an extraordinary situation.

Think of the nations around you, like Malaysia and Indonesia. These are Muslim countries that have never before experienced an all-compassing national change by God's presence, even though some revivals have taken place resulting in the establishment of the church. Here you will find millions and millions of Muslims. These people are waiting for Jesus to show them real purpose and everlasting peace in their life. Look at Thailand with its great numbers of Buddhists, India with its Hindus and Japan with its materialism. The Filipino islands are surrounded by countries of people just waiting for the liberating truth of Christ. Many Filipinos are Catholic by tradition, and the consciousness of God is significant. The Bible is widely read and much of the population can relate to the gospel. All this makes you a country which will be very strategic in God's harvest. There is no other country around you with as many Christians. The openness to the gospel is palpable, the Spirit of God is moving and the potential for people being sent out as missionaries is enormous. Your greatest asset is people – people who are willing to lay down their lives for what they believe. Your mission may seem impossible

to implement, but that makes it just more fitting to God, to whom nothing is impossible!

Our Father in heaven does not follow man made standards for what is possible and impossible. He is doing exactly what he wants. You may look upon your country with your physical eyes and think, "*God must be wrong, His promises are not relevant for us because we are not able to govern ourselves*". That is just what He likes to hear, because when we realize our human limitations and look to Him, His power can flow. We may still witness starvation, social problems and criminal actions for a season, but the moment God starts to work, it is simply a matter of time before the state will change.

Today, there is a God-made mobilizing of Christians in the Philippines. We encourage you to give your response to this calling. The awareness of the country's eternal purpose is growing stronger and stronger among the Christian leaders. The farmer waits patiently for the harvest so that he may store it in his barn. In the same way, there will be a harvest of souls before Jesus returns. In our lives we experience seasons, as the Proverb describes. In the same manner, what we experience today as parts on Jesus' body on earth is a season of preparation. God is sovereign, doing a resurrecting work in His body, both in the church as a whole and in every believer's personal life. What was dead will be given life. People will be raised up to what God intended. They will see who they are in Christ and discover their calling and high purpose. Be clear minded and alert as a Christian leader, and do not withstand the move of the Holy Ghost. Say yes to the future and wish it welcome in your life.

Geographically

It was an eye-opener to me when I saw the Philippines' strategic position for missions. Geographically, the Philippines is located in the midst of Southeast Asia's billions of people. Around you there are swarms of humans who have never accepted Jesus as their Savior. Huge populous nations are found outside your borders. If you take a look at a map, you will see that the archipelago of the Philippines is located in the heart of South-east Asia. You're not hidden away in a corner. The Bible tells us that God is the one who drew up the borders between countries, and God knows what He is doing! There was not at coincidence that your country was placed where it is found today. Rather, there was a purpose and strategic plan behind it – a plan which covers you as a whole nation.

Culturally

God put you in this part of the world because he has laid down characteristics in you as a nation which He wants to make use of. When he looks at you, he sees a people with a tremendous capacity to adapt to foreign cultures. The Philippines is the country in the world with the greatest number of abroad workers. More than 7 million Filipinos are employed worldwide. Some are even working in cold Norway! How is this possible? How is it that you are able to adapt wherever you go?

As a Norwegian with a different culture and mindset than yours, it is amazing to observe how easily you live along with people from other nationalities. In the West, values like individualism, freedom and self-realism are in focus. In the Middle East like in Saudi Arabia we meet a

completely different world. A sphere dominated by traditions and strict practices of Islam is what characterizes human life in this country. What is unique is that you are able to live and work in different cultural spheres. You are able to adapt and adjust in a remarkable way. Without doubt, this is a cultural treasure that you can be proud of. This cultural strength God will use mightily in the harvesting of souls. If there has been a Filipino exodus of workforce to the international job market, how much more will there be an exodus to God's harvest field.

It is no coincidence that this quality has been bestowed on you as a nation. If you are to be sent out as workers in God's harvest, this ability a necessity. Your openness makes it easy for you to get in touch with people from other nationalities. You are truly Asia's smiling people! This is God's grace on you and it is a noble hallmark of high rank. Do not speak negatively of any of your shortcomings. Every culture has its strong and weak sides. So is it in Norway and so also in the Philippines. As a Filipino Christian leader you need to be aware of your potential and speak well of it. You also need to encourage people around you. A Christ-centered self-image will bring forth a healthy worthiness and wholeness. It will make you walk upright, conscious of what is unique to you as a nation.

Chapter 2

Dreams and Visions

The language of the Holy Spirit

This little book is a vision-book. What is more natural than to start here?

The Bible describes a supernatural life. We are often led by our experiences and limited thoughts, but this is not God's best. We will experience failure if we allow our natural human sphere to be our platform. God's desire for his children is to let them experience goodness and progress on earth. His desire is that we will reign in life.

It is important that we as believers see that we are created to dream. I am not referring to day-dreaming or any kind of escape from reality, but to a Holy Spirit inspired train of thoughts where impressions are conveyed to us from God.

For people in the western world this may sound strange because we are taught to trust our analytical analyses and human judgments. If we cannot see it with our eyes or understand it with our minds, we tend to abstain from it. Is it then surprising why God moves so little among us? Even

though you as Filipinos might be better equipped on this area than us, we think that this phenomenon is also found among you.

The Acts is a letter that was not only written to be admired as good history. This text reveals how we as God's church may live on an arena where God is doing great wonders among us. Therefore, it is interesting to study how it all started. The birth of Christ's congregation was not a result of professors or intellectuals coming together to plan. It was not a carefully balanced intervention between different opinions. Rather, it happened spontaneously as a fulfillment of prophecy, a fulfillment that had been resting in God's heart since the beginning of time. God's church was God's dream coming true.

Joel had prophesied that there would be a time when God's Spirit was shed upon all flesh, a time when sons and daughters would prophecy, young men would have visions and older men would dream dreams. Peter recognized this and spoke with assurance to the congregation, led by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14). This was the time when the prophetic word was coming to pass. The church in Jerusalem grew quickly and people saw things they had never seen before. After the Holy Spirit was poured out, God's actions were manifested through the believers.

God is a God who speaks to his people. He reveals his ways for us so that we may find comfort in them and walk joyfully according to them. In this process we are headed supernaturally towards our future. Not only individually, but also as God's church in its entirety.

If we read carefully through the book of Acts, we find a supernatural language. In addition to the Scriptures that existed at that time, there were several means by which God communicated to his children. Examples are dreams, visions, prophetic words and angels. Divine leading was useful for example in dangerous situations and when a person was facing a radical decision. God's Spirit *prevented* people from doing things and He also *led* them very specifically *into* things.

These ways of communication may seem weird to us. Many have become so used to seeing nothing happen that we have ended up with a kind of 'common sense-based' faith. The problem with such is that we do not see God as our personal Father who is always willing to be there for us. In the first Christian days, it was a matter of *course* that God spoke to the congregation. People did not make their church programs out of old habit. They did not perform their activities just to maintain "business as usual". No, they chose to live dependent on the supernatural. They knew *all too well* that they had nothing to share in their own self. They sought God, and they expected that He would advise and guide them in all situations.

There is a supernatural language in the Bible and it is essential that we as leaders get used to it. Often there is a certain skepticism associated with this language, but in the Biblical days it was accepted as basic. Just think of Abraham, who left what was naturally comfortable and headed for the unknown after God revealed himself to him. Think of Moses, to whom God spoke from the burning bush. He was made to be a great leader who led Israel out of Egypt. Or think about Joseph. One of the

finest stories in world history is written about him. This man who God raised up as a character of salvage had two dreams in his early years that changed the world's destiny. Gideon experienced a visit of an angel and Samuel heard God's voice at an early age. Paul was struck off his horse, and as a response to the fact that he heard God's voice he was chosen to be apostle to the gentiles. And Peter saw the vision that opened the door for the gospel to be preached to non-Jews. We see that God speaks in different ways so that we as his people may respond. It was like that before, and it is the same way today. The attitude we need to develop is the one which the prophet Habakkuk demonstrated in chapter 2, verse 1-3,

"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said: Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

You must have a dream

A man came with the following statement: *"A man without money is not necessarily poor. A man without a dream, however, is very poor. It is well possible that the man with a dream finds that his dream gives rise to a lot of wealth in the future."* Martin Luther King uttered one of the most famous statements in the post-war period: *"I have a dream"*. The rest is history which we admire today.

Having a dream or a vision for our lives is incredibly important. All people who perform things in our world, has a dream that drives them. The dream, which is a seed in the time of sowing, is forcing itself forward and will gradually grow to become real in this physical world. In times of difficulty and darkness it is always the dream that carries in these people's lives. It is like a lighthouse that clearly shows the way. The dream is a source of enthusiasm and motivation. What the dreamers see on the inside has a tremendous ability to fill them with joy and expectation. These people are not motivated by what they see around them, but by what they have on the inside.

As a Christian Filipino leader, you need a God-given vision. You need a clear picture that you are working after. If you do not have this, it is very easy to just walk in circles. The motivation and momentum is ebbing out and you are not really going anywhere. My wife has a script that hangs on the wall in our home and it deals with just that. By reading this, I can remind myself of just how important a vision is. The script is this, *"Vision without action is merely a day-dream. Action without vision just passes time. Vision with action can change the world."* We can never overestimate the importance of a vision. It serves as a major direction in what we should do. It helps us to make good choices when we are at various crossroads and it provides motivation and meaning in rough circumstances every day.

Many leaders often lose their encouragement because their vision is unclear. They get frustrated and fed up because there is no development.

Then it is time to seek God for clarity in what one is going through. Trust that God will show to you his mission for your life and help you to develop a strategy. Based on this, a conviction will spring forth that allows you to proclaim the vision with great assurance to other people – people that God has placed in your life. Then you will receive a new power and people will recognize God in your communication.

In the conclusion of the last chapter we looked into a Bible verse that is extremely important in this context. It all started with a willingness to stand on the post. Then, there is an expectation that God speaks. There is no question about *if* God speaks, but rather *what* he is going to say to you. When we have this childlike confidence in our Father, we are able to hear him speak clearly to us. Without the slightest shadow of doubt, we will know what he means.

The prophet goes on to say that we should clearly write down the vision on boards. The purpose for this is that those who read it can apprehend it and run with it. The vision must be made simple and easy. All those who work together with you must have a clear understanding of what to aim for.

The vision can be compared with an arrow. It needs to be pointed enough to carry sufficient power of penetration. At the same time it must be wide so that it allows enough people with different equipment to partake of it in different ways. A good aid is to ask yourself the following question: If you had everything you wanted, what would you do? The answer to this is your dream. If you had unlimited time, unlimited money, unlimited

information, a lot of people to work together with and every possible resource at hand, *what would you do?* Write this down. Make it clear to yourself and take it seriously. In due time, this dream will come true and its fulfillment will accelerate. Even if it seems to sojourn, you will eventually conclude that what you longed for has become a reality.

God has dreams - do you have?

Cross the border

It is challenging to believe God and to obey him. He asks us to do things that are impossible from a human perspective. We are completely dependent of him. A preacher once said, "*God will not ask us to do as good as we can. He expects us to do the impossible.*" This is true. If we do our best to help God, we are working in our own strength. And when we work in our own strength, there is a temptation to take credit on ourselves, which God does not tolerate.

God's method is to use imperfect people like you and me. He anoints and equips us for what He wants us to accomplish. And He lets us understand that without Him we can do nothing. It is not by might and not by power, but by His Spirit.

The question we need to answer is this: am I just working for God on my own, or do I allow God with His resources to access my life? Is it so that I strive, flurry and achieve little, or is God's ease and delight found in what I do? Only *you* can answer this for *your* life. Choose to have the courage

to be honest with yourself. It might be that the answer you get requires adjustments.

The headline of this section is to cross the border. We can do this only while we believe and expect God to be with us. And above all, we can only do it out from the conviction that the supernatural power that we need is our blood-bought right, independent of how well we perform. The real barrier is the thoughts that try to limit or prevent our dreams from coming true. It may be the fear of lacking money or employees. It may be insecurity or a negative self-image. It may be frightening experiences from the past or even traditions that prevent us from experiencing the good future that God has for us.

The Bible records a brilliant example in terms of passing a border. We find a report about this in Acts chapter 10. Here, Peter receives a vision that turns out to be very difficult for him to tolerate. He discusses with God. How can he eat something so unclean? He is told not to name anything unclean which God has cleansed. To his surprise he is soon introduced to friends and family of Cornelius in Caesarea. For Peter, this was a completely crazy thought – that the Gentiles should hear the gospel! Even if Jesus had said this shortly before he went to his Father, it would not be something Peter easily could identify with. However, Peter was obedient. The purpose of the vision he had seen was that the gospel should be preached to all nations. This marked the beginning of a new era in history. The whole point is that this scene demonstrates an enormous barrier. No Jew had previously been encouraged to dine with or preach to non-Jews, but from now on it should happen. Now, it should

be written history. In spite his slow start, Peter allowed God to pull down his strongholds and became a door-opener to the gentiles.

Where was the barrier? Was it in Cornelius? No, absolutely not. Cornelius was quick to obey, even though he had not yet been born again. Was maybe Peter not so willing to serve Jesus on that particular day? Still not so. The Bible says that he was in prayer. And we all know that Peter was an eager disciple of Jesus. The barrier was neither circumstances nor lack of willingness to surrender to God's will. Rather, it was within Peter's own head. The tradition in which he had grown up was an obstacle, hindering him from understanding what the Spirit of God wanted to accomplish. The vision was unknown and strange and it is a good example of a culture shock. Peter's thoughts faced a big challenge. In the first place, his mind failed to fathom this, but Peter acted in faith on what he did not understand.

Think of your life, your family and your congregation. What challenges are you facing? What needs to be overcome to see your dreams come true? Maybe the Spirit of God has spoken to you over and over again, but for some reason, you have not been able to grasp what God has said. Then it is time to think like Peter: cross the border! An adventure is there in front, waiting for you. God will not cross these barriers for you, but he will certainly go together with you. Neither will other people be able to do it. Realize this: you are created to cross barriers. God's dreams and visions require that you and I take steps in faith. They require us to step out of our comfort zone and choose to live *dependent* on God. When we do our part, which is an easy part, God's arm of salvation is there to do

His part. It is not hard, because God himself has said that when we have received Him, all things belong to us. All things are given to us because we are in His own Son, Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3

Who am I created to be?

Your capacity in God

God has called you. Other nations are waiting for you to come and give the gospel to them. The knowledge that you are a part of this calling can be strong. You can be so full of God's dreams and visions on the inside that you almost burst. However, God's potential in you will never be released if you do not have the correct image of yourself. A good self-image will help you to receive God's best for your life. Conversely, a wrong image of yourself will damage you severely. Negative thoughts and self-contempt will involuntarily keep you in bondage. And fear of failure will prevent you from blooming in the gifts God has for you.

It does not need to be that way. Before you leave your home in the morning, you look into a physical mirror. A mirror's purpose is to reflect an image of you. It tells you how you look. While it is good to have a healthy and positive image of our physically outlook, God has provided *another* mirror that is far more important.

The Bible says in James 1:22-25, "*But be you doers of the word, and not only hearers, deceiving yourselves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*"

When the word of God is the source where we reflect ourselves, we will truly understand who we are. The words of truth reveal clearly who you are in Christ Jesus. The word gives you a healthy, good and true self-image and it imparts value and direction into your life. Too often Christians have a tendency to allow others to tell them their opinions of who they are. This also applies to leaders. The enemy intends to make us blind for who we really are: new creations in Christ Jesus! He wants us to be shy, quiet and cautious. He comes to you and says, "*Hey, who do you think you are? Are you not a bit too bold now?*" He may say, "*You are a walking failure. Look at all the times you have fallen short.*" In other words, he makes you compare yourself with others. He wants you to fix your attention on insufficiencies in your personality so that the image of yourself is destroyed. The tricks that he uses to make you receive his lying propaganda are numerous. But you will avoid them all if you are firmly established in who you are in Jesus.

When you look into a physical mirror, there are two things that are obvious. Firstly, it is *your* face and not another person's face you see. Secondly, the mirror never lies, but tells you the truth about your

appearance. Whether you like it or not, has nothing to do with the matter. You stand face to face with yourself.

The word of God is also a mirror. This mirror works in the same manner. It reflects the image of yourself. But it is not your outer look that is reflected, but the image of who you are in Christ. That image is always good. The Bible says that as He is, so are we in this world. This means that you are as pure, as holy and as righteous as God is. When God looks at you, he looks at you through his Son. This has nothing to do with your actions. Your works cannot change how you look to God because Jesus took your sins on Himself. That is how God sees us, and that is how he wants us to see ourselves.

A man, who does not use some time in the word on a daily basis, will sooner or later have major problems. As long as he sees himself through God's promises, he will have a clear and vivid understanding of himself as God's child. Every attack of condemnation and rejection will be of no effect. But once a believer takes his eyes off God's word, he will much easier be damaged by the accuser. When we allow God's word to be watered and preserved in our hearts, we are as trees that bear fruit in every season.

Put on the right clothes

When we go to God's Word, we go to the good source. There is a temptation for us to let other people, negative experiences or ourselves tell us who we are. The truth is that many Christians go around with a stunted self-image. The problem is that they go to the wrong source to

get to know the truth about who they are. He who created you knows the best, and he has written about you in his Word. When you go to the Bible and reflect yourself in it, you are free to see who you are created to be. He does not create failures. He did not send the best he had just to redeem strange creatures. If you call yourself hopeless, you are also saying the same about God. Since he created you in his image, you are as he is. (As he is, so are you in this world.) No one who is saved will say directly that God creates failures, but the truth is that when we speak derogatory about ourselves, we speak derogatory about our Father in heaven.

Adam was created perfectly in God's image. He had no negative thoughts about himself. He did not live in condemnation or self-contempt. He was a man who lived peacefully in freedom with the God who made him. Then man chose sin. And with this disastrous choice the true image of man was completely destroyed. It did not last long before Adam lived far below the level that was intended for him. But God is a winner. And in Christ he redeemed all people.

After we were saved and re-united with God, it is a goal that we should more and more allow ourselves to resemble Jesus by discovering who we are in him.

Rom. 8:29 says,

"For whom he knew in advance, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

This is encouraging. You are predestined to be formed in the likeness of your Savior. God is committed to shape you to be like Jesus. And what a role model he is when it comes to being a true human. He was completely free and relaxed. He was not submissive to human expectations and fear. He was determined and at the same time easygoing and loving. He lived in God's obedience, and he experienced the most amazing things. God's Word says that we more and more are to be like him. Eph. 4:23,

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

This is interesting. The Bible encourages us to take on new clothing. You are already a new creature in Christ. The amazing, irreversible transformation that has happened on the inside of you is now more and more to shine through and influence your outside. Choose to take on God's wisdom. Choose to take on goodness, power and love. The old clothes of condemnation and rejection do not fit you anymore. You are a son in God's father house. The mantle of righteousness and new, heavenly shoes have been put on you. You have received authority and dignity. So take once and for all off your old clothes. Those are dirtied by disappointment, bitterness and hardness. Take off your cloths of fear of men. Do not limit yourself. Those clothes will prevent you from entering into your calling. Take off your clothes of insecurity that take away your boldness to just be yourself. You are unique in Christ. When you see yourself as He is, you will also dare to live like Him and to act like Him.

When we equip our minds with the work of Christ on the cross, He will

be able to lead us and fill us with the power we need every day. Jesus knew that what he did was of eternal value. As his children this is what we are made for. Choose therefore the right clothes. Allow God's word to fill you up and transform you into Jesus' image. Let him tell you who you *truly* are. And throw all the negative images away. Dress up on God's best!

Your attention

When you get up in the morning, you choose with your mind whether it is going to be a good or a bad day. You decide yourself. No one else makes this choice for you. With your mind you choose to take on the right clothes. Have you noticed that no matter how tired you are, you have to get dressed up? You choose what to wear. The clothes lie right there at your disposal. Say to yourself,

"Today I choose health. I choose God's wisdom. And In Christ I have already God's solution to all the problems that might arise. I take on the grace of Christ instead of trying to make it through my own achievements. Today I am not going to make it. No – I have already made it in Christ. The solutions I need will come to me. I do not need to run after the blessings or the solutions to the problems that show up. When the enemy, other people or my own mind pops up an ugly face, I am still blessed. And surely my salvation shall not linger. I am more than an conqueror."

When you do this, your focus is right. You turn your attention to your Father already from the beginning of the day. You allow him to take control over your thoughts and attach them to the truth. The Bible says

that one who is able to control his mind, is better than a big hero. Like David defeated Goliath, you can defeat whatever enemy who comes against you because you know that Christ is living in you. Col. 3:1 says,

"If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

This is a strong encouragement for us to give our attention to God. One said it like this, *"What catches your attention catches you."* In this statement lies a great truth. What occupies your thoughts is what concerns you – whether it is life or death. In this struggle, it is both carnal and godly thoughts. The winner in this battle is the thought that you allow to speak with the strongest voice.

Whether it is positive or negative, you will always surrender to the strongest conviction in your soul. It is our goal that we are caught by God's thoughts. The truth is that your perception of God's thoughts about you is an option. When you get up in the morning, you can either say yes to that which the word says, or you can spin around your dissatisfied and negative mind. The Bible says, *"As a man thinks in his heart, so he is."* Our attitudes and perspectives are formed by our thought patterns. These are built by our background and experiences. It is important that we constantly take in plenty of the Word of God so that faith may permeate our personalities.

In various everyday situations it shows if you seriously have let yourself influence by God's thoughts. In difficult situations it is essential that you think God's way about yourself and what you go through. This applies to our personal lives, our families and our congregations. To receive faith is a choice, in the same way as it is a choice to accept unbelief and grief. To receive doubt, skepticism and confusion is a choice, in the same way as it is a choice to receive a childlike confidence. Accept what God says about you. Choose His voice above all other voices around you. Give your attention to what is God-given and good. When you do that, wrong things will not lead you into bondage. We encourage you to allow God's thoughts, dreams and visions to capture you. Let yourself be inspired and filled with the truth about you. This will lead you to freedom.

Who are you?

We have written about the calling and the vision. This is important for the kingdom of God to seriously expand in our lives. A strong awareness of these things creates direction and passion. But even before you come to that point it is important that you understand who you really are. A lack of such understanding will prevent your capacity in God from blooming. When you accept what He says about you, a new security grows forth. What other people say and believe will no longer have the effect on your life that it had before. God's true image of you erases erroneous impressions that the world, the flesh and the devil is trying to impose. A competitive mentality is broken down and you look at people as resources rather than as obstacles. Only God can give you this true image of yourself. And it is up to you whether you accept it or not. A

Filipino leader who has a good and healthy self-esteem will move into his or her divine potential. He or she expects God's best and will not be satisfied with the mediocre. Therefore, it is a strategy from the empire of darkness to keep you firmly bound in inferiority.

Your calling is great. God will rise up your nation to be a base that sends out thousands of missionaries. This is your divine destiny – your adventurous future. My question to you is: What do you think about yourself in this context? Do you exclude yourself from the calling, or do you embrace it with a great zeal? What does *your* future look like? Are you planning your life in accordance with God's prophetic purposes, or will you be satisfied with something lesser?

We encourage you to *speak* about the things that do not exist and to *dream* about the things that are not yet a reality, as if they were. This is biblical. That is what Abraham did. In faith he saw himself as the father of the earth's family long before Isaac was born. He knew he was the initiator of something that would have consequences for the whole planet. And it should not stop with him. He was only the beginning of something powerful that was to happen. This is the one you are called to be. This is your future. You are a man or woman of faith who is called to dream, speak and see God's promises come true. It is not enough just to know theoretically who you are in Jesus. You need to be rooted in it. Your identity as a human being, created in God's image, needs to be strong. You need to have the assurance that you are in the right place and that you do what God has called you to do. This results in peace and true satisfaction. Stability and security will begin to dominate your life. You

have God; therefore you have a tremendous future. You will succeed and prosper in everything you set your hand to do.

From cat to lion

It is important that we acknowledge that experiences and background has made its mark in our lives. Much of this is due to circumstances that we have not been able to influence. There are both positive and negative experiences, and they have been allowed to add color to our lives. The encouragement in all this is that God's word reveals that we are new creations in Christ. Maybe you have a picture of yourself as unsuccessful. You feel that your life and ministry has been halted. Self-contempt has been allowed to come in and you have lost your winning spirit. You measure your progress based on human criteria and you place yourself far down on the list. If that is so, the Bible has good news for you. In Christ you are more than a conqueror. A known preacher said, "*I am ten thousand times greater on the inside than on the outside.*" The truth about you is that you are not pitiful and small on the inside, no you are great on the inside – even if you feel like you are small. Time has come when the lion of Judah more and more shall show forth in your life. The person you are on the inside must be clear in your mind so that you can identify yourself with it.

A person once said that comparison is a curse. The ten spies who came back after scouting the promised land proved this. A fantasy image had been developing in their minds. They were convinced that they were as grasshoppers in the enemy's eyes. This was of course wrong. They could not possibly have known what the enemy thought of them since they

never made themselves known to the enemy. In God's eyes the men behind the walls were as bread that was to be devoured. But because of an erroneous self-image, the spies compared themselves with the enemy based on their natural strength, and therefore they saw themselves in a bad light.

Maybe you are comparing yourself with other leaders' progress. Maybe you are looking to the Western countries and you wish you had the financial resources that they have. (The truth is that their wealth not at all suffices to meet the coming needs in mission.) Maybe you look at your challenges in life and think, *"How can I be able to engage in this gigantic calling? Even in the life I have now I have more than enough challenges."* Then God will stretch your faith. He says,

"Lift your eyes and look at reality from my viewpoint. You are not a small windblown cat that runs frightened under the sofa to hide away. In God's eyes you are like a lion that goes out hunting!"

If you have seen documentaries about lions you cannot fail to be impressed by the authority these animals possess. It is not a coincidence that it is called the king of the jungle. There is a majestic dignity above it. All other animals respect it and fear it.

In the time to come God will release some of this dignity and authority over your life. The truth is that you already have received it, but now you shall live it out in a stronger way. We need to believe that God is rising up a new generation of Christian leaders who know God and what power

they have with Him. Can you see a bold Joshua-generation that meditates on God's word? A people who know who they are and what they are called to do, breaking with inferiority and condemnation? Get away with false shyness and human fear. Speak about yourself by saying what God says you already are. You are a conqueror because of the conqueror resides in you. Believe it, speak it and expect it.

God's blessing

Designed for growth

I am very happy for the first pages of the Bible. There God created man and put a spirit of dominion upon him. This was destroyed in the fall of man, but all this has been restored in Christ.

In Genesis 1:27-31 we get a glimpse of how God looks at you and me. He does not apologize for having created us. Instead, he says some fantastic words,

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it

was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

Here we read how God transfers his ability to manifold himself. When God blesses, it means that he takes of his life and gives to his sons and daughters. After the people were blessed, they were to go out and be fruitful. It is as if the Creator says, "*See! Here I have created the earth with all its resources. I have blessed you and given you the authority to prevail and govern. Now it is up to you what you do with this mandate.*"

It is important that we frequently remind ourselves of this truth. Limitations and difficulties are parts of our everyday life. God's word must therefore be allowed to do its deep work in our minds so that progress and development becomes natural to us. This calling is not just for a few selected – it applies to all of us. Because God put you in Jesus Christ, you are special. The Creator has put his nature into his children, therefore we can expect prosperity. God wants you to have an inner image of yourself as someone who succeeds in your work. Progress is something you can reckon on if you are seeking God's will for your life. It is an encouragement for us to know that God longs for us to succeed. He does not want us to be passive and self-satisfied in such a way that we stop up. In the story of creation in Genesis we find words like "*teem*", "*be many*" and "*fill the Earth*". Growth and development is at the very heart of God. Therefore, we who are the finishing touch of God's creation can expect this in our lives. You are created to multiply. God will trigger you and me to move on from where we are today by his power.

This is not just a daydream. It is a reality because our success is not built on our own qualifications, but on God's. Our experience, knowledge and skills do not determine whether we will succeed in God's kingdom. God has settled this once and for all in the atonement where Jesus won an eternal victory. Connect to this victory and realize that you are created for growth!

What do you see?

What we see is governing for our lives. Two different people who face the same kind of situation may respond completely differently. One person may be facing a situation that seems to be hopeless and be consumed with fear and trouble. Another may experience a similar or even a worse situation and still meet the challenge with faith and enthusiasm instead of disbelief.

Actually, what happens in our surroundings is not important. What is crucial is how we react on it. If we rely on the blood of Jesus in the situation, we will manage to see our challenges through the eyes of God. What counts is what God has said. As a Christian Filipino leader you need to wear the glasses of faith. You need to receive a true picture of the situation. The restrictions around you do not have power stop what God has laid on your heart. *"Everything is possible for the one who believes"*, says the Bible. This includes you. The Bible says that *all that we see, we will get*. You must ask yourself again and again what you *see on the inside*, because this is what you will see in the future.

This applies to you both negatively and positively. A generation of leaders in the Philippines, who sees good things, will soon see themselves partake in good things. Allow yourself to open up for the word of faith and you begin to look at life through God's eyes. Then the problem you face is not as big anymore. You feed on His enormous love for you and you experience that *He* is your source. Instead of seeing impossibilities in every possibility, you start to see possibilities in every impossibility. Earlier your eyes were blinded by everything that was difficult, but now you lift your eyes up to the mountains and there you find help. Nearsightedness disappears and you turn your attention to him who more than willingly pours his good gifts over your life. Negative thoughts and attitudes slowly but surely fade away and you get an attitude of gold because you see that He has an attitude of gold towards you.

What is it you see regarding your life, family, ministry and church? Remember: what you see is what you get.

The door of faith or the door of death

The Bible is very clear that we as believers are called to live on the arena of faith. Over and over again it reminds us that we are to live by faith and not by works. Faith will produce good works, but our own work can never produce faith. In other words, it must be a lifestyle for us to continuously feed on fresh faith from Jesus.

The Bible tells us that the law, which was written and engraved on stones, was against us. It is called the ministry of death. Jesus won a final victory over the law at the cross of Calvary. There death – the ultimate

consequence of breaking God's law – was destroyed once and for all. Even so, it is a fact that we as Christians may be plagued by anxiety. Anxiety for what? It is important that we do not accept fear as permanent and that we do not submit to it, or else we will not see ourselves enter into what God has for us. We do this by seizing to demand faith from ourselves and instead thank Jesus that He is the author and finisher of our faith in every situation we face.

In the book of Exodus in the old testament we meet two characters who God lifts up in a strong way. It is Joshua and Caleb, and they had a different spirit. They chose to believe God even if they were part of a generation who would not believe.

Twelve scouts were assigned to explore the land, but only two came back with a true report. The rest were completely consumed with fear. God had repeatedly told them that they were going to possess the land. The enemies should be driven out and they were supposed to win a final victory with God's help. But this was no longer seen as a reality by ten of the twelve scouts. These ten were frightened and they placed themselves far outside God's plan. They imagined how the enemy thought about them and considered themselves as very small. Numbers 13:33 says,

"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

This is how it can be in this world. If you have a negative view of yourself,

you will inevitably transfer this to other people. You think others do not like you, talk bad about you or look down at you. Often, this is not true at all. It is just because you have widely opened door of fair and said, "*yes, thanks*" to all which enters through that door. Ten spies said yes to fear and doubt. This hindered them and the rest of the people from stepping into God's blessings. But there were two others. And these opened instead the door of faith in their lives. They chose to believe what God said and they saw the promises coming true. Joshua and Caleb grabbed hold of the door of faith and crossed the border. What they saw in faith was so much more satisfactory. Only 40 years later should their faith be rewarded with victory.

A generation of faith

When we read about the generation that died in the wilderness, we realize how amazingly negative they were. One day, they were up on the hill and the next day everything was completely dark.

They had come out of captivity in Egypt, but Egypt had not come out of them. God's goodness was something they witnessed every day. His miracles were continuously demonstrated. God's ability to protect, heal, help and support was part of their everyday life. Yet, this did not produce any significant faith in their lives. They got into trouble over and over again because they looked to themselves for provision and power, and not to God.

The scouts that should have lead the people were themselves bound by disbelief and doubt. The people who should have shown the way out of

pessimism and condemnation, considered themselves as dwarfs in the enemy's eyes. What had changed a few years later when Joshua laid his hands on the tiller? Why did this new generation run into the promised land, taking what belonged to them? This was a completely different melody. The attitude and motivation had now radically changed. Where there was skepticism before, there were now opportunities. Where there was disobedience before, there was now obedience. This generation realized that they could not produce this obedience. This generation understood that it was not their responsibility to do the job. They simply allowed Him to do it while they were at rest. Therefore, they no longer talked about going back, but rather stormed ahead.

So what had happened during the time when they wandered around in the desert sand? Imagine Joshua and Caleb. They realized that they needed a miracle. They acknowledged that God must be allowed to do something entirely *new*.

During this period these two warriors coached a new generation of leaders that was willing to obey God. Let us imagine how this may have happened. Faith, confidence and obedience was transferred to the youngsters. When Joshua and Caleb told about what was to be found in the promised land, the eyes of the young people began to glow. Their ears did no longer hear, "*is not possible*", "*difficult*" or "*hopeless*". Instead of growling and murmuring there was now an expectation that started to arise. God's Word about conquering the land was gradually becoming a matter of course in their hearts. In faith they encouraged each other. In

faith they saw on the inside what God had said to them, and in faith they prepared and won the land.

Are you a leader who communicates belief or disbelief? Are you one who looks with the eyes of faith? Or is it so that you have not allowed God to minister to you in such a way that your glasses of doubt can be replaced by glasses of hope? Remember that you surround yourself with an atmosphere. People feel what kind of material you have on the inside. Are you someone who lead others into negative talking and dejection, or do you open the door for the faith to people? This is your calling. God has called you to lead the people into the fulfillment of the promises that are given to them. And to see this happen, they need to receive the spirit of faith. It does not help much with only a few people going in the forefront. All of God's people are born with the ability to hear from God.

The Bible calls us believers, and we need to see ourselves as such. You should never try to produce faith on your own. That will not succeed and it will only tire you out. You do not even need to pray for faith because it is already given to you. Instead, you can simply set your mind to thank God for his presence and anointing on your life, and suddenly you will find that you operate in faith – *unconsciously and effortlessly!* When a supernatural faith is released in people, they begin to expect the best, and the next thing you notice is that they go and take what rightfully belongs to them.

For the Filipino mission calling to be realized, there needs to be a living faith in the people as a whole. The trust that God has already blown away

every barrier on the cross of Calvary will cause believers to rise up. Choose to be a leader with the spirit of faith on your life. Only that way can you set other people free.

Chapter 4

How do we give Response?

Depending on God

God's visions are huge and He is planning a great adventure for us to participate in. How do you and I as God's children respond to this? We all know that the fulfillment of visions do not happen by accident. One matter is that God speaks and shows us things. Another is to see this materialize – in the midst of a world full of problems.

If we are honest, we do not have much to show for in our lives compared to what it takes to fulfill the visions of God. It is then good to know that our own abilities – or our lack of such – are completely irrelevant. If we realize this, it is good, because then we recognize that we are completely dependent on Him. Dependence on God releases true faith. It allows the unlimited anointing to flow. In other words, the mission that God has given you is impossible to carry out from a human standpoint. God's perspective is different from men's. God knows that we are mere humans, and that we are weak in ourselves. He knows that we do not possess much power, wisdom or resources. After all, He created us. What He looks for is people who are willing to bow themselves to receive God's thoughts

for their nation and its people. He is looking for Filipino leaders who dare to believe Him for the impossible. People who are not moved by harsh circumstances and who declare the word of the Lord as truth. God's word says you are more than a conqueror in Christ. The word of God says that He fills all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Do we have the courage to rely on these promises? Do we trust that Jesus speaks the truth? Romans 4:21 says this about Abraham,

"...because he was fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform".

Despite the confining circumstances that surrounded Abraham, he chose to believe this promise. He had a vivid experience that God was not only a talker, but also a doer. If Abraham could believe that, then how much more you and I?

We are born again; Abraham was not born of the Spirit. We have the author and finisher of faith abiding in our hearts. Abraham had not. Abraham had a promise and that was all. We, however, have God the trinity residing in us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. *He* is our courage, *He* is our faith and *He* makes sure his promises come to pass. Let us look to Him to find help in time of need.

Many people 'have it in their mouth'. They talk, and talk, and do little. God is not like that. When God talks, He is trustworthy. On the basis of the covenant that Jesus cut with the Father on behalf of us, God *must*

engage himself in our prayers, lest He is an unrighteous God not being obedient to his own covenant.

So, what is it then all about for you and me? It is about making a choice. That is where it starts. You can choose to live your life in your own strength and rely on your hard work. That is choice no. 1. However, choice no. 2 is far better: we can connect us to El Shaddai – the Lord that gives willingly and abundantly, without accusation.

Your calling as a Filipino Christian leader exceeds by far everything you may accomplish on your own – no matter how influential you are. Be conscious of your dependence on God. People can never take God's place and be your source. Neither can the rich countries in the West be your strength. They will never be able to meet the vast needs in mission field in the future.

There is only One who is sufficiently rich – our Father in heaven. He must serve as our source, just like he served the Samaritan woman by the well. If we have our main confidence in people, disappointment and bitterness will come. We will turn out to be disillusioned and we will not experience inspiration and joy. But if we have confidence in God, we will succeed. *God* can never fail. The Bible says that even when we are unfaithful, He remains faithful.

The Philippines will never be a nation of missionaries if the Christian leaders put their trust in financial support and man-made programs. Turn

away from obstacles that hinder you from letting Jesus be your source. Choose to live dependent on God, who is all together sufficient.

God's great plans

When we acknowledge our dependency on Him, we realize that every attempt to operate apart from him will fail, even when we do our best. God knows what success is. God succeeded through Jesus Christ. He made us like him and gave us everything with Him. We as children of the promise are not supposed to sweat, but rather let Him who is the true source work in us, for us and through us.

This is a great encouragement to us all. Our focus is moved away from our limited resources and towards God's unlimited power. When we see that it is not our resources, but God's resources it is all about, a new boldness and confidence wells up in us. A preacher once said, "*God does not need a perfect vessel, but one that is committed.*" The question is whether you submit to Jesus, hence being a vessel that can be molded and formed as the master wants. We believe that you are such a leader and that the message in this little book touches your heart and inspires you.

We humans tend to think small. It has a lot to do culture, tradition and background. In some parts of the world it is widely accepted to have great thoughts, but in other parts, like Norway or other countries, big thoughts are considered arrogant and boastful. This applies to the secular life, but is also evident in the kingdom of God. This is sad and it doesn't have to be this way. Jesus is not dull, and He never thinks small.

It is on time that the culture of the kingdom of God becomes a part of our everyday lives. It is at utmost essence that we allow stronger colors to dominate our lives. God is not sad, gray or boring. On the contrary, he is rich and versatile, and he invites you and me to partake of his glory. Because we live in a world with many limitations, it is incredibly important that we open up for his thoughts. They are so much higher and so much bigger than ours. Life and prosperity follows in His footsteps.

Let us look at Gideon in the Bible. Gideon thought little about himself, his family and his future. God had to do a miracle in his life, so that he would be able to receive God's best. Gideon was accustomed to a life full of defeat and despair. Fear, lack and melancholy was in his thoughts. Every day turned out to be a struggle to get food on the table. For Gideon it was not a question of overcoming, but rather of surviving until the next day. He was depressed. But one day he changed his thinking and started to believe that there had to be something better. He started to believe that what God said was true. This changed his life, but not only that – even his family and eventually his entire country was transformed.

The radical change in Gideon's thinking is a prophetic sign of true repentance. The word 'repentance' stems from the word '*metanoia*', which means renewal of thoughts, or to receive a *new mind*. Repentance is thus nothing else than believing the Gospel – the good news. From thinking "*too good to be true*", repentance makes us think "*too good to be ignored*".

Think like God

In an earlier chapter we talked about your capacity in God. Our godly capacity is released through what the Bible calls the renewal of mind. It does not matter whether you are an ardent leader on fire for Jesus with a great ministry, or if you have served as an usher for just a few years; whether you have been a pastor for 40 years and have a rich background, or you are more inexperienced. Whoever you are, God still needs to change your mind! Only in this way are we capable to receive God's best in our lives. We all need to renew our minds.

Romans 12 says that renewal of our minds brings forth change. It makes us able to know God's good will. Why do we constantly need to change our minds? Because human background, experience and traditions need to be replaced by God's thoughts. Everywhere we hear about sad things happen to people. Violence, murder, corruption – we have a tendency to think thoughts of fear and anxiety because our minds are bombarded with elements of this fallen world.

The renewal of your mind is not something that just takes place the first year you are saved. On the contrary, this is a lifelong process. As mentioned above, "*repentance*" means a change of mind. It means that your images and ideas are updated. Whenever we read or hear the Word of God, repentance is going on. When we listen to anointed CD's or DVD's which focus on the finished work of Jesus, our minds are constantly being washed by the water of the word.

Dark thoughts that previously led you into the gloom are now

interchanged with bright, motivating ideas. Where hopelessness used to rule, hope now rules. In situations where we earlier thought "this is impossible", we now have peace. Uncertainty about God and ourselves disappears as we learn to trust in Him. Only the gospel has the power to save and restore our souls. If we long for great things to happen in our lives, there must be a constant and radical change in our everyday way of thinking.

Everything that has happened to us – be it good or bad – is part of our minds. The Bible says, *"As a man thinks in his soul, so is he."* In other words, we are products of our thoughts. When we realize this, we understand how important it is to allow our minds to be renewed on a daily basis.

In a book on leadership I read these lines,

- *If you think you are beaten, you are.*
- *If you think you dare not, then you will not dare.*
- *If you wish to win, but do not think that you can, you will most certainly not.*
- *The battles in life are not always won by the strongest or fastest man, but by the man who thinks he can.*

If you think that you will never travel outside your country, then that is precisely what will happen – you will not travel. But if you think, *"God said the whole world. There are no limitations in Him. This is for me and*

my congregation", then a time will come when God releases you and other believers in your church to go to the nations.

God has called the Philippines to be a nation of harvesters! To think anything less would be an insult to Him. The calling not only applies to the Philippine Islands, it is about the big Muslim and Buddhist countries lying right outside your borders. Think about Malaysia and Indonesia. They cry immensely for workers. Take up a map and look at Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. Pray for these countries and for the harvest, and see yourself as God's missionary to many people. When you do that, faith springs forth in your heart to reach further and further out. When you open up for God's thoughts, you see that your thoughts are narrow and insignificant in comparison. Choose to think God's thoughts.

Take responsibility

It is so easy for us to be Christians who do not take responsibility for the work that has been entrusted to us. Jesus gave us the great commission. This was the last he did before he went to his Father and sat down at His right hand, but for some reason we often use our resources on other things. Something is wrong if we teach people without a real purpose. The intention is not that we should attend a church for a lifetime and then not implement what we hear. Christians who are self-absorbed and tired are often putting their eyes on themselves instead of Jesus. When we look to Jesus – who gives us rest and whose burden is light – we will always end up being keen on doing His works. The Bible tells about the disciples who heard God's word and were doers of what they heard. They got their joy and strength to do their work because they did what Jesus

called them to do and not what they wanted to do themselves. It is not *my* ministry, *my* education, *my* position or *my* car. It is not *mine*, but *His*. If you know you are called to be a worshipper and not a businessman (or –woman), do not try to be the latter. If you are called to be a pastor and not an evangelist, do not try to become one. Find out who you already are in Christ, and you will see that your dreams come true.

In Norway, it is common to sit under good preaching, but the Word of God is often not given a real influence in people's lives. It is often just received as input for theological discussions.

When Jesus said, "*Go therefore and make disciples...*" he did not say this only to the twelve. He spoke to every believer. We cannot ignore this responsibility. The Bible says that we are messengers in Christ's place; we are ambassadors representing the kingdom of God wherever we go. Maybe you say, "*it is enough with my village*" or, "*we are so few, so we will concentrate on the people close to us.*" It is good to give top priority to neighbors, but it is also right that we are called to reach out with the gospel to the ends of the earth!

It is good if you have a burning vision to reach your city with the gospel. It is amazing if you think your region or your island or even your own country. But the time has come when the Lord redeems faith for world evangelism. He is looking for Filipino men and women who take their calling seriously. To stand up and act on a mission assignment is to take responsibility for your country. The future of your country is in your hands because it is closely linked with how you respond to the calling of

reaching the nations around you with the gospel. What you sow in the surrounding world you will reap in your homeland. This is a big and motivating promise.

Obedience to God and what He says always results in blessings and prosperity in all areas of life. Do not say, "*this kind of world mission is for others to take care of*" or, "*this is too difficult*" or, "*this is impossible for us*." What we really do when we think like this is that we minimize God. We make Him small by conforming Him into our restricted environment. Our human thoughts are not inspired by God. Rather, do like Abraham and LIFT YOUR EYES to a God who is infinitely great in love and in power – and you will see with your eyes the fulfillment of what God has planned for the nations of Asia.

Chapter 5

Restoration based on Ezekiel 37

God has a mighty plan for the Philippines

God's plan for the Philippine people is to raise it to its feet, put it into order and send it out as a great army!

We believe that Ezekiel 37 and Isaiah 60 are prophetic words to the Philippines in this time. Although both these chapters are written to Israel, there are many parallels to God's plan for the Philippines.

Ezekiel 37 is about the process that occurs when a people rises up in the power of the Lord (the way to restoration). Isaiah 60 on the other side deals with the fruit that follows when a nation is fully restored.

Ezekiel 37

Verses 1-2 say,

"The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and see, they were very dry."

In this valley were many fallen warriors. In human eyes it looked chaotic and hopeless. But God is thinking differently than men. Although God saw a whole valley full of dry bones, and even knew about the killed men who through the years of oppression and contempt were wounded to death, He was also able to hear their shouts, "*Dried up have our bones, and perished has our hope, we have been cut off by ourselves*" (verse 11, Young's Literal Translation).

Where people think 'impossible', God – the creator of the universe – thinks possible. A large amount of dry bones is in human eyes equivalent to a large amount of *impossibilities*. But in God's eyes, a large amount of dry bones is the same as *great possibilities* and an *immense potential*.

God's thought is that many bones equal many soldiers in the army!

What do you see?



The map of the Philippines looks like a man facing west. You can view this man in two different ways. Either you may see a sick, curved man bent over a cane. Or you see a mighty warrior, attacking the enemy with a sword in his hand!

For generations, many people have just seen the sick, old man, spiritually speaking. But God has all the time seen a well-trained soldier at full speed forewords with a sword (the Holy Spirit's sword). This is God's true image

of this nation. He is the one who created this country, shaped the map as a warrior and placed him strategically in the heart of Southeast Asia. Now time has come to blow life into this mighty warrior.

A single breath of God's Spirit is sufficient to rise up the sick man and make him a mighty warrior! Luzon is the head (Manila is located in the mouth of the man), Visayas is his back/stomach, Mindanao is his feet and Palawan is his sword.

The road to restoration

Through a long time the thief has been stealing from, murdering and destroying the Filipino people. God's picture of this nation as an offensive warrior has not been displayed to its inhabitants, and the people in the Philippines have been oppressed too long. The enemy has been allowed to ravage and carry out his sly strategies. This can be compared with the situation in Ezekiel 37, where an entire army had gradually been destroyed. This is the word of God to these knocked-out warriors:

"Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD." Ezek. 37:5-6

In these verses God's thoughts and plans are clearly proclaimed. God loves to restore and resurrect that which is entirely dry and dead! He puts to shame human downheartedness and despair. He says, *"You are by no*

means lost for ever and you are certainly not forgotten. In my heart you have a great potential, and now is the time of relief!"

In verse 10 we read how God's Spirit comes from the four winds and blows life into the whole army. It stands on its feet and it is a very, very large army. Verse 10,

"So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

God will rise up all of the Filipino people. Every single person that falls down he will rise up – all those who are crippled due to wounds from the past. It includes the Filipino mindset that is affected by the people's history of oppression and abuse, and it also includes the personal experiences of every single individual.

We foresee this as an army of Special Forces, created and equipped for a particular mission. God has anointed the Filipino people to reach into nations and cultures where others do not enter.

For this powerful army to be really effective, God will teach it to stand together under one common goal. In Ezekiel chapter 37, verses 16-22, unity is described in an incredible way. Here there are tribes that have earlier stood against each other, that are now being connected to one rod in God's mighty hand. The rod which has been in several pieces is now one rod that is longer and stronger than before. In the same way,

God will shape its people in the Philippines so that there is one army, one goal and one king - JESUS!

We see that God with his strong hand lifts this rod against the four winds from where the Spirit of life descends, and sends out his army towards the north, the south, the east and the west.

Arise and shine

Isaiah chapter 60 is about the consequences of a people having been raised up in the power of God and united itself with his plans. We have just seen a whole army being restored in Ezekiel 37. Let us imagine that this is the same as in Isaiah 60, verse 1. An army that has been raised and become light!

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the LORD shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you." Isaiah 60:1-2

I amplified it says,

"ARISE from the depression and prostration in which circumstances have kept you – rise to a new life! Shine (be radiant with the glory of the Lord),..."

We believe that this is exactly what the army in Ezekiel 37 has done. They have risen above the circumstances and been transferred into a new room

where there is life! An upright people have God's light and glory in it. It is an army that represents a visible difference in the midst of darkness.

There is also a huge contrast described in these two verses. The gross darkness is very dark and God's light and glory is very bright!

The army attracts people

Verse 3 says,

"And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising."

People, other nations and kings that are in darkness are attracted to the light of Jesus. It is quite obvious that those in darkness find the light appealing. When they are confronted with the loveliness of the true Light of the world, they understand that they themselves are in deep darkness. It gives them hope.

If we translate verse 3 into Filipino context, it goes like this,

"Because God's light and glory is within you and over you, Filipinos, all kinds of people will be drawn to you."

Verse 4 continues,

"Lift up your eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to you: your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be nursed at your side."

The sons and daughters that this verse describes are those who are of

God's family, but have moved away. We think this portrays people and even whole nations that are lost in darkness. They will be saved through the obedience of Jesus. The true light and glory that will be over you will draw them back into God's family.

An enlarged heart

Verse 5 says,

"Then you shall see, and flow together, and your heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto you, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto you."

At this time, the people in God's army will find out that something has happened to their hearts. Their hearts are alive, they beat and they expand. Where God's Spirit is, life is produced and hearts beat with full force. It is these hearts that have the ability to expand.

When God's agape love, that was poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, is allowed to increase on the inside of us by the power of the Spirit, it is working in us a new wine that expands our hearts.

To expand the heart means to give more room for Jesus. Jesus is without restriction. Therefore, there is also no limit for how flexible our hearts can be in him.

"Love suffers long, and is kind; love envies not; love parades not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the

truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." – 1. Chor. 13:4-7

These verses describe a heart that is expanded by God's love. In a time when the army is being sent out into all kinds of nations and cultures, there will be a need for such hearts as described in 1 Corinthians 13. It can be challenging to meet other cultures with other traditions, to deal with people who see things differently than us, who behave differently from us, dress up differently from us and perhaps even resist us. To reach out with God's love to all kinds of people we will have to be clement and have much grace. We cannot allow ourselves to be too easily wounded or offended, and we cannot use our energy to defend ourselves. We will need large, generous hearts.

An enlarged heart is characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. Such a heart makes it possible to collaborate without having to compare oneself or envy others. It becomes possible to love ones enemies, forgive one another and move on. An enlarged heart brings an end to disappointment, bitterness and hurt feelings by the power of God's love.

New riches will come

Verse 5 says,

"... the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto you, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto you."

When the Philippines is restored and goes out with God's life, one of the

consequences will be economic growth for the entire nation. Moreover, verse 6 says,

"The multitude of camels shall cover you, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD."

Camels were natural in Israel. The verse mentions that these blessings will increase – which means that they are already present to some extent – and that these blessings will actually cover the people completely! Similarly, we believe that God will increase and make fruitful what is already within the Philippines, so that it will cover the entire country. The whole nation will be affected by the blessings.

Did you know that the word '*camel*' means '*to carry*'? Camels can carry a lot of goods over a long distance. This shows that the blessings that come over the Philippines will be plentiful and carried far out. At the time of Isaiah it was regarded a great wealth to have camels. Not only because they could carry heavy, valuable goods, but also because all parts of the animal could be utilized. The milk was used, some people ate the meat, they made clothing of its hair and the manure was used as fuel. We believe that God's blessing to the Philippines will be just like the blessing the camel was for the people of Israel and the Middle East. In the same way that the camel could be used to so much, the resources that God has laid down in the Philippines can be used to accomplish many different tasks!

We believe God will create great creativity and wisdom in the people, so that ALL the resources that exist there will be exploited to its maximum. God will guide you and show you the existing opportunities as well as where they are located and how they can be developed. He will teach the people how to manage and govern the riches that he has hidden within their land.

In this verse it is also stated that the blessings will proclaim the glory of the Lord. This includes the absence of corruption at all levels. Corruption can never proclaim the glory of the Lord. When God's people arise as one great army, the power of corruption will gradually die out.

Gold and frankincense was to be brought to you by the camels. Gold symbolizes wealth, while frankincense (an ingredient in incense) symbolizes purity and holiness. This means that wealth should be won and managed in holiness!

In the Philippines there is much poverty. Poverty does not honor God; it is a curse (Deuteronomy 28). God does not want poverty. He is a rich God! The riches that God has for the Philippines will be managed in a more prudent way that will break the yoke of poverty over the people in the country. This will proclaim the Lord's glory!

For this country to be able to complete its calling to reach out to the nations there is a need for much money. In order to afford to equip and send out troop after troop of well-trained 'Special Forces' into the

kingdom of God, these riches must turn to you, and it is Philippine PESO that will finance all this!

Verse 9,

"Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your sons from far, their silver and their gold with them..."

Verse 9 talks about the ships of Tarshish. These ships were well known for its cargo of all kinds of exclusive goods. Symbolically, we can compare the Philippines with these Tarshish-ships. The nation will not only *receive* blessings, but also *pass them on*. Like such ships you will travel far out – to remote coasts – with God's gifts! God has loaded you with beautiful enrichments and blessings that fit perfectly to reach out with the gospel to the people around you.

Above and not beneath

Verse 14 says,

"The sons also of them that afflicted you shall come bending unto you; and all they that despised you shall bow themselves down at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you; The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

Throughout history the Philippines has been under other nations. You have been treated unfairly, been exploited and abused. But now there is a new era for the country. Sons of those who oppressed you will come and give you honor and admire what God is doing! The whole nation will get back double for what has been stolen from it. A new identity, a new

independence and a new consciousness of your standing in God will come upon you, and people will respect you.

No more violence

Verse 18 starts like this,

"Violence shall no more be heard in your land, wasting nor destruction within your borders"

Today we hear about violence and destruction in parts of the country. Strife that is internal is always extra painful. But God's word and God's plan is that no more will it be heard about violence in your country. There shall be *one* nation – no more internal strife or struggle, but unity and cohesion.

Open gates

Verse 18 continues,

"but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise."

In an even stronger way God will release the worship over the Philippines. Worship is a gate and serves as an open door for God's blessings to come in and go out.

In verse 11 it says,

"Therefore your gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto you the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought."

Continual praise opens the doors of blessings because in praise we focus on JESUS and not on the blessings or the gifts.

The least shall be one thousand

Verse 22,

"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time."

This verse is a summary of the entire message. The least, that before has been looked upon as small and weak, gets up and becomes a *great people!* "The sick man" is made into "a mighty warrior", and it happens quickly in God's time. We read about exactly this in Isaiah chapter 43, verse 18-19,

"Remember you not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."

Chapter 6

More Prophetic Words

Isaiah Chapter 41

God speaks through his written word. He prepares and guides his people so that they can move into his plans for the future. So it was with the people of Israel in the old covenant, and that is also how it was on Jesus' time and among the first Christians. The Bible says that the prophetic word is like a light that shines in darkness. God's Spirit speaks the word and promises of Jesus. What is of crucial importance for the people of God is the response to the prophetic words that go out. A good example is when Jesus began his public service. He opened the Torah and gave a powerful speech which later was entitled his program speech. Jesus identified himself with the prophetic message and said, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..."* followed by, *"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears"* (Luke 4,18-21).

Another example of prophetic fulfillment is when the Holy Spirit was shed and the church was born. Joel, who lived under the law, had earlier prophesied over the land of the Jews and he was quoted by Peter who said,

"This is what is spoken by the prophet Joel, «It will happen in the last days says God, I will shed my Spirit upon all flesh.»"

This prophesy came to pass right before Peters eyes. We now want to give some prophetic words and convey what we feel the Holy Spirit tells.

Isaiah 41:1-7

Isaiah Chapter 41 speaks of king Cyrus and Israel. However, we experience that there is a message in these verses to the Filipino people. Verse 1 says,

"¹Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment. ²Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow? ³He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet. ⁴Who has wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am He. ⁵The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came. ⁶They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. ⁷So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, it is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved."

Jesus calls on their attention. He says, "*be quiet and listen to me*". There are so many messages and so many voices you can hear today. But the Champion has something very important he wants to make known to you in the time we live. He says,

"Let the people have renewed power"

No matter how much you have experienced Jesus before, there is still greater adventures in front of you. God has hidden the best wine for the end times. We need to attire new strength in order to face the challenges of the future.

"Not by force or by power, but by my Spirit", says the Bible. When God's people in the Philippines seriously allow themselves to be filled by the power of God, they can do more than ever before. The Bible says, "*be filled with the Holy Spirit*". This is something we need to practice over and over again. When we are not allowing the Holy Spirit to fill us up on a daily basis (such as by speaking in tongues), everything else will begin to dominate us. We will soon come down on the same level as the world around us and we will seize to have impact in what we are doing.

Moreover he says,

"let them come near; then let them speak"

He invites you into his presence and wants to let you speak out from the longings of your heart. Have courage to express what you feel that God's Spirit tells you. You are like Abraham. You are a friend of God. You are

not just a servant, but a friend who has a continuous fellowship with God heart to heart. Your heavenly covenant partner wants you to be as bold as Abraham and to start to desire that which rightfully belongs to you and your congregation. Begin to speak freely to Him who has cut a covenant with you. He meets you, He calls you by name and He wants you to be a person that reminds God of His promises to you.

In the next sentence, he says,

"let us come near together to judgment"

Jesus leads you – the Filipino people – by the hand, because your lives are placed in him. Jesus is our lawyer and has won our case. When your Father in heaven sees Jesus and that your lives are safely secured in Him once and for all, He will act on the basis of the covenant which He made with His Son on behalf of us. The Philippines will be led by Jesus in such a way that the calling that resides over the nation becomes a reality.

Verse 2 starts with,

"Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot..?"

This is all about motivation, equipment and mobilization. God is working to restore the Philippines. He calls his people out of sleep and into the arena of effortless action. This restoring work affects spirit, mind and body. We are in a process where the Spirit of God is mustering his army of Asian soldiers. God has a plan with his people and he has everything under control. The one from the East whom he calls to his feet must be prepared for combat before he is sent out on the battlefield. That is

precisely what the Filipino Christian people as a whole needs to wake up for. It is not a coincidence that you are living in this time. God's people in the Philippines shall be healed, recovered and sent out to the surrounding world.

In verse 3, Isaiah says,

"He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet."

For several reasons God's people in the Philippines has not yet fully responded to the calling to go to the nations. Quite a few have gone, but they are not by far as numerous as God intends. This barrier shall now be torn down. Because of apathy, various complexes and lack of money, many have not been empowered to cross the border. Now time is here when you will have the confidence to walk along paths where you earlier did not come with your feet! God is your shield. And even in turbulent areas that God sends you into, you will experience supernatural protection. There are Muslim autonomous areas within your own country that will be visited by spiritual worriers. The paths go into the entirely unreached valleys in Indonesia and Malaysia. They go into Vietnam and Laos. Yes, they expand to the north, south, west and east. Where you could not come before, God now opens the most incredible doors. And he has promised to be with you at all times.

God asks a question through Isaiah. He says in verse 4,

"⁴Who has wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am He."

This is not a human work. What God will do among you is so great that no people can be able to steal the glory. He who called our ancestors is the one who takes the initiative. The credit belongs to God and Him alone. "*It is not by force and not by might*", says the Lord. It is "*by my Spirit*". This mission cannot be carried out by human cleverness. If you had been able to do so, it would have been completed long ago. God will endue you with renewed strength from on high. When your own resources and skills do not suffice, you must rely on God's excellence. And when your Father in heaven calls you and equips you with his capabilities, all credit goes to Him.

Verse 6 and 7 are important for you to go to mission effectively,

"⁶They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. ⁷So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, it is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved."

These verses speak about divine cooperation. The time when we isolate ourselves and do things on our own has passed. One beats thousand but two beats ten thousand. Power is released when we stand together in the heavenly mission.

In an environment of cooperation across cultures, qualities are exchanged through mutual influence. People help and encourage each other and

cheer each other up by focusing on an exciting future – a future where we share victories and progress. It is not about our names or our ministries. God will get all the glory through what is accomplished.

As Christians we need to come together and pray, dream and plan. We need to deeply recognize that we need each other. One person is strong in an area where another is weak and vice versa. We all have something to learn from each other. And the function of one person is no better than that of another. Choose to close down everything that prevents you from working effectively with other people. So stop riding your hobby horses and connect with the greatness of God's kingdom.

We must learn to think God's way. In the kingdom of God there is not only your denomination or those who think just like you. No, God is fortunately much richer, and He loves diversity. It is time for us to value differences rather than only our tradition and customary practice. God is not gray, He has many colors. We need to live out our own, unique identity, and that identity is found in Christ. Only then will the characteristics of our personality spring forth.

Future mission work is not about spiritual "super stars". (There are no super stars in the kingdom of God. All of us have the same position.) It is not about some super-individualists who are unable to work with people around them. We must recognize that we need each other. Choose to build a network of relationships with the mindset that you should be a servant. Think of God's kingdom as a whole rather than just your own context. Do not be sectarian or exclusive, which only leads to

suspiciousness and prejudice. Instead of attracting people, you will then only create distance. Be open to develop visions together with others. This will inspire you to develop a broader perspective and far more resources will be released through you in mission.

Acts chapter 19

This whole chapter is about Paul in Ephesus. Here he found some disciples whom he taught the word of God. In this city there was a chaotic atmosphere, but God won a tremendous victory. What the Holy Spirit did in Ephesus turned out to be not merely a campaign, but a deep work lasting over time. God truly saturated this metropolis with the gospel.

It is interesting to see that this large influential city was a base for spreading the gospel throughout Asia. In Acts chapter 9, 10 and 19 we read about daily conversations in Tyrannus' school. This lasted for 2 years, so that anyone who lived in Asia could hear the word of God, both Jews and Greeks. This is sensational! As the believers were equipped for a long time in Ephesus, Asia got to hear the word of the Lord. All this preaching was not done by Paul himself. That would have tired him out. Instead, the work was done by the disciples who had been under his influence and service.

God's Spirit has spoken to us about the necessity to create such Ephesus-bases. The concept is not primarily revolving about big churches or to discover "the right method". It is more about a way of thinking – the imagination that what we already have may grow. We have also received the word *reproduction* very strongly. What is already invested in the

kingdom of God in this nation shall be passed on to other nations and to the next generation. Everywhere in the Philippines there shall be such bases for equipping believers to spread the gospel. If you are serious in coming into the calling that God has for you, this perspective must be a part of your life, your family and your congregation.

Strategic thinking

Strategy is simply to find ways that make us reach our goals. This is something that many non-Christians are good at, but very few Christians. We are often concerned with the power of the Holy Spirit, faith and spiritual gifts, but not goals or strategies. Maybe it sounds boring and little spiritual to you, but the truth is that you need to develop your ability to think in long terms. Too often we do things without goal or meaning. Light-considered and short term projects usually give very limited results.

Paul is known as a man of great faith and power. At the same time, he was a great strategist. He was not a boring person who analyzed everything, but at the same time there was a plan and platform for everything he did.

When he started this work in Ephesus, it was not by accident. Ephesus was one of the world's largest cities at that time. Here there was a bustling life like in a modern mall. Ephesus was a capital of its time with many different kinds of people from a variety of cultures. This was certainly not a sleeping village. In this trend-setting environment, Paul started a work that was going to affect the whole of Asia. Soon, it was not only the

occult that spread out from Ephesus, but the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ.

We believe that the Filipino nation has a similar calling. He has placed this country in the middle of Southeast Asia as a lighthouse. This nation has the potential to become a modern Ephesus. In many ways you are already a metropolis in Asia. People from many different nationalities are residing within your borders, and the Philippines is the country in the world with the largest number of civilian abroad workers.

Instead of sending Western missionaries out to many of these places, it would be more appropriate to send you. You have the best workers, you are well equipped culturally and you have the flexibility and willingness to surrender to your calling. We are convinced that you will become a launch pad for end-time workers as Ephesus was.

Let us think reproduction. Let us imagine a large number of well-equipped believers rather than just a few evangelists who are doing their job. It is time to become smarter in what we are doing. God will teach us to manage human and financial resources in the best way. It is also on time that we stay together as Christians in this gigantic task. Together we can do so much more. In these days God connects people all over the world. They find each other in new ways and choose to focus on that which binds them together instead of all the differences. When the Filipinos are working together as one man towards a shared goal, the kingdom of God will greatly advance.

Chapter 7

Working while resting

When God is working among us, He makes us discover things He has already provided. This drives us to worship Him. It is wonderful when He unveils what it means to be His sons and daughters.

Some people have the perception that if things are going to happen in God's kingdom, you and I must work it out in our own human strength. But we should not think that the calling we have received is a burden that must be carried on our shoulders, and that the heavier it feels, the better it is. The problem with this idea is that it makes us fail to discover the initiative that God has taken by sending his Son.

The work of Jesus on the cross is finished. That means that you and I cannot add anything to it. His work has redeemed us from eternal condemnation. It provides an abundance of blessings for us to enjoy, and it equips us for the tasks He wants us to accomplish.

Jesus died for us so that we could receive everlasting righteousness. He was cursed for us so that we could be forever blessed. When Jesus died, He took our sicknesses and our diseases so that we could enjoy His divine health, and soundness of mind. He died young so that we could live long. He became poor so that we could become rich. He was rejected so that we could have good friends. All this – and everything we will ever need – is already provided through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is a gift we can freely receive through faith. We cannot earn it. We cannot manufacture it. We only need to believe it, receive it and act on it.

The Bible promises us good success. This was made available by Jesus on the day He died. The responsibility for us today is to choose to believe that the work is complete, and flow with God's initiative the way He intended. When we do that, we act as good receivers. We may still seem busy on the outside, but we are at rest on the inside. People might say we work hard, observing all we do, but we are not stressed. He works through us.

When Jesus asks us to do something in His kingdom, He provides the strength and eagerness needed. When the Holy Spirit wants to perform, He speaks to us. He is the One who takes the initiative, and puts His dreams within us. When it happens, we sense His longings within our hearts, and we are stirred. We are challenged and excited, yet at peace.

One indicator whether a certain initiative may be from God or not, is how we are motivated. Jesus told Marta that what Maria did was needful. Maria had chosen the good part, being at rest. Another example is when

Ananias was sent by the Holy Spirit to open Saul's eyes. He could have been afraid, and maybe he was. But still, God's rest was found in taking action, and not obey his mental fear.

Can we reach His goals? Is our wisdom sufficient to point out the course? The Holy Spirit knows all things and He gives life to God's word. The Bible says that God's wisdom has the benefit of succeeding.

We do not need to instantly apply every new idea. We can take time to let it sink for a while. When God talks, we will recognize on the inside whether it is of Him, and we will sense the right timing.

When God initiates, it is not our responsibility to complete it without Him, but with him. When He has started something, He will finish it together with us. Our task is to recognize God's agenda, go with Him and allow Him to lead. The only way to achieve this is to have Gods Word in the center of our everyday lives.

Chapter 8

Conclusive Remarks

The purpose of this book is to inspire you to bring the Gospel to the nations. This is not a book on theology. Rather, the intention is to inspire you to see what God has made you to be and to encourage you to take further action upon His purpose for your life.

The devil, surrounding circumstances or people cannot stop you. The calling which is put upon the Filipino people is strong. This booklet is written to inspire you to identify yourself with what God says and act on His great plans.

We are convinced that the Filipino people will be restored, healed and sent out to the nations by God's miracle-working power! We write to you, as a Filipino believer, because you have a vital role to play. The response after God has touched you will cause other nations to follow, and many people will be saved.

We in Harvest Asia look upon you as a wonderful resource in God's hand. The Filipino people have a great prospective and God wants to release it to its full potential. Many people around the world have faith in you and your calling, but the most important truth is that *God* believes in you and that He wants you to succeed.

It may seem strange that this book is written by Norwegians. But if you think about it, it is really very natural. We have the same Father in Heaven, and He puts His dreams and thoughts into His children's hearts. It does not matter if you come from Norway or from the Philippines. National borders do not exist in the kingdom of God. We want to see a changed Philippines and a changed Asia. And we are convinced that the Pilipino people play a key role in spreading the gospel to these nations.

Norway is about 15 hours on an airplane from the Philippines. The distance is vast, but because of technology the world has grown smaller, and this gives us Christians tremendous possibilities in terms of bringing the Word of salvation out to every people.

There are many differences between Norway and the Philippines. Perhaps the most tangible difference when you step out of an airplane on Filipino ground is the humidity and the temperature. This is especially true to people from the "cold north". The Filipino people are warmhearted and the smiles on their faces are not far away. If the Christians in this country enter into His plan in a large scale, other nations will be affected. His plan is to heal, restore and release His servants into the whole of Asia.

You cannot escape this plan. It is part of God's heart for this nation. It is God's plan for your lives. We want to serve Jesus together with you in the plan that every one of us has a role in. We believe that one of God's main focuses is on Asia. The harvest is ripe and in the years to come, Jesus will work through you in a fantastic way.

We would like to hear from you

If this book has been of inspiration to you, or if you would like to know more about Harvest Asia, please do not hesitate to write to us or call.

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We look forward to hearing from you!

May God bless you richly.

Jørn Cato Andersen

Founder of Harvest Asia



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