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News Flash: Davao Festival Site Venue Moved to RELC (See update below)

Visayan Brethren Prepare for Feast of Tabernacles

by Florante Siopan

Feast fever is starting to build up! The Feast of Tabernacles is just around the corner. But if we are not careful, those remaining weeks can slip by without doing some planning and preparation to make it the best Feast ever.

For the Visayan brethren, preparing for the FOT 2003 began in earnest during the first week of August. After the Sabbath service on August 2, the festival coordinator called for a meeting to discuss what preparations are to be made for the upcoming festival. A lively discussion followed as different suggestions were brought up by the members to form different committees. Many volunteered to handle particular assignments, presenting at the same time what needs are required in each committee.

Although the different committees formed have their own unique preparation and planned implementation during the Feast, there are certain programs that need an early and thorough preparation, such as the family night presentation, choir, family day, and youth activities.

The success of the Feast will depend on how the preparations are made, the effective participation of those who have been given responsibilities, and the cooperation of all who would come and attend. But the blessings of the One who has commanded His people to observe the Festival is the ultimate source of success.

But why keep the Feast? God's people know why. God commanded His people to keep this particular Feast for good reasons. Scriptures tell us that we should learn to fear Him, who is the Source of all, including our lives. Another reason is that God wanted us to have a glimpse of what is in store for us in the future. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the coming rule of God for a thousand years, called the millennium. We, who will be given eternal life at Christ's return, will assist our Savior, Jesus Christ, in fulfilling His ultimate plan of salvation for mankind. The Feast of

Tabernacles pictures a time when Jesus Christ, with all His saints, will be administering the way of God to all humanity. At that time, pain, suffering,



Mr. King Finlay shares his time with children during the Feast last year in Davao (photo by Charles Macaraeg)

and sorrow will largely be a thing of the past. That time will be different from what we have today. At that time, all mankind will have to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16). The law of God will be the constitution of the world and the spirit of God will be available to all. God will give man a new nature, so that they will desire to start keeping the commandments of God. This will be a major contrast to our present age when humanity by nature is hostile to the word of God.

As God's people, we should look forward to attending the Feast, to review the meaning of this Holy Day, and to experience a foretaste of an exciting world tomorrow. We are to rejoice during this Feast, as we learn more of God's word, His

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Davao Festival Site Venue Moved to RELC

by David Baker

As you are aware we have been struggling to find a suitable location for the FOT in Davao due to the expected attendance and the fact that the GSP Camp demolished 20 of the older cottages early this year.

Initially, the Marco Polo Hotel was selected as the location for the FOT but their high rates would severely limit the number of members that could attend the FOT. Through much effort and resourcefulness Mr. Macaraeg was able to locate a more reasonable location. The new location of the FOT in

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Editorial

by David Baker, *Philippine Senior Pastor*

Preparing for a Memorable and Inspiring Feast

It is hard to believe but the Feast of Tabernacles is fast approaching. By the time you read this article, the Feast will be less than a month away. Each year we anticipate the best Feast ever. Sometimes our expectations are met but other years our overall Feast experience is not as fulfilling as we may have anticipated. This year I will have the pleasure of observing the Day of Atonement in Davao and the Feast of Tabernacles in Iloilo and Baguio. I am looking forward to a most enjoyable and fulfilling Feast. This year will mark my 40th Feast of Tabernacles!

How can we insure that this year will be a very memorable and inspiring Feast? I would like to share with you some of the things that I have learned during the past forty years. The first point to remember in observing the Feast is to put God first. In Deuteronomy 16:15 we are commanded to keep a sacred feast to God in the place He chooses. Implicit in this command is the understanding that the Feast of Tabernacles is God's Feast and not our feast, although we do enjoy abundance during the Festival. Therefore, since it is God's Feast and we are summoned to the place where He has chosen, we should remember to put God first. Sometimes the Feast can be so busy that we let down on prayer and Bible study—something we cannot afford to do! During the Feast, because we stay in unfamiliar places, we don't have the same amount of privacy, and our normal routine is broken. If we stay up late fellowshiping and if we are not careful, we can allow prayer and Bible study to be reduced or neglected. But staying close to God is a vital part of the Feast. Also we should focus on the meaning of the Feast rather than the activities. Activities, fellowshiping, and serving, are important and fun but the most important part of the Feast is God and His Word. A section of scripture to remember in this regard is the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10:38-42. Christ commended Mary for choosing the "one thing that is needed, that good part."

The second point to remember is the command to rejoice at the Feast (Leviticus 23:39-40). We are commanded to rejoice at the Feast regardless of whether we are having a good time. Rejoicing is a state of mind rather than a state of being. Peter encouraged the church to rejoice even during a time of trial (1 Peter 4:12-14). Everything may not be perfect during the Feast. If reality does not measure up to our expectations in every instance, what will our reaction be—anger, resentment, or joy? God desires that His people experience joy during the Feast.

Another purpose of the Feast is to learn to fear God. God commanded His people to save a festival tithe to use in observing the Feasts. Contained in that command in

Deuteronomy 14:22-23 is the phrase "that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always." One of the lessons that we should learn at the Feast is the proper fear toward God. That fear should not be anxiety, distress or apprehension about appearing before Him, but rather a feeling of awe, reverence and great respect. During the Feast we hear God's word expounded (Deuteronomy 31:10-12) and we are reminded of the blessings of God's way of life by utilizing ten percent of our annual income in just a few short days.

We should also be mindful of the fact that we are representatives of God's kingdom. As citizens of that kingdom, we should "let our light shine." Christ instructed His disciples that they were "the light of the world" and they should "let their lights shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." At the Feast our light can shine more brightly as we come together as a group. By analogy it is as if a group of candles are gathered together to form a bright beam of light in the community where God has chosen to place His name. So let's make the Feast a positive experience for everyone we meet by exemplifying the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and Godly love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

One last point to consider is the binding of Satan. We should give no place for Satan during the Feast. The Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows the millennial reign of Christ with His saints. Satan will be bound or restrained during that time and will have no influence on humanity. Therefore we should be diligent not to bring Satan's way of thinking, his values, or attitude to the Feast. During the Feast, we will be confronted with many decisions and in each situation we should consider whether the intended decision reflects God's way of life or that of Satan.

I look forward to observing the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles with many of you. My only regret is that I will not be able to meet all of our Filipino brethren this year. As we enter into this very important and joyful time of the year, let's continue to ask God for His guidance and inspiration during the upcoming Feast days and that He will grant us a most memorable and inspiring Feast! ■



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Church Members Receive Award for Marketing Excellence

In a fitting ceremony held at the Traders Hotel Manila on August 20, Remo & Associates, a sales agency managed by church members Grace and Adolfo “Bong” Remo, received the Award for Marketing Excellence (AME).

The AME is the highest and the most prestigious award given by Philam Plans, Inc. to its sales agencies. According to Roderick Lim, regional manager for Manila North 2 and host of the program, in the 14-year history of the company, less than ten percent of over 400 sales agencies have qualified for the award. That Remo & Associates qualified for the award in its first year of operation—a feat that has been achieved by only one other sales agency—made it doubly significant.

The award consisted of a mounted glass victory cup for the agency and plaques of recognition for the qualified managers and sales counselors of the agency. Each awardee also received a pen with his or her name engraved on it as memento of the occasion. A cash incentive to cover all expenses related to the celebration was given by the company.

The dinner affair was attended by about 120 guests, which included the couple’s family, friends, church members, and sales associates. Rey Evasco, pastor of UCG in Manila gave the opening prayer. The company’s top executives, including the president and CEO, Jesus G. Hofileña, were on hand to confer the award.

Mr. Hofileña congratulated the agency in his keynote address: “It is with the greatest pride and pleasure that I stand before you today as we commemorate this wonderful milestone in the remarkable performance of Remo & Associates—your very first Award for Marketing Excellence, Philam Plans’ highest and only honor that it confers on a sales agency. I consider this accomplishment as nothing short of remarkable because you attained it in your very first year as a sales agency. Rarely do we see that happen, and it eloquently speaks of your passion for excellence as well as your dedication to our profession. Let me therefore extend PPI Management’s resounding congratulations to all of you... I truly feel your best accomplishments are yet to come...”

Part of the program was a special audio-visual presentation entitled “In Pursuit of Excellence,” which highlighted the phenomenal performance of the agency during its first year. Bong and Grace took the evening celebration as an opportunity to thank God for His blessings and to glorify Him for what He has allowed them to achieve.

In the audio-visual presentation, Bong compared the agency to a fledgling eagle wanting to soar: “Why the metaphor of a fledgling eagle? You see, we are a young agency—only a year old—and we wanted to soar. Now, why are eagles able to soar? Because God made them so. We could not have achieved

so much success on our own. God is our partner and He has been very gracious to us. He has blessed us and prospered us even during economically challenging times. To Him we give honor and glory.”

In her acceptance speech, Grace expressed their gratitude to God: “Above all, we give thanks to our Great God for all His blessings, for His guidance and direction, for everything that He has allowed us to achieve in our lives. To Him we give honor and glory.” She recounted that attaining their first AME was nothing short of a miracle. “Truly, with God, nothing is impossible.”

A leading pre-need company in the country, Philam Plans, Inc. is an affiliate of the Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company (Philamlife) organized to handle the marketing of pre-need plans (pension, education and memorial plans). It is a member of the Philam Group of Companies and is part of the American International Group (AIG), a leading US-based international insurance organization.

Bong and Grace rose from the ranks of the company’s sales force having started as sales counselors until they were able to develop their own sales agency. They are part of the Manila North Sales Division with their operation based at the Times Plaza in United Nations Avenue, Manila. Earlier in the year, they received top rookie sales awards in Philam Plans’ national annual awards (See *UNP*, June 2003). Theirs is an example of how God blesses His people.

Bong and Grace attend the Manila congregation of the UCGIA together with their children Gracielle, Christine, David Jonathan, and Angelica. *UNP*



Adolfo Remo (third from left) during awarding ceremony in Manila; Grace Remo (right) recounts their experience in the first year of operation (photos by Philam Plans Corporate Communications Dept.)



Manila Prepares for Feast Show

by Cecile Cinco

The brethren of the United Church of God, *an International Association*, in Manila, Philippines, have been seriously preparing for the Feast of Tabernacles’ variety show since the start of August. The involvement is so inspiring that even non-dancers are encouraged to learn the art of folk dancing, from the youngest kids to the more senior brethren. The indefatigable folk dance aficionado, Mrs. Gloria Lorenzo, with the help of her equally patient daughter, Ruth, patiently teaches the brethren the art of Filipino folk dancing.

The show will be thematic and is designed to bring out a culturally Filipino festival show.

As part of the festival preparation, the festival choir is also set for a complete-duration performance. Aably directed by Mr. Benny Lorenzo and participated in by almost half the adult attendees, the choir practices weekly after services and several

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“Feed My Lambs”

by Laurie Lynn Macaraeg

“Feed My lambs—this emphatic command of Jesus Christ to His disciples was among the first of three similar mandates given after His resurrection,” said Edmond D. Macaraeg, pastor of the Mindanao congregations.

In an effort to comply with this instruction, a Sabbath Youth Bible Program was started in the Davao City church more than two years ago, and it has now been adopted in most of the congregations in Mindanao.

This caters to the children of our brethren from ages four to 15. Since there is already an existing, effective, and time-tested material on this program (and is publicly available on the Internet), we simply adapted the youth Bible lessons from our previous association.

We presently have all the lessons at all levels on CD; we simply print them according to need. Children are classified according to age groups, which represent the various levels. The age categories are organized from levels 1 through 9. There are 12 lessons for each level, with a special edition for the Spring Festival and the Fall Festival.



Therefore, there are a total of 108 well-organized lessons based on biblical material. Each lesson contains different stories from the Bible. The younger students are given the opportunity to color pictures and illustrations, plus answer biblical questions. An activity to memorize a verse, passage, or phrase at the end of a particular lesson is a common feature especially in the lower levels.

We currently have 97 active students in our list from among church areas in Mindanao. Since there are nine age levels, there are usually also nine teacher-evaluators for each congregation, composed of able young adults and qualified married parents, as in the Davao City church. In smaller congregations, a teacher-evaluator may have two or more levels to teach.

The program is designed to help parents teach their own children at home by providing them with lesson material which they can conveniently use; for their children, they can take it home and do their homework. The role of the teacher-evaluator is to check and encourage progress, in addition to providing a greater understanding on the lessons being covered, and answering any questions the students may have. The evaluation sessions are held after services, every first and third Sabbath of the month in Davao City.

Parents who have children 4-15 years old are encouraged to enroll their children in the said program. Simply submit your child's name, age and birth date to your local leader who will in turn send it to the YBL Davao Coordinator, Daisy S. Macaraeg or Laurie Lynn Macaraeg for processing. Lambs of God, be spiritually fed in our Sabbath school program! ■

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prophecies and His laws, to be expounded by His servants for eight days. The Feast provides us with a spiritually enriching experience through our growing in reverence for God and Christ. It should also teach us greater love for all humanity.

After the Feast, if you are asked the question, “When was your best Feast ever?” I hope your answer to that question will be “The Feast of 2003!” It is up to us to make it happen! ■

“Davao,” continued from page 1

Davao will be the RELC (Region XI Educational Learning Center) compound (just beside Teodoro Palma Gil Elementary School), along Quirino Avenue, Davao City. The Davao City congregation is now using this facility for Sabbath services since it is less expensive than the Apo View Hotel.

The facility has a dormitory (with air-conditioned rooms) having a total capacity of 100 beds, making it possible for many brethren to conveniently stay within the RELC compound. This will be especially helpful for the elderly and those having difficulty with travel.

The meeting hall will be a bit of a challenge since the number expected to attend will be more than 350. The facility has a large meeting hall (with 250 maximum seating capacity) and a smaller hall with 100 maximum capacity. The canteen can also seat 100. The big hall will be used as the main service area with a video camera. The smaller hall will have a video hook-up and big TV which will be used for the Cebuano-speaking brethren listening to the translation from the English language. The canteen will have another video hook-up which will be suitable for mothers and families with small children.

With the change in venue coupled with the funds raised by the Oshkosh and Milwaukee brethren (home church area of Jeb Mortier) that were recently wired to the Philippines, most of our brethren in Mindanao should be able to attend the FOT. I am very grateful that God has provided for the needs of our brethren in this way. ■

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times on Sundays at the choir director's residence, where the participants are treated to some hearty snacks and ginger ale.

Mr. David Baker, Philippine senior pastor, was our guest speaker last August 30 where he inspired the brethren to get involved in the activities and rejoice during the Feast but without neglecting our personal Bible studies and prayers during the Feast.

The festival brochure has likewise been designed to conform to the cultural theme. Mr. Baker liked two of the three designs presented for the brochure cover and suggested using both designs for the festival brochure. So, half the brochures will have the first design on its cover and the other half with the second design on its cover.

Even if some members were not feeling well during the rehearsals, this was no reason enough for them not to get involved. By getting involved, each of the participants feels blessed with the extended fellowship they find truly fulfilling and rewarding. Besides, are we not encouraged to rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4)? ■

The Best Recognition You Can Achieve!

by Audrey Ruth Angcos

In our life as students, examinations and practicums are the things we prepare for. And if we're aiming to be an honor student, we would exert extra effort and do our best to be prepared as the examination approaches.

"Education is the only treasure that we can give you..."

That's a familiar reminder that our parents always utter. Indeed! Education can help us attain our goals and ambitions in life. This is the reason why our parents work hard to send us to school—the justification why they always motivate us to do our best and strive for excellence.

As Christians, we are considered as students of Jesus Christ. God also requires us to take His examinations, and He also expects us to do well. In fact, our practicum, the Feast of Tabernacles, is fast approaching! Are you already prepared?

To all the students who are striving hard to do well in their classes, this might prove a little difficult. Priorities now seem conflicting! Our parents require us to give our best in school. Now, they want us to be absent to be able to observe the Feast of Tabernacles!

"What would be the reaction of my teachers and classmates?"

"One week of absence! That's too much! How about my goal of being an honor student?"

These might be the questions lingering in your mind—questions that feed your emotions. Now, you're trapped in this difficult situation and you have to choose.

I can understand how you feel, since I've experienced this situation before. I was a fourth year high school student at that time. My goal was to be the first honor in our class and be included in the honorable mention list. Using my carnal mind, I concluded that it would be impossible for me to achieve my goal if I missed classes for eight days! There really was a close fight for all the honor students in the entire batch since our school administration would pick only ten out of one thousand graduating students for the honorable mention.

"I did my best in school; do I really need to sacrifice my recognition now for the sake of that Feast of Tabernacles?" "Why do my priorities now seem conflicting?" These were the questions that frightened me at that time.

Thankfully, my dad reminded me that we are being educated in school to have a good life here on earth. But at the Feast, we would be educated on how to have a good life through all eternity. The Feast of Tabernacles is designed to keep God's true servants in perpetual hope of a golden age yet to dawn on this earth. It is designed to be a living parable of the prosperity and blessings that will come under the reign of Jesus Christ.

But what would we get from observing the Feast?

Would God give us medals, certificates, diplomas, or plaques as rewards just like the approach of our school teachers? Absolutely not! God wouldn't give us any of these things. He will give us something much greater than these.

Medals, certificates, diplomas, and plaques may be a symbol of intellect, fame and prestige during our lifetime. It's an incentive that we enjoy for a short time. But in a matter of years, it would fade and be lost. But the reward from God is a symbol of undying intellect, wisdom, and character that we could attain by walking in His ways throughout our lifetime. If we can pass His examination, then His reward—which our minds could hardly imagine—will be waiting for us. God will share His power with us and He will appoint us to be rulers of His vast possession; we will reign with Him in His royal family as kings and queens forever.

Can our teachers give us any due recognition that can surpass our Father's reward?

Would you barter your throne in the Kingdom of God for medals and other diminutive things this world can offer? Would you choose to have a good life here on earth, or a good life throughout all eternity? Would you decide to attend your classes in school and please mortal beings such as your teachers and classmates—or would you decide to observe the Feast of Tabernacles and please God, who is all-knowing and all-powerful—the only Sovereign who is the reason for the existence and sustenance of all things including our own life?

Of course, these are obviously incomparable things! But the decision still lies in our hands. We've already weighed things carefully and we know our priority as true Christians. But how can we prevent the occurrence or the consequence of obediently following the will of God?

PREPARATION is the KEY! Let us strive to do our best in order to have good grades and impress our teachers before leaving for the Feast. In so doing—and with the divine guidance from God—it would be easier for us to approach our teachers and get their permission to be absent for five days.

In spite of the hypothesized consequences that were before me, I still chose to observe the Feast of Tabernacles when I was a fourth-year high school student. And I'll tell you, I have no regrets to this day! I met new friends, learned many things, enjoyed a lot—and guess what happened after the Feast?

Did my grades sink? Did I lose my recognition?

Well, if that's your guess, then you're wrong! Because I got higher grades and graduated with flying colors!

See! There is nothing impossible with our Almighty Father! If it worked for me, then I know that it would be the same for all of you. We just have to assure God that He is the center of our life—that to please Him and to walk in His path is our principal conviction.



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“Remember Who You Are!”

by Daniel Roy Macaraeg

Nine years ago, I watched a very impressive animated cartoon film called *The Lion King*. Perhaps many, if not most of you have already seen it. Produced by the Walt Disney Company, it happens to be the biggest and most critically acclaimed animated film; it grossed \$782.4 million in the worldwide box office, making it the number one animated film of all time. *The Lion King* follows the epic adventures of a young lion cub named Simba as he struggles to accept the responsibilities of adulthood and his destined role as king of the jungle. As a carefree cub, he “just can’t wait to be king,” and spends his days frolicking with his pal, Nala. His father, King Mufasa, the revered ruler of Pride Rock and the lands that surround it, teaches him about the “circle of life”—the delicate balance of nature which bonds all animals together—and cautions him to prepare for the day when he will be called upon to lead. Mufasa’s evil brother, Scar, hopes that day will never arrive and schemes to do away with the king and Simba so that he can assume the throne for his own tyrannical purposes. He and his hyena henchmen—Shenzi, Banzai and Ed—lure Simba into the path of a wildebeest stampede in which Mufasa is killed trying to save his son.

Scar convinces Simba that he is responsible for his father’s death and urges him to run far away from the Pride Lands and never return. A frightened and guilt-ridden Simba flees into exile where he is befriended by a wacky but warmhearted warthog named Pumbaa and his free-wheeling meerkat companion, Timon. Under the dubious guidance of this nature’s odd couple, Simba adopts their “Hakuna Matata” (no worries) attitude towards life, living on a diet of bugs and taking things one day at a time. The cub matures into a young adult and is able to put his past behind him until a beautiful young lioness, who turns out to be his childhood friend Nala, arrives on the scene. She tells him of the hard times and suffering that have come to the Pride Lands under Scar’s reign and beseeches him to take his place as king. With the help of Rafiki, a wise shaman baboon, Simba realizes that his father’s spirit lives on in him and that he must accept the responsibility of his destined role. In a climactic battle with his uncle and an army of hyenas, Simba attempts to reclaim his rightful place in the “circle of life.”

Reflecting on this film several years later, I noticed certain parallels to our calling as Christians as we prepare for this upcoming Feast of Tabernacles, and more importantly, the soon-coming Kingdom of God. While all analogies are not perfect, *The Lion King* is very much a “royal” movie, and I would like to share with you the three lessons I learned from watching it. Here they are:

1. Remember Your Identity!

Simba was born an heir to his father’s throne. Having been mentored by his own father, he was clear on his identity and future role. He became very excited about being king,

though he didn’t really know what it all involved. But since his envious uncle Scar tricked him into running away from home, he totally forgot his identity. He forgot who he really was. Then, toward the end of the movie, Simba saw his reflection in the pool of water. First he was a bit startled at his own mature appearance, but he then realized what he was looking at—his reflection was resolving into Mufasa’s face!

Simba looks up and sees a huge image of his father forming in the clouds, appearing to be walking from the stars.

“Simba, you have forgotten me,” the voice echoed.

“No. How could I?” Simba replied.

“You have forgotten who you are, and so have forgotten me. Look inside yourself, Simba. You are more than what you have become. You must take your place in the Circle of Life.”

“How can I go back? I’m not who I used to be.”

“Remember who you are. You are my son, and the one true king... *Remember who you are!*”

It was only when he realized who he really was did he go back and fight for his kingdom.

In the same manner, you and I are God’s true sons and daughters—we have a potential far greater than what now appears. Our Father’s Spirit lives in us! We are made in His image and likeness. You and I will be future kings and queens in the soon-coming Kingdom of God!

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His

marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy [emphasis mine]” (1 Peter 2:9-10).

We will one day rule with Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords in supreme power and great glory! Satan knows this. He knows who we really are. Are we just as clear on our identity? We belong to God and to Jesus Christ, the Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5). In the troubles and everyday cares of this world, it’s so easy for us to forget *who* we are—and *whose* we are. When we forget our identity, our standards and our values drop. Our zeal and commitment wane. We’re not as enthusiastic or as excited as we used to be. Perhaps we become prone to depression and discouragement.

But when we know our true identity, we have that unshakable confidence that God is for us (Romans 8:31) and that He will never abandon us (Hebrews 13:5-6). We have that certain conviction that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). Just as the hyenas shudder at the mere mention of the name “Mufasa,” the demons literally tremble and shake at the mention of the name of our

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“Remember,” *continued from page 6*

Lord, Jesus Christ. We need not fear. We need not become discouraged.

How about you? Have you become discouraged? Have you forgotten who you are?

We are the children of God! We are God’s very own sons and daughters! Don’t let anybody tell you otherwise. Don’t let the evil Satan deceive you about your real and true identity. Don’t let him hide the fact that you are a literal son or daughter of the King of the entire Universe! We are destined to inherit all things! Let’s not ever forget it!

2. Remember Your Destiny!

When we forget our identity, we also forget our God-given destiny. Because Simba forgot his identity, he also forgot his destiny, which was to assume the throne after his father Mufasa. Fed by Scar’s lies, he left the Pride Lands and was befriended by two easygoing companions who took life easy, with no worries and no responsibilities whatsoever. Since he forgot his true identity, he also forgot all about his responsibilities.

Satan also wants us to forget our God-given destiny—that we were born to rule with Him!

“And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10).

In the task that lies before us, we have a solemn promise from our one true King. Jesus Christ is going to be with us until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). He will always be there to guide us in spirit. He looks down from His throne in heaven—farther than those brilliant stars billions of light years away, yet just a prayer away—and makes intercession for us whenever we slip and fall. Our Savior, King, and High Priest stands ready to help whenever we feel alone.

But like Scar, Satan is the accuser of the brethren. He accuses us before God’s throne night and day (Revelation 12:10). Whenever we sin, he wants us to make us feel hopeless and powerless—simply unable to ever please God. He convinces us that it’s no use to serve God and strive to be holy; he persuades us to “run away and never return,” to back away from the fight, to forget our destiny, and to relinquish the crown laid up for us. But what we really need to do is *repent* and turn back to God, instead of running away from our calling and destiny. Moses tried to run away. Jonah tried to run away. Simba tried to run away. Satan still uses guilt and fear tactics to frighten and discourage us. But we need to put the past behind us. We need to confess and bury our sins under the blood of our loving Savior Jesus Christ. We can’t change the past; we can only face it squarely and learn from it—and then move forward, just like the apostle Paul did.



“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, *forgetting those things which are behind* and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12-14).

Sometimes, like Simba, it’s so easy for us to get side-tracked and just live a carefree life with “no worries.” It’s so easy for us to go back to the ways of this world. The world can be very tempting! Timon and Pumbaa are like our friends in the world. They give us temporary acceptance, but they lure us away from our calling and true destiny. No rules, no responsibilities, no worries—so they say. They encourage us to lower our standards and begin to eat all manner of unclean things, like bugs and worms. From being a noble and royal priesthood, we grovel so low and become just as slimy as the creatures we begin to eat and the values we begin to adopt.

3. Remember Your Enemy!

We must awaken to the fact that we *have* an enemy who wants to take our crown! Let’s not ever forget who our enemy is!

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary [enemy] the devil walks about *like a roaring lion*, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your

brotherhood in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9).

Satan is personified in this passage as a roaring, hungry lion. He wants nothing but to devour you and me. Poor little Simba—he was so naïve! He thought Uncle Scar had the best of intentions. Too bad his father Mufasa warned him about the dangers beyond Pride Rock, but failed to warn his son about the more lethal danger lurking within good ol’ Uncle Scar. If only Mufasa and Simba knew of the envy and deceit burning within Scar’s wicked heart! Like Scar, Satan is envious of us, since we will eventually rule with Christ in his place. And he knows he doesn’t have much time left (Revelation 12:12)!

Filled with fury, he tried to destroy Christ. When Jesus was a baby, Satan inspired king Herod to kill all the babies from two years old and under. When Jesus was thirty years old, he tried to kill Him spiritually by disqualifying Him in the titanic battle of the ages. Finally, God allowed Satan to inspire wicked hands to crucify Him when he was 33 and a half years old to fulfill the Scriptures. Do you think Satan has changed? Satan still wants to disqualify you and me NOW! He wants to “eat us alive”! He hates to see us assume the throne with Christ, who has successfully overcome!

Let us not be too naïve and ignorant of Satan’s devices—he CAN and will take advantage of us if we are not close to God (2 Corinthians 2:11). He uses psychological tricks—manipulation and deceit—playing on our pride, naiveté, and our natural curiosity, just like he did Adam and Eve.

See **“Remember,”** page 8

Comments from Our Good News Readers



I enjoy reading *The Good News*. I proudly use it to witness to others. Do you have a Tagalog translation?

E. R., Olongapo City, Zambales

I was truly blessed the first time I received a copy of *The Good News*. I learned a lot of truths about Christ and the salvation He is offering to us from the articles I had read. *The Good News* has kept me well-informed about the worldwide events and because of that, I'm very encouraged to read more.

I hope a lot of people will be able to read *The Good News* too so that they will know more about their salvation and the Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you all!

M. A. B., Pavia, Iloilo

Since I had read *The Good News* once from my cousin's subscription, I was really amazed by its contents. It tells me more about the message of God to His people. From that time on, I have become an avid reader of *The Good News* because of its inspirational and helpful messages.

J. S., Santa Cruz, Davao del Sur

Good morning, *Good News*! I just received my subscribed reading materials from you yesterday. Our Bible study group is enjoying them so much. Thank you!

Text Message

We find your magazines so fruitful, interesting, and different. Every issue gives so much impact; it strengthens our hearts and minds and lights up our souls. Sometimes we find it confusing, especially about special occasions like Christmas and others, yet, we still find ways to believe what's the truth.

R. P., Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte

This magazine helps us understand more of God's truths because it is easy to comprehend.

Text Message

Thank you for the free spiritual and educational service you provide through your magazine of understanding, *The Good News*! Thank you and more power!

R. D., Dasol, Pangasinan

Thank you for sharing with me a blessing from our Father Almighty God. I have read more precious truth with regards to Him and a lot of practical information, which I have been applying in the daily routine of my life. Good luck and God bless! More power to *The Good News*!

D. B., San Fabian, Pangasinan

Thank you very much for your very informative and inspiring magazine. I have learned a lot from all the publications you have sent me. I always look forward to receiving one every [other] month. I often share it with my family and friends. Some of them have already availed of your publications.

Though I came from a different faith, my knowledge of the Bible has increased because your publications have updated me on what is happening in our world today in relation to the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is comforting to know that in spite of all the hopeless situations we are experiencing and witnessing everyday, this will all lead to the glorious plan our God has in store for us.

May God continue to sustain you and bless you in every endeavour you undertake. Again, thank you.

C. B., Bacolod City, Negros Occidental

"Best Recognition," continued from page 5

If that's the case, rest assured that God will be with us always. We just have to do our part with all our might, and God will absolutely do the rest.

I hope that we can all pass our final examination from God and graduate in His school with flying colors. Then we will be kings and queens in His kingdom, and live a good life through all eternity. That is truly the *best* recognition we can achieve! ■

"Remember," continued from page 7

Yet, in spite of our stupidity and disobedience, Jesus Christ still rescued us from certain death—just as Mufasa did—and gave up His very own precious life so that we might live!

Remember, the greater danger lurks within. The enemy is not necessarily "out there," but within us, within our own kingdom, within our own ranks (Acts 20:30). That's how Satan was able to attack the church in times past. Satan similarly disguises himself as an angel of light, but in reality is as evil and cunning as a snake (2 Corinthians 11:3,14).

How about you? Are you going to allow Satan to steal your crown and destroy everything you worked hard for?

"Behold, I am coming quickly! *Hold fast* what you have, that NO ONE may take your crown" (Revelation 3:11).

The Feast of Tabernacles will be here in just a couple of weeks. It pictures our great and glorious destiny, ruling and reigning with the *real* Lion King, Jesus Christ! Our calling is so precious, more glorious than ruling the African jungle. We need to guard our identity, safeguard our destiny, and be on guard against our enemy.

Remember who you are! ■

YOUR ARTICLE IS NEEDED!

Do you have an article you wish to share with your brethren around the country? If so, please submit it to your pastor. The next deadline is October 31, 2003.