

COVID-19 AGENDA



AND GOD



BY LANILANE OCBINA

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Glory to God!

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COVID-19 AGENDA and GOD

Who doesn't know about COVID-19? Perhaps only the newborn kids. A child who is at least two years old knows about it. Well at least even with a simple "baby talk", the child knows what it is in his/her cute perspective. This virus has been rapidly taking its peak in popularity, negative enough that everybody wants it out of his/her household and whole life. However, we know that this is not the first time that it happened in the world.

There was the Spanish flu that tried killing the humanity during the first World War, in 1918. Back then, they did not have the necessary advancement in the medical field or even the communication technology that we have today. 500 Million people out of the 1.8 Billion population worldwide died from that pandemic. It took about 2 years before the world became free from that virus. Today, we have about 900,000 deaths out of the 7.8 Billion world population since the outbreak 8 months ago. How long will it be before we finally get to say, "We have finally slayed COVID-19, we are free!" ? Nobody knows except God.

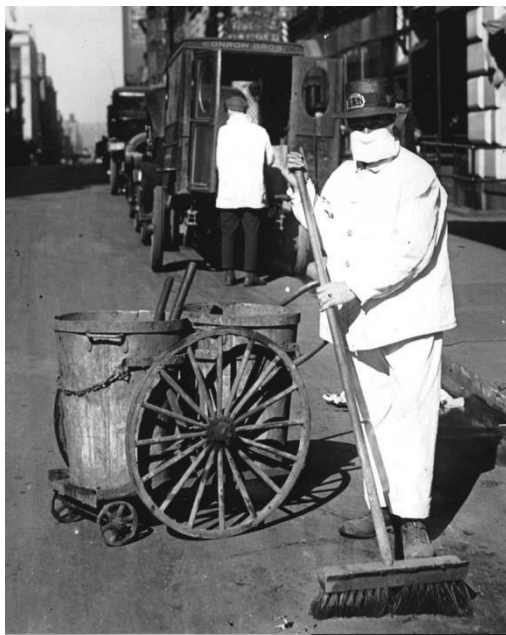
The numbers are huge. But the pandemic in 1918 was more awful compared today. Imagine the difficulty of not

knowing what is happening in the other sides of the world because of the suppressed media and low technology? How about the lack of trust in wearing the primitive facemask, knowing that it is not good enough to keep the virus from getting into your system? Nonetheless, either the Spanish flu or COVID-19 is already a monster that no one wanted to welcome in his or her own household.

Here are some pictures from BBC.com featuring the Spanish flu in 1918.



A telephone operator with protective gauze



A New York city street sweeper wears a mask to help check the spread of the influenza epidemic, October 1918. In the view of one official of the New York Health Board, it is 'Better be ridiculous, than dead'. (Photo by PhotoQuest/Getty Images)



A man sprays a bus of the London General Omnibus Co, with anti- flu preparation in March 1920. (Photo by H. F. Davis/Topical Press Agency/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)



A woman wears a flu mask during the Spanish flu epidemic



Women from the Department of War take 15-minute walks to breathe in fresh air every morning and night to ward off the influenza virus during World War I, c. 1918. (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

(more photos featured in www.bbc.com)

They managed to escape Spanish Flu after about 2 years but what about us? WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

WHERE ARE WE HEADING TO?

What is God doing in the midst of the pandemic? Perhaps you wonder why the figures keep on swelling. Why deaths just boom and do not even stop even for a day? Well with some countries, they were “able” to defeat the virus.

In contrary, I keep hearing stories about fabricating truths about the figures being encoded into the worldometer records. For example, one country that has less than 300 cases is being applauded because of its good health management but others would say that it is because the government is just showing off and that the true statistics is not being publicized. The media is suppressed. On the other hand, another country that is consistent on top 5 has millions of cases already and huge number of deaths. But a friend of mine from that country spilled to me that the parties in their government are too corrupt that they use COVID-

19 to earn more external support for them. He continued that people dying from cardiac arrest, cancer, asthma, and any other

ailments were not recorded as they should be, instead, recorded under COVID-19 as the cause of death. That is the reason why this certain country seems to have thousands of recorded cases everyday. These are two different countries with different motives. One wanted fame to look good to attract global applause, perhaps for more tourism income, world power, or anything else, and then the other wanted negative popularity to gain sympathy, thus drawing in money for more opportunity to corrupt out of their generated funds from charities.

You see, everybody has his own motive in the midst of this pandemic. Great nations, great people, they have their individual agenda. What about you? And as you would ask , “What about God?”

What is God’s agenda in the midst of all of these? Well, while people do their business, God also is actively moving. You may not see it, but He is very busy doing good especially for those who continue to be obedient to Him.

WHERE IS GOD IN THE MIDDLE OF THESE NEGATIVITIES?

In one of the devotions that I had during this pandemic, I learned something amazing in the ninth chapter of John. As I stumbled upon this chapter, I realized that even though we have read some books in the Bible over and over, God has a new lesson to teach us. I have never understood the lesson out of the life of this blind man like I had recently. You see, when speaking about blind men being healed by Jesus, I just always remember the ungrateful ones. Those who experience God's miracle, and then ran away, celebrated, forgot about Jesus and that's it. But in this chapter, it is completely different. The blind man was healed and he became a follower of Christ even though it meant that he had to be an outcast.

To sum it up, I saw three points, which are like one of the lessons that we used to have in our English classes: First person, Second person, and Third person.

First Person Perspective. God Himself seems to say:
I
demonstrate My miraculous work out of the impossibilities..

JOHN 9: 1-5

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³ “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

You see, God makes miracles. And most of the time, He does it alone. But the pattern usually is that, He does it out of the weakest point of the weak. Well, it has to. The intensity of the miracle is resonated more loudly when it comes from the impossibilities. How will you call it a miracle when it is actually possible to happen? So with this blind man, God was able to demonstrate His work- His miracle out of the impossibility. People and the blind man himself understand that it is impossible to gain sight. But God showed it was possible.

Second Person Perspective. God invites you to join Him in making miracles. He seems saying, “You have a role in the miracle-making business”.

JOHN 9: 6-7

⁶After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. ⁷“Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

Jesus could have just healed the blind man with the mud paste that He put in the eyes. But what was commanded to the blind guy was really amazing. He actually gave him a role before the miracle happened. God also wants you to do your part in miracles that He is working on.

Third Person Perspective. God wants others to see and experience miracles too. This is what He seems to tell you, “They should see and experience the miracles themselves. You have a part but they have a part too.”

Jesus' love is for everyone and no one is exempted from the invitation to experience His miracles. But it is a matter of choice bestowed upon our hearts. Some people have already seen miracles but choose not to believe. Some would believe at the onset but later forget. Some are just too blinded and want to be blind until death. A choice either gives life or death. As per the blind man, he chose to believe and follow Jesus so he chose life. And for sure, his parents knew about it when he went home. Just imagine how amazed they have been. For sure, they wondered who was their son's healer and thirsted to know more. Hence, the blind guy, in his excitement, might have told them the whole story about Jesus' actions to rescue him and how amazing He was. His testimony is so powerful that could have changed the hearts of his parents but sadly, no matter how great the news was, the parents lost the point and chose not to believe and not to follow Jesus as their son did. They chose "death". Because rejecting Jesus means "spiritual death".

JOHN 9: 18-23

¹⁸ They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹ "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

²⁰ “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. ²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

This also taught me the reality that no matter how great your testimony is, some people will still not get the point. But it should not take away your confidence in Jesus. As I said, it is a matter of choice. Your role is to witness God’s miracle and be able to testify about His greatness, and then leave the consequence to God. People choose, and God decides the consequence. Just continue to follow and obey God and try not to be distracted by the outcome. Rejection is part of the reality. Some will praise Him, some will doubt Him no matter the power behind your testimony and persuasion.

COVID-19 is like the blind man’s disease. It was a huge problem. And it seems unbearable. It was as powerful as that darkness that creeps into the blind man’s body, making him disabled, feeling lonely, feeling hopeless, feeling useless, and most of all, feeling scared in the dark. Much like how you

feel during quarantine. But God, who is over all the impossibilities can make a miracle. Just remember, He also wants you to do your part to unfold that miracle. And that, He also wants everyone to see and experience that miracle.

GOD'S MIRACLES IN HISTORY

Most likely, you have heard about many miracles from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Here is a list¹ of God's miracles for your references:

The Miracles	The Bible Verses
Egypt	
Aaron's Rod Is Turned into a Serpent	Exodus 7:10-12
The 10 Plagues	
1. Water Is Turned into Blood	Exodus 7:20-25
2. Frogs	Exodus 8:5-14
3. Lice	Exodus 8:16-18
4. Flies	Exodus 8:20-24
5. Murrain (Anthrax)	Exodus 9:3-6
6. Boils	Exodus 9:8-11
7. Thunder and Hail	Exodus 9:22-26
8. Locusts	Exodus 10:12-19
9. Darkness	Exodus 10:21-23
10. The Firstborn Are Slain	Exodus 12:29, 30
The Parting of the Red Sea	Exodus 14:6, 21-31

¹ List of God's miracles from <https://www.bible-history.com/old-testament/miracles.h>

The Wilderness

Healing the Bitter Waters of Marah	Exodus 15:23-25
The Manna from Heaven	Exodus 16:14-35
Water from the Rock at Rephidim	Exodus 17:5-7
The Death of Nadab and Abihu	Leviticus 10:1, 2
The Burning of the Congregation at Taberah	Numbers 11:1-3
The Deaths of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram	Numbers 16:31-35
Aaron's Rod That Budded at Kadesh	Numbers 17:8
Water from the Rock at Meribah	Numbers 20:7-11
Lifting up The Brazen Serpent	Numbers 21:8, 9
The Parting of the Jordan River	Joshua 3:14-17

The Land of Canaan - Joshua	
The Fall of Jericho	Joshua 6:6-25
The Sun and the Moon Standing Still	Joshua 10:12-14

The Land of the Philistines	
Dagon Fell and Philistines were Cursed	1 Samuel 5:4-6

The Land of Israel - The Kings	
The Death of Uzzah for Touching	2 Samuel 6:7

the Ark	
The Withering Of Jeroboam's Hand	1 Kings 13:4
The Destruction of the Altar at Bethel	1 Kings 13:5-6
Uzziah is Smitten with Leprosy	2 Chronicles 26:16-21

The Land of Israel - Elijah

Replenishing the Oil and Meal at Zarephath	1 Kings 17:14-16
Raising the Widow's Son at Zarephath	1 Kings 17:17-24
The Sacrifice and Prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel	1 Kings 18:30-38
The Burning of the Captains and their Host	2 Kings 1:10-12
The Parting of the Jordan River	2 Kings 2:7, 8

The Land of Israel - Elisha

The Parting of the Jordan River	2 Kings 2:14
The Healing of the Waters of Jericho	2 Kings 2:21, 22
The Destruction of the Mocking Children at Bethel	2 Kings 2:24
Water Is Supplied to the Armies in Moab	2 Kings 3:16-20
The Multiplication of the Widows Oil	2 Kings 4:2-7
The Raising of the Shunammite's Son	2 Kings 4:32-37

Curing the Deadly Pottage	2 Kings 4:38-41
The Feeding of the 100 with 20 Loaves	2 Kings 4:42-44
Naaman the Syrian General is Cured of Leprosy	2 Kings 5:10-14
Naaman's Leprosy Clings to Gehazi	2 Kings 5:20-27
The Iron Axe Did Float	2 Kings 6:5-7
The Syrian Army Was Smitten	2 Kings 6:18-20
The Dead Man Was Raised by Touching Elisha's Bones	2 Kings 13:21

The Mediterranean Sea - Jonah	
Jonah is Released from the Great Fish	Jonah 2:1-10

The Land of Israel - Isaiah	
Destruction of Sennacherib's Army	2 Kings 19:35
The Sun Dial Returned 10 Degrees	2 Kings 20:9-11

Babylon During the Captivity of Judah	
3 Jews in the Fiery Furnace	Daniel 3:19-27
Daniel is Delivered from the Den of Lions	Daniel 6:16-23
The Writing on the Wall	Daniel 5:22-31

If you happen to stumble upon most of these, I would expect that you are in awe of the miracles that God has created. But you know what, personally, I too stand in awe of God's works but what amazes me too in a negative sense is how the Hebrews, who later became Israelites upon taking over Israel, became consistent with their complains in spite of the great miracles that they have encountered. Imagine, when they were in the wilderness, God was there with them, being the cloud that gave them shade during daytime and the fire to keep them warm during nighttime. How sweet God was right? They were taken out from slavery and God gave them every need from their exodus to their closest approach to Canaan. They saw before their eyes how the Nile river turned into blood and how the locusts, and other plagues attacked their oppressors and not them. They saw how the Red sea parted so they can pass through. They also saw how the sea closed and kept their enemies from them. If I was there, I will really be in awe. But what happened? Why they kept complaining no matter the miracles that they have witnessed?

It may be easy for me to say and judge the Israelites but the truth remains that I was not there when they experienced the difficulties. So who am I to say they were fools? Even myself have also been a fool many times before God no matter the miracles, small or huge, that I have experienced.

In John 13 and 14, even Peter, who was very passionate to Christ failed in his faith considering that he was there throughout Jesus' ministerial period on earth.

John 13

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

31 When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him,[c] God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

33 "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

36 Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

37 Peter asked, "Lord, w hy can't I follow y ou now ? I w ill lay dow n m y life for you."

38 Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!

GOD'S MIRACLES AND OUR BETRAYAL

You see, with just a word or a snap, God can make a miracle right now! But why is He not doing it? Why is COVID-19 still here? I also don't know. What I know is that God is teaching us something as human being collectively and as an individual believer (or non-believer).

We are enshrouded with lies. Who knows, the answer to our problem is already there but somebody or some people are just hiding it. It is possible that the vaccine has already been made but someone's agenda to "depopulate" the world is still not yet completed so the cure has still been hidden. Much like how people speculate that the first landing of man on the moon was just staged and actually never happened. Also sounds like how a group of people fabricated the truth about milk being so very important for kids and adults but the real "truth" is, they overrated the value of milk for the sake of business and money. Are these true or not? Even myself get confused whom to believe.

Now whether the COVID-19 has been planned by some entities, I believe them and their masterpiece virus will never be more powerful than God. I still believe in God's miracles even

though God knows that I can fail even if He will show His miracles to me.

As I can see it, God is not releasing the miracle for humanity these days as a whole. But He surely is doing miracles piece by piece into our individual lives.

This has been the most difficult time of your decade perhaps. Well as per myself, it is. Though I know there are people who face more difficult situation than mine and I salute them for being so courageous to endure the hardship brought by this virus. Some are fighting under their PPEs as frontlines. Some are fighting with ventilators on. Some are fighting hunger one day at a time. Some are fighting anxiety every other hour. And so forth.

We are all like soldiers in the battlefield but we are all in different positions thus giving us different perspectives toward the war before us. But one thing is for sure, God is with us who believe and obey Him no matter what.

CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS

If you are to check, what are you 8 months ago before this virus took over us? And what are you now? This year is almost

done and if you will just scan your record, what have you accomplished? Sadly, most of us do not have anything! Quarantine life has been the most useless period of our existence. Nonetheless, I tell you, this year is not yet finished. There are still lots of chances to progress.

I am sure that God has a plan for you. He has an agenda in mind to make progress in you. The question is, are you ready for it? Are you being mindful of His instructions? Are you opening your senses to listen to Him?

I understand it is hard to listen to God when you are suffering. But I guess, knowing that all these things are temporary will mean that great things can still come as long as you remain in God's will. I hope you take courage and endure until God finally release that great miracle. I am quite sure He has a miracle in mind to show you really soon.

I want to share to you how I have been since this COVID-19 virus took over the earth 8 months ago...

How To Be JESUS To The Culture That You Are In? That is an important question in my head now that I am stuck in Cambodia because of Covid-19. Although it has always been a constant question wherever I go, I also forget it because of

the series of tension that I experience in different degrees depending on what culture that I am in.

Last January 20th, I left the Philippines for Thailand and stayed there for a month. I got to explore Hua Hin, Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai during that visit. That time, COVID was still being downplayed in the world. There were 4 to 10 infected people recorded then. After doing ministry and being exposed to the culture for a month, I travelled to Cambodia. I arrived there last February 14. I was given the opportunity to visit several places from Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville, Kampot, Kep, Kratie and Stung Treng.

Remembering these places that I have been to, whether in Thailand or Cambodia, I was deeply struck by seeing “lost souls” who still don’t know Jesus and actually don’t have idea who He is and what the Bible is. They seem to be the “dry bones” that the prophet Ezekiel was talking about in a vision. And I thought, our brothers and sisters who are called to be missionaries to these places should be constantly remembered in our prayers for what they are doing is never easy.

As Covid-19 became a Pandemic and stirred up panic to many nations, Cambodia remained relaxed. That time, I was about to go home to the Philippines. I travelled to Vietnam

in March 13 and I started to feel the tension when I was crossing the border, while talking to the immigration. While the officer took more time as usual to look upon my passport and records, I was praying to the Lord to give me peace. After a while, the officer finally let me in.

I can still remember the sleeper bus that I was in taking off for Ho Chi Minh. There were like 10 or 12 who were strangers to me in the bus and I was the only female passenger. It was my first time to be on a sleeper bus and I really found it weird, I actually wanted to laugh at myself looking so weird because it was something new to me. Then during the stopover for lunch, I find myself sitting in a round table with Vietnamese men whom I don't know. I was asking in my head, "what am I doing here Lord, why did you put me in this round table?". Then I just prayed for the people and ate what they ate and ate how they ate. It was a very silent table but the cry in my heart was so loud for the salvation of these men. I wanted to cry because I cannot even open my mouth and speak Vietnamese. Not a single word.



My flight going back to my beloved country was supposed to be in March 20th but the lockdown in Manila was announced a week before so my flight was cancelled. That was the time when I started to feel that the tension brought by the pandemic has already progressed to a highly serious level. And I started praying to God about what to do, “what is the next plan?” I thought. By then, Vietnam has already shutdown schools and businesses and has actually issued a directive that foreigners will not be allowed to be issued any visa extension. So I asked the Lord, “what now?”.

I became an extra busy researcher for a while, intently looking at the news in the Philippines, Vietnam and also Cambodia. And by God’s grace and wisdom, I was led to a decision to move to Cambodia before things get worse. I booked

for a flight since the borders were closed, 2 days after I arrived in Vietnam. The ticket for Qatar Air was expensive but the Lord has provided.

My flight was on March 27th. The suspense in that scene was that, flights have been cancelled as that day approached. My flight, which was QR 970, was cancelled on march 25th and march 26th. I was asking the Lord, how come that You allowed me to book for a flight that will be cancelled later on? And then I was rebuked by Him in my prayer and asked me “Where is your faith?”. So I asked for His forgiveness right then. I said “Lord I will accept if the flights are cancelled but You are God, You can make these things turn around.. You can make a miracle...”

QR 970 Qatar Airways Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh Flight History

Airportia Widgets: Embed the Table Below on Your Site or Blog - Get Code Here >

Date	From	To	Scheduled-Departure	Departure	Scheduled-Arrival	Arrival	Status	Track >
26/03/2020	SGN	PNH	14:40		15:30		CANCELLED	Track >
25/03/2020	SGN	PNH	14:40		15:30		CANCELLED	Track >
24/03/2020	SGN	PNH	14:40	14:35	15:30	15:13	Landed	Track >
23/03/2020	SGN	PNH	14:40	14:50	15:30	15:23	Landed	Track >
22/03/2020	SGN	PNH	14:40	14:41	15:30	15:19	Landed	Track >

Figure 1: Seeing these two consecutive "cancelled" flights directed my thoughts about being trapped here until Covid is over. That also meant that it will be a great challenge to keep up with the protocols. My flight was on the 27th of March.

So early in the morning of March 27, with a pounding heart, I checked the status of the flight and it said, departed, which means that it's first flight from Doha Qatar to Ho Chi Minh was not cancelled and that the Ho Chi Minh to Phnom Penh Flight is not cancelled too! And my heart jumped for joy. Indeed, the Lord can make miracles like this.

So I went to the virtually empty airport of Ho Chi Minh. The taxi driver was really shocked about the weird look of the place as it was like a ghost airport. I think there were only about 10 people I saw inside the airport that include the guards, money changer staff, some passenger, and flight attendants in the check in counters.



Figure 2: Virtually empty Ho Chi Minh Airport when I was there for my Phnom Penh flight

They did not issue my boarding pass unless I was able to book for my plane tickets from Phnom penh to the Philippines or any other country except Vietnam. I had errors in the booking and I became a bit anxious about it because I did not have enough time. Finally, after three or four attempts, my booking went through. So they issued my pass. Walking through the immigration was peacefully done until I was about to enter the scanner section. They have put my entry on hold because they said they detected something from my luggage. So I had to be escorted back to the luggage inspection area. I just got 3 minutes before the boarding gate will close! So we ran to see my luggage only to find that the thing that they have detected was just a can of a tea! So upon releasing me, I ran again to the scanner section and finally ran to the boarding gate. I was just on time. For sure, the crews were informed to wait for me. I was the last passenger to come in.

Inside the plane were so many Chinese people and about five were Cambodians.² It was a huge plane and was full. I wonder where they came from when I didn't see as much people as that compared to when I was inside the airport? Anyway, my seatmate was a young Chinese man. He moved to the window side and I stayed in the aisle side. The middle seat was empty so we were one seat apart. I see that as God's favor for the two of us.

I had an opportunity to talk to him because he was asking for help in filling out his arrival card, health cards, etc.. I was amused by the suits of the other Chinese people in the plane who almost like wearing PPEs while I was just wearing a one-dollar worth of mask and a fashion headband. Upon arrival in Cambodia, I felt relieved. I cannot explain the feeling of being released from a very dark tunnel. That was one of the best days of my life and I could really define the word “freedom” by what I have experienced. Passing through the immigration was almost seamless; there was not a lot of questions or even lab tests. They just let me in.



Figure 3: Upon arrival at Phnom Penh International Airport

² I have a number of vlogs in my youtube channel to give you more of the stories about these encounters. Please see <https://www.youtube.com/LanilaneOcbina>

The interesting thing that happened that day when I arrived in Phnom Penh was that, that same day, the Prime Minister signed the directive that they will not allow foreigners to enter Cambodia anymore unless we have 15000USD worth of medical insurance or bank account balance. I just arrived on time! Imagine if I arrived the next day. What \$ should I present to them? In addition to that, five days later, Cambodia also issued a directive to waive all overstays until it is possible to go home. What a favor! How generous Cambodia is and I thought, the Lord will bless this land!

I saw how the sovereign Lord has moved His hand in all of these. How He has moved me out from Thailand before the outbreak there has started. How He has brought me to Vietnam just on time before the borders closed. How He has brought me back to Cambodia in such a nick of time. How He has provided me with free visa in Cambodia for the past months of being here. And how He has provided for everything including the mission house (FIDE) and the Spiritual family whom I live and serve with now. He is faithful and always on time! How can anyone question His divine providence? These miracles are like “mixed cement” that are filled into my foundation and columns of faith.

I have been here in Cambodia for almost seven months now, with visa waived free for me and other foreigners. I am still praying for the Lord's direction. Who has ever experienced having free visa for this long period of time? Myself and other foreigners these days! What a miracle.

My home-country, the Philippines, is still struggling and trapped in uncertainties and dilemmas, which is very sad. Here in Cambodia, we can move around and just wear mask and carry hand sanitizer. Nonetheless, no matter how I want to talk about Jesus to them, I still can't because my Khmer vocabs are still limited. Praying for the Lord's anointing of my tongue, ears, mind, heart, and hands in this land. His will be done.

INCARNATIONAL MINISTRY THEOLOGY

When I was supposed to head home, the Lord said "NO" and brought me back to Cambodia. And the question again was, "what now Lord?"

Today, I eat what they eat. I ride tuktuk as they do. I try to think how they think. And I try to study and speak their heart language.

One day I was so confident about my (self) language study when I finally memorized how to say “one” to “ninety thousand”. So I went with a sister to the market and was in deep confusion because whenever I ask “tlay man” (how much), they speak too fast and I had no idea what each of them say. It turned out that theoretical is often easy and practical is a nightmare. Nonetheless, I thought, it is just one of the many discouragements that I will encounter. I need to press on and study harder.

As we serve the Lord and minister to people, it is important that we look at the example of Jesus. He was on earth for about 33 to 36 years and about 3 years of that were spent for His ministry.

If we try to remember what John 1 says, “He became flesh and dwelt amongst us”. It was not like God stopped becoming God to be human. No, it was God came as human but did not stop being God. He was 200% person, meaning 100% God and 100% human¹. With Him having had to adjust to reach us is what our theologians call the “Incarnational Ministry”.

As gotquestions.org, which I am a subscriber of, says:

“A working definition of incarnational ministry is “the immersion of one’s self into a local culture and ‘ becoming Jesus’ to that culture .” Incarnational ministry seeks to dispense with ministry “from a distance” and embrace ministry “up close and personal”—the love of God and the gospel of Christ are “incarnated” or embodied by the person ministering. Just as the Son of God took on human flesh and came into our world, we should adopt the culture to which we are ministering and “become Jesus” within it. The idea that Christians should represent the incarnated gospel is called incarnational theology. A central tenant of the incarnational ministry concept is “live the good news rather than preach the good news.”

Philippians 2:5-8New International Version (NIV)

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness.

*8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself by becoming obedient
to death*

— *even death on a cross!*

Jesus = 100% God+ 100% man
200% person

Jesus took the very nature of man and it means that He was 100% man: like any other man, he thirsted and hungered, he got tired sweated out, he wounded, he felt the strong heat of the sun, he got fevered, and all that any human experiences.. yes, he faced temptations too but He never gave in and sinned.

As per my current situation, I do not lose my identity as a Filipino totally but I prepare myself to embrace the Cambodian culture to be able to minister to them. In this case, I am 100% Filipino and 50% Cambodian, making me 150% person. ^^

The point of Jesus' incarnation is that He became man like us to reach us. I remember a beautiful story that metaphorically explained what Jesus somehow felt for us:

One day there was a man who was standing anxious. There is a storm and he was looking outside as he was surrounded by the fiber glassed porch. It saddens him when he saw so many birds dropping dead as they hit themselves hard on the surface

of the glass. These birds are trying to find shelter and they thought that they can get inside the man's house but they didn't know that there is a barrier. The man got so empathic about the situation of the birds so he tried a way to save them. He took a flashlight and tried to guide their way to his backyard, where he has a small nipa hut where they can probably find their temporary shelter. However, the birds still continued to bump into the glass and die. The man got so upset that the words that came out of his mouth was : "IF ONLY I COULD BE A BIRD LIKE YOU ALL ARE, THEN I WILL BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE TO YOU EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO."

This story is life changing. Only a bird can talk to a bird 100 percent accurately. And thus a man can talk to a man 100 percent accurately. We have our own languages and using the same language, communication is 100 percent effective. That is the reason why God came from heaven to earth, from being King to being a servant, from being God to being a man. He became man so He could reach men! That has made His Word, His message perfectly understandable. He has provided His instructions to get to heaven in our terms- man's terms.

Jesus' has set a model for us through His Incarnational ministry. Our ministry in every church should be incarnational.

We are not to bring our own culture in an area where we want to proclaim the Gospel of Christ but we are to be in that culture, immerse ourselves there, learn and speak their heart language, eat their foods, live their culture, and preach the Gospel according to their own learning styles. Doing all these without compromising our faith or falling into sin, is what Jesus has demonstrated for us to imitate. Hence, we do not bring out our Bibles and preach the Gospel aloud on our first day, week or month. We study the culture first.

Adjusting Your Own Worldview

Worldview is simply how you “see the world” reckoning with what background you have. It is affected by underlying factors such as experiences, social authority, and values. Basically, a person’s worldview is like the eyeglasses that is being worn everyday.

Since every individual has his or her own eyeglasses to wear everyday, it is important that you understand those glasses. You need to wear their glasses at some point to understand where they are coming from. As followers of Christ, that is a must for us, who are called to preach the Gospel and make disciples,

baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

It takes humility to remove your own eyeglasses to wear somebody's glasses. It is a challenge and takes so many investments be it emotionally, physically, psychologically, financially, and even spiritually. That is the cost of being a follower of Christ. Nonetheless, who are we to complain when all of these investments were made by Christ Himself during His 3-year ministry on earth?

Many cultural contexts within us affect our worldview, some of the main factors are:

- ☐ Family
- ☐ Church
- ☐ School
- ☐ Peers
- ☐ Work

The molding of our worldview begins and primarily developed in early childhood. Try to remember what you can remember during your childhood. The games you wanted to play, the people you were with all the time, the kind of village you were raised up in, the setup in your house, the kind of classmates

you've been with, the kind of teachers who taught you at school, and so forth.

A rich kid usually grows up very dependent on the money of his or her parents although in some cases, some rich kids are taught using a different style of parenting.

A poor kid usually grows up fighting and reaching out to his or her dream although in some cases, some poor kids give in to their dreams early in their lifetime and just accept that they will die poor.

Parents have a great influence in your WV development too. Their principles were initially your principles. If you do not have parents, then the people around you when you were growing up must have influenced you.

Religion, on the other hand has a massive influence in WV development. How you move on earth is usually affected by how you understand the spiritual realm. Eastern people are more

likely to believe in the existence of the spirit world while Westerners are more likely to depend on scientific facts and reasoning. Nonetheless, there is no stereotyping here for there are always some exemptions.

The kind of peers surrounding a person also molds his WV knowingly or unknowingly. As the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:33, “Bad company corrupts good character..”. No matter how good or kind a person is, if he continuously let bad people in his company, there is always the possibility of going along with them. Unknowingly, this person will adopt the language, habits, and mentality of those people. I believe that is the reason why Paul was very serious about wearing the Armor of God everyday as we are always in the battle. One of the parts of that armor is the “helmet”, which protects our minds from being influenced easily by the evil powers trying to intrude our growth and maturity as Christians.

The kind of work of a person also defines a person’s personality many times. An accountant will bring numbers in almost everything, and engineer is more likely to make a plan before doing a thing, a doctor or nurse will make things clean and safe, a teacher will make sure you understand what she is saying, and so forth. You will understand a person more if you know

where he or she is coming from, and his or her work is one of the keys to do this. That is his or her eyeglasses.

Why know our WV? Why know Another's?

It is always ideal to begin through your own worldview and don't self-project. After understanding where you are coming from, that is the right time to begin understanding others. I will say it again, do not self-project. Do not make your life a standard for others to live. You can set an example but never impose or force.

The key here is to imitate Christ and just leave it to people if they will imitate you. If they are blessed, they will be inspired to do the same. If not, then they are not genuine. Just keep going and keep reaching out and loving them. Soon enough, their time will come.

Always remember that it is God who holds the time. Time does not hold God for God exists outside it. Our Lord is the Alpha and Omega, or the beginning and the end. Hence, it is only Him who knows when is the right time for a person or a people group. Our role here is to follow and obey Christ and leave the consequences to Him alone. And remember, be "Jesus" to them.²

THE COVID LOCKDOWN MEANS FREEDOM

This whole pandemic thing is freedom in a positive sense. It's freedom from the old you, who is now becoming a brand new human being because you seem to have a paradigm shift concerning life, you and God.

Suddenly, there are huge changes that happened and you somehow saw yourself riding on such huge waves. How did you initially cope with these? For sure, there were lessons learned right? How about you get a notebook, contemplate on them, and write them all down? I bet you will also be able to write a book like this!

As for me, I experienced God's miracles in little and mighty ways for the past 8 months. Having Him sustain my every need, opened every gate and every flight for me. I don't have much monetary resources but I have never been too hungry. Not a day at all. I understand there are families who are getting hungry today. But I believe, God has His own lesson to teach us individually. I have my race, you have your own, they have theirs too. And if we all endure the stress and strain and trust the Lord

no matter what, we will get by and see that in the end of it all, we will taste victory, for God is our victory.

HEADING TO THE COVID APOCALYPSE

I am always caught up by the verse that keeps me going, which is Matthew 24:14:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come... ”

However, I always forget that the verse before it is as important as it is, which is Matthew 24:13:

“But he who endures to the end shall be saved..”

God is purifying all of us individually. Your process is different from mine and everybody. The victory about the end has been promised but we have a role to take as we approach that end.

Your race may be more difficult than mine. Good for you. I want to cheer for you today. Run that race with complete endurance through Christ. And when the judgment day comes, we will celebrate together!

Meantime as we are still here, taking offense and defense against the virus that we cannot see, we continuously use our faith as shield and the Word of God as our sword. Our heads are still secured with the helmet of salvation so we will not be deceived by any lies trying to get in. Our balance is never lost for we get our belt of truth engaged around the waist. Our heart remains unshaken for the breastplate takes all the bullets aimed at us. And our feet with the boots remain to be in peace no matter the difficulty brought by the uneven surface of life.

I am convinced that there will still be more difficult challenges that are about to come, much more difficult than the pandemic. But as we walk with Christ, nothing will ever defeat us. So no matter what, endure everything my friend, for all these are temporary.

YOU ARE GOD'S REPRESENTATIVE TODAY

There I said it. Your role is to represent God in this generation.

Jesus has shown us great endurance during His ministry. There may not be COVID-19 virus nor Spanish Flu virus then but

He had stronger villains, and that was people's hypocrisy that has led to His crucifixion. Nonetheless, He has conquered death and completed His perfect work, that was required for our salvation.

He has done it all for us, so we will not do it anymore, because the truth is, no matter how we try, we will never do it. So He gave His own self to accomplish what we cannot accomplish.

Though Jesus has completed it all on the cross, still there are things to be done since He has commissioned us to do the next steps.

As you let Jesus drive your life, you automatically receive that gift of eternal life that He worked for on that cross. But the journey goes on. You have a task to do and such is not for your salvation because your salvation has already been paid for. Your work today is the evidence of the truth about your salvation. You are to follow Jesus and obey Him until the time is through.

Today, in this difficult time, being in that status of being saved by His grace through faith, you are automatically God's representative. His face is to shine on yours.

You are most likely in a struggle too whether speaking on things concerning your emotions, finances, relationships, job, family, studies, and so forth. You may say it is hard to represent God and

you fear that you might misrepresent God. That is valid but take it one day at a time and try not to be eaten by your fear.

God is greater than anything including your insecurities, problems, and fears.

I have stumbled upon a quotation today while browsing through social media and it says, “It is a great blessing for you to be a blessing to others while you are facing your own storm.”

You see, it is easy to be a blessing when all things are going well, when you are happy enough to make other people happy. The complete struggle is there when you are ought to light up others’ lives when you yourself are in the dark. But Jesus Himself did that on the cross. It was the most unimaginable darkness to be nailed on that tree with the crown of thorns while being dehydrated under the sun and being mocked by the crowd. Yet, He was there for you and me. He was in great deep pain to make sure you will attain eternal life.

Now is your time to be that light too. Do not worry, you will not do everything that is in His agenda. You have a part but the rest is left to Him. Walk, reach out, and love people for His

sake and whatever the outcome is, leave it to God. He will manage the consequences.

² To be JESUS to them, you will need to know Jesus deeply. How can you demonstrate who God is when you don't know Him? So please, get more serious in knowing and understanding His Word and be sensitive to His work. Desire to experience Him more and more everyday. God bless!

Thank you for reading this short book.
I hope this has given you at least a little impact while being trapped in this
perhaps most unpleasant circumstance in our generation. But I believe
you are made for a miracle. Press on my friend. Great things are about to
come!



www.LanilaneOcbina.online

And part of the sales for this material is going to the ministries to the marginalized kids in Asia. Thank you for your participation in this pursuit.

The LORD Jesus richly bless you!

www.MenschvilleKids.com



For great health advices, I would like to recommend my most trusted Doctor in the world, Dr. Terry Shintani, from Hawaii. You can visit his youtube channel for great videos especially contents about COVID-19 and how to fight it.

See www.AskDrShintani.com

**Or get his latest book called the “Peace Diet” at
www.PeaceDiet.org**



God bless your health always.

What is your role in this difficult challenge in our generation? Are you even interested of your role? What if your interest is the key to unfolding the miracle that is about to happen?



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The author is a committed servant to the marginalized kids in Asia. She is the founder-director of Menschville Missions, which has been focusing on serving the street kids, child laborers, and victims of social injustice since 2013. She completed her MA from Asia Pacific Theological Seminary and currently taking her ThM at Westminster Cambodia Theological Seminary.

