

CHURCH PROFILE

Name of Church : MARANATHA REVIVALS
Address : ZONE 4 SAN SIMON, CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY
Senior Pastor : PASTOR GELITO J. CASTILLON
Wife : FEBIE A. CASTILLON

CHURCH HISTORY

I and my wife Febie got married on December 7, 2013. After our wedding, we became part of a local church whose pastor was Febie's aunt. We were involved in the church ministry for 10 months.

Then the Lord impressed upon my heart to start a new church. Hence, we asked permission from the pastor to release us from her ministry. She willingly let us go and prayed for us.



We prayed for the Lord's leading on the specific place where we would plant a church. My uncle, who is part of a denomination learned that I and my wife Febie were planning to pioneer a local church. He told me that a church in the city had no pastor. There was already a meeting place. The members were professionals and some were businessmen. He was tasked to find a pastor for the church.

He said that he can recommend me to be the new pastor. The pastor would be receiving a monthly honorarium of 5,000 pesos plus love gifts and other privileges.

It was a good offer for a newlywed. There was regular support. I considered it. But then I prayed to God for his specific will. Then I audibly heard the Lord telling me to start a church at San Simon, a rural area in the city.

We had opened up bible studies in the place. Hence, there was an opportunity to start a local church. But the situation was that we had no support. But I was so certain that I heard God's voice.

Then the Lord made a way for me to be formally ordained as a pastor. I met Don Carpenter, a 70-year-old Canadian Bishop, on one of his mission trips to the Philippines. I attended one of his meetings. I was blessed by his teachings. I then told him that I was planning to pioneer a local church. I wanted his organization to be an umbrella of the local church that we would be pioneering.

He consented. He then ordained me to be a pastor. But then he told me that he will not be supporting me financially. I will have to start ministry by faith and continue it by faith.

I was unfazed by the no support issue. I heard from the Lord. I was eager to obey and plant a local church.

Thus, on September 7, 2014, we started our first church service. I and my wife Febie and Jeanette, who regularly attended the bible study had Sunday service at San Simon.



We gathered at a so-called building platform. It was a makeshift structure that was used to shelter the building materials for a workshop building project for the families of persons with disabilities. And it was situated along the road. We asked permission to use it on a Sunday.

After, a month, Jeanette's children also attended church. Then the Lord slowly added a few people.



The first two years of the planted church were a struggle. We had no financial support from anybody. I had to resort to eking out a living by making novelty items like bracelets, necklaces, and indigenous lampshades. Also, I did recycling. I would ask for old computers and other appliances from friends. I would then disassemble the items and sell the metal parts to the junk shop.

The income of the local church was of little help. On average, the tithes and offerings would be around 20 to 100 pesos on a Sunday. The people who attended our church service were mostly families of persons with disabilities. They were so poor. Most of them were on a hand-to-mouth existence. Some would have to wash other people's laundry to have income.



There were times that we would run out of money to buy food. I would then call my brother Arvin and he would lend me some money.

Because of our difficult situation, my wife Febie came to her breaking point. She complained. She told me that it was not the life that she expected in our marriage. She pointed that she was very uncomfortable in the house that we were renting. The neighbor's pigpen was just 2 meters from our kitchen. The stinking odor was ruining her appetite. Moreover, the coconut tree of another neighbor was leaning toward the comfort room. The coconuts had dropped on the roof and had damaged it. And the windows had no glass. We had to cover them with a blanket. (After 7 years we are still living in the same rented house. But we will be transferred to the house that we are currently constructing when it will be finished.)



And we had so little food. She could not take it any longer. She told me to stop pastoring and look for a secular job.

I am a teacher by profession. I used to teach. But, I opted to be in ministry.

She pressured me so much to go back to my teaching job. She was crying and was so broken.

I then told her that I heard the Lord's voice to plant a church. We were in the center of God's will. What we were going through was just a test. God was testing us whether we would hold on to our faith in Him or not. I told her that before we will arrive in our promise land, we would go through the desert.

We were in that desert. We should not turn back because the promised land of the Lord's provision was on the horizon. I told her that I had faith that the Lord will soon provide financial blessings for us. I encouraged her to ride on my faith.

She got convinced. Hence, we continued doing ministry.



After two years the platform was no longer available. The construction of the workshop building for disabled persons was started. We then transferred to a vacant unfinished house for persons with disabilities in the same area. We used the house for our church service for a year. By this time, we had increased in numbers. We would average 8 to 12 individuals on a Sunday.

It was an uncomfortable place. It was so hot. But we kind of get used to the place. But one day we were kicked out of the house. All of a sudden, a person with a disability wanted to use the house. Without prior notice, he occupied the house. We were surprised that the items we were using for Sunday service were taken out of the house.

We meekly moved out. We struggled to find another place. I found a vacant house in the center of San Simon. I asked the owner to rent it for 500 pesos per month. She agreed. We used the house only on Sundays.



By this time the Lord started to use a few individuals in sharing some financial blessings for our personal needs. We had ample food supply. Febie was beginning to see the Lord's hand of blessing for us.



By this time, we had increased in number. On a Sunday, around 10 to 18 individuals would attend church service. The house was more comfortable than the previous house where we had Sunday worship.

We were getting accustomed to the place. But one day, the owner of the house told us to vacate the place. It was Saturday at 4 pm and he told us that the place was no longer available on the following day, Sunday. He told me that they were renovating the house. I felt so insulted. How could we find a place for Sunday worship for just a few hours of looking for a vacant place?

I pleaded with him. I told him to let us use the house on that Sunday because it was already late to find another place. He consented. We had our last Sunday in the house.

I felt so offended. He had no respect for me being a man of God. I cried out to God to help us find another place for the following Sundays.

A member offered his house in the person with disability compound. We used it for worship on the following Sunday. But the place was so small for us. Hence, I cried out to the Lord to lead us to find a comfortable place of worship.

By this time the workshop building for persons with disabilities was finished. I then asked the president of the organization to let us use the facility. He agreed and allowed us to rent the place for 500 pesos every Sunday.

Hence, for the past 2 years up to the present, we have been having Sunday service at the workshop building.

It is very interesting to note, that we are back to the very spot where we had our first Sunday service. We had our first Sunday service on September 7, 2014, on the very exact spot where the building is built. But this time, we are gathering in a comfortable and large facility.



On a regular Sunday, around 20 to 30 individuals would be attending the church service. We had an increase in numbers. And I believe God will add more people to the church. Glory to God.

CHURCH HIGHLIGHTS

2020 is our year of breakthrough. Maranatha Revivals has turned six years old. Some members of the church had matured in the faith. The Lord had led me to raise two leaders, Marjune and Maydene.

I have tasked Marjune to lead the bible studies for the adults. Maydene is assigned to do bible studies with young people.

I have given Marjune and Maydene the privilege to preach on a Sunday. I have trained them on how to preach. I taught them to ask the Lord to give them the message for their preaching. And we are so amazed at how the Lord would graciously give them his message for their preaching on a Sunday.

MARJUNE

Marjune did not graduate from elementary. But when he preaches, I would get amazed at the deep of insight that he would be sharing. He would use no concordance or any other reference but only the bible. Yet, he can connect the verses. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is guiding him.

Whenever he would be tasked to preach on a Sunday, Ginalyn, his wife, would be leading the praise and worship.

Marjune used to be a drug addict and would beat his wife, Ginalyn. Ginalyn was the first to become a member of the church. She would always request that we would pray for Marjune. And the Lord answered our prayers.

I shared the gospel to Marjune. And, he gave his life to Jesus. After more than a year of discipleship, he was transformed into a gentle and loving husband. Moreover, he let go of all his vices.

Marjune and Ginalyn are actively involved in ministry. Marjune has regular bible studies with adults. Ginalyn is doing bible studies with children.

Marjune used to work as a garbage collector. But he resigned after he had an accident. He now works as a hollow block maker. He and his wife are struggling financially. But still, they are faithfully doing bible studies. I could foresee that someday in the future, God will call Marjune to be a pastor.



MAYDENE

Maydene was one of the first members that I baptized. She was a grade 10 student then. But she backslided because her boyfriend broke up with her. She stopped schooling and worked as a salesgirl in the city.

In the city, she indulged herself in carnal activities. We kept on praying for her. We asked the Lord that the Holy Spirit would convict her. The Lord answered our prayers. She repented and came back to church.



I admonished her to live a life of purity. I told her not to engage in a boy-girl relationship and wait for God's perfect will for her life. I told her to read 15 chapters of the bible every day. (I require all church members to read 15 chapters a day). She complied. And we were so amazed at her transformation.

She continues her schooling. The Lord graciously helped her to finished high school. She had graduated. She is now a second-year college student.

Maydene is now so focused on her relationship with God. She can audibly hear God's voice. Also, the Lord showed her visions.

Because of her faithfulness, the Lord used her to bring to the Lord her 3 sisters Chen-Chen, Britney, and Mary Ann. Also, I tasked her to disciple Bella, one of the young people of the church.

Bella then mustered some courage and boldness from the Lord and shared the gospel with her parents. And they have accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

Maydene is a beautiful young woman. She has many suitors. But she has committed not to enter into any love relationship until the Lord would reveal her lifetime partner.

She has become a good example to her sisters. Her sisters are also committed not to enter into a boy-girl relationship. This is a very significant commitment. Teenage pregnancy is very rampant in San Simon. Hence, their faithfulness to the Lord is keeping them from being victims of such an unfortunate situation.

I also tasked Maydene to preach on a Sunday. She would boldly deliver God's message whenever she preaches.



Whenever she is tasked to preach on Sunday, one of her sisters would be leading the praise and worship.

MELINDA

In the second year of the planted church, Melinda became part of it. She was already a Christian. She had a very strong personality. She oftentimes opposed me. When I would tell her to submit to her husband according to the words of the bible, she would not obey. She didn't have a healthy relationship with her husband. It was her husband that submitted to her.



I kept on telling her to obey God's word. She got offended. Eventually, she left the church. Her 3 sons and 1 daughter also left with her. Hence, 5 people were subtracted from the number of churchgoers.

All of a sudden, there were only a few people who gathered with us on a Sunday service. Yet, I told myself, I would rather prefer to have a few who listen to God's word than with many whose hearts are not right with God.

Melinda's rebellion had some consequences. 2 of her sons became drug addicts. And her relationship with her husband turned from bad to worse. They even came to the point where they were about to break up.

Then the Lord humbled her. She realized that I was right all along. I visited her and ministered to her. I told her to once again fellowship with us. (She had been absent for more than a year.) She asked for forgiveness. I told her that she had to ask forgiveness from the Lord. She repented and once again regularly attended church.

Since then, Melinda has become submissive to me as her pastor. Once again I told her to submit to her husband and serve him. This time she has listened. And she is slowly bringing her husband to the Lord.

Moreover, Melinda has faithfully complied with the 15 chapters of daily bible reading. Consequently, the Lord has allowed her to see visions and let her experience dreams from the Lord. She even had a vision which I interpreted as God's leading to open a mission work in a tribal area. The people in that tribe are her relatives. Melinda belongs to the indigenous higaonon tribe.

Furthermore, Melinda, by God's grace was able to open regular bible studies. She had shared the gospel with a few people. And they have accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

The Lord led me to give Melinda the privilege to preach on a Sunday. She preached with fire and passion. We were so amazed at the insights that God gave her.

On the Sunday that she preached, her daughter Jonamae led the praise and worship.

One of her sons who became a drug addict has attended church with us. But the other son is still lost in the world.

BRITNEY

Britney is Maydene's younger sister. She is 15 years old. I shared the gospel to her. She accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior and I baptized her.

She is only one year old in the Christian faith. Yet, she had read through the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation twice.

On a Sunday, I assigned Britney, to preach during Sunday service. It was her first time preaching.



We were so amazed. God gave her boldness and confidence. She preached on holiness. She emphasized that we should live holy lives because the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We were so blessed with the message that she delivered.

She told us afterward, that she had prepared an outline for the message. Yet, the moment she preached, she told us that the Lord led her to the different verses that were not in her outline. The Spirit took over. All glory to God.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

We are always excited to gather on a Sunday. Every time we have praise and worship, we would feel the strong presence of God.

In every service, we would have testimony time. The members would share their experiences during the week. I had admonished the members to have a daily encounter with God in their lives.

I have trained them to come to the Lord and pray, whenever any problem would arise. For example, if there is a financial need, I have told them to pray and ask the Lord for provision. I, as their pastor, would be the last resort to the solution. The first resort would be God. I have admonished them to allow God to miraculously work in their lives, to put their trust in him and not on any man.



And on every Sunday, we would hear of miraculous intervention on the members' lives. Financial needs are met. Sickness is miraculously held. Oftentimes, they would rely on miraculous healing because they have no money for a check-up and the medicine for their illnesses.

I have tasked them to read 15 chapters of the bible every day. Those that have complied were able to read through the whole bible from Genesis to Revelation.

For example, Chen-Chen, 17 years old, only a year old born again Christian has already read through the whole bible. Other members had already read through the bible 2 to 3 times.

We stand on these principles:

TO LOVE THE LORD IS TO LOVE HIS WORD BECAUSE THE LORD AND THE WORD ARE ONE AND THE SAME (JOHN 1:1). LOVING THE LORD MEANS SPENDING QUALITY WITH HIS WORD.

TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT IS TO BE FILLED WITH GOD'S WORD BECAUSE THE WORD AND SPIRIT ARE ONE AND THE SAME (JOHN 6:63). THE WORD IS THE FOOD OF OUR SPIRIT. THE MORE WE READ

HIS WORD, THE MORE THAT OUR SPIRIT GET NOURISHED. HENCE, WE ARE ABLE TO RESIST TEMPTATIONS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ABLE TO USE OUR LIVES FOR GOD'S GLORY AND HONOR.

Why 15 chapters of the bible? It takes around an hour to read 15 chapters of the bible. Jesus said to his disciple in Matthew 26 "Could you not keep watch with me for an hour? Watch and pray that you will not fall into temptations."

15 chapters of daily bible reading means an hour of keeping watch. Those that complied with the task had testified that they can resist temptations. Some can see visions and have dreams from the Lord. And these are attributed to the 15 chapters of daily bible reading.

PRAYER POINTS

1.) Financial provisions for the house project. - We are currently constructing a small house. It is 80 percent done. We still need a considerable amount to finish it and for the furniture and fixtures.

It has two rooms. One room is the master's bedroom. The other room is a prayer room. The house will enhance our service to God.



2.) The church building and church lot - We are praying that the Lord will give us our own church building and lot. We desire to have at least 1000 sq. meters of lot area and a church building that will sit around 200 to 300 people.

3.) Livelihood for church members - We are praying for livelihood projects for the members of the church. We are located in an area where farming and planting vegetables are the main livelihood of the people. With some capital, we can have backyard farming for the members. Or we can rent or purchase a lot for vegetable gardening and farming.