

CFC and GK – 3

At the Crossroads on our Journey of Hope and Joy

One of the most important reasons for my resignation from the CFC Council, if not the most important, is the continuing tension and conflict between CFC and GK.¹ As both CFC Director and GK Chair, I took responsibility for my inability to resolve the tension. Now, because we are at the critical crossroad, at the start of our next 25 years, where we either slide into further infidelities or God reverses the slide and moves us onward with greater empowerment, God has brought us to Lamentations. Lamentations calls for bringing everything into the light, so that we will know the truth, which will set us free. Lamentations should bring us all to repentance, but also to directly addressing the conflict between CFC and GK.

Since I will again be misunderstood by some in GK because of this paper, let me say this clearly and unequivocally. For me, GK IS ONE OF THE GREATEST BLESSINGS OF GOD FOR CFC, AND FOR THE WORLD THROUGH CFC. I have consistently extolled GK in all CFC assemblies, whether here or abroad. I am still all-out for GK as one of CFC's 7 pillars, and as our defining work with the poor.

Now here is the basic problem as I see it. GK IS SLIDING AWAY FROM GOD'S PLAN FOR IT. Again do not misunderstand me. GK is doing great work. But there are many great works in the world. Many non-believers and even atheists do a lot for the poor. The question is: is GK fulfilling God's plan for it?

What is God's plan for GK? GK will be the foremost work for global poverty eradication. But GK was given to CFC and not to any great charitable institution or to anyone else because God had a purpose. GK will not only bless the poor, but will glorify God. GK is not only about good works, but is all about evangelization and renewal. GK will build not only homes and communities for the poor, but the kingdom of God in our midst. GK is not only about heroism but is about holiness and discipleship. GK is not only about building a nation but is about building one nation under God that will be a light to the world. GK is not only about raising heroes but also raising saints. GK is not only about the poor and what we can do for them, but about God and about how what we do is simply because we are His instruments.

In other words, the basic danger is that GK will become a SOCIAL work that has lost its SPIRITUAL foundation.

Among many renewal groups, CFC was blessed in that God led us into the social dimension of the gospel. Faith had to lead into good works. How ironic if in GK we now have good works but miss out on the faith dimension.

THE SOCIAL WITHOUT THE SPIRITUAL?

¹ When CFC and GK are mentioned in this way, "CFC" refers to those brethren in CFC who are not directly involved in GK as their service, and "GK" refers to those brethren whose service is GK.

The following are my concerns. These are the ways by which we can miss out on the centrality of God. These are the ways GK can become merely a social work and no longer a spiritual work.

ONE: Deliberate imposed silence on the connection of GK² to CFC.³

CFC members are instructed not to mention CFC at all. This is because of the fear that some potential partners will not want to participate in a work that is “religious” or “faith-based.”

REALITY: Fortunately, this secular wisdom has already been debunked, as it has been our partners (including non-Christians and Christians not into renewal) who spontaneously mention CFC.

GOD’S INTENT: God intends GK to be a great work that will point to His majesty and will bring people, not just the poor, to Himself. God intends to use GK, which many people will marvel at, to bring them to faith (or greater faith).

CONCERN: If we do not speak of God and CFC, GK will just be one great work that people will admire and marvel at, but will not necessarily bring people to God. People will not praise God but merely admire man.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: We do not have to throw religion at others, and we do not have to trumpet CFC, but we must never deliberately hide CFC. In fact, we must know that what makes GK a work of evangelization is precisely the proclamation of Christ, whether verbally or just when people know we are couples/singles/youth “for Christ.”

TWO: Tony as “founder,” “father” or “driving force.”

REALITY: God gave GK to CFC. GK has no human founder. Jesus said to call no one on earth “father,” since we all have only one Father, who is God.⁴ Further, being father is practically the same as being founder, since a father (with the mother) gives life to a child. The “driving force” behind GK is the Holy Spirit.

GOD’S INTENT: God intends to do a miraculous work through GK. God intends such miraculous work to get the world to look to Him and recognize His majesty.

CONCERN: To call Tony or anyone else the founder, father or driving force is to put the person in place of God. Further, it makes GK simply of human and not divine origin. Still further, God is a jealous God and this can put Tony in jeopardy.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Let us not build the cult of any one person. What should be promoted, and this will be sufficient for marketing purposes, is Gawad Kalinga,⁵ and not any one person. In fact, since Tony by his own claim is now just a volunteer, the ones

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³Or Ancop abroad.

In fairness, this I believe is being addressed (just in the last month or so) and hopefully will no longer be so much of a problem.

⁵This instruction does not refer to addressing our biological fathers or clerics.

Before Mohammad Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize, he was largely unknown to the world at large. What was well known for microfinance was the Grameen Bank. Microfinance swept the world and lifted millions out of poverty.

who should be at the forefront should be the GK Chair, Joe, and the GK Executive Director, Luis.⁶

THREE: Multi-sectoral and all-inclusive work of GK.

At its surface, this is as it should be. GK indeed should bring in all sectors of Philippine society and exclude no one in the work on nation-building.

REALITY: However, we should also be prudent. For example, the Mormons are a proselytizing and missionary community, preying specially on Catholics. They offer to do water systems and agriculture, which can gain them access to all GK communities. Will they now be able to proselytize at will? Will they pick promising young persons from GK communities, bring them to Utah and return them as Mormon missionaries? A second example: GK wants to open up GK education to all, especially to the many universities that are our partners. Well, one of them has programs, part of their education package, that are anti-life.

GOD'S INTENT: God intends GK to unite a whole nation, in order that we will be one nation under Him that will be His light to the world.

CONCERN: In our drive to bring in all without reservation, will we also bring in forces that are anti-God or anti-Christian or anti-Catholic?

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: As Jesus tells us, be innocent as doves but wise as serpents (Mt 10:16). We will accept whatever good intentions are offered by all, but we must be prudent and watchful. We should also insist on maintaining the elements that characterize a GK community, including its patterns of life, programs and culture.

FOUR: Partners may be setting the agenda for our work.

We are so intent on having as many partners as possible that we do not want to risk offending anyone. Thus, for example, we are not pushing NFP in GK areas simply because we know some corporate partners are for population control and strongly support the use of contraceptives.

REALITY: Corporate partners have substantial CSR budgets, which they have to spend. They are looking for good projects, and GK is one of the best. They get free advertising mileage when they become GK partners. They will not be the ones to insist that, for example, we do not do NFP. They will not set such conditions. They actually need GK more than GK needs them.

GOD'S INTENT: God intends GK to help evangelize partners. This is done not by suppressing what is God's work, but precisely by going ahead with our pro-God and pro-life agenda. Because GK will be so attractive to them, including being a good social investment, their relationship with GK can eventually lead them to consider the faith we live out.

CONCERN: Partners that are not led by God should not lead GK in where it is to go. Further, we should not lose the opportunity to precisely use GK to help evangelize partners.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Do what is right in the Lord. Implement our pro-God/pro-family/pro-poor/pro-life/pro-environment agenda. If partners are not on the

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It follows that Joe and Luis will be the ones to sign MOAs and contracts, represent GK officially, and speak at major GK events.

same page, simply explain things to them. If they tie their help with aspects that violate our pro-God agenda, then say goodbye to them.

FIVE: Holding off on the CFC CLP and YFC Youth Camp in favor of GK Values Formation and Power Camp.

The rationale given for this is that some partners and volunteers are not ready for or do not want to move on to our CFC programs. Fair enough. They should not be forced. We also do understand that, unfortunately, not all will move on to deeper spirituality. So as the rationale goes, in the meantime, we need to provide them something for their further growth, including spiritual growth. Thus the VF and the Power Camp.

REALITY: GK already provides much for one's "spirituality" including participation, even unconsciously, in the very mission of Jesus. If a partner or volunteer or beneficiary does not want to move on to CFC programs,⁷ then there is no need to think about a deeper spirituality for them. The opportunity for deeper spirituality has already been offered to them. If they do not want that, then it is OK for them, for the meantime, to remain with what GK has for them, which is already a lot.

GOD'S INTENT: GK is God's good news to the poor, not just for human liberation but also for spiritual renewal. God's call is the call to everyone, and that is, to holiness and true discipleship. This can only happen if people enter deeper into faith. The way God has given us is through our programs and support environment in CFC.

CONCERN: If we do a lot for the poor, but do not bring them (Christians) to Christ,⁸ then we would have done great social work, but we would not have accomplished God's plan for us. Further, giving partners and volunteers more formation in GK will precisely keep them from trying the CFC/YFC programs. They then end up with more spirituality, but not renewal in the Spirit. Still further, we might end up developing a GK spirituality which is an alternative to the one CFC spirituality we should all have.⁹ This can be potentially very divisive. It also brings to question where we want people to be led, if indeed we believe that our life in Christ as experienced in CFC truly provides the fullness of faith.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: No one is forced into the CLP or Youth Camp. But Christians should be invited at the opportune time. If they are not interested, then there is no need to think up of more formation programs in GK for their spirituality. They have already made their choice as to their level of spirituality for the moment.

SIX: Singular and almost exclusive focus on GK.

There is a posture of some GK leaders that the only important work, or the prime and most important work, is GK, as against the other work we do. This is why the other pillars are being excluded, since they are involved in non-GK work, unless they refocus and make GK their prime involvement. Having excluded the others, GK then develops programs that are parallel to and already being done by the other pillars.

⁷ For Christians.

⁸ Non-Christians would still be brought to God, through the witness of our being disciples of Christ. They can grow in such values of the kingdom of God as solidarity, caring and sharing, purity, justice, tolerance, unity, forgiveness, and so on.

⁹ For those who are still not into Christian renewal. If one is already in BLD or some such group, then they do not need to be brought into CFC.

REALITY: God has given CFC the 7 pillars. GK, very important as it is, is just one of the 7. CFC will not be doing the complete work that God has given us if we focus most of our energies and resources just on GK. Further, our work is global, but in the First World, the challenge there is not poverty but such things as the culture of death. If we do not address this because our singular focus is on GK, then we are not providing for our work in other countries where the problem is not poverty.

GOD'S INTENT: God intends to renew the face of the earth, and one of His foremost instruments is CFC. Part of the work of CFC is GK. The basic work of CFC, encompassing everything else, is Evangelization & Mission. The foundation is marriage and family renewal, through the Family Ministries. Then there is the threefold thrust of work with the poor (GK), work for justice (Social Ministries), and work for life (Pro-Life).¹⁰ God intends GK, as with the other pillars and ministries, to bring people to Himself.

CONCERN: GK appreciates holism. Now what GK needs to appreciate is that the global work of CFC is also holistic, with many parts (pillars, ministries) that are to be integrated, doing one work.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Let everyone recognize and accept that all the 7 pillars of CFC are crucial and they make up the one work of God in and through CFC.

SEVEN: Non-integration of the Social Ministries and other pillars/ministries.

There is much resistance to fully integrating the Social Ministries. In fact, GK is building parallel programs. The irony of the “walang iwanan” slogan is that it is CFC brethren who are being left out of the work.¹¹

REALITY: We are one work. Doing GK work is the privilege not only for those whose direct service is GK. The Social Ministries have much to offer GK, being “experts” in their respective fields.

GOD'S INTENT: God intends GK to evangelize not just outsiders but also CFC members. God intends GK to be a work of all of CFC, utilizing all the other pillars God has provided. This is the way GK will move forward in the full power of the Spirit.

CONCERN: GK is being over-protective, but against its own brethren in CFC! And GK is building a parallel structure that will divide the community. GK is failing to make use of the bountiful gifts within CFC. GK seems to prefer to tap partners, mainly secular ones, rather than tapping CFC itself, its parent that is doing the very work of God.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Just integrate! Do not be overprotective of GK against our own brethren. If they need to learn, then teach them. If they are not as excellent as some partners, then rejoice for God chooses the foolish, the weak and the lowly (1 Cor 1:27-28).¹²

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There are two other pillars. Pastoral Support is crucial for the total support of all the other pillars. Special Ministries, whose time has not yet come, is the final frontier, where all sectors of the Church will be united for the universal work of Christ.

Our course, they can be allowed to participate in GK, but only if they immerse, toe the line, have the same mind, and perhaps bend to the will of those who lead GK.

Why? “So that no human being might boast before God” (1 Cor 1:29). This is also a warning to some leaders in GK, who exclude others simply because they feel they are not excellent enough or committed enough, like they are or claim to be.

EIGHT: Bias against Pro-Life and such programs as 100% Pure.

Some GK leaders have put down Pro-Life as not important to our mission. Some have even made fun of 100% Pure as “just talking about sex rather than integrity.” Some do not want to have such programs as NFP in GK communities because it might turn off partners.

REALITY: Pro-Life is one of our 7 pillars. Pro-Life is crucial to our life and mission. Pro-Life and programs such as 100% Pure are crucial for Christians to live as true Christians.¹³ In fact, in the western world, the challenge is not poverty (they hardly have material poverty) but the culture of death. Since CFC is a global work, our concern must not only be the need of the Third World but also the First World.

GOD’S INTENT: The culture of death is the enemy within, since even Catholics are into abortion, contraception, sterilization, sexual immorality, etc. God wants to purify His people so that He can have better instruments with which to renew the world, including the work of poverty eradication.

CONCERN: When we downgrade our Pro-Life work, we are rejecting one of the key aspects of our total work, which is to be pro-God, pro-family, pro-poor, pro-life and pro-environment.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Accept Pro-Life, with all its programs, as a co-equal pillar, and very much a part of God’s work in and through CFC. Further, recognize that in the First World, the problem is not poverty but the culture of death.

NINE: Bias against the Church.

Tony has repeatedly said to many that “ang problema ay si father at si mayor.” Tony also turned off Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, the head of the South African Bishops Conference, when Tony said that the Church gave us religion but not faith.¹⁴ Such talk, given its effect on such an important central figure as Cardinal Napier, endangers our work in Africa.

REALITY: CFC is a Catholic community, its members are overwhelmingly Catholic, and it lives its life and mission as an integral part of the Church. It is the Church that is the body of Christ, where we experience Jesus in a personal way.

GOD’S INTENT: God intends to renew the face of the earth, and part of that will be the global work of GK. But the mission of CFC and the work of GK are founded on our Christian faith, which ultimately points us to the body of Christ, the Church. God chose CFC, a Catholic community, started in the Philippines, a Catholic Christian nation, to do GK. God’s Church, both laity and clergy, cannot be left behind.

CONCERN: We must respect our “elders” in the Church, specifically the ordained ministers. Blaming the problem of poverty on them (and the mayor) is not only biased and simplistic, but also misses out on God’s intent in establishing His Church in the world, and in establishing CFC formally within the Church.¹⁵

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Recognize that Christ established His Church, and we are a part of it and doing its work. We do recognize that some or even many clergy have problems, but we respect them anyway because of their calling and position. We do not

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The head for GK of one of our major university partners got his girl friend pregnant. He was one of those pushing for GK Values Formation instead of the YFC Youth Camp.

¹⁵According to Cardinal Napier’s written paper “An Evaluation of CFC.”

Our formal recognition by the CBCP, other bishops conferences in other countries, and by the Holy See.

Speak negatively against the Church or clergy in a way that puts them down and brings the Church into disrepute. We can proactively engage them, but always with respect.

TEN: Slide into aspects of liberation theology.

Liberation theology developed as a response to the oppression of the poor. While the goal of justice for the poor was very good, God very soon disappeared from the scene. Ultimately, even violence was used to justify the ends of liberating the oppressed. Now we see GK very intent and passionate in liberating the poor (very good!), not tearing down but building up (very good!), but marginalizing the spiritual dimension in favor of the social.

REALITY: Work with the poor is Jesus' mission. It can only happen effectively if all the methods are God's. True liberation cannot happen outside of God's grace and power.

GOD'S INTENT: God does intend to liberate the poor, and God does intend to use GK. But God not only wants to free them from material bondage, oppression and injustice, but also bring them fully back to Himself.

CONCERN: Are we just focused on liberating the body but not renewing the spirit and bringing salvation to the soul?

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Do not forget the spiritual dimension of our work with the poor.

ELEVEN: Moving toward the prosperity gospel.

Some GK leaders keep saying that the Philippines will become First World.

REALITY: Our goal in attacking poverty is not to bring the poor into the First World, but rather to achieve the ideal of the first Christian community, that of having no one in need. The First World, while enjoying prosperity, is characterized by immorality, secularism, materialism, hedonism, the culture of death, etc. Our nation can enjoy prosperity too, as that is part of being in covenant with God, but certainly being First World is not a blessing but rather a curse.

GOD'S INTENT: God's want to liberate the poor from need, oppression and injustice. God will bless the poor, providing for them not just material blessings but also spiritual blessings. But God wants the true gospel proclaimed, which is a gospel of the cross.

CONCERN: If we eradicate poverty but lose people to the world and the flesh, then we would have failed in God's mission for us, even as we succeed in helping the poor. The poor would shake off their bondage to poverty, only to be enslaved again, this time by the world and the flesh (and of course the devil).

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Let us bring the poor not to the First World, but to the first Christian community model.

TWELVE: CFC being put down by certain GK top leaders.

Some hurting words: "You will be left behind." "CFC will collapse if not for GK." "GK will save CFC." "CFC is envious of GK." "Tekton is pera pera lang."

REALITY: GK is what it is because of CFC. This is not just to speak about God working in and through CFC. This also is about the practicalities: CFC has provided, and continues to provide, the warm bodies, the financial resources, the territorial presence, the zeal and commitment, the willingness to make "padugo," the perseverance despite difficulties, the integrity, the societal acceptance, the heroism. In fact, it is not CFC that

will collapse without GK, it is GK that will collapse without CFC and its committed membership.

GOD'S INTENT: GK is God's blessing to CFC and to the world, especially the poor. This is why God allowed CFC to give birth to GK. GK is our one work.

CONCERN: When you put down CFC, you are putting God down. You are failing to recognize God's hand and His intent. You are dangerously close to disowning GK's very source of grace and empowerment.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: First, realize what God has done in intimately connecting CFC and GK. Next, realize how utterly dependent GK is upon CFC, and how CFC has made it possible for GK to be where it is now. Then stop putting down CFC leaders or members. If there is a problem, take that matter up with the appropriate authority.

THIRTEEN: CFC leaders and members are receiving formation from those who are not elders in CFC.

GK resource persons are giving formation teachings, conducting recollections, giving fraternal correction, giving pastoral directions, etc., to CFC members and leaders.

REALITY: Formation and pastoral guidance are crucial aspects of community, since they form minds and hearts. God has raised elders in CFC to handle these things. Non-CFC or non-elders in CFC can give inputs that are technical in nature, but spiritual inputs should not in general be entrusted to them.¹⁶

GOD'S INTENT: God wants to pass on His mind and heart to His people. God does this generally through His anointed elders. God does not intend secular minds, no matter how intelligent or experienced, to form His people.

CONCERN: Where are some of these non-CFC or non-elder resource persons leading our brethren? Will they in fact promote the social but neglect the spiritual? Will they in fact teach things that are contrary to the spiritual?

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: GK resource persons who are not CFC or who are not elders should not give pastoral teaching inputs but only personal sharings and technical inputs to CFC.

FOURTEEN: Some key GK leaders do not give priority to critical CFC life and activities, such as households, prayer assemblies and formation programs.

Many key GK people now in place actually have not undergone the basic formation courses in CFC. Many of them missed the three wonderful recollections we have had this year: with Bp Tagle, with Bp Bacani and with Fr Go. Many of them give priority to GK service rather than to CFC formation.

REALITY: CFC is crucial to the spiritual well-being of all members, especially its leaders. Such spiritual health comes through faithful participation in CFC's community life, and not just in doing one's service. The basic CFC life and activities are a priority over services.

GOD'S INTENT: God renewed us as individuals and as couples, then as families, before bringing us into the social dimension. Our spiritual foundation is what prepares

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This does not refer to clerics, who speak on spiritual and pastoral matters that are actually within their expertise. We often ask clerics to do teachings for CFC.

and empowers us for our service to others in the world. God gives us our support environment in CFC precisely so He can use us for His purposes in the world.

CONCERN: When we miss out on what is basic and foundational, we endanger the very work we do. When we are no longer focused on growing in holiness, even as we grow in heroism, we are missing out on God's fundamental call to us. When we are no longer grounded in CFC, we plant the seeds for disunity and even separation.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Make CFC life, with all its important activities, our priority. If this means giving a little less time to our work with the poor, that is time well invested, because if we do what is pleasing to God, then "God gives to his beloved in sleep" (Ps 127:2). GK is God's work and God will do miraculously things if we have our priorities right.

FIFTEEN: Looking to CFC basically only for warm bodies, but not being submitted to the CFC mind and heart.

REALITY: There is not much active submission to the territorial leadership in CFC.¹⁷ Some in GK even just look on CFC as a partner, rather than the parent community that is its steward.

GOD'S INTENT: God allowed CFC to give birth to GK, according to His eternal plan. God intends that CFC be the steward of GK. God wants CFC spirituality to permeate GK.

CONCERN: Not having the fullness of the heart and mind of CFC will cut GK off from the heart and mind of God.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: GK leaders and their service should always be under the general oversight of the CFC territorial governance.

SIXTEEN: Some GK top leaders are not into Lamentations.

Lamentations is dismissed, because some claim they have nothing to lament about, and others claim that we should just move on.¹⁸

REALITY: God amazingly brought us to the book of Lamentations, where we got our theme for 2007. God knew what was going to happen and what He wanted to do. So there were the resignations that shook the whole global CFC community. There are many lessons to be learned.

GOD'S INTENT: God intends to stop our slide into greater infidelities, and bring us to greater empowerment for the work of the next 25 years. Lamentations is God's blessing to CFC, but only if we learn its lessons.

CONCERN: God precisely brought us to Lamentations to prepare us for what transpired (the resignations), and intended to truly disturb us. If we simply set this aside and just move on without learning the lessons, then God is unable to do for us what He intends. The possibility of a continuing slide to even greater infidelities becomes real.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Learn the lessons of Lamentations. This does not mean we stop our work. Our work continues in the way that it has, and perhaps even more.

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The CFC Council members are part of the GK Board, and the Area Councils were part of the GK core groups in the provinces, but some GK leaders just basically did their own thing, according to their own ways.

¹⁸ In fact our work has not stopped. Lamentations does not mean just sitting still in dust and ashes, but means having a repentant spirit and a desire to embrace one's covenant with God more fully, while continuing to do one's work or service.

SEVENTEEN: Is there a Banahaw spirituality for GK?¹⁹

Many of our young people and others have been brought to Mt Banahaw where a seminar is conducted which has elements of New Age, and where a visit is made to the Suprema of the Iglesia Mystica, to whom our people pay their respects.

REALITY: New Age is anti-Christian. Iglesia Mystica is a cult.²⁰ Both can easily deceive people, especially young minds, about true Christian spirituality.

GOD'S INTENT: God not only renews us in CFC and deepens our spirituality through GK, but God wants us to have pure hearts and minds not tainted with syncretistic ideas.

CONCERN: Are our brethren, especially the young, being consciously or unconsciously initiated into New Age and influenced by cults?

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Stop such practices.

EIGHTEEN: Are we still being loving to one another as brethren?

Some GK leaders speak negatively about brethren in CFC, cannot move on beyond past conflicts, marginalize brethren in the work, are vindictive towards those who cross them.

REALITY: Many in CFC are not experiencing the love of some leaders in GK, in the practical ways dictated by Paul (1 Cor 13:4-7).

GOD'S INTENT: God intends for us to love one another. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Our brethren in CFC are among our closest neighbors.

CONCERN: We profess love for the poor but do not show practical love for our own brethren. If we do not have love, we can achieve GK777 but we ourselves will still be nothing and gain nothing (1 Cor 13:1-3). We would not please God.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: Be patient (help others to come on board), kind (speak well of brethren and others), not jealous, not pompous (do not simply discard those who seem unable to keep up), not inflated (do not look to the praises of men), not rude (do not put down brethren), not self-seeking (whether for self or for GK), not quick-tempered, not brood over injury (forget the perceived shortcomings of brethren from years ago), rejoice with the truth (no inflated marketing claims), endure (1 Cor 13:4-7).

THE IRONIES WE FACE

Irony #1: One of the greatest blessings to CFC, which is GK, is turning out to be the one causing conflict and disunity.²¹

Irony #2: We are supposed to proclaim Jesus to the world, and now that we have a great vehicle for doing that, we deliberately tell our people not to speak about Jesus in GK events.

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I really do not know. This is not an accusation or a judgment. This is included in the spirit of surfacing all questions.

Some in GK will continue to insist that it is our Catholic religion brought in from the colonial west that makes us judgmental and critical of other indigenous religious groups or forms. But whatever the shortcomings of clerics, the Church itself is a divine institution, the very body of Christ, and provides the fullness of faith.

This is not saying anything negative against GK. Jesus himself said he came to cause division (Lk 12:51). The fault is not with Jesus, or in this case with GK, but with people and how they conduct themselves.

Irony #3: Our faith led us to good works, but our good works are not leading those we help and those who volunteer or partner with us to real living faith.²²

Irony #4: GK is all-inclusive and wants to include potentially proselytizing Mormons, educational institutions with anti-life programs, and even cults, but is in effect excluding its own brethren of the Social Ministries. Walang iwanan, pero puedeng iwanan ang sariling kapatid.

Irony #5: GK will bring the poor out of poverty, but might not bring them to spiritual renewal. The poor might be liberated but not saved. They might even be lost to the world, the flesh and the devil.

Irony #6: God already gave us our spirituality, which is our Christ-centered, Holy Spirit-empowered spirituality in CFC. Will some of our brethren be drawn into an emerging “GK spirituality” that misses out on the spiritual?

Irony #7: Our partners are bringing good news to the poor, which is the very mission and gospel of Jesus, but some will not recognize Jesus in the good news they bring, because we do not speak about him nor do we invite them to get to know him better.

SUMMARY

Again I reiterate: GK is a great gift of God. But this gift is threatened, simply because we are doing the SOCIAL but missing out on the SPIRITUAL. As such, this is not as God intends.

The good news is that the solutions are simple. We just have to see the truth, and the truth shall set us free.

God bless us all.

By Frank Padilla
Easter Sunday
April 8, 2007

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There are of course many among the poor in our GK communities and some among our volunteers who are joining CFC. However, this is because of the evangelistic zeal of the caretakers, who are CFC, rather than because of the deliberate posture and directive of GK leaders. Consider also how to date, after 3-1/2 years of GK777, GK has not initiated a strategic CLP for partners.