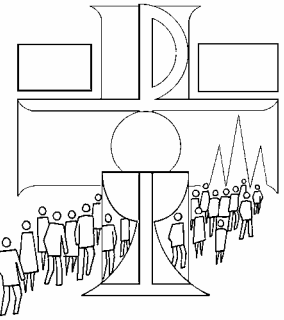




# CFC CANADA/USA

## DIRECTIONS 2008



**THEME: "LOVE AS I HAVE LOVED... BE MY DISCIPLES"**

JOHN 13:34-35

### Message of the CFC International Council

September 10, 2007 Ref. No. 07-47

#### Greetings of peace!

The dialogue with the bishops is over. We prayed for unity but it did not happen. But we trust in the Lord's wisdom, as expressed through his bishops, and so we accept whatever He wills. The crisis shook us but now we see what the Lord's message is for us – the crisis has allowed us to set new directions for our community. It is indeed time to move on. As we face the future, we would like to exhort all of you, our CFC global family, to reflect upon the past events. Not to dwell on them, but to be enriched by them. Not to be afraid but to draw strength from them, from the knowledge that everything happened because of the Spirit working in and around the events.

#### Our Mandate

We quote from the 5-page statement issued by Bishop Gabriel Reyes, Chairman of the Episcopal Commission on Lay Apostolate:

**"In the light of this, the original CFC, with Gawad Kalinga as one of its ministries, retains its recognition as an international private association of the faithful, which was given by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in 2005. It also retains its recognition as a national private association of the faithful, which was given by the CBCP in 1996."  
(September 6, 2007)**

This is our mandate, this is our call to truly prove ourselves worthy of the recognition we have received. During the dialogue, we committed to work at attaining closer ties with the bishops, our shepherds, and to fully submit to them in matters of faith and morals. We thank them once again for their patience and concern in allowing us to speak from the heart.

#### The Separation

It is time to fully accept that Bro. Frank Padilla has chosen to separate from the CFC global family. We went into the dialogue hoping for unity but the reality is that the separation of Bro. Frank's group, **Foundation for Family and Life (FFL)**, was already a fait accompli, even from the very day that it was announced (July 30). We wish Bro. Frank Godspeed in his own spiritual journey. We would also like to reiterate that the separation was between CFC and Bro. Frank's group, FFL. It is not, as has been reported in some news articles, between CFC and Gawad Kalinga. CFC remains

committed to living the fullness of its mission and vision through the 7 pillars. There is no undue focus on GK although CFC is the backbone of GK and each one draws strength and inspiration from the other.

### Relating in Love

The Lord's message is clear: Relate in love and respect to each other, even to those who have left us. We ask everyone to avoid negative talk and thoughts and to discuss issues in a balanced, objective manner. We need to accept that discernment is both an individual and a continuing process. We enjoin everyone to respect the decision of those who wish to join FFL. We also request that all of us welcome with open arms those who would choose to come back. In the face of negative talk and divisive actions, **BE STILL**. But continue to protect our beloved community, not by vengeful actions but by the witness of our love and concern. The one striking thing that we have seen as a community in this crisis is how the Holy Spirit has made His presence felt in our hearts. The God-cidences are too plentiful, the transformation of hearts too compelling to ignore. God has been with us through all these difficulties. He will be with us in the years to come.

### The Pastoral Congress

The International Council is committed to address concerns in all our ministries and pillars. We now have the perfect avenue within which to discuss, formulate plans and programs, revisit our mission and look closely at our relationships, particularly with the clergy, in the coming Pastoral Congress. We commit to sift through all the inputs and to discern how to integrate all the inputs into our life and mission. We urge you all to be deeply involved in the conferences leading up to the Pastoral Congress. This month, the various sectors, provinces and countries will be meeting in separate conferences to discuss the Congress topics. The Congress proper will be on November 17 to 18. Pray for all those who will participate in the final sessions and who will draft the roadmap for our community for the next 25 years.

### Looking Ahead

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising its shame and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God."*

Hebrews 12:1-2

The worst is over, the best is yet to come. The strength we have gained from the past difficulties and challenges will sustain us for the work that lies ahead of us. Keep the faith. Focus on the Lord of the work. Rejoice in the Lord for He is good. God bless us all.

## THE CFC INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL





## **One Nation for God : Charismatics unite with GK**

By Patricia Esteves, Sunday, September 16, 2007

United by a common goal, **Couples for Christ- Gawad Kalinga** and Catholic charismatic groups **Bukas Loob sa Diyos, Focolare** and **Light of Jesus communities** formed a partnership to help the poor.

"We have decided to unite and work together to address poverty in the country. We need to unite all Catholic organizations in the country to build one nation under God where every Filipino lives in dignity. We must bring glad tidings to the poor," **GK advocate Tony Meloto** said during the prayer rally dubbed "One Philippines for God" held recently at the ULTRA .

The organizations vowed to "work together to respond to the challenges, social needs and sufferings of our times as our contribution to the Catholic Church." "This 'One Nation for God' will work to honor God for his design of our being a Filipino. We are united in this vision to honor God's blessings," said Meloto, who led the prayer rally.

The partnership was also born in response to Pope Benedict XVI's appeal, who said that in a *"community of believers, there can never be room for poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life."* Each group will do its share in mobilizing and raising funds for the "Feed my Sheep" campaign of the Catholic Church. The campaign, which was launched during the rally, is in support of the Catholic Church's HapagAsa project, a feeding program for children where a P900 donation will feed a child for six months.

**Light of Jesus community leader Bo Sanchez** shares the view of Meloto in the need to unite various Catholic organizations to work for the poor. "We unite in sharing our time, talents, and treasure showing our love and solidarity for Jesus who is present in the weak and the poor," Sanchez said. Sanchez did not have second thoughts in joining Couples for Christ and Gawad Kalinga's meaningful endeavor. Sanchez said he has always believed in the redeeming work of Couples for Christ, through GK, for the poor. "Why is it that we are gathered together to work with GK when in fact we are doing our own work for the poor? One answer is that because we believe in our heart of hearts, that there is something wonderfully miraculous about GK," he said. Loving the poor calls for total commitment, Sanchez said, adding, "It is so easy to excuse yourself to say I will love the poor when it is convenient. (But) we have to love the poor despite our sickness, challenges, unfinished projects, even when it is inconvenient."

**Ric Pascua, presiding elder of the Bukas Loob sa Diyos**, was also very supportive of and enthusiastic about the partnership. "We want Christians to do what Christ told them to do, feed the hungry, execute the mission of being a Christian. We should channel our focus on what would unite us as one nation and one church. We should be united in fighting poverty. We are calling out Christians to live their faith and put love into action," Pascua said.

**Carl Fontanilla, coordinator of Light of Jesus**, was also pleased about the partnership. "If we can go together with a common cause and feed the hungry, that will be good. We have been

cooperating with GK and it's good to see other Catholic communities participate. As long as we find a common ground, we can work together," Fontanilla said.

**Hapag ng Pagasa** At the prayer rally, painter Joey Velasco, who gained fame after painting Hapag ng Pagasa (Table of Hope) depicting a modern take on the Last Supper of Jesus with hungry street children, vowed to help in whatever way he could to eradicate poverty in the country. The children he used as models are real-life street urchins and scavengers, and Velasco said he was forever changed by the experience. "I never realized there were people who ate the filthiest of food just to have something to eat. I was disturbed but became firm in my commitment, that I will dedicate the last brush of my paint, few drops of my blood in my small way to eradicate poverty, not only in the material canvas but in the canvas of society," Velasco said.

In the Philippines, poverty afflicts 40 percent of the population, the highest incidence in Southeast Asia, much higher than Malaysia (eight percent in 1998) and Thailand (12.9 percent in 1998). A recent Social Weather Stations survey said one in every five residents of Metro Manila are involuntary hungry, meaning they do not eat because they have no money to buy food.

## CFC – CANADA REVITALIZATION 2008

Couples for Christ – Canada, is currently, revitalizing its response to the **CFC VISION and MISSION: Families in the Spirit, Renewing the Face of the Earth and Bringing Glad Tidings to the Poor.**

CFC members are committed to serve in different capacities in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Our Family and Social Ministries include



- CFC Handmaids of the Lord (**HOLD**)
- CFC Servants of the Lord (**SOLD**)
- CFC Singles for Christ (**SFC**)
- CFC Youth for Christ (**YFC**)
- CFC Kids for Christ (**KFC**)
- CFC **Pro-life** Ministry
- ANCOP** International Canada

To this end, a **Pastoral Congress** is taking place in March, 2008 in line with the Theme launched by the CFC International Council : “As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.” John 13: 34-35. The Consultation Process involving every member through the CFC Households has already begun. The participative nature of the process has generated much enthusiasm among the CFC members.

### **FACING THE CHALLENGE IN CANADA**

CFC Canada faced the same challenges as CFC International Council. The resignation of three top leaders of the CFC International Council in Manila, Philippines on February 20, 2007 has created a whirlpool of events that has brought confusion to many members. What should have been resolved internally in Manila among those who were involved have now become issues that members of the community are asked to base their decisions on because of the strong spiritual relationship among its members worldwide.

### **CANADIAN CFC NATIONAL COUNCIL**

The CFC National Council, which consists of seven men in charge of the life and mission of CFC in Canada, consulted with its Archdiocese of Toronto CFC Spiritual Director, **Father Mark Villanueva**, who conducted a teaching and an open forum for its members to explain the crisis and help members understand the community’s situation. It was Father Mark’s desire to unite the community in CFC Toronto. However, a strong campaign launched by the **Foundation For Family and Life Leaders** convinced a number of CFC Households and Members to join the newly formed **FFL**. The previous months were months of pain and suffering, as friendships developed through years of CFC community life have now become strained or outright, separated. The FFL is currently registered as a not-for-profit corporation in Ontario, with their own vision, mission and leadership structure. The Archdiocese of Toronto has granted them recognition and has assigned a Spiritual Director as their spiritual adviser.

At the risk of oversimplifying the issues at hand, the FFL used the following parallel phrases to convince the CFC members to choose FFL for what they claim as a move towards restoring CFC to its original purposes. In a letter written on November 1, 2007, The Way Forward #5, Frank Padilla enumerated the points of “veering away” as:

<u>CFC</u>	<u>FFL</u>
Emphasis on social (GK).	Emphasis on spiritual (family & life)
Build a nation.	Build God’s Kingdom
Focus on heroism	Focus on holiness.
Inward look to the Philippines	Mission outlook to other countries
GK as non-sectarian	Total work overtly Catholic

For a detailed exposition of Frank Padilla’s exposition, please see: <http://www.cfc.gerimie.com> **CFC Situation, A Chronology of Events**. The website is an attempt by an independent persons presenting the documents of both CFC and FFL.

## TEACHINGS OF FR. MARK VILLANUEVA

Until November , 2008, Fr. Mark Villanueva was Spiritual Director of CFC – Toronto (1998-2007), the liaison of the Archdiocese of Toronto to the Couples for Christ and by extension, to the rest of Canada. On the same day that Bishop Gabriel Reyes penned his clarification statement regarding CFC and FFL, Fr. Mark was giving a teaching at Blessed John XXIII Church, on issues affecting the CFC community in the Archdiocese of Toronto. The letter written on September 19<sup>th</sup>, represents Fr. Mark’s personal reflections and suggestions, which he may help members in their discernment process.

For the full length of Fr. Mark’s letter to CFC Toronto, please go to [www.cfc ...](http://www.cfc...)  
 We report here excerpts from his three part letter rich in insights – organizational, theological and spiritual:

### Part One

The state of affairs in Toronto as affected by what is happening in Manila. Fr. Mark cautioned: “But, as it is, there are so-called “leaders” who seem to be intent in dividing CFC Toronto. If you must separate, then separate, and stop calling yourselves CFC. You are not helping CFC. You are not also helping yourselves. Do not be naïve. For every time, someone ask you the reason for the existence of two separate CFC’s in Toronto, you will always be opening old wounds.”

He raised the question: “Has CFC Toronto (and I mean Toronto, not United States, not even Manila, but Toronto) veered away from the ideals of the Movement? If your answer is “yes,” then I ask you to name those areas (You need to be specific) which you think have changed the direction of the Movement in Toronto. If your answer is “no,” then what is to restore? Aren’t you barking on the wrong tree? Granting that you have issues, which you think have changed the direction of the Movement in Toronto, let me also ask you, and are these issues dividing-issues? Can these issues not be worked out within the group and without the need to divide?”

Let us take our inspiration from the tradition of our Church. You know, when our bishops reflected on the Church during the Second Vatican Council, they said that *the Church, embracing sinners in her bosom, is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal* (Lumen Gentium 8). CFC is our way of being church. CFC received a special anointing from God and for that reason we may consider it to be holy, but since it is run by men and women, CFC needs to undergo purification on an ongoing basis just as each one is called to ongoing conversation each day until Christ will come in glory. "

## Part Two

We quote directly:

"One of the accusations of the "restoration group" towards the International Council is disobedience to the bishops. You may not realize it, my brothers and sisters, for the last twenty five years, the culture which you have fostered within CFC is a top-down approach to authority. It is not surprising then, that when the three bishops recommended for the postponement of the election, you have understood it to be an order. And yet, in the recent article published on September 6, 2007 in CBCP News Online, Bishop Gabriel Reyes said that the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) *has no authority over the Couples for Christ in the national level. It can only make recommendations to the Couples for Christ.* And again, Bishop Reyes says, *only the Vatican, through the Pontifical Council of the Laity (PCL), has the authority over it in the national and international level, although every diocesan bishop has power to deny permission to CFC to function in his diocese, even if the association is international.* It is clear that the three bishops: Bishop Reyes, Bishop Villegas, Archbishop Lagdameo were merely making recommendations. I would probably not be far from the truth. The bishops made recommendations because of their love and concern for CFC. This is an exercise of authority: to unify the community and to direct its attention to God who is the center of life for each and all the members of the community.

Obedience for the sake of obedience can be sheer domination. Our problem begins, my dear brothers and sisters, when we become totally dependent on the ideas and directions of another in a blind and unexamined way. These are the bare facts:

1. The resignation of Frank Padilla and company
2. The recommendation of the Bishops
3. The 13-man committee assigned to study the situation and make recommendations
4. The elders' assembly
5. The election of the members of the International Council

What we have before us is perhaps unprecedented in the twenty-five years of CFC. Rather than just following the Bishops' recommendations, the elders' assembly, through a **process of prayerful discernment** in which they listened to all the parties including the recommendations of the 13-man committee, decided a course of action, though unpopular, nevertheless, corresponds to the traditional custom of voting for seven men for a fixed term of two years. We may not like the outcome of that decision, but we must at least respect the process that took place, because that process, though imperfect, is an exercise of the freedom we are given in Jesus Christ. During that discernment, the elders' assembly did three things, which I believe, is the right thing to do in any discernment process, namely:

1. Seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit
2. Listening to all the voices (consultation)
3. The practice of reflexivity, acknowledging the movement character of the group in contrast to being overly concerned with its tradition-directed character.

To be honest with you, I am not impressed by the decision of some to separate merely on the basis of the result of the election process. I have seen this too often within the Filipino community abroad. There are so many groups, both civic and religious, maintaining their own turfs, not because of a noble purpose (although they may be claiming to do so), but because their leaders at some point have been disenfranchised. I pray that no one among you should fall prey to this type of behavior. CFC members should try their best to be more sensible, slow to anger, and abounding in grace and humility.”

### **Part III**

Fr. Mark preached on the Gospel of Luke 4, connecting it with CFC Vision and Mission. He noted that Jesus applied this passage to himself, and basically gave an inaugural speech outlining the key themes of his intended public ministry.

He then asked CFC members: “Is this not what all of us should do? How does the passage apply to us today? Is not CFC the extension of the ministry of Christ? If one stays with the text long enough, one hears in it not only an announcement of what God has accomplished in Jesus, but also a call to service, a call to join that ministry Jesus began and defined.”

#### ***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me...***

Jesus claims to be the anointed servant of the Lord. I have read so many emails from CFC members concerning the issues before us. Some of the emails refer to an “anointing from above.” We are all anointed by virtue of our baptism into Christ. We claim a special anointing for CFC as it tries to fulfill its mission. CFC started as an outreach to married couples, then as the years went by kids, youth, singles, handmaids, and servants were included. As CFC continued to reflect on the life and ministry of Christ, it began also to address the cry of the poor and as a concrete answer to that cry, Gawad Kalinga (GK) came into being.

#### ***To bring good news to the poor***

Part of the mission of Jesus and our mission too is to preach the gospel to the poor. What poor and in what sense, one may ask? There is no reason why the term should not mean among other things the financially poor; but it will certainly include poverty of other kinds. There is poverty when marriages fail. There is poverty when children are not educated according to gospel values. There is poverty when people live alone and have no one to turn to in their hour of need. When the Church truly preaches good news to the poor, it designates a significant resources, financial and human, to support the anointed message. Otherwise, our preaching will be inadequate. It will not raise the level of awareness, which is necessary to effect changed behavior in the world around us.

#### ***He has sent me to proclaim release to captives***

Part of the mission of Jesus and our mission too is to proclaim release to captives. In the time of Jesus, this would mean imprisoned debtors. For us in North America, this is well too common when our spending habits ran wild and max our credit cards. The word “release” (aphesin or aphasis in Greek) means forgiveness. It carried a broad range of meanings including release, let go, discharge, release from captivity. A broad application would also include those who may be imprisoned because of their own biases and prejudices. It may also include those whom we hold captive because of our inability to receive forgiveness or to offer forgiveness.

Several years ago, I was studying the Lord’s Prayer in the original language of Jesus, which was Aramaic. Anyone who speaks several languages knows that in translation something eventually gets lost. I was struck to discover that the prayer “forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who

trespass against us," carries with it this idea of knotting. When you take a string and create a knot in the middle of that string, as you pull both ends of that string, the knot you created will become tighter. As you continue to pull the string further, the tighter the knot becomes and the harder it will be to untangle it. Every time we sin against God or one another, we create a knot. Every time we do not ask for forgiveness or extend forgiveness, we tighten the knot. Eventually, the knot becomes too tight and it would be near impossible to free anyone from a tangled or a twisted state.

***And recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free***

Recovery of sight to the blind could refer to those who are physically blind. It could also mean spiritually blind. Many in the synagogue that morning were undoubtedly extremely religious but spiritually blind. The world is full of religious people and religious movements, but any person or any movement without the Spirit of the Living God is a blind person or a blind movement.

In the Old Testament, these words of Isaiah spoke of concrete acts of deliverance, the setting free of captives, the announcement of release to people in slavery. In effect, they have to do with all the experiences of human bondage, which the men and women of Israel experienced as a nation and as individuals. The prophetic words both declared God's delivering work through his anointed and called the nation as a whole and each individual to commit themselves to that task of freeing the prisoner and the oppressed.

***Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.***

CFC has been doing its best to follow the Savior's lead. We are not only reaching to out to married couples, to children, to young adults, to single men and women; we are also successfully and surprisingly heeding the cry of the poor.

***Is this not Joseph's son?***

Jesus described the incredible arrival of the Lord's favor to the people that Sabbath morning. His message, however, was not well-received. I suspect that it impinge on their comfort zones and with their small-town attitude they were unable to comprehend the amazingly good that Jesus intended to inaugurate.

The work of Gk is so far-reaching; going well beyond the imagination of your founders and fellow members. Like some of the people that Sabbath morning in Nazareth, some are asking: "Is this CFC?" *Truly I tell you, Jesus says, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown.* "We want to restore!" sounds like what our Lord said, *doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we heard you did at Capernaum.*

*But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was severe famine over the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarepath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.*

My dear brothers and sisters, notice the recipients of God's goodness. The widow of Zarepath and Naaman the Syrian were non-Jews. Salvation is meant for everyone!

**What is salvation?** In God's great love for the human family, God desires that each person be saved, that is, to spend an eternity of happiness with Him in heaven. The Church carries out this mission in bringing salvation to all persons in a variety of ways. Three are more important than anything else:

1. Bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to all cultures (evangelization)
2. Helping its members to grow into an ever closer relationship with God (sanctification)
3. Working to establish God's plan for the human family (the reign of God)

**We cannot isolate one dimension from the other.** We can try to strike a balance, but experience tells us that as we journey through life one will take precedence depending on the situation we are in. The Church, as it imitates the Savior, puts a high value on the establishment of the reign of God. In a world that is increasingly forgetful of the Creator, the establishment of the reign of God would mean that we work to establish belief in the existence of a Creator, who is also love. To establish the reign of God on earth also means that we love our brothers and sisters in the human family. We cannot effectively love them when they are denied sufficient food and a roof to live in, when their basic human rights are violated through injustice, and when thousands of people are displaced and die.

A woman came to my office several months ago asking for help. She told me about her sister and children who are lingering in a refugee camp in Pakistan. She asked me if it is possible to assist in bringing her sister and children to Canada. My initial reaction was, why come to me. You are a Moslem. Why don't you go to your Imam? She left. Several days later, she came back. I again denied her request. A month later, she came back and this time I said yes. With the supervision of Cross-cultural Services (an agency supported by ShareLife), I signed the papers that will hopefully allow her family to come to Canada as refugees. Will she become a Catholic? Only God knows. What is important for her and her family to be reunited and to have a place where they can start anew.

Earlier, I have referred you to the suggestion of Frank Padilla to isolate yourselves from the conflict in Manila. Implicit in that statement is the recognition that the context of CFC Manila is different from the context in which we are in. We need to learn to cut our umbilical cord. As parents, you know, that at some point your children will have to move out of the house, assert their independence, in order for them to grow and become the person God wanted them to be. If you don't, you have scarred them for life. Dependence is an obstacle to psychological growth. The dependent person become the other instead of him or herself. Dependence is not a virtue. It is a substitute for character. In a similar manner, CFC Toronto needs to recognize that CFC Manila will always be her parent community, but CFC Manila needs to allow CFC Toronto to chart its own course of action in order for it to mature. CFC Toronto has much to offer. As one priest said last Thursday night, it is not by accident that we are here in in this city.

**The context of the Philippines is not our context in Toronto.** And yet, we constantly refer matters to Manila. We even appoint coordinators who are not resident of Toronto (or Canada for that matter). Let us take the case of Ecumenism as this is an issue raised in some of emails I received. In the Philippine context, ecumenism is generally suspect. Proselytism is a major concern. Partnership and cooperation are virtually non-existent. Canada, on the other hand, is a "mosaic" of cultures. We come from every corner of the globe. Toleration and cooperation is our way of life. We are open to appreciating the other as gift. When I give a gift to someone, I make sure that the gift I am giving is something that the recipient will benefit from. How many gifts have you received, only to wrap it and give it to somebody else because you already have it or you have no use for it?

I love Canada and I am grateful to God each day for bringing me to this land. It is here that I have begun to appreciate the gift of the other. It is here that I have experienced concretely what the Second Vatican Council says in the **Document on Ecumenism no. 12, *Cooperation among Christians***

*(Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Eastern) vividly expresses the bond which already unites them...such cooperation...should contribute to a just appreciation of the dignity of the human person, the promotion of the blessings of peace, the application of gospel principles to social life, and the advancement of the arts and sciences in a Christian spirit. Christians should also work together in the use of every possible means to relieve the afflictions of our times, such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, lack of housing, and the unequal distribution of wealth. Through such cooperation all believers in Christ are able to learn how to esteem each other more and how the road to the unity of Christians may be made more smooth.* Ironically, the personal parish of the Filipino Catholics in Toronto for the last 25 years, is located at Blessed John XXIII Church, which also happens to be a shared worship space with our separated brothers and sisters, the Presbyterians. This arrangement would be unthinkable in the Philippine context.

**And again, with regards to non-Christians,** the Second Vatican Council has this to tell us: *The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless, often reflect a ray of the Truth which enlightens all men...The Church, therefore, has this exhortation for her sons: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture.* (Declaration on the relation of the church with non-Christian religions no. 2) Indeed, we do not need to question people if they want to participate in our work. Let us offer them the chance to reach out to people who are poor and marginalized. Remember, it is not us whom they serve. It is Jesus.

*When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff.*

**In another passage of Sacred Scriptures, the seed that was planted has become a huge tree.** CFC was the seed that was planted many years ago. Look how it has grown. The trunk (Couples) has now many branches (CFC-kids, CFC-youth, CFC-singles, CFC-handmaids, CFC-servants, CFC-GK). Many birds have perched on its branches; many more have come under its shade. People are coming from everywhere to support the work that you do. As chaplain of the Filipino community in the Archdiocese of Toronto, I am invited to so many functions and I am amazed at the level of enthusiasm from non-CFC members who wish to participate in the work of GK. This is the level of awareness, which is necessary to effect changed behavior that I have mentioned earlier. These are signs of God's goodness to you. Celebrate it! Do not allow the tree to be cut in two!

At the Second Vatican Council, the bishops recognized the scandal of division among Christians – a scandal that impedes the proclamation of the gospel and so they resolve to pursue the path of unity. But if you, my dear brothers and sisters, cannot be persuaded otherwise, then hear what the scriptures says:

***But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went on his way.***

Let us pass through the midst of all these problems and go our own way.

## Teachings from the Canadian Catholic Bishop's Conference

We present here two documents for our Canadian Bishops which may underline the relevance of CFC ministry, particularly with Gawad Kalinga which has been pointed out by our brothers and sisters in FFL to be the main cause for the so-called veering away from the originating mission of CFC. For more information about Gawad Kalinga, please refer these websites.

<http://www.gawadkalinga.org/>, <http://www.ancopcanada.org/>, <http://www.ancopusa.org/>,  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gawad\\_Kalinga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gawad_Kalinga),

- 1) **COMMUNICATING CHRIST'S LOVE THROUGH THE MISSION OF DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE** : *Pastoral Message for the 40th Anniversary of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace* The full text may be found in this website:

<http://www.devp.org/devpme/documents/eng/40e%20Anglais%20Final.pdf>

- 2) **Canadian Catholic Bishops Conference 2007 Plenary Assembly Pastoral Theme** : *New Evangelization – New Challenges for the Church's Mission in Canada* The full text may be found in this website:

[http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/plenary2007\\_presentation-bishopchampagne.pdf](http://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/plenary2007_presentation-bishopchampagne.pdf)

Both documents from our Canadian Bishops' Conference are useful teachings for our evangelizing ministry for and with the poor. Just to cite a few lines.

**From the Pastoral Message for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CCOBP**, we excerpted the following lines:

### 1. *The Prophetic Call to a Civilization of Love*

This call of Pope Paul VI moved the Catholic Bishops of Canada to create the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace in 1967, with its twofold role

1. to provide development assistance in the Global South as well
2. to educate and sensitize Canadian Catholics about peace and justice issues.

In their subsequent pastoral letter to mark this achievement, THE BISHOPS OF CANADA INSISTED THE NEW ORGANIZATION WAS NOT TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE RELIGIOUS BELIEF OR IDEOLOGIES OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM AID IS GIVEN. The only consideration will be

- the intrinsic value of the projects,
- their conformity with criteria of priority, and
- the evaluation of their human and social effectiveness....

We are convinced that we who dare to call ourselves [Christ's] disciples must share his universal love and compassion, embracing generously the sacrifices that love entails.[\[2\]](#)

The Bishops of Canada called for a joint effort "for the creation of a renewed humanity"<sup>[3]</sup>. The goal is to build a world where men and women "can live truly human lives, free from discrimination on account of race, religion or nationality, free from servitude ... or ... natural forces which they cannot yet control satisfactorily."<sup>[4]</sup> Thus, the mandate of Development and Peace is totally consistent with the appeal of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II to build a "civilization of love". ...

...**The social challenges of justice and peace can never be kept at arm's length from one's life as a Christian.** Faith demands the gift of one's whole being through works of love, as so well stated by Pope Benedict XVI:

*Practical activity will always be insufficient, unless it visibly expresses a love for man, a love nourished by an encounter with Christ. My deep personal sharing in the needs and sufferings of others becomes a sharing of my very self with them: if my gift is not to prove a source of humiliation, I must give to others not only something that is my own, but my very self; I must be personally present in my gift.<sup>[13]</sup>*

**From the 2007 Pastoral Theme of the Plenary Assembly of the Canadian Catholic Bishops Conference** we excerpted as these passages impels CFC:

**PRIMARY MISSION:** This means that before we discuss the mission we have received as a Church, we must affirm that **the primary mission**, the most important in our world today, is **first and foremost that of the Spirit of the Risen Christ, already at work, who precedes us in the world.**

It means that :

- We do not go forth to conquer the world in order to bring God to this world.
- We do not make him present in our world: the Spirit was already there long before we arrived.
- We are not ambassadors of the Risen Christ and his Spirit, **but we make visible his presence and action.**
- **The important thing** is to recognize him, welcome him and collaborate with him, who prepares humans for journeying toward the plenitude of the Reign of God, already inaugurated in Christ's Paschal Mystery. ...

... Admittedly, Jesus never defined this Reign, but he makes it present: what he was, what he did and what he said enable us to comprehend what he meant by the Reign of God.<sup>8 8</sup> *Redemptoris missio*, 1

The following are among the important elements:

1. His welcoming and re-integration of all the marginalized of his society: the poor, sinners, publicans, Samaritans, foreigners, women. Jesus made it possible for each of them to find their place in the community.
2. Jesus' life of prayer which reveals to us a God of mercy and love, a God who has not forgotten humans but calls them to enter into communion with him.
3. Jesus' attitude to the Law is also important: although Jesus is a faithful observer of the Law, it is not an absolute in his eyes. The only absolute is God who is Love, mercy and pardon.
4. His preaching is not so much an announcement of punishment, judgment or retribution, but more often a message of pardon and mercy.

5. The healings and exorcisms that Jesus performed are presented as signs of the presence of the Reign of God among us. These help us understand that this Reign affects human beings in all their dimensions: spiritual, psychological, physical. We are no longer able to talk exclusively about the salvation of the *soul*.
6. Jesus also changed the type of relationships that exist among the members of the community. They are no longer individuals who dominate or who are dominated, but brothers and sisters, ready to place themselves at each other's service, ready to give their lives so that the others may live.
7. Jesus, a free man, invites us to experience inner freedom.<sup>9</sup> *RM 14-15*

## CFC Canada therefore affirms:

**Gawad Kalinga (GK)** remains as one of the pillars of the CFC community. As such, it will be pursued with as much clarity and vigor as before. Together with the rest of the CFC Ministries, already in existence for many years, concerns that have surfaced in the course of development will be address in the forthcoming Pastoral Congress.

**What has become clearer to the membership is that CFC and GK are interlinked.** GK is a ministry of CFC and will continue to be supported by the membership. As Frank Padilla, former spokesperson for CFC wrote quite eloquently in his book published in 2005, **Fulfilling the Mandate, GK** is the CFC response to the needs of the Church of the Poor

### *The Church of the Poor*

(p. 34) Further, the integration of the Social Ministries found expression in the ministry of *Gawad Kalinga*, meaning "giving care" and called GK for short. GK is the integrated, holistic and sustainable work of building communities among the poor. Its basic and essential components are shelter, health, education, livelihood and community empowerment. It includes everything that is needed to restore the dignity of the poor and to raise them up as productive members of society.

### *The Philippines as Light (p.79)*

GK777 is a miracle in the making. And it will transform the very face of the Philippines. The prophecy of Habakkuk concerning Israel seems quite appropriate. *"Look over the nations and see, and be utterly amazed! For a work is being done in your days that you would not have believed, were it told."* Hb 1:5

We are today starting to witness the miracle that is GK777 unfolding. It is so utterly amazing that it is very hard to believe. After all, building 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities in just 7 years is so monumental, especially for a non-government religious group! This is why some of our members, especially at the start, found GK777 hard to accept. If it were only told to us, we really will not believe. But this work is certainly being done in our days, and we are seeing it with our own eyes. And God is slowly but surely building up our faith to accept this miracle that is utterly amazing.

GK is included in the major structural reforms that the Council is committed to implement, if it needs pruning and re-direction, then, this will be done. In all these, the Council will exercise the

empowerment of the Spirit and will listen to the Word of God in order to hew closely to what He wants for His people.