

# HARVEST USA

A NEWSLETTER OF WORD INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES USA

## WIN US Region Updates

### A Brief Report

#### CHURCH PLANTING

#### TEXAS



**Southeast Houston** - A church has been planted in the Southeastern part of Houston. Pastor Gordon Apura pastors this newly established church, assisted by another credentialed minister, Bro. Rocky Apura. They have a place with a maximum capacity of 60 on a property purchased by this congregation.

The District of Texas has covered the Southwest, Northeast and Southeast of the Houston quadrant leaving the Northwest as a new area to plant a church. A group of 30 families from various churches have been meeting for Bible study under the leadership of an elder in the Northwest.



#### San Antonio

A church is scheduled to be planted this July in San Antonio, Texas led by Pastor Dani Sindac from our Austin church. This project will be supported by the Texas District Council, representing all WIN churches in the State of Texas.



#### CALIFORNIA

**Northern California Tracy** - There is an attempt to plant a church in the city of Tracy. Pastor Perry and Marilen Escalera, Assistant Pastor of Pastor Vic Lopez of WIN Silicon Valley, has moved residence from Silicon Valley to Tracy. Several families have already committed to be part of this church planting effort.

## Southern California

**Chino Hills** - Continues to be a prayer item. Pastor Jess Tuanqui needs our prayers and intercession for this place to open up and committed families to start a new church.



## MASSACHUSETTS

A church in Salem has been officially recognized as a new congregation. The church was planted by WIN New York led by Dr. Ferdie Melendres, Senior Pastor, New York. The church is in need of a permanent pastor.

*WIN Massachusetts members during the WIN Northeast USA District Meeting held at the WIN New Jersey church center on May 9*

## WORD INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP (WISL)

**WIN New York** established their WISL campus with several paying students who will take the courses for credit.

**WIN New Jersey** commenced February 4 to set up their WISL campus with several students taking the courses for credit.

**WIN Northern California District** - A new campus will be established to serve the workers of our churches in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**WIN Texas** campus will be revived.

**WIN Southern California** continues to provide WISL, having the most courses given to their students. Courses for credit have been offered.



*WIN New York*



*WIN New Jersey*

## LOCAL CHURCH DISCIPLESHIP

WIN USA has entered into a relationship with **Leadership Network** to provide local church discipleship materials for small groups, Bible study groups or home cells. You can access the materials through their website [righnowmedia.org](http://righnowmedia.org).

Contact Pastor Vino Atienza ([pastorvino@wordinternational.com](mailto:pastorvino@wordinternational.com)) so he can set you up to access materials. We have paid for this arrangement.

# “Learning From the Past, Looking to the Future:”

by Patricia Peralta and Koleen Hernandez, WIN New Jersey

Earlier this year in January, iGen (Integrity Generation) continued its bimonthly Youth Night, in which the youths led and participated in praise and worship and guest speaker Jon Macapodi addressed the group. The theme of the event was “revival,” in which the youth group encouraged everyone to be empowered by the newfound strength and resolve that could be found in Christ’s unwavering love.

According to Mark Dela Cruz, “Youth Night was a pretty eye opening experience. I had a lot of stuff going through my mind at the time, and it helped me clear out my mind. I learned that I shouldn’t have to worry about everything around me [...] I learned to trust God with my life.”

The youths listened attentively to Jon Macapodi as he shared his life testimony of following God’s plan despite the struggles that faced him. Being raised in a family that did not strongly believe in God or emphasize reading the Bible, he was discouraged to continue reading the stories and teachings of the Scripture. However, after attending a Christian youth camp during the summer, he was empowered to stand out and follow Christ.

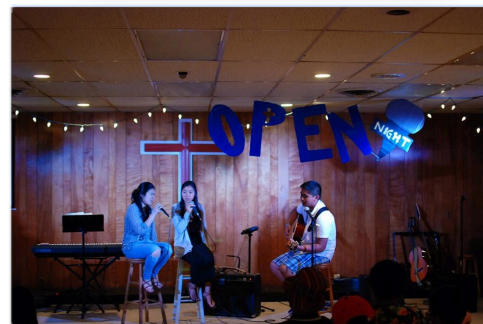
According to Kaila Banguilan, Macapodi’s message was a relevant and powerful message because it focused on the everyday struggles faced by a Christian teen.

“I think these days, everyone gets distracted and concerned by so many other things - school, work, friends, relationships - that we forget to take care of identity,” she said. “We cannot walk with God passively. We must always remember who we are and what we stand for, especially as Christians.

After the testimony, the youths gathered to reflect on the achievements and growths of 2014, and the areas that could be improved for the new year. The central idea of the discussion focused on the strides made in evangelizing local communities through new initiatives, like the Christmas Carols in December 2014 and volunteer and donation work through the iGive Ministry.

“2014 was a time for new ideas and plans, the determination and enthusiasm of everyone in the youth helped us to reach new heights,” said Patricia Peralta. “With the constant willingness to work together, work hard, and work for the future, our goals will be accomplished easily and quickly, as long as Christ is the one of these ambitions.

## iGen Youth Night







## HELP! I'm Pastoring A Small Church

In 2001, I visited a church in Georgia, and boy what an amazing church it was. At that time, the church was only six years old and they already had more than ten thousand members. Not only that, they also had a church property that many of us can only dream of. Nestled on multiple acres of land, the church was large enough to accommodate six thousand people for worship gatherings. Their youth room alone could fit several hundreds. The offices were opulent, the café and bookstore was second to none, and parking was ample for the thousands of people who came for worship each week.

Needless to say, I was incredibly impressed by what I saw. But at the same time, I left that church feeling somewhat depressed. I felt like a failure when I compared my church with this one. I went to Georgia to be inspired and motivated but instead I flew home wishing I never went.

I soon realized that my heart was in the wrong place. Sometimes we pastors can suffer from what Eugene Peterson calls "ecclesiastical pornography," a very provocative term that refers to lusting after churches that appear more appealing than ours. In his book, *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, Peterson writes,

Parish glamorization is ecclesiastical pornography—taking photographs (skillfully airbrushed) or drawing pictures of congregations that are without spot or wrinkle, the shapes that a few parishes have for a few short years. These provocatively posed pictures are devoid of personal relationships. The pictures excite a lust for domination, for gratification, for uninvolved and impersonal spirituality.

Instead of fantasizing about the churches we wish we had, we should start shepherding the flock we actually have. And if that flock makes up a small church, understand that there are many blessings and opportunities that come with it. Let's examine a few of them.

**1. Motivation to evangelize.** Because we are a small church, we should develop a greater sense of urgency to reach the lost in our community. Rather than focusing only on the members we have, we should also fix our gaze on the harvest around us and pray that the Lord of the harvest will enable us to reach more people for Christ.

**2. Personalized discipleship.** The primary task of the church is to make disciples. This means that pastors and leaders of the small church have an amazing opportunity to develop deep and intimate relationships with each member of the congregation. Rather than using cookie-cutter discipleship programs imported from larger churches, we can tailor-design a discipleship and leadership-development movement in the local church that will produce quality disciples for a global harvest.

... Continued on Page 6

**Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning.**

~ Benjamin Franklin

# Online WISL at WIN Massachusetts

*Dr. Ferdie Melendres, Senior Pastor,  
WIN New York*

On February 20, Friday, 8:00 pm, the workers from the newly established church of WIN Massachusetts started to pursue higher learning on WISL through online education. As we all know, online education is becoming more viable and accepted strategy as a means of education, especially among the Christian communities. So far, there are seven students from Massachusetts namely; Cesar, Josie, Alex, Cora, Winie, Mildred, and Nanette. All of them work full-time, in varied professions; some are nurses, an IT specialist, a social worker, and an engineer. They believe that long distance should not be a hindrance to pursue higher education, and online learning offers many benefits that make it an important part of growth in relationship with Christ and His people.

They are currently enrolled in Old Testament Survey and Foundation. There are many reasons to study Old Testament, and one is that, it lays the foundation for the teaching and events found in the New Testament. The Bible is a progressive revelation, and if we skip the first half of this book and try to finish it, we will have a hard time understanding the characters, the plot, and the ending of the entire story. In the same way, the New Testament can only be understood when we see the foundation of the events, characters, laws, sacrificial system, covenants, and promises in the previous testament or covenant.

One of the most important aspects of online learning is the freedom it gives to our time. It is true that many Christian leaders would like to go back to Bible school or seminary for personal growth and enhancement, nevertheless, they simply don't have the time to travel to and sit down in a classroom setup at the campus. Today, with the advent of internet technology, all things are possible if we desire to grow both in our spiritual knowledge and leadership skills. With online learning, we can travel as far as our computer, and it fits our schooling time and timetable around our normal schedule. I believe this is the great solution for the



pastors and church leaders' interest for education because online study is convenient for courses that will fit in our busy schedule.

This is how we do in WIN Massachusetts. The teacher is in Queens, New York while the students are in Salem, Massachusetts, a more than four hour travel by car. All students are gathered together in one roof, using one big screen smart television, an internet provider, the materials for the course, and a conducive room to learn the lessons. We started at exactly 8:00 pm and finished at 11:00 pm. Meetings are done every other Friday, just like a normal classroom set-up. Students can ask questions and teachers can be interrupted if there are things that need clarifications. The teachers uses a whiteboard while teaching, writes words and numbers, or draws objects as needed. And, as we study the lessons, the learning process is far different from the ordinary small group Bible Study.

Via Skype, we discover that online education gives people skills that many pastors and church leaders might find desirable. An online program makes it possible for students to experience our Christian learning community from anywhere. Students can learn more about their skills in research and the process of writing Christian essays and literature. Not only that, they can also learn how to navigate the computer and to figure out modern technology. Of course, these are all done with the help of the Holy Spirit, Who is the ultimate teacher of the whole course.

Since this online study is similar to the regular classroom setup, assignments are given from time to time. There are also class discussions and recitations, and two exams for the whole semester, mid-terms and finals. Class IDs are also given to all regular-enrolled

... Continued on Page 6

## **HELP! I'm Pastoring A Small Church**

*Continued from Page 4 . . . .*

**3. Affirmed sense of family.** Church is a family, and a small church is a great place to experience it in a very personal way. In a small church, people are not nameless faces. It is difficult to hide or be anonymous in these churches. Pastors can foster a keen sense of family and belonging because it is much easier to connect with people without the corporate ambiance of a large organization.

**4. Intimacy in worship.** Small churches may not always have quality of musical and performance talent to put on a worship program. But that is not a problem at all since the Bible does not hold that as the standard for acceptable worship. Praising God and bringing Him honor in the context of a small settings allows for believers to see the connection between worship, witness, and community building.

**5. Multiple doors for people to serve.** Even though a church is small, it continues to have many needs. The opportunity, therefore, for people to volunteer is tremendous. In a larger church, some gifts and talents go unnoticed because there are many competent people already assigned or hired to do the work. A small church, however, rely on people putting in their fair share of time, energy, and resources in order for do the work of the church. As a result, pastors are able to disciple members to discover their gifts and talents and immediately put them to good use for the glory of God.

Whether you are leading a large church or a small one, I pray that you and I learn to be faithful wherever we are planted and allow God to open our eyes to the blessings and opportunities of leading God's people.

## **Online WISL .....**

*Continued from Page 5 . . . .*

WISL students. Remember that the ultimate goal of WISL is to enhance the leadership skills of the current leaders and pastors in the ministries, at the same time to raise up more potential leaders for church growth and expansion. As we regularly meet every other Friday, all students are already given a heads up on the next course to be offered.

With this set-up, I encourage the pastors and leaders of WIN-USA to take this opportunity of using the internet as a means for personal education and leadership enhancement. To God be the Glory!

**WORD**

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**SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA • AUGUST 5 - 8, 2015**