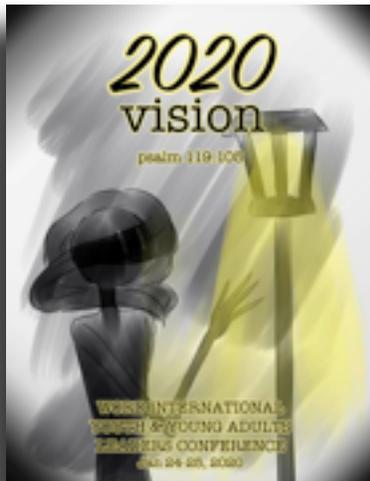


HARVEST USA

A NEWSLETTER OF WORD INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES USA

VISION 2020



The Annual WIN-USA National Youth and Young Adult Leaders Conference 2020 convened in our Church, WIN-NJ; also known as Word Christian Fellowship International, last January 24-25, 2020, a typically cold winter season in the East Coast. By the grace of the Lord the cold weather did not hinder the event nor stop us from making a difference to about 70 young people that represented 12 churches all over our WIN-USA family.

The theme of the conference is **“2020 Vision”** (Psalm 119:105). The theme was to provide the opportunity for our youth/young adults in church leadership to be challenged in their commitment to biblical ministry; truth of the Gospel and to find encouragement from their pastors, church leaders as together we seek to become more effective servants of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is also to challenge them to see their role in the present and in the future to guarantee that a Church exists where the Word can be heard, as given by Pastor Babes Paulate (WIN-USA Region Director) in his session, *“The Church For All Generations.”* We also discussed the *“The Lens of Scripture in this Generation,”* the challenge of *“The Lonely Leader”* by Sandra Cordero of WIN-LA. The conference closed with a message from Pastor Mark Briones (WIN-USA Youth/ Young Adult National Coordinator) on *“Living It Out in Life and Ministry”* to inspire delegates.

We had several breakout groups where they wrestled with relevant and challenging issues such as “What is broken in our culture that we can restore?” or “Do we have the answers?” We believe questions such as these would challenge and help our young people to think not only critically but also most importantly, to think Scripturally.

From the posted video reflections of our young leaders (please do see it), I would say the conference was a success, for which we bring honor, glory to God Almighty. To all WIN pastors and church families who prayed and supported this event, we acknowledge you and say thank you and God bless you.



Pastor Randy Castro, Youth Pastor, WIN NJ Word Christian Fellowship International

WIN USA NATIONAL YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE HOSTED BY WIN NEW JERSEY

For the past nine years, our WIN Houston area churches have been hosting our yearly US National Youth and Young Adults Leadership Conference. This year, WIN New Jersey had the opportunity to host it last January 24-26, 2020 at their sprawling church facility.

The theme of the conference was **Vision 2020**. Under the leadership of Pastor Randy Castro, youth pastor of WIN NJ together with his youth leaders and with the support of Pastors Edwin Hernandez, Kiko Sanchez and Mando Zacarias; made preparations were made to ensure a successful conference.

We had the biggest number of delegates in attendance since we started this conference way back in 2011. We had a total of 75 delegates; with around 54 leaders coming from out of state. Youth and Young Adult leaders from our WIN San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Seattle, Houston North, Houston South, Dallas, Arizona, New York, Massachusetts and New Jersey.

It was such a blessing to see 12 out of our 17 US churches represented. We were blessed by the presence of our US National Overseer, Pastor Babes Paulate who was one of session speakers during the conference. Other conference speakers were Pastor Randy, Sandra Cordero from WIN LA and myself.

There were two breakout sessions with 14 breakout groups facilitated by different youth and young adult leaders from the different churches.

During the group breakouts, delegates were able to share and reflect with one another regarding the topics taught by the speakers.

One of the highlights was when the leaders representing their churches shared about the challenges, strengths and weaknesses of their group. Everyone was blessed and encouraged that though we all come from different states or cities, the challenges we all faced are almost similar and that we can learn from each other's experiences.

After the last session that Saturday afternoon, we had an awesome prayer time where the different leaders were praying for one another, speaking words of encouragement and just imparting to their peers. When the conference was over, we had the opportunity to drive in to

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Babes Paulate



Mark Briones



Randy Castro



Sandra Cordero



Mando Zacarias, WIN NE District Overseer welcoming the delegates



*Pastor Mark Briones
WIN USA National Youth & Young Adults*

WIN USA Youth and Young Adults Conference

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Philadelphia for dinner to experience the world famous Philly Cheesesteak from Geno's. The delegates also had some time to go and hangout for a short time at the Philly Museum and the Rocky Statue.

I thank the Lord for what He did during the conference. It was such a blessing to see the different leaders bond and learn from one another and from the different speakers. The delegates saw first hand the hospitality and servant hood of our WIN New Jersey family; who opened up their homes to host them, who had to wake up early to cook and prepare breakfast for all the delegates in church, who picked them up, drove them around during the conference and drove them back to the airport. We saw without a doubt, the body of Christ coming together to ensure the success of the conference.

Thank you pastors for sending your youth and young adult leaders to the conference and investing in their lives. We still have a lot of work to do, but with the current Youth and YA leaders, we have a bright future for our WIN churches. To God be the Glory!



The WORD on the STREET



A Case for Meekness

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

Matthew 5:5 NIV

It was during one of the Sundays in November of 2016 that I shared a message to our Seattle congregation entitled *“Love is not Rude”* (a sermon on 1 Cor. 13:5). I felt, at that time, that we (the church) needed a strong reminder to *be mindful of our Christian witness during a very divisive and vitriolic election period...* Lest we contribute to our own regression and irrelevance! This year, 2020, is yet another election year with its own variety of ‘election brouhaha’! Maybe a reminder towards Christ-like meekness will be appropriate and timely again.

The word “meekness” (*“mansuetus”* in Latin; *“prautes”* in Greek) was associated with the process involved in the taming of wild beasts and curbing the aggressiveness of a bucking stallion. By training an *instinctually aggressive force*, meekness actually describes the disciplining of an aggressive horse! The opposite of meekness is *uncontrolled aggressiveness* - it is rooted in an inflated ego that lashes out when it is hurt or threatened! The opposite of meekness is to weigh in on every controversy at every opportunity while provoking others in endless confrontation! Meekness wisely cools the heat of passion and controls the untamable tongue! **Meekness is strength under control!**

Let’s be the meek person – gentle, proper and measured in our actions and reactions (including, and especially, on our social media posts, reposts, ‘likes’ and comments!) ***Let’s reclaim our place in the healthy, democratic and public discourse!*** There is always room for free and wholesome dialogue in our complicated political spectrum. We can disagree and still be winsome!

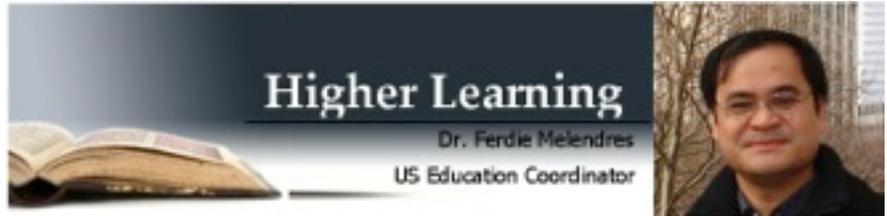
The question to constantly ask ourselves this election season: ***As Christ-following Americans, are we conducting ourselves with Christ-like meekness and winsomeness in a manner that exalts Jesus and advances the Gospel?***

Let Christ be exalted, His Gospel be proclaimed and His Kingdom be expanded even as we politically engage our culture and with winsome gentleness!

“Christlike Meekness” - the word on the street!

Pastor Vino B. Atienza,
Senior Pastor, WIN Seattle/Tacoma, WA





GOD'S IRREVOCABLE GIFTS AND CALLING

Romans 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

From the beginning of time, human beings are in rebellion against God. Adam, Eve, Cain, and their descendants had turned their backs on God, choosing their own ways. The Bible tells us that the Lord was sorry that He had made them, and He was grieved in His heart (Gen. 6:7). When He saw that the wickedness of men and women was great, God considered to destroy both humans and animals on the face of the earth. When He decided to destroy the life that He gave, He did not destroy all of life but saved eight people, Noah and his family. Moreover, after saving the new group of people to populate the earth and start a new beginning, human beings continued to follow their own desires, turning their back again on God.

Out of many peoples and nations, God called Abraham, made a covenant with him, and later, the nation of Israel was born. Israel is God's chosen people to be a conduit of blessing to all nations and families of the earth (Gen. 12:3, 22:18, 28:24). However, the descendants of Abraham disappointed God repeatedly. They disobeyed God's Law, worshipped other gods and idols, in the end, they hanged the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ on the cross and killed him. Later on, those who would acknowledge Jesus as Messiah were excommunicated and put out of the synagogues (John 12:42, 16:2). And out of this truth, Paul declares: "Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers" (Rom 11:28). He meant that even though that was a fact, the Lord still regarded the Israelites as His chosen and beloved because, "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." The NLT translation wrote, "his call can never be withdrawn," while the Message version wrote, "under full warranty - never canceled, never rescinded."

If this is true, what does it mean to us? We all know that life on earth is full of trials, but the grace of God abounds, so that we remain standing like trees, strong

and firm. The Bible is clear that the creation of the human being is grace from God. The salvation of Noah, the calling of Abraham, the Law to Moses, the throne of David, the life and death of Christ, and our gifts and calling are grace from the Lord, unmerited favor that flows down from on high. When God calls us from darkness and showers us with gifts, and when God chose a group of people to be His own, He never takes it back! God's gifts and calling are pure; they cannot be earned, but free to anyone who simply believe. We got saved not because we worked for it and earned enough points to get our names written in the book of Life. Indeed, it is God's gift to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ, and it is irrevocable and not regretful on the part of God. And this is the idea of Paul when he applied the theology of grace to the case of his people, the Israelites.

But the Apostle Paul struggled with the apparent reality that most of his people refused to believe that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. He said that they are like olive branches that had been "broken off" (Rom. 11:17). Nevertheless, Paul did not stop there but he tried to understand how this situation could fit with the unbreakable covenant that God made with Abraham and his descendants. In this passage, Paul highlighted some issues pertaining to Israel's attitude toward the gospel and their relationship with God. He said that there was blindness in the part of Israel but it is temporary and partial, since there are remnants chosen by the Lord through grace. Paul also said that this blindness led to the riches and salvation of the Gentiles, so that "if their (Israel) fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! (Rom 11:12). Abraham and his descendants are God's instrument to bless the whole world, even in a very strange and mysterious way. For Paul, it is not a new issue, in fact this is the major issue that runs throughout the Bible. All things has started from God, and it is God who will sustain and fulfill it in His own way.

So Paul used this situation to encourage Christians that our gifts and calling from God have a similar situation; it is irrevocable and can never be withdrawn.

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God's Irrevocable Gifts and Calling

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We may at times feel unworthy to serve God, or feel guilty for failing to give up bad things to meet Christ's standard of holiness and righteousness that we've been hearing from the pulpit. But that is the very reason why Jesus Christ is here with us, to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). We can't do anything to be completely righteous before God's sight. Only the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb could meet the requirement that sin demanded to satisfy God's high standard. Indeed, we can trust what the Lord says, even if we do not fully comprehend what grace is all about; it is unmerited favor, or irrevocable calling.

Therefore, never doubt your gifting and calling. It is God who called you and it is God who will equip and strengthen you, till the right time that you are ready to move and fulfill His plan in your life. We are in the ministry only because of the God's generous character, and we are simply vessels and instruments involved in God's plan, making a difference in this world. Let us rejoice that His gifts and calling are irrevocable!



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Since adolescence is the time of the emerging self, the time of becoming, *the way we understand and guide our young people has the greatest of impacts on the kind of Christian persons they become.* Understanding their feelings and needs, the pressures that operate within their personalities and their culture, we can better relate to youth as persons and better provide the distinctive kind of ministry they need.

Lawrence O. Richards,
*Youth Ministry, Its Renewal in
the Local Church*