

# HARVEST USA

A NEWSLETTER OF WORD INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES USA

## UNEASY CHRISTIANITY

### WIN USA Youth and Young Adults Leaders Conference 2021

Our yearly WIN USA Youth and Young Adult Leaders Conference was held last January 16-17, 2021. Due to the existing Covid pandemic, this was an online conference. The theme this year was **“Uneasy Christianity”** taken from 1 Peter 4:14. Pastor Randy Castro from WIN New Jersey together with his dynamic and tech savvy youth and young adult leaders hosted this online conference utilizing the Zoom and OBS platform.

Since it was the first ever online leaders conference we have had, the gathering was very well attended with almost 100 leaders from our US churches in attendance. After almost a year of not seeing each other in-person or coming together as one, it was refreshing to see the different leaders from our WIN Seattle, WIN Silicon Valley, WIN San Francisco / Bridgepoint, WIN Los Angeles, WIN San Diego, WIN Chino, WIN Arizona, WIN New York, WIN Salem, WIN New Jersey, WIN Dallas, WIN Houston South and North churches in attendance.

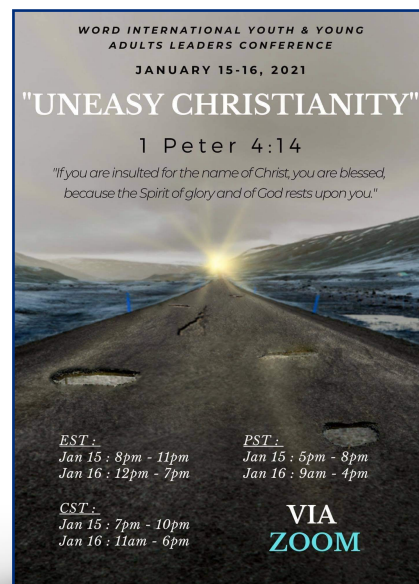
The conference was a refreshing time for all of us with the worship teams from WIN New Jersey, WIN San Francisco / Bridgepoint and WIN Houston leading us to a time of praise and worship during the conference. Everyone was blessed by the anointed sessions of Pastor Randy and Bro Chris Mapeso during the opening and closing sessions. In between these plenary sessions, breakout sessions catered to our youth leaders, young adults and young professionals were taught by Jireh Alabado and Joanna Cordero respectively. After each plenary and breakout session, 2 facilitators comprising of different leaders from our churches gathered in 8 breakout rooms to discuss further what they learned.

It was a very timely and successful conference. I thank the Lord that even in spite of the ongoing pandemic, our youth and young adult leaders were not hindered in taking care of their respective ministries and in fact continued to minister fervently. I am grateful to the Lord for touching their hearts and equipping them to serve.



Thank you to all the pastors who supported this conference and especially to Pastor Randy Castro and his team for hosting and putting this nationwide online conference together.

*Pastor Mark Briones*  
 WIN USA National Youth & Young Adults Coordinator  
 District Overseer, Southern California



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### Leaders Testimonials

#### Jireh Alabado, WIN New Jersey (WCFI)

Despite the surprises 2020 brought upon us, Pastor Mark, along with other leaders, decided to push through with the National Youth Leadership Conference even if it meant having it via Zoom.

We were extremely blessed to be able to host and, with the Lord's guidance, choose the theme for this year's conference. In addition to that exciting news, Pastor Randy gave me the opportunity to teach one of the sessions. It felt unreal. All I could remember were the days I wanted no part of any youth gatherings, and now I find myself being used mightily by God to teach His word to many youth leaders located in different parts of the country. I couldn't pass up the opportunity.

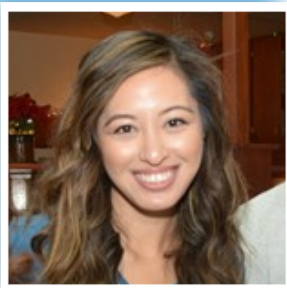
It was necessary for me to remind them the reality that although we go through trials and difficulties in this life, God will always be with them. That He will stay faithful.

I once heard a saying from a song, "those who learn must be willing to teach." And that was my thought process. Learning from each other is how we become better. We become better servant leaders for Christ, and we become stronger as His Church.

Over that brief virtual conference, I met so many young leaders who were passionate and devoted to Christ. I pray that through the conference, God was able to embolden and inspire His leaders to continue in His work, no matter the challenges they may face. Without a doubt, God has great plans for His Church and I'm excited to witness how we will all be partners in His mission. To God be the glory!



#### Joanna Cordero, WIN Los Angeles



After a year of online fellowship in our local church communities, our youth leaders, myself included, were thirsty for spiritual refreshment.

Planning a schedule that accommodates three time zones across the country sounded like a challenge, but I was very impressed and blessed with the planning team's smooth execution. While we could not travel to New Jersey, Houston, or San Francisco, it was refreshing to see our leaders faithfully serving locally and experiencing God's presence through the online broadcast. The teaching sessions reminded us that we need to stand strong in our faith, in the unwavering truth of Jesus Christ, in a culture of relative truth and anti-Biblical values.

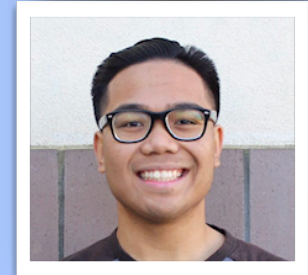
While we look forward to the day that we can travel and fellowship with other youth leaders in person, we praise God for his faithfulness in using our young people to leverage technology for ministry, praise and worship, and teaching.

## Uneasy Christianity

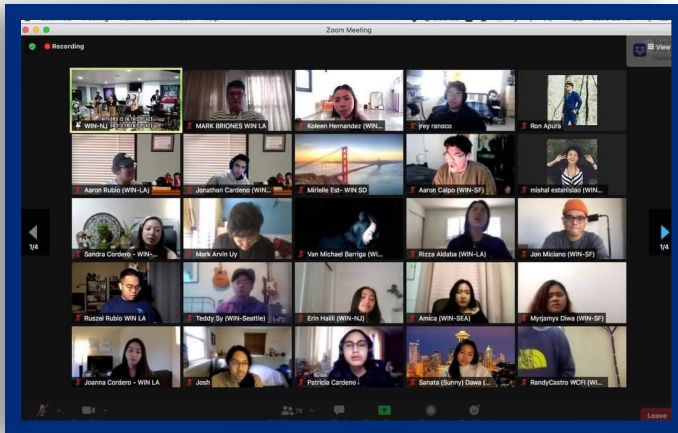
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### Ruszel Rubio, WIN Los Angeles

“Uneasy Christianity” was the theme for the 2021 Youth & Young Adults Leaders Conference, which is also the theme for most of the lives of youth and young adult Christians today. In an ever-divisive culture and society, the leaders of today and tomorrow ventured into a 2-day conference hosted by our brothers and sisters from WIN-NJ. We were taken through sessions about tackling the environment and atmosphere of the world as Christians; to know the challenges of today’s society and to have practical, Biblical strategies to implement when discipling the Youth and YA in our ministry and those in our sphere of influence.



Despite the online circumstances that the pandemic has put us in, it was inspiring to see the number of faces on the screen; being able to reconnect with one another at such ease was refreshing. The online platform allowed more people to participate and provided everyone the opportunity to be part of the first-ever online leader’s conference. I was blessed with a fantastic group and an amazing partner. We were able to create an intimate atmosphere to talk about the past year, our struggles, the circumstances we face, and to know that we have this community of believers to lean on when times get tough and an Almighty God to turn to for everything.



**Learning from each other is how we become better. We become better servant leaders for Christ, and we become stronger as His Church.**



# Win Minnesota ~ The Beginning

## Bible Study



We first visited Minnesota in September 2019. Bro Erick's childhood friend invited us to come when he heard that we were in Arizona. There we met Bro Dave Soto and he shared that it was his burden and some other Filipinos to have a church that caters to the Filipino community. To make the story short, during that visit, the vision and burden was shared, talked about, prayed for. It was given a thumbs up by our Word International Ministries US Overseer Bro. Babes Paulate to go make disciples in Minnesota. And on December 13, 2019 we flew there and it became a reality.

December 15, 2019: We started our first Bible Study group with two families. And before the pandemic hit us, we were six families. Then everything slowed down. But we just waited, walked, worked in step with the Spirit in 2020.

Fast forward to January 2021, we started a once a month men's group and ladies' group. Youth group study is still irregular. Since most of our members are health care providers and in essential services, scheduling our meeting is a big challenge. At first, we did our worship service either on a Saturday or Sunday. We also hop from one house to another. But last April, with much prayer, patience and wisdom, we all finally agreed to have our regular worship service on a Sunday morning.

We continue to strengthen the people God has given us through Bible study, prayer, worship and fellowship. We also plan to train our music team as we upgrade our musical instruments.

## Family Retreat



Last May 28-30, 2021, we had our first family retreat. The theme of the retreat is about Warfare / Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). Our battle cry was *Stand Strong Soldiers of God!* There were challenges before and during the retreat. The enemy would shoot its arrows to ruin the program, peacefulness and the people. But our God is always present to take charge of His children. We also prayed for the men and women to rise up to be the servant leaders of this upcoming Minnesota Church.

By God's grace and timing, we'll be able to appoint our council of elders, look for a regular place of worship and register Win Minnesota Church this coming June or July. By then, we will be able to open Win Minnesota Church, invite others, share the Gospel and disciple people.

May you pray with us to Win more people to Christ here in Minnesota and beyond. May our good Father be honored. May our Lord Jesus Christ be lifted high. And may we all be anointed through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

Soli Deo gloria!

Pastor Erick and Dina Alix  
Senior Pastor, WIN Minnesota



# The **WORD** on the **STREET**



## Open For Business!

A humorous sign on the front gate of an east coast church said:

**“Gone out of business.  
Didn’t know what our business was!”**

*<sup>46</sup> Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions...<sup>49</sup> And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:46 & 49)*

The 12-year old boy, Jesus, was found in the temple courts in deep discussion with some teachers. Now, *that’s truly amazing!*... not just that he was in deep discussion with them and that he amazed all his listeners – **but, at such a young age, He knew what HIS BUSINESS WAS!**

Here in the United States, we just crossed a turning point in the struggle against coronavirus. Some positive signs are beginning to appear everywhere and plans of reopening are showing up on all sectors of society! I just passed by a restaurant with a big banner that said : **REOPENED for BUSINESS!** Not just restaurants but also schools, offices, hotels, gyms and, yes – *churches!* Most are sure that things will be different though, post-pandemically... *church will be different too!* As we reopen and members start filling up sanctuaries again and as events and activities start populating our calendars once more... I wonder, **do we remember what our CORE BUSINESS really is?** With the changes we are compelled to adopt and the fluff we are forced to release, **will what is left be the essentials we are supposed to be devoted to?**

**Acts 2:42** shows us the example of the New Testament church. After experiencing the Risen Christ and adjusting their lives to the new reality of Kingdom Living, the bible says *“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”* This was **back-to-basics** for them, a **return to the fundamentals** as one may say.

We can learn from their example of **DEVOTION and FAITHFULNESS** by making the following priorities: **1**-apostles’ teaching, **2**-fellowship, **3**-breaking of bread and **4**-prayer. We at Word International Ministries have patterned our **CORE COMMITMENTS** upon this example by these: **W-Word, O-Outreach, R-Relationship, D-Discipleship.**

**Like Jesus, may we also be found faithful to “our Father’s business” as we reopen.**

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





## Moving On After The Crisis

We work every day with people who are joyful and optimistic, but some of them are desperate and hurting. We may not be aware of the struggles they are handling right now, and the crisis they are going through. Probably because of our busy life and the considerable attention that we give to our ministries, or the heavy work that we are doing in our offices, hospitals, schools, jobs and families, and so often that we don't notice them. Or maybe, to be honest, we are those who are being hurt, lonely, injured, wounded and weak.

One day, the coronavirus crisis will end, and all of us will say that it's safe to go outside, go to the park, visit friends and relatives, go to church, or organize parties. Also, we can do missions, fly the 747, attend conventions and discipleship programs, with no social distancing and without putting the mask on. However, many doctors and pandemic specialists suggest that until the vaccine is available, it will be necessary to be cautious, and be able to identify who can move freely, especially, those with underlying conditions that need protective measures.

The Bible shows that even God's people are not exempt from suffering, pestilence or crisis. Noah was in crisis for 150 days during the deluge, Moses was in crisis when Korah and his people rebelled against him. Who can forget the suffering of Job? It felt like a never-ending suffering to him. The prophet Jeremiah was in crisis before and during the Babylonian's Jerusalem siege, while Paul was in crisis when he was in prison in Philippi and Caesarea as well. The life of King David was an open book, and many of his Psalms describe his thoughts and everyday concerns. We see his emotions in times of success and jubilation, as well as pain and agony in time of distress and troubles. For a long time, he suffered persecution in the hand of Saul, conflict with the Philistines, and crisis within his own family. Even in the zenith of his reign, he still had enemies and still had many concerns. But how did he and all other

men and women of God handle these crisis and moved on after going through painful experience. Recovery after the crisis can be a big challenge to all. We are left to recover the pieces of pain and confusion we had to overcome when the crisis smashed into us. Since the Bible did not give us a formula or a step-by-step plan on how to move on and take steps toward the future, what actions should we make to move forward away from the crisis? Here are some of my thoughts.

**First, determine your priorities.** Before Noah established any action plan, the first thing that he did was to build an altar to the Lord. After removing the animals out from the ark, Noah built an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings on the altar (Gen. 8:20). He set up the requirement for worship, first and foremost, and offered sacrifices to God using some of the precious animals from the ark. Similarly, after recovering from the crisis on the census issue, David purchased the ground, today's temple mount in Jerusalem, to build the altar for the Lord. As a result, God heeded the prayers and the plague was withdrawn from Israel (2 Samuel 24:25). Both Noah and David put God first. On the contrary, the Israelites who just came back from Babylonian captivity, began to build their own houses and business to the point of neglecting their religious obligations. The prophet rebuked them, saying: *"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"* (Haggai 1:4). They failed to see that the reason they were sent back home was *"to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah"* as commanded by Cyrus the king of Persia (Ezra 1:2). Indeed, we need the help of God to understand His mind and the meaning of what is going on around us. Pray to discover issues wherein we have offended our Lord. Examples: we neglect our regular Bible Studies and church Sunday service, we don't exactly give our tithes and offerings for fear of financial shortage, we ignore the importance of evangelism even in time of coronavirus, and others.

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## Empowering Future Leaders

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**Second, protect yourselves and get proper group support.** When the famine struck the land of Israel, Elijah was told to go to Zarepath in Sidon, and meet the widow who would support him. He discovered that the widow's food supplies were exhausted and that she was preparing her last meal for herself and her son. But Elijah told her to prepare a meal for him first, then later for her and her son (1 Kings 17:13). At the surface, Elijah seemed selfish and unmindful of others, but there is a principle we can learn from this. At such a time as this, Elijah had to secure his strength first so that he can be more useful to strengthen others. Since the widow listened to him, for the one meal afforded to the prophet, God miraculously increased the small stock which was afforded to her and her son for many days during the time of famine. *"The jar of flour was not used up, and the jar of oil did not become empty"* (v16). The supply of flour and oil came without end during the time of crisis. Therefore, we need to protect and strengthen ourselves first, because we were sent by God to our people not for our own protection and security alone, but on account of our people's faith, that they may be stronger, encouraged and active as they serve the living God.

**Third and last, proceed to the necessary manual works.** Attending manual works such as visiting friends, relatives, and brethren, or doing other ministry works like accounting, payment of bills, or repair of properties that may require our physical attention, has to be done properly. Noah, David and Elijah did the first thing first, then proceeded to other essential manual works. Noah began to cultivate the land to plant a vineyard (Gen 9:20). David went to Araunah to buy the ground and paid him six hundred shekels of gold for the site (1 Chron. 21:25). Moses, after the crisis with Korah, took action to set up the priesthood ministry of Aaron and his sons (Num 18). In our case, we can do the same, by visiting people who are in pain physically and emotionally, reset the ministry works, pay the pending bills, answer emails and letters, and the likes. However, if we are struggling with this part of the recovery process, why not ask help from others too!

I believe there is no right and wrong way to recover from crisis. We only need to set a goal, in order to at least, lessen disappointments and stresses in order to create a more pleasant environment. Having various courses of action in order to start a new beginning is not easy, it may require a strong spiritual and physical body. But, if we can get through that, with the grace of God, we can move on unto the right direction.

The truth of Scripture demolishes speculation.

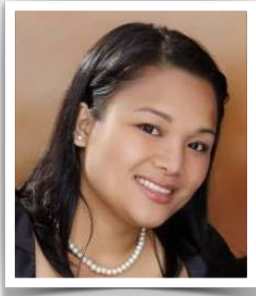
~ R. C. Sproul

When we fill our minds with Scripture and live according to its principles, Satan's schemes lose their power over us.

~ Charles Stanley

# Celebrating 14 Years of God's Faithfulness

*Jal Labiles Raval, wife of Associate Pastor Michael Raval of WIN NY*



## Word International Ministries in New York City

have thrived in spite of overcoming the challenges brought about by the global health crisis due to COVID-19. It has presented a unique opportunity to innovate and reach out in an effort to contain the spread of the deadly virus within the community, WIN-NY transitioned to different virtual platforms. Fellowship was streamed live in social media, and real-time interactions through zoom, with brethren became common. Nationwide, New York City emerged as the epicenter of pandemics where the atmosphere of fear, uncertainties, and hopelessness was evident among residents of all boroughs. It took a crisis that brought the city that never sleeps on its knees, turning the Big Apple into a metropolitan ghost town. But God was faithful, He has never left those whom He elected. God's shield of protection was on His people financially, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, giving comfort to all especially in times of need.

Weekly virtual icare bible engagement has started, digging on the timely study of the end time through the lens of the book of Revelations. The number of participants, who eventually became church members, has increased over time. All planned activities for the year prior to Covid restrictions were implemented successfully. All icares have grown in numbers and commitment to God's ministry through WIN-NY was apparent. Each member shared their resources with those who were in need. Moreover, WIN-NY's version of the one-time stimulus package was provided to all families like that of the first-century church (Acts 4:32-35). The children's ministry has more than doubled during times of pandemic where non-New York residents joined the virtual Sunday school faithfully and consistently. The youth ministry, on the other hand, followed suit utilizing technology to connect.

WIN-New York's Around the Word Youtube Channel has also been monetized. Initial requirement was successfully met to receive YT monetary incentives. A lot of accomplishments took place during this period and it was God who brought them all to completion. While Covid restrictions were far from over, end of the year celebrations were practices such as virtual Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas party, and New Year's celebration. What a faithful God we have! New souls for Jesus, empowerment of couples, building our senior community, and production of fruits through online evangelism were few of the many blessings the Lord has blessed Word International Ministries-New York with. The body of Jesus Christ in this part of the U.S. was comforted by miracles and successes all for the glory of God!

And rightfully so, WIN-New York celebrated God's 14 years of faithfulness to the church community on March 14, 2021 with the theme **"Moving Forward,"** an acknowledgement of God's unending love despite all the odds. Like many churches across the globe, Covid-19 pandemic is temporary but God's Word is eternal. Looking at what lies ahead is crucial in making progress. The Christian life is like an airplane; when you stop you drop. Let your eyes look directly forward and your gaze straight before you (Proverbs 4:25) for He who promised is faithful.



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