

Pastor Ed Lapiz

Proclaiming The Gospel of Nationalism

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Pastor Ed Lapiz founded and heads the Day By Day Christian Ministries with churches and missions in the Philippines, Japan, Middle East and the U.S.A. His pioneering underground mission in the Middle East in 1985 gave birth to this church network. He holds a degree in Philippine Arts from the University of the Philippines, and is presently writing his thesis to earn a Doctorate in Philippine Studies at University of the Philippines. A writer with more than thirty published books, a creative director, producer, and broadcaster, Pastor Ed advocates the development of Christian nationalism, the indigenization of Christian church liturgy, the redemption of the arts for use in Christian worship and ministries, and the decolonization of Christianity which is the declaration and practice of independence from religious power structures that are practical extensions of the Philippine colonial experience.

What he saw, heard and experienced made him sick to his inner being, burdened in his heart and made him seethe with patriotic indignation.

His many years of traveling as an exchange student and his five-year OFW (Overseas Filipino Worker) experience in the Middle East among the working class only made him see such dismal reality at close range. For a few riyals, dollars, rupees, liras and yens to bring home to their loved ones, Filipinos all over the world were exposing themselves to be abused and discriminated against by their foreign employers and even by their own wealthy *kababayans*.

Although he was extended privileges and courtesies in the countries he visited, his concern was for his countrymen who were not accorded the same benefits. Deep in his heart, Ed Lapiz struggled with a disconcerting question – why have Filipinos become the servants of the world? Why are they slaves in the community of nations? Why are Filipinos being brazenly raped through nearly all their orifices yet their response is a shy, apologetic smile? Why are Filipinos poor despite the country's very rich natural resources?

His quest to find answers would lead him back to his country and back to the values that would re-awaken Christian Filipinos from their cultural and spiritual slumber. In the process, Ed Lapiz would establish a ministry that would both be zealously biblical and nationalistic.

Books of Inspiration

It was along the idyllic banks of the Angat River in Bulacan and at the foothills of the legendary Mt. Makiling in Laguna that Ed spent most of his childhood. His deep cultural experiences and the wisdom of his elders enriched him. “I grew up with a strong sense of identity. It was inculcated in us by a matriarch whose personal and work ethic inspired emulation. We grew up in an atmosphere that valued dignity and industry.”

Early in life, Ed learned to appreciate and value books that celebrated love, strength of character and the triumph of the human spirit like Francisco Baltazar’s *Florante at Laura*. Later, another book that also featured unconditional love and characters strong in their faith would greatly influence his thinking.

That book was the Bible.

“With enthusiastic prodding from friends at UP Los Baños, I began reading the Bible. My first Bible studies were done with a campus ministry and my first spiritual experience in the context of biblical Christianity also happened through a retreat under the auspices of the same campus ministry.”

Soon, Ed would be serving as Youth Camp Director and Radio-TV Announcer/ Producer for Youth for Christ. His ministry was a battle for the hearts and minds of the young people. Little did he realize that he would later be engaged in a bigger struggle that would radically change how Christian Filipinos view their country and their faiths.

Tales of Discrimination

Ed’s first encounter with Filipinos abroad was when he was a frequent participant in youth exchange programs. Over the years, he noticed a change in the way most Filipinos were being treated abroad. Some countries began to see Filipinos as desperate job seekers who would bend to any form of self-debasement just to be able to leave their ‘country-of-no-opportunity,’ and go abroad to make money. The world began to equate the Philippine passport with servants, illegal aliens and even prostitutes.

“I was disheartened at how unkindly many Filipinos were being treated abroad. Even early on, in my initial travels, I already began to ask many, many questions about our sad fate, such as why the Philippine flag was not among those displayed at money exchange boards as if the peso didn’t matter.” This very rude awakening on the international stage jolted his beliefs. Thus, began Ed’s inward journey into the roots of the country’s malaise. Then, a recurrent theme – the one possible singular root of the Philippine’s national tragedy—began to emerge in

Ed's mind, and it was the pathetic lack of nationalism of many Filipinos.

Lord of Every Tribe and Nation

“I discovered that the root of our national problems is our lack of nationalism. Thus, promoting nationalism in the hearts and minds of Filipinos would be the main answer and solution. We should fall in love with our country, with ourselves. Then we can build a strong, prosperous nation on which we can establish a strong sense of dignity and from which we can teach the world to respect us. And thank God, because the life and works of Jesus teach us how to do that!”

Ed had found an ally and a strong foundation for nationalism in the Bible

” I think nationalism is a great form of spirituality. Anyone who loves God will love what God gives. And a nation is God's gift to a people. Love for God can be very beautifully expressed in love for one's country.”

The battle to win the hearts and minds of his countrymen is far from over. But Pastor Ed intends to use his patriotic indignation, his love for the Philippines and his unwavering faith in the Lord to one day see God being understood, internalized, and expressed even through the promotion of the country's cultural heritage.