Part Two of a Series: From Bulusan to Bulosan: Reviving the "Pensionado" Tradition

{xtypo_quote} When we've been here ten thousand years ... bright shining as the sun. We've no less days to sing God's praise ... then when we've first begun. – The last lines of the 'Amazing Grace' hymn. {/xtypo_quote}

T he classic hymn, "Amazing Grace," is more-often than not sung in Christian memorial services or funerals. My father, Dominador S. Reyes, a former soldier, asked me once at the funeral of his wartime comrade, a retired U. S. Army physician, after he heard the hymn: "Who will remember the soldiers like me when we are gone – even for a few of those 10,000 years?"

I told my Dad that since he has a son who finished journalism, I would write a classic biography when he would have gone to the Blue Yonder. I assured him that for as long as it is published online, people will read it and remember his great military service to the Philippines and the United States
during World War II.

When my Dad went to the Great Beyond on Jan. 10, 1999, I finalized the manuscript that I have been working on in my computer and turned it to a eulogy. Casting modesty aside, I believe that very-few descendants can duplicate what I did in remembering and honoring an elder because I have the gift of a modest, ahem, wordsmith. To read the obituary piece, please click on this hyperlink:

My Father Was the Birdman and Butcher of Bulusan during the War and a Don Quixote Later in Life

Then I recalled my training as an altar boy in Sorsogon Province and as a student of schools run by the secular priests, the SVD Fathers, the Benedictines and the Jesuits. I have learned from my religious mentors the concept of “living forever,” as stated by Jesus Christ (as found in the Gospel). Christ said: “ *I am the bread that came down from heaven. The person that eats this bread will live forever* ,” while he was teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum (John 6:59).

People have always been preoccupied by a search for the Fountain of Youth. To the clergy, the number-one (if not, the only) path to “immortality” is for Christians to continue living morally-upright existence, possibly by following in the footsteps of their Lord and Redeemer. It is existence until the end of time in the Next Life, in Heaven or in the Great Beyond.

But in this modern world, there are no more pharaohs that can build pyramids or emperors that can construct coliseums or palaces or great walls – infrastructures that can secure for them "immortality." And those monuments have not even lasted for 10,000 years. Not yet.

Editor's Note: To view a beautiful rendition of "Amazing Grace,"

please click this hyperlink: http://www.clarrissegill.com/videoclips/amazing_grace.php

Even with the advances in science, technology, nutrition and medicine, mortals can only hope to live not more-than 30-years longer than the average life span.

"Simmortality"

S ince my father's death in 1999, I kept brainstorming on how community leaders, civic workers and even ordinary laymen could obtain what I dubbed "a semblance of immortality." Or for short, "Simmortality," as I coined it.

In 2007, this writer proposed to a Pomona, California-based agency of the New York Life to launch what he called the “Philippine Immortality Project.” These articles were written about it:

"Philippine Immortality Project" Deals with Charitable-Gifting Insurance for RP Beneficiaries

Batting for "Filipino Immortality" at Dodgers Stadium

The Pomona-based insurance agency did not provide any much-needed support as a corporate sponsor to the plan of promoting the “Simmortality” Project by insuring the lives of community leaders, with the insurance proceeds either payable to their often tax-exempt American-registered associations or their alma mater in the Philippines or the United States to create a “Students’ Loan Fund (SLF)” or another charitable endeavor. I, therefore, unilaterally ended the corporate tie-up with the said agency.

The “SLF” would virtually create a “semblance of immortality” on the part of the person insured because it would be replenished by the borrowers after they have graduated, get employed and started earning salaries and other remuneration from employers. For as long as the “SLF” remains funded, the memory of the insured community leader or Overseas Filipino would be remembered, as it has become a legacy bequeathed to the insured’s alma mater or chosen educational institution in the Philippines or the United States.

In March this year, Paul P. Villar, a friend of this writer, called to say that he has been recruited by a bigger Irvine, California-based agency of the New York Life. Mr. Villar said that he discussed it with his immediate supervisor at the agency and he was authorized to revive the “Simmortality” Project and make a go of it – with the right corporate support.

Testing the Project Among this Writer’s Fellow Bicolnons

T he project proponent hopes to test the concept among his fellow Bicolnons who have migrated to the United States.

The plan now is to launch formally the “Simmortality” Project at the induction of the Bikol U.S.A. of the Midwest on Friday, May 13, 2011, at Four Points by Sheraton at 10249 Irving Park, Illinois.

This will be followed up by a “Simmortality” presentation at the 31st Bikol National Association of America convention on July 15-17, 2011, at the Hyatt Regency – Downtown Riverfront in Jac ksonville
,
Florida
, as hosted by the Bicol Association of Greater Jacksonville.

If all goes well, the “Simmortality” Project will be presented at the Sorsogon Province booth at the 36th
Peñafrancia Fiesta of the United Bicolandia-
Los Angeles
at the
Echo
Park
in the City of
Los Angeles
. The event will be held on
Sept. 17, 2011
, from
8:00 a.m.
to
5:00 p.m.

Editor’s Note: To read Joseph G. Lariosa’s column on the Bikol, U.S.A. of the Midwest and the BNAA, please click on this hyperlink,
For the Love of Bikol Culture and Its People

O ther non-Bicolnon associations of Filipino Americans have expressed interest also in looking

at the "Simmortality" Project as a viable way of helping Filipino students in the United States and in the Philippine homeland – through the "SLF" idea. A successful "Simmortality" Project may be the best financial vehicle to launch the 21st-century version of the "Pensionado" Tradition.

In Part Three of this series, particular details of the revived "Pensionado" Tradition will be discussed.

(To be continued . . .)

Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF