

## iGod Congress – God’s Affirmation of His Strength



After the Almighty I AM Congress in Toronto last August 15, 2010, the BOC decided to move the 2011 YFL-SFL Congress to Calgary. This was a leap of faith. But it was a long jump of faith for CFCFFL Calgary to accept the challenge of hosting the 2011 Congress. When you consider that the singles & youth from Toronto would travel some 3,434 kms and cross the two-hour time zone, take the one way 4-hour flight and spend some \$650.00 (Php 30,000.00) for the airfare, this was relying in God's strength. When you have only some 25 couples, 2 years of YFL with 35 youth, no SFL, and limited resources, CFCFFL Calgary was begging for God's strength.

By August 5 to 7, 2011, the iGod YFL-SFL Congress affirmed God's strength. No doubt about it.



iGod Congress is Canada's version of "strong in God" or "Lakas ng Diyos". When the Special Events team started the congress deliberations, the team initially thought of the rocky mountains of Calgary to depict our strong God. However, on the second meeting, the dynamics changed and turned out to be iGod. The small i represents us. WE are small and nothing before our strong God. We only stand as YFL & SFL with God as our strength. The bar code signifies the price. The price is the blood of the Lamb. With such a great price, we are all now "Made for Heaven". The cross superimposed on the apple logo represents Christ defeating sin. The death and glory of Christ on the cross has broken the curse of the original sin (represented by the apple). This is a statement that

technology should not be seen as a hindrance but rather a tool to evangelize more effectively the younger generation. As such, we are building the young generation that will put their trust and hope in the Lord instead of the world (represented by the apple logo). Fort en Dieu, French for "Strong in God", comes from our 2011 theme that "God is now my strength (Isaiah 49:5).

We are not giving our God a new name. To know what was the reaction on the iGod title, we asked some 50 SFL and YFL leaders during the Avatar- Imprint of a servant leader workshop whether they have thought that the congress title was giving God a new name. No one ever considered that iGod is another name for our God. When we were at Starbucks, one of the crew left his post to approach a brother wearing the iGod t-shirt only to tell him that he likes the cool design. This is creative evangelization.

iGod Congress begun with the iPraise Parade on the eve of Friday, August 5th. This was the first time we introduced the "digital banner" for each delegation. Among the YFLs, Vancouver was Blackberry Curve; Manitoba was iPhone; Alberta was HTC Legend; and GTA was HP Veer. For the SFL, Vancouver was Samsung Galaxy; Alberta was Blackberry Playbook; and GTA was iPad. Each had their own cheer, digital banner, and mascots. It was a proper way to introduce Session One – iIdentity, proclaimed by SFL Paul Lim. For the true identity of a person, regardless of what touch phone or computer tablet he/she carries is still the image and likeness of God. The Friday evening ended with the iDol Talent Night.

The manifestation of God's strength was vividly revealed on the second day. Session Two was iRely, given by SFL Kate Garbino for YFL and yCFCFFL Elvin Tolentino for SFL. When you see priests hearing confession of the youth in tears with the penitent, there you find God's strength in His mercy over the repenting sinners. You see God's strength in the special events team who came not only as the production crew but also as session speakers and workshop facilitators. With God's power, they (Erwin & Jill Alvarez, Elvin & Candice Tolentino, Kate Garbino, and Raymond & Tess Arguelles) stepped up since we had only one missionary from Manila, instead of two, due to budget constraints. They have to handle three sets of afternoon workshops such as Avatar-Identity of a Servant Leader, YouTOB (Theology of the Body), Sisterhood & Brotherhood Connect, My Space - Cool Catholics, and Filtr - Critical Minds.



In the evening, the congress has reached the climax of the event. Session Three was iGod, given by Bro. Raymond Arguelles. The attack of the enemy was evident at the end of this session. When you get the loud feedback from the sound system despite the fact that all the volume levels of the mixer was lowered down to zero, that was when you recognized that the enemy was not pleased on what was about to happen - the majestic presence of our Lord in the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. We were so blest to have Fr. Julian. He was a charismatic priests who requested for a lively song to welcome the Blessed Sacrament, to allow the youth to bask in the loving presence of our Lord, and to bring closer the Blessed Sacrament in procession along the three aisles. It was so touching to behold the youth weeping with outstretched hands to touch the Blessed

Sacrament as the Lord passed through the aisles. This exemplified what the Lord asks us to have - a child-like heart before our Father.

Saturday ended with iDance Fellowship Night. All the delegates came in their cowboy attire. The dance floor was full with stampeding YFLs and SFLs to perform the line-dance.

The last day was the sending off. Session Four was iTune. With God's renewed strength, the YFL & SFL were now ready to go forth and proclaim God before the world in four areas. They were sent off as Cool Catholics, for Family Renewal, for Live Pure and YFL & SFL missionaries. These were proclaimed at the end of Cocoli Javier's talk. The YFL & SFL leaders moved forward by groups before the assembly to proclaim with conviction statements as the Praisefest ended the iGod Congress.



From the series of sessions and workshops, the delegates were treated to a scenic tour of Banff. The delegates went up via the gondola to the highest peak of Banff. We have enjoyed the beauty of God's creation. It was suiting conclusion and affirmation how God is so great, so powerful and so strong. He is the creator of these beautiful sights. We can just reflect how small we are before our God. He is so huge, so majestic, so full of wisdom, so almighty and so strong before us. That is why we affirm the iGod in our heart.



In all of these, the most striking to me is how CFCFFL Calgary served. The team was so humble and so unassuming. No one stood to grandstand. No one took the center stage and the limelight only to get all the glory of the event. The team worked behind the scene, offering all the service they can muster. They silently did all the leg work, the dirty job, and perfectly executed the logistical requirements of the event. No one stood to claim before the community that when I served as head of the conference, I did this and that and manage to end the event within the budget. Each of them pitched in, big or small. I personally came across a brother, Ron Arcilla. He drove the U-Haul truck to carry all the equipments to Alberta Hall, University of Calgary. He did the service silently. To my surprise, I came to know that he is the brother whose newly born son was still in the hospital. He was so apologetic that he could not host the delegates in their home since her wife just gave birth to twin babies with the son still in hospital recuperating from an ailment. Just to help more, he lent his 8-seater crossover van to ferry the delegates from one venue to another. Considering that this brother just graduated from a CLS a year ago adds more power to the service. This was just one of the many heroic deeds that the CFCFFL Calgary offered to our God and to His people. To CFCFFL Calgary, we honour you for the great service you have done. May your service bring glory and honour to our God and proclaim to the world that we are small before our strong God --- iGod.

