



COUPLES FOR CHRIST

Families in the Holy Spirit Renewing the Face of the Earth

MOVING FORWARD AND LETTING GO (Q & A No. 1)

On April 30, 2009, the Couples for Christ International Council issued a statement announcing a major decision – CFC is “letting go of the governance and corporate structure of Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, Inc., and allow(ing) for the immediate transition of GK leadership” to a board that will be distinct from CFC.

Such statement expresses the principles and reasons for the decision and reflects the spirit in which it was made. Hence, we request all CFC members to use the April 30 statement as a reference document in the transition we are undergoing. As Tony Meloto expressed in his written reflection which he shared in the Mission Core Gathering on May 3, “the spirit of the proposal was for greater empowerment of both CFC and GK, to remove confusion and to restore relationships.”

While the basic principles are already embodied in the April 30 statement, we recognize the need to amplify and clarify certain aspects, in response to questions raised.

Hence, we are issuing this first of a series of Questions and Answers (Q & A).

1. What does ‘letting go’ mean - referring to the IC statement of April 30?

The CFC International Council decided, after much discernment and prayer, to let go of Gawad Kalinga. The IC statement referred to letting go of the governance and corporate structure of GK. Hence, Gawad Kalinga will be governed independently and distinct from CFC, and will have its own governance, corporate identity and functions.

The IC members will transition out of the 12-man GK Board. The vacancies will be filled by new board members, some of whom may possibly be CFC members. Of the five remaining GK board members, four are CFC members; Ateneo de Manila University President Fr. Ben Nebres, S.J. is the fifth member.

CFC will thus cease to have institutional authority over GK, authority that was vested on the IC by tradition and precisely because of such membership in the Board. CFC Executive Director Joe Tale will cease to be GK Board Chairman and Melo Villaroman, Jr. will step down as GK President.

2. Why did CFC decide to let go of GK?

GK started as a ministry of CFC, one in mission to bring glad tidings to the poor. As GK grew and upscaled, particularly in recent years, the “CFC Mission” and the “GK Way” evolved distinctly, highlighting fundamental and deepening diversity in approach and implementation.

CFC pursues the fullness of the mission, “Building the Church of the Home” and “Building the Church of the Poor” in oneness with the Catholic Church. GK is focused on nation-building and on

poverty alleviation that necessitates mainstreaming and partnering with all sectors of society. In fact it is poised to enter non-Christian countries as a non-religious organization.

Moreover, by culture, tradition and policy, leadership of CFC over all its ministries and programs resides in the IC. However, GK leaders struggle with constraints inherent in its organization structure so long as it remains under the authority of the CFC IC-dominated GK Board.

The divergence in opinions due to fundamental differences between the CFC mission and the GK way has been manifesting in very negative energies, even anger and disrespect for leaders. The IC has tried to resolve these differences in various ways, especially over the last two years, including an attempt to strengthen oneness of leadership through changes in the organizational structure. However, unity and oneness of leadership have remained elusive.

We want to leave all these negative experiences behind and move forward to allow the Holy Spirit to bless both the CFC and GK missions. Therefore, the IC decided to let go of GK so that the poor will not suffer. The welfare of the poor, after all, is an integral part of the fullness of our mission. Giving both CFC and GK the freedom to implement their individual approaches to the work by giving them separate and independent leadership and structure, will allow both missions to flourish and bless even more poor.

3. Does this “letting go” mean letting go of CFC’s Work with the Poor?

No. As the April 30 statement also states, CFC remains committed to the work with the poor as a fundamental element of the fullness of our life and mission. However, in view of this decision, we are also letting go of GK as a ministry. CFC’s work with the poor will continue, with GK as a major and important expression, but will include other areas such as the Prison Ministry, Feed My Sheep and the Migrant Workers Program.

4. Will CFC and its members leave the work of GK and the GK communities?

No. CFC members who are currently involved in GK are enjoined to continue their presence and work in the GK communities. CFC and GK, while with distinct governance and corporate structure, will continue to collaborate in the GK villages. This is because of CFC’s solidarity with and commitment to the poor. Thus, it is of paramount importance that the welfare and care of the poor must not be jeopardized by these recent changes.

Should there arise any questions, the general rule is for CFC members working in GK to stay put and to continue the work. The IC will issue guidelines as necessary.

5. Will CFC members serving in GK remain as CFC members?

Yes, of course, as these changes do not affect membership in CFC. Pastoral cover for CFC members serving in GK will continue to be provided by CFC.