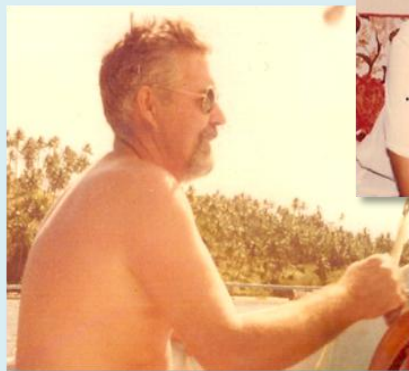


# JESUS PEOPLE: CLSF Pioneers prior to 1983

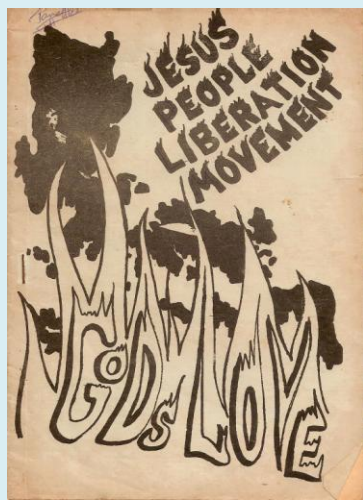
by Jojo Padilla

**As** a one-year old young believer from Nueva Ecija and a newcomer to the fellowship at YMCA in 1981, I was searching for answers to the question “Why did Bill and Lil Tinsley leave the Jesus People (movement)?” and it sounded like an abandoned little child blaming his parents.



I have not seen them personally until 1987 when the couple visited the

Philippines in a reunion cum 31<sup>st</sup> Wedding Anniversary at CLSF headquarters in Mandaluyong City. From verbal descriptions by original JP members, I deduce that the missionary couple is quite extra ordinary. More than a father, Dad Bill is an adventurer, a genius, a prophet, “jack of all trades” while Mom Lil is a cheerful teacher and a strict discipler (disciplinarian), perhaps twice more than a mother.

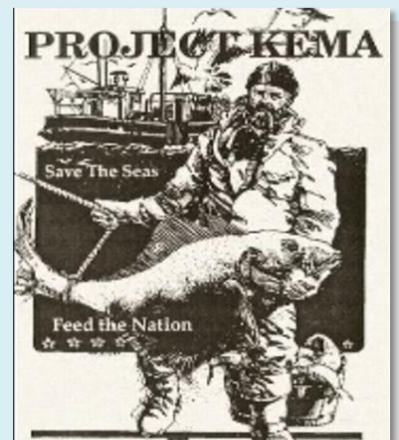


Spawned perhaps by the Jesus People movement that swept across the US, the couple brought their young family to the Philippines in 1970, at the height of the worsening communist movement and radical activism. Dad and Mom shared the Gospel to MM university

students anywhere possible, conducting Bible studies and street evangelism.

With local and foreign support, they opened the “Maranatha Discipleship Training Center” at R.Fernandez St. in San Juan (then a part of Rizal province), and shared its facilities with YWAM (Youth with a Mission) and CEF (Child Evangelism Fellowship). Sunday fellowship meetings (called “rallies”) were initially done at Maranatha. When the Tinsleys moved to Tandang Sora in Quezon City, their house became the venue for Board meetings and discipleship training while YMCA chapel (a few blocks to the back of the Manila City Hall) became the venue of Sunday rallies. Bible study groups called “Kuriakos” were reaching out to the campuses of PLM, Adamson, PWU, PNU, and the localities of Manila, Pasay, Makati, San Juan and Quezon. Key training materials used were Winkie Pratney’s “Youth Aflame” and the Tinsley’s own discipleship tracts.

Sometime in 1975, Dad Bill and Mom Lil found something more important than getting young people to church. Seeing the great shortage of food (particularly protein food) in the Philippines, leading to malnutrition and health related problems and seeing that the Filipino leaders at that time (Noly Garvida and a set of leaders called “the Board of Directors”) were taking the responsibility and guiding their own “Jesus People” fellowship, Dad and Mom released the group on their own and established SeaBio Systems Asia, a private organization. The new calling pushed themselves to rural Philippines, in the island of Mindoro (off the coast of Batangas, a day’s travel south of Manila) to meet the challenge of reconstructing marine environments to increase protein production in the sea – an initiative called “Project Kema”.



Few people knew exactly the details of their new ministry, the new life they faced, and their new home in a new community. But they were “busy as a bee”, making occasional visits to leaders in Manila as they re-charge on funding and replenish supplies and continuing to oversee the activities and meetings of the JP Board of Directors. Their long absences in MM, however, proved quite challenging to the group. Like the rest, young leaders had to struggle with job-hunting and income-earning after graduation, and pressures by family members.



Testimonies disclosed, *"kaunti na lang kami noon, nag-aaway away pa"* (the few that remains, were even quarreling). Everyone seemed to be satisfied on their own affairs and paving their own separate roads to "success". And my questioning thoughts kept coming back -- How could this couple leave a booming urban campus ministry hanging in a balance? With an exit that seemed surreptitious and urgent, why do they have to leave the Jesus People children like orphans to barely survive the streets of Metro Manila three years into the Martial Law rule of Marcos?

The Tinsleys were busy with project Kema in Mindoro when another ministry-shift took place in 1980. Open Doors with Brother Andrew International sought Dad Bill's help for Project Pearl, a bold expedition that smuggled one million Bibles into mainland China. Open Doors was a non-denominational, evangelical missionary organization based in Ermelo, The Netherlands. The group has specialized in smuggling Bibles mostly into Communist countries for some two decades. In the article "Risky Rendevous at Swatow", Time Magazine reported in detail the remarkable mission that was executed with military precision. Dad Bill designed the cargo vessel, and led the 20-man crew. In the same article, I found the answers to my questions. "Between obedience to God and obedience to men, we choose obedience to God".

It was not personal interests that sent them from one place and one ministry to another. A higher calling kept them moving. Like a mother eagle to its young, comes a time when she had to change its nesting material from feather to thorns, or drop her young eaglet from soaring heights for flying lessons. The Tinsleys did not leave the Philippines until 1983. Dad Bill's autobiography "Seadog" related his reasons for leaving including political harassment. We knew later on, God was orchestrating the circumstances all along.

Meanwhile, the Jesus People remnants caught up with a Rhema word from God

*Revelation 3:2 - Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God).*

As they re-committed themselves to the Lord, relationships began to heal, and dedication to the fellowship matured to a new level. A series of overnight prayer retreats later, the zeal for missions was ignited, while evangelism and discipleship fervor emerged as the group hungered for God. When the group registered a new name (Christ the Living Stone Fellowship, CLSF under SEC in 1983, at age zero), the 13-member Board of Directors (now called National CLSF Elders) was already overseeing one mission church in Benguet, two satellite churches (Pasay and Tondo), one office headquarters in Montojo St. Makati, a few campus ministries, and a dozen cell groups called "Kuriakos". In addition to Sunday Rallies in a rented Philippine Bible Society Auditorium in UN Ave Malate Manila, the fellowship were conducting regular discipleship training seminars (Youth Aflame, Halakah Series, Metano Series, More than Conquerors, So send I you, etc).



The name CLSF was taken from

*1 Peter 2:4 - As you come to him, the living Stone— rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

while the cell group strategy, called Kuriakos Explosion (or KE) later on, was inspired by

*Isaiah 54:2 - "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.*



I wonder what would have happened if the Tinsleys did not obey the Lord in the 1970s through early 1980s. I wonder how far each of the remnants of JP would have gone by, doing their own things. Probably not too far, or otherwise, just floating along like “ducks” in this uncaring world. As 25 years of CLSF would testify, many of these young people and their equally-gifted disciples (pastors, doulos and amans) later on, grew out to be capable “eagles” in the Kingdom of God.

Looking back and reaping great lessons of faith, Dad Bill reminds us that for anything, God should always receive all the glory. On his “Project Pearl” video at [www.GodTube.com](http://www.GodTube.com), he quoted that in spite of many mistakes in judgment during the planning and operation, God clearly escorted the project to miracle success. And so, has God been faithful to Jesus People before CLSF was born and over the next 25 years later on.



**2 Timothy 2:13**

*... if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*

**Romans 8:28**

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

**Ephesians 2:10**

*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

**Philippians 2:13**

*for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*

**Notes:**

A set of secret codes for mobilization of young people for discipleship and evangelism, the following terms were used by Jesus People in the 1970s to remain discrete from radical activists of the pre-martial law, early-martial law years.

*Kuriakos* – Greek for “called-out ones”, otherwise referred to as a house church, Bible study, cell group or care group

*Doulos* – Greek word for “bond servant or slave”, otherwise referred to as a group Bible study leader or facilitator

*Aman* – Greek word for “faithful and steady”, otherwise referred to as a member of a Kuriakos