

# JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE!

by CARLO  
SANTAYANA



The first sight of New York I had ever seen was at the end of the Lincoln Tunnel. Like the Mole Machine in Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, the Jeep Cherokee transporting me, Jeff, and Tita Mitos, surfaced amidst the bustling, fascinating world of Manhattan. The streets were filled with horn-blaring yellow cabs. The sidewalks were teeming with yuppies and bums alike. Smoke came out of potholes and sewer drains, billboards littered the lower level skyline, and

traffic was horrendous. But, hey, this is New York - the Pinnacle of Civilization and Center of the Universe, Seinfeld's neighborhood, Godzilla's nursery, preferred target of asteroids and meteors. Had it been any bit more pleasant or relaxed, it wouldn't be called the City that Never Sleeps.

My agenda of things to do in New York was relatively simple. I didn't care much about the Brooklyn Bridge or Wall Street, Greenwich Village or Times Square. I just wanted to eat Pastrami on Rye. Tita Mitos gladly took me to her favorite delicatessen - Carnegie Deli! It was there that they served the best pastrami sandwich I had ever tasted,

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and the biggest I had ever seen. A 200-pound, African-American waiter sat us down, took our orders, and delivered everything to our table in less than three minutes, therefore making it also the fastest sandwich I had ever ordered.

Horseradish, mustard and dill pickles came free.

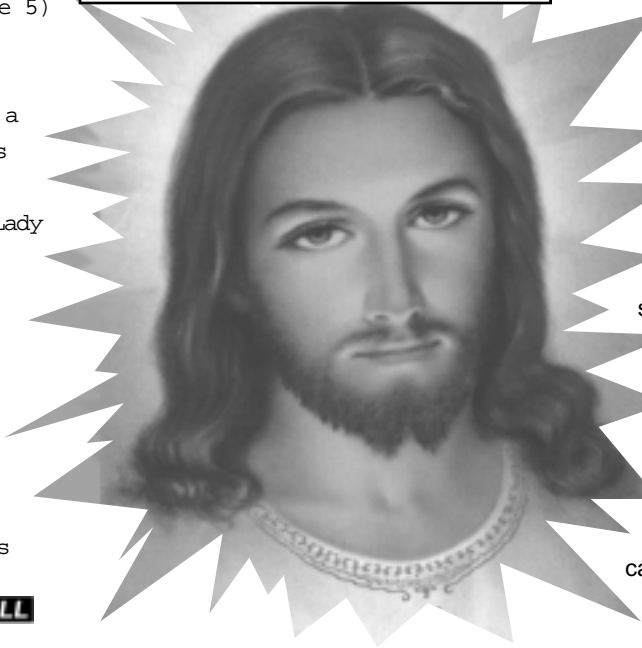
I was content after our meal, but with such able guides, I saw and did a lot more in New York than I had ever planned. Tita Mitos and Jeff took me to Broadway to watch a musical, and to Central Park to watch in-line skaters do their stunts, as well as to enjoy this lush oasis of trees in a mostly concrete jungle. We rode the subway and kept our eyes peeled for authentic sewer rats or an odd human body part stuck in between the rails but we didn't see any. I walked along Fifth Avenue to go shopping (of the

"window" variety), and around Rockefeller Center to see Radio City Music Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the large statues of Prometheus and Atlas. Still, I had yet to see the most famous statue in New York City. A cruise around the isle of Manhattan offered just the perfect glimpse of the lady I was looking for. Although I saw lots of pretty women in New York, this grandest of all dames - the Statue of Liberty - blew them all away. Then it was off to the proverbial "top of the heap" - the Empire State Building. New York is nicknamed the Empire state, and from the top of this 102-story namesake, I pretended I could see all the way up to Buffalo and beyond. Yeah, King Kong must have felt the same way.

I stayed in New York City a mere five days out of six months in America, and yet it has had such an effect on me. Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods to give to man, must have landed in New York and lit the fire of this city's burning spirit. Its people, who are often viewed by the rest of the country as brusque and haughty, are nevertheless passionate about their work, their lives, and their city. The mythical Atlas, who carries the world on his shoulders, is perfectly appropriate as he stands in the heart of New York, where everyone is the foreigner and the multitude of different languages heard on the street makes English, spoken normally or with a Brooklyn accent, just another babbled tongue. In a place where Arab or Indian cab drivers can take you to Chinatown, Little Italy, Spanish Harlem, the Holland Tunnel, or Greenwich Village, and the United Nations is but half a mile from *Chicago, Miss Saigon*, and *The Lion King* in the Amsterdam Theatre, it's hard to contest that the entire world does, in fact, melt in the pot they call the

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Big Apple. Yes, New York may indeed be dirty and ratty, with a society on the brink of neurosis and a crime rate as high as the Chrysler tower. But just like Lady Liberty coated in green tarnish covering her otherwise radiant copper glow, all of New York City's crud and commercialism, greed and graffiti, traffic and trash (human or otherwise) fail to hide or destroy the essential beauty, charm, variety, excitement, and soul of this fabulous city that truly is the Center of the Universe. **LL**



ancient peoples deified. Pretty messed up, huh?

MARIA:

The first time I saw Anton and his friends, my initial impression was, "Oh, fun, these guys look pretty questionable. Kind of a mixture of drunk musicians and terrorists." (I love talking to strange or somewhat-on-the-weird or different-side people). So I gave them tracts, but seeing as they were pretty rowdy, I moved on.

Later, Anton and his friend approached me to ask where I was from. Anton got it in two guesses. I was impressed that not only did he know that there was a country called New Zealand, but he also knew where it was on the map. He didn't just smile and tell me he'd also

been to Europe, like so many other people have. Ha! His way of looking at things was pretty different from the majority of people I've met here and I enjoyed the challenge.

Over the next year or so, he attended Bible

classes at our center every week during which time we got to know each other better and became good friends. In December of '96, he told me that he also wanted to do something with his life that would help others, and a year later, in November '97, he decided to become a missionary too. Not long after that we decided to get married.

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# THE LORD WAS OUR MATCHMAKER

...the *INSIDE STORY* of the  
*SURPRISE WEDDING* of the YEAR!

**ANTON Santayana and Maria Angela Murphy-Santayana had an intimate and elegant wedding on July 12, 1998 at the Hyatt Regency, Manila. Rory Laico Packwood was one of the sponsors.**

ANTON:

It all started on July 12, 1996 when Maria and I first met, at my old hang-out near De La Salle University. We got married exactly two years after we first met. At that time, I was studying music in UST and was visiting my friends who were studying in DLSU. We usually met there each Wednesday to drink, talk, be an eyesore, weird-out and do all sorts of things that would be classified as deviant behavior. It so happened that on that particular week we couldn't meet on Wednesday so we just decided to meet on Friday.

MARIA:

Meanwhile I was still in my first year of missionary work here in the Philippines. We had a Bible study group in UP and went there once a week but that particular week a friend and I had decided to go to DLSU to distribute gospel tracts, talk to interested students, etc. While travelling on the bus I prayed that I would meet

someone special, as in someone who we, as missionaries, could be a help to and who would be interested in the message we were giving.

ANTON:

When I first saw Maria, she was distributing these gospel tracts and she had given me one. I asked what it was and she just said, "Read it and find out." She later passed by our hang-out again and this time we had gotten to talking. A few weeks later I started visiting their center and later on I began to believe in Jesus. Before this, my beliefs and outlook on life was *CHAOS*. I believed in certain elements in witchcraft, eastern religions, Babylonian mythology, and all sorts of other things. When I would think about these things, my beliefs were sometimes blown to pieces by me partially believing in the theory of the gods actually being aliens which



Newlyweds **ANTON SANTAYANA** and **MARIA ANGELA MURPHY-SANTAYANA** with **BIBOT** and **RENE**.

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ANTON:

Yes, up until this point I was pretty jaded about life. I felt that I had done everything that I ever wanted to do, and all the rest I didn't want to do. The two years that followed after we met saw a lot of changes that are a bit too many to write so I'll just skip to the wedding.

We never expected anything like the wedding we had. In fact, I thought that we would have spaghetti and barbecue at the reception and that Maria and I would just have to put on our best clothes. We're really thankful to my grandfather and to my mom and dad for the wedding that they gave us. It was held at the Hyatt on Roxas Blvd and it was really fun. The night before the wedding, thoughts were running through my head like crazy. No, I wasn't thinking, "Should I go through with this?" but I was thinking how it seemed that my childhood was just yesterday and how it also seemed like a totally different life of a different person.

A lot of funny things happened at the wedding, like when we had to kiss a second time because the photographer didn't get it at first, and then we had to kiss a third time as Maria's dad came storming down with his camera, saying in a strong American accent, "*Sandali, Sandali!*" Another thing was, one of the flower girls, who was 6 years old, innocently remarked in her high-pitched little voice, "I hope you have fun sleeping in your room tonight!"

MARIA:

We had a week-long honeymoon in Baguio, courtesy of Ninong Bertie, Tita Rory and Anton's parents! Thank you all! It was great! Our first three days were spent at the country club and the next four at the El Cielito Hotel. Baguio was definitely a nice escape from the Manila heat and traffic. I guess we're coming to the end of our little story. Married life has been fun so far though it's taking some getting used to. It's just a totally different way of life. But I would say that all in all, it's nice to know there's someone besides God who knows everything about you but loves you anyway!

ANTON:

Married life's great! I'm really thankful first of all to God that He not only takes great care of me but that He also brought Maria along to remind me of the wonderful job that He does in watching over me. Marriage is rough sometimes, and in the long run it really kills your pride, but I thank the Lord for every second of married life.

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## Travel adventures of GINA

DAVID...

# Bachelorette Lives Life of Casanova

GREETINGS once again to the Laico league! The year has gone by so quickly and still I haven't found my "Prince Charming". So, I continue to get my thrills by going on travel adventures.

This year, it seems I craved tropical weather. In February, I went to beautiful Hawaii for the first time, with some friends who owned the time-share where we stayed. The big island, Kailua-Kona reminded me of the Philippines. On the remote island of Hilo, houses had the same roofing as in the Philippines, the yero type. We stopped at *sari-sari* stores that had Filipinos selling foods like *chicharon* and *siopao*. *Wala nga lang suka*. Hilo is where the Kilauea Volcano is located. This volcano is still active and continues to erupt, but slowly enough that it is still considered safe to live around the area. We did go down to the active crater and walked over the dry lava which was releasing such heat that we couldn't go too near the most active part. It was even erupting from underneath the sea. Of course, we enjoyed the clear warm beaches and a beachfront luau, where polynesian dances were performed, and the famous dish, the Kalua Pig (which is comparable to our *lechon*) was served.

In August, I went to the Philippines to visit my dear Mom and my two new nieces, Lizzie and Nicole. It was such a wonderful reunion. I could tell from what was left of the expression on her face

that Mom was indeed happy. Words she couldn't say, but her eyes said it all. I longed to hug her and it was indeed a momentous experience, especially when she suddenly surprised everyone in replying to Rey by saying, "I love you too, I miss you too" repeatedly. And for every visit from her sisters, tears would roll from her eyes as she tried to reach out with her hands. Thanks to our loving dad, our mom is provided with all the TLC she needs.

I also took the opportunity to visit Cebu with Rey, Jovits, Jovits' brother and his wife. Indeed, it was a relaxing and enjoyable time. We stayed at the Plantation Bay Resort. There, I was able to bike, enjoy the beach in warm weather, sing shamelessly in the karaoke (since there was nobody else around), play table tennis and play volleyball. The resort reminded me of those in places like Jamaica, but much cheaper. I felt luxuriously rich - the best part of it all.

And to end the year, I just had to go to South Lake Tahoe to cool off and try a cold weather sport - skiing. Luckily, I didn't break a leg, though I twisted my neck a bit but still got home in one piece. So, that is my whole year of adventures.

*On behalf of the House of David, I want to extend our deepest gratitude for your support with our mom's condition. The hospital bed was indeed a blessing, a gift from heaven, for comfort is the most we can give her at this time. Thanks so much.*

- Gina

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