

Rizalista: A Closer Look

April 30, 2015

What is Rizalista?

Rizalista is a new religious movement which is adopted by numerous ethnic religious groups in the Philippines that believe in the divinity of Jose Rizal. Members of this religious movement honours Rizal as a divine being, as the power of the Holy Spirit, as a second Christ, or as a new messiah who will return. There are different groups of people that worships Rizal and they have different views on Jose Rizal's divinity. Some believe that Rizal, as I've mentioned earlier, is the second Christ, the second son of God, the God of the pre-Spanish Malay religion, and some believe that he is God himself. Some, however, only see Rizal as a spiritual guide.

It may seem strange that some people, in this modern era, still believes that a simple human being such as Jose Rizal can be thought as a divine being. Many people, of course, believes that this is insanity but when it comes to religion, no argument is wrong. What needs to be done is to respect one another about his or her beliefs in order to avoid future conflicts specially because, for me, a debate about religion does not make any sense.

Who are they?

Rizalista are composed of different groups of people having different beliefs but focuses on one faith. Their faith to Jose Rizal, our national hero, binds them together. Generally, these groups view Jose Rizal as a divine being.

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They worship Jose Rizal, just like a Christian worships Jesus Christ and other saints.

The Rizalist religious groups ranged from colorums which were prevalent during the 1920s up to the 1930s to Philip-



An example image of Rizalista

pine Benevolent Missionary Association, which was led by Ruben Ecleo. Rizalistas have different sects depending on their beliefs with different founders and founding dates. Each groups have contrasting views about the persona of Jose Rizal. Some of the registered groups are Samahan ng Tatlong Persona Solo Dios, Ciudad Mistica de Dios, Universal One Faith House of Prayer for all Nations and Humanity, Inc., Espiritual Pilipino Catholic Church, and many others. Originally, there was only one Rizalista group in Lecheria,, it was the Iglesia Watawat ng Lahi. However, the sect was wracked by schism among its members and then later divided into factions. They are scattered all over the archipelago but most of them are based in Calamba, Laguna and at the foot of Mt. Banahaw in Quezon Province. There are even chapters abroad.

“The essence of all religions is one. Only their approaches are different.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

Samahan ng Tatlong Persona Solo Dios

The Samahan ng Tatlong Persona Solo Dios (STPSD) is a religion that believes only in one God in three persons—Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The guiding forces of the group is the “Voice” and the “Voices” of nature’s spirit. The goal of this group is a complete dedication to spiritual liberation which is expected to bring about the unification of all Filipinos into one nation. Jose Rizal is their most important saint. The second image in the next page has a message that says, “Ang nasa larawang ito ng ating Panginoong Jesucristo— Bilang isang balik tanaw;. Noong unang panahon, magpahanggang ngayon bilang CRISTIANISMONG PANANAMPALATAYA... (skip parts) ...ANG AMA GATMAITAN DR. JOSE RIZAL po naman; Nang siya’y



Images of STPSD by Sidney Snoeck

ipinatapon o ikinulong sa Talisay, Dapitan, Zamboanga del Norte, Mindanao, ng apat na taon, limang buwan at labing tatlong araw (July 17 1892—July 31, 1896). Sa kanyang pag-iisa't pagtitiis sa tuwi-tuwina't taimtim na panalangin, nagpakita sa kanya ang PANGINOONG JESUCRISTO, at siya'y kinausap at inutusan....". The other parts were blurry so I was not able to get the whole message. It was stated that Jesus Christ has talked and commanded Jose Rizal while he was in jail. This belief, however, for me, is a conflict in the truth that Jose Rizal didn't believe in Jesus Christ as a God. So if he ever prayed during his exile in Dapitan, then, maybe he must have prayed directly to God, and not to Jesus Christ.

Ciudad Mistica de Dios

Suprema de la Iglesia del Ciudad Mistica de Dios, Inc. (Ciudad Mistica de Dios for short) is another group of religious people that believes in Jose Rizal as a divine being. This group was founded by Maria Bernarda Balitaan. Since her death, this group was always been led by women. This group can be seen at the foot of the sacred Mt. Banahaw that uses the Bible and Christian prayers as the basis of their rituals. Sad to say, the images for this group is not available due to copyrights reason.

Universal One Faith House of Prayer for all Nations and Humanity, Inc.

The Universal One Faith House of Prayer for all Nations and Humanity, Inc. is a relatively new church founded on June 2007 by Artemio Espiritu Ugali in Barangay Sta. Lucia. The members of this group worships Rizal as the personification of the God UA.

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Dr. Jose Rizal—God UA

Bathala was the supreme being and the omnipotent creator of the universe. Bathala is a tagalog word for God. In the Universal One Faith House of Prayer for all Nations and Humanity, Inc., Bathalang UA as seen in the image (below) is represented as a woman who symbolizes the Divine Mother Nature.

“Father Bathala, who truly loves us, may you come to help us so that there will be peace in our country "Father Most Powerful”“



An image of their 7 Bathala (1)

These images are there 7 Bathalas including the bird- Bathala “AEIOU” (isip), Bathalang “ELOHEIM” (mata), Bathalang “IAOUE” (taynga), Bathalang “AEI” (ilong), Bathalang “IEIOUA” (bibig), Bathalang “UA” (puso), and Bathalang “AUAEI” (kamay at paa).

According to Mr. Ugali, the founder of this group, Bathalang UA is the Divine



An image of their 7 Bathala (2)

Mother Nature and the Divine Mother Nature is equals to Jose Rizal and also “UA” is the first cry of every baby. The followers of this group meet two times a month to pray.

Spiritual Pilipino Catholic Church

The Spiritual Pilipino Catholic Church was founded by Dr. Wincelao Santoyo in 1952. Their church is located in Barangay Sta. Lucia at the foot of Mt. Banahaw. In this group, they worship Rizal as a Christ. Rizal is worshipped for his apparent parallelism with Jesus Christ. The members of the Spiritual Pilipino Church believe that Mt. Banahaw is the new Jerusalem. It is said that “Long time ago, God became discontented with the Middle Eastern people and he instructed four angels to transfer Jerusalem to another place. When the angels reached Luzon in the Philippines they thought it was the ideal place to transfer the Holy City because the Philippines was the only Catholic country in Asia. Alas Jerusalem landed by accident upside down. Thus Jerusalem became a mountain, which has since been known as Mount Banahaw.”



Dr. Jose Rizal statue

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Displayed inside the church is a reproduction of Rizal's last walk towards his execution with his last poem. (Photo by Sidney Snoeck)

"To doubt God is to doubt one's own conscience, and in consequence it would be to doubt everything."

- Dr. Jose Rizal

Other Religious Groups you can find

Here are the list of some religious groups in the Philippines that worship Rizal:



The Creator



Iglesia Watawat ng Lahi Malvarosa Faction, Inc.

- Bangon Bayan Banal
- Adamista
- The Creator
- Bathalismo (Inang Mahiwaga, Inc.)
- Iglesia Sagrada Filipina
- Iglesia Watawat ng Lahi Malvarosa Faction Inc.
- Tipunang Tandang Sora ng Kati-punang Gat Rizal
- Nuestra Señora del Carmen
- Rizaleo sa Banahaw
- La Iglesia Catolica Pilipina

Parallelism of Jesus Christ and Jose Rizal

Some Rizalista groups believe that Rizal has apparent parallelism to Jesus Christ. Some of the things they share in common are as follows:

- Both were morally upright and exemplary in their own rights.
- Both were pious.
- Both were Asians.
- Both of them originated from countries which were under foreign rule during their time.
- Both were advocates of solidarity, equality and peaceful co-existence in spite of differences in social status, ethnicity and creed.
- Both possess extraordinary character and have the purest intention in pursuing their missions.
- Both of them were healers.
- Both were great visionaries.
- Both were advocates of reform and peaceful means to carry out their missions.
- Both strongly denounced prejudice, apathy, immorality and cruelty.
- Both were messianic in their own rights.
- Both were victims of trial by mockery.
- Both were executed by their enemies.
- Both died for a noble cause.
- Both their teachings have enduring influence to many people around the world.



Jesus Christ



Jose Rizal

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More about Rizalista in social media


Since I didn't have the chance to interview a member of Rizalista, I have gathered some of the views and opinions of people in social media—both the believers and the non-believers. I have searched for people, mainly in Facebook and other sites, who believe in Rizalista. I sent a friend request to one of them, hoping they'll accept it and maybe interview them through Facebook, but unfortunately they did not accept my request. However, I have read a comment thread in Facebook and this is what I've got.


*“Receive, Oh God, the sacrifice
which we are offering to Your
Majesty, in honor of Our Father
Rizal, the Christ of the Tagalog
region.*

*...Rizal is the Christ of the
Tagalog region. He is the Lord of
the whole world. He is the King
of Kings, the Lord of Lords.
Because in Him is given by the
Holy Bible the Spirit of God
Almighty.”*

(An excerpts of the prayers of the
members of Bathalismo)

 **Therapeutic Association** Amang Dr. Jose. Rizal sa akin na kanyang ipinapaabot sa ating lahat na tayo'y magsipaghandana at pababana siya upang kanyang tuparin ang kanyang pangako sa atin na buhay na walang hanggan na kapiling siya sa kanyang kaharian sa Bagong Jerusalem sa ating Inang Bayang Pilipinas. Malapit na ang takdang oras kaya sana tayong lahat ay magkaisang manalangin sa ating mahal nating Ama sa kaitaasan na kanya tayong ililigtas kung darating na ang hangganan ng ating mundong ginagalawan. Huwag sana tayong magsisisi sa bandang huli dahil hindi ninyo kinikilala Si Amang Dr. Jose Rizal na siya ang ating panginoon.
Gusto ko ito · Sumagot ·  1 · Oktubre 31, 2014 sa ganap na 5:53 PM

 **Oliver Oliver** matanong ko lang po kayo, ba.c po sa ka.c sa nbase ko sa taas ay naniniwala po kayo na hindi namatay si Dr. Jose Rizal, eh bkit napaka importante po ng Dec. 30 para sa inyo? At bkit po kayo dumadagsa sa luneta tuwing Dec. 30? Paki sagot lamang po, ang aking mga ktanungan. Sapagkat nais kong maliwanagan. Salamat.
Gusto ko ito · Disyembre 3, 2014 sa ganap na 6:14 PM

 **Therapeutic Association** Si Dr. Jose Rizal ay buhay siya ang huling sugo ng ating Amang Kaitaastaasan na sa kanyang ay ipinadala si Rizal na sanggol din katulad ng naunang Kristo ipinadala din siya ng ating Amang Kaitaastaasan na sanggol din at pareho silang Diyos sa langit na nakaupo na kumakatawan kay Hesukristo. Mahirap ninyong maunawaan ang aming mga sasabihin na nasa kapatiran ng sumasampalataya kay Dr. Jose Rizal kahit ipaliwanag mo ay hindi maintindihan ng mga tao. Mahalaga sa amin na sumasampalataya kay Dr. Jose Rizal ang araw ng kanyang kamatayan para gunitain kagaya din ng paggunita natin sa kamatayan ni Hesukristo sa biyarnis santo at gayon din si Dr. Jose Rizal sa araw ng kanyang kamatayan sa katapusan ng Desyembre.



Elmer Oliver ang bagong Jerusalem po ang tinutukoy nyo na kaharian nya. Subalit bkit sa pilipinas sya isinilang, at hndi sa jerusalem?

Gusto ko ito · Abril 14 sa ganap na 11:12 AM



Theodorico Aquino Ang Bagong Herusalem sa takdang panahon ay ang ating Inang Bayang Pilipinas si Rizal ay isinilang sa Bagong Herusalem na magiging kaharian ng panginoon na siyang Lupang Pangako o Lupang Hinirang ni Amang Dr. Jose Rizal.Kung ating pagiisipan at maintindihan ang ating Pambansang Awit ay maliwanag na tinutukoy ang ating bansa ang Lupang Hinirang ang ibig sabihin ng Lupang Hinirang ay Lupang Pangako maliwanag diba.Sa Huling Paalam ni Dr. naisulat na bago siya hinusgahan ng kamatayan sa Bagumbayan ng mga kastila ay naisulat na niya sa Huling Paalam na paalam mahal kung Lupang Hinirang ang ibig sabihin ng Lupang Hinirang ay Lupang Pangako sa atin ng ating Panginoon sa nakatakdang panahon.Sa ayaw man at gusto ng mga tao sa buong sanglibutan laluna tayong mga na ayaw nating tanggapin na siya ang susunod na pangalawang Kristong buhay na darating sa Lupang Hinirang sa nalalapit ng takdang oras.Masasabi pa ng mga tao ang pangkukutya kay Dr. Jose Rizal pagdating ng tamang panahon luluhod silang lahat at magmamakaawa sa kanya.

Gusto ko ito · Abril 14 sa ganap na 4:18 PM



Elmer Oliver kung gayun po, bkit hndi siya nabanggit sa Banal na Kasulatan? At bkit wala ni isang propesiya tungkol sa kanya?

Gusto ko ito · Abril 14 sa ganap na 7:41 PM



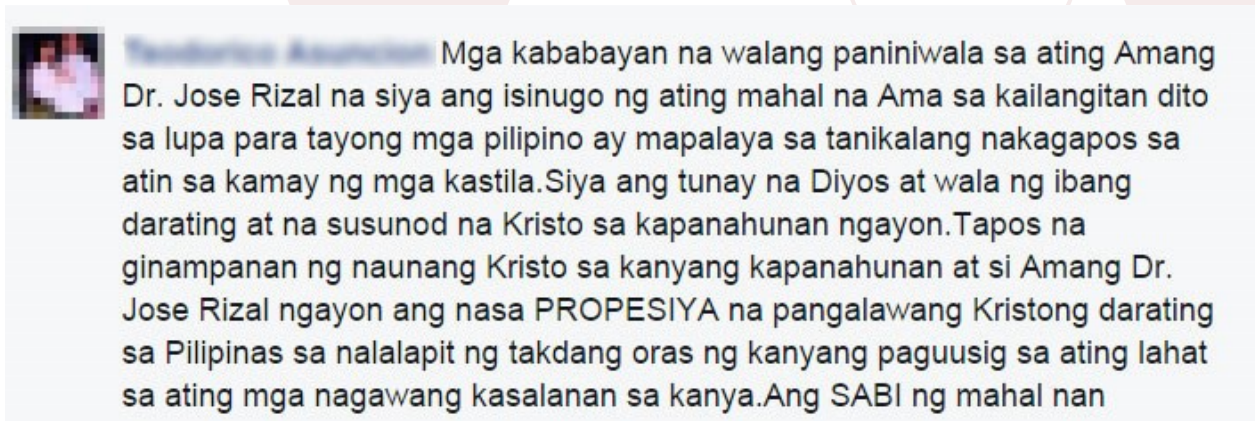
Elmer Oliver iba iba po ata kayo ng testimony ng mga kasapi nyo? May napagtanungan po akOng rizalista, na hndi daw po namatay si Rizal, ang binaril daw po sa Bagumbayan ay kamukha lamang nya.

Gusto ko ito · Abril 14 sa ganap na 7:42 PM



Theodorico Aquino Tama duplekado niya ang namatay ang tutuong Jose Rizal ay buhay at hindi lang iisang katauhan ang kanyang tinataglay.Hintayin mo ang takdang panahon malapit na at iyang katanungan mo ay masasagot na.

And this last comment that I will put here is a message for people who do not believe in Rizalista as posted by the same person who believes in Rizal in the comment thread earlier.



Based on the comment thread, most Rizalistas believe that Jose Rizal is not yet dead and that only his duplicate was shot in Bagumbayan. Also, they believe that according to the prophecy Jose Rizal will come back to the Philippines in the right time, just like what the Christians believe of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, here are some opinions of the non-believers in an online forum I visited in the internet.

Advanced Member



I see these people as just lost sheep who are desperate for a master who will tell them how to live. I see it as a very sad existence, the way they move from one religion to another, thinking that this next one will save them. I'd liken it to just substituting Pepsi for Coke when Coke doesn't do it for you anymore, when in reality you really should just be drinking water instead of sodas.

Advanced Member



Unfortunately the Philippines is still very much backwards and trapped in a web of religious mysticism. I have traveled through that part of the world and most of the countries are religious but Philippines is exceptionally religious and bigoted. The beliefs formed around Jose Rizal are pure mysticism and a sad indictment on society.

Advanced Member



I have never heard of Jose Rizal but I find it interesting to learn about him and how he is regarded in the Philippines. It is not unusual, in countries where Christianity has been introduced, for those people to establish their own local cults and their own iconography. In many parts of the world local traditions have been incorporated into the Christian religion.

Advanced Member



Why,,,this is pure utter baloney. I live in the Philippines and OP it seems you do too. You should know that there are people that claim that Rizal is nothing more than a common man, some even speculate he was homosexual, and was blatantly 'Hyped' up by the Americans when they were "helping" the Philippines get back on its feet.

Members



07 votes

Hitlers line is especially perfect for this. Make the lie big, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.



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PI100-2015#!ABOUT/CBGA**

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About the author



Hello, I am Vina! I am a 4th year BS Computer Science student in the University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College. When our professor asked our class to conduct a research about anything that is related to our national hero — Jose Protacio Rizal— Mercado y Alonso Realonda, I immediately thought of the religion that worships Rizal which is the Rizalista. I've always been wondering what it was all about, even though I am really not a fan of any religion (even my own). Although I do not know any particular individuals that worship Rizal, I have searched for the people or pages in Facebook and other social media sites that publicly post their deep belief of Rizal as someone who is greater or as great as God. So through that, I took the liberty to use their posts in the completion of this paper. THE END.

P. S. The picture above is not me (obviously). Hehe. His name is Luffy, my favorite anime character. =)