

Post-MCGI Society Research Team

Working Paper

MCGI: A Modern-Day Slavery Economy

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Abstract

This paper argues that MCGI’s current crisis cannot be understood as mere “loss of faith” or a doctrinal dispute. It is better explained as a shift in political economy: from a founder-centered preaching movement to a labor-intensive, material distribution system built around performative charity, captive-market products, and event logistics. Our research documents patterns of uncompensated labor solicitation across organizational tiers—youth, mothers, fathers, and OFWs—paired with moralized compliance mechanisms that frame refusal as spiritual failure. We use “modern-day slavery” as an analytic frame, not as a courtroom verdict, by testing observed practices against internationally recognized elements of forced labor: work extracted under a “menace of penalty” and without fully free voluntariness, plus recognized indicators such as restriction of movement, intimidation, abuse of vulnerability, and debt pressure.[1][2] We then connect labor extraction to our earlier thesis on Charismatic Insulation and The Great Collapse: founder charisma previously softened the perceived costs of unpaid work and financial sacrifice; after succession, that insulation weakened, making extraction feel heavier, more visible, and more contested—driving exit cascades.[3] The central claim is simple: MCGI increasingly operates as a machine that converts member time, discipline, and surplus labor into organizational output that sustains affiliated ventures, while intensifying pressure on remaining members as the system enters The Great Collapse.

1. Introduction: when a church becomes a labor system

Religions, at their best, produce meaning, mutual aid, and community. But religions can also function as labor regimes. They can take what the state recognizes as protected—your working time, your family time, your right to rest—and re-label it as “tungkulin,” so you surrender it without wages, without contracts, and often without the ordinary right to refuse.

MCGI’s turning point, as many exiters describe it, is not that “charity exists.” It’s that charity became the organization’s daily operating logic: lugaw programs, performative medical missions, construction sites, mass events, food pack production, bottled products, and logistics.

That whole ecosystem is not self-running. It requires bodies, hands, and time—recruited and organized at scale.

This is where our framing begins. We treat labor extraction as the material consequence of MCGI’s shift toward materialism, and we treat the resulting crisis as part of The Great Collapse: when a high-control organization’s recruitment and attention weaken, it often responds by squeezing the labor base harder. That response can keep output moving in the short run, but it also accelerates burnout, resentment, and exit.

2. Defining “modern-day slavery” without cheap rhetoric

“Slavery” is a loaded word. If you use it carelessly, people stop listening. So we define the term with discipline.

International labor law defines forced or compulsory labor as work or service extracted under a threat or “menace of penalty” and not offered voluntarily in a fully free sense.[1][2] The “penalty” does not need to be physical violence. It can include threats, coercion, restriction, or punishments that compel compliance through fear, shame, or loss.[2] The ILO’s indicator framework also flags warning signs that commonly cluster around forced labor—abuse of vulnerability, intimidation and threats, restriction of movement, debt pressure, withholding of wages, and more.[4]

Philippine law, through anti-trafficking statutes, also recognizes concepts like involuntary servitude as a condition of enforced and compulsory service induced by schemes or patterns intended to cause someone to believe they have no real alternative but to serve.[5]

This paper does not claim to deliver a legal verdict. It makes an analytical claim: the labor regime described by exiters and documented in our research archive resembles the structure of modern coercion more than it resembles ordinary volunteerism—because voluntariness is shaped and narrowed by hegemonic penalties.

3. Theory: surplus labor, hegemonic compliance, and charismatic insulation

Marx's concept of surplus labor names something ordinary people already understand. You work, you produce more than your immediate consumption, and that "excess" sustains children, the sick, and the elderly. It also becomes the main target of extraction in any exploitative system: the part of your energy that could have gone to your household gets redirected upward.

But exploitation today rarely needs chains. Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony explains how domination can work through consent, moral language, and internalized discipline. People obey without police because the moral universe inside them has been reorganized. "Good works" becomes a lever. "Tungkulin" becomes a choke point. Refusal becomes shameful, and shame becomes a penalty.

This is where our earlier thesis matters. Charismatic authority—Weber's concept—does not just persuade belief; it also suspends cost-benefit thinking. Under founder charisma, sacrifice feels meaningful, even exhilarating. Under succession, when charisma weakens, the same sacrifice stops feeling like devotion and starts feeling like burden. That is "Charismatic Insulation" breaking.[3]

So labor extraction is not separate from The Great Collapse. It is one of its engines.

4. Materials and method: what this paper relies on

This working paper draws on Post-MCGI Society's research archive and interviews with exiters. The archive includes screenshots of labor solicitation and fundraising pressure; internal memos calling for volunteer mobilization; photos of member deployment in events and sites; and audio recordings of meetings in which ministers and officers solicit extraordinary financial actions (including credit-based giving and liquidation of personal items). These materials are organized as exhibits with capture dates, provenance notes, and redactions for member safety.[6]

We treat exiter interviews not as gossip but as structured testimony: repeated patterns across unrelated informants become evidence of a system, not of a single grievance. We also separate observation from inference: exhibits show what was said or demanded; the paper interprets what that demand means structurally.

Because this is published on an activist platform and not a peer-reviewed journal, we adopt an open-review stance. Our core commitment is replicability: we tie claims to exhibits so critics can challenge the record, not just the mood.

5. Findings: MCGI as a distribution system of labor

The core finding is not simply that MCGI asks members to help. Many organizations ask. The core finding is that MCGI increasingly functions as a coordinated apparatus that distributes unpaid labor across sectors—production, maintenance, security, logistics, content, and political mobilization—while framing compliance as spiritual duty and refusal as moral failure.[6]

5.1 The “performative charity” turn increased labor intensity

Our research and interviews converge on a sharp shift: theology recedes as the central daily activity, and service operations take over. Lugaw programs and medical missions do not only “help.” They require continuous production, packaging, transport, staffing, and documentation. The charity becomes a factory rhythm—except the workforce receives no wages and, in many reports, not even consistent basic allowances.[6]

This shift matters because it redefines what the organization is. Once output becomes the central proof of righteousness, the institution begins to measure faith in labor units: attendance, deployment, shifts, quotas, targets, and “patarget” systems.

5.2 Unpaid labor is organized by gender and age tiers

Exiters repeatedly describe labor assignments that map cleanly onto social roles.

Mothers’ groups are pulled into cleaning locales, cooking, packing, and preparing items that are later sold as “food packs” and other captive-market products. Youth groups—reported in some cases to include minors—are conscripted into front-of-house roles (including guest coordination and ushering) and, in certain reports and screenshots, deployed to sites such as KDRAC and other labor locations as “volunteers” without pay, with resulting sleep loss and missed schoolwork.[6] Fathers and male members are routinely utilized for security, logistics, building

maintenance, and enforcement roles, including groups described as DRRT and QUAT (Quick Action Force).[6]

This division is not accidental. It produces organizational efficiency. It also normalizes the idea that your household identity determines your unpaid workload.

5.3 Captive consumption completes the extraction cycle

A repeated pattern in our research is what we call captive consumption: members produce goods or services, and then members become the pressured buyers of what they produced.

Food packs and bottled products are described as being made and distributed through organizational channels and then sold back to the same community, often at prices members describe as burdensome. In this framework, that is not merely “fundraising.” It is a loop: labor → product → internal market → revenue, with the member paying twice—first with unpaid work, then as a captive consumer.[6]

This becomes especially relevant when we situate affiliated media and events within the same economy. Public-facing sources state that Wish 107.5 is operated by Breakthrough and Milestones Productions International (BMPI), and BMPI materials describe Daniel Razon as CEO/President of BMPI and connected to UNTV operations.[7] The point is not to claim illegality; the point is to clarify the material logic: a labor base that can be mobilized at near-zero cost makes large-scale content and events structurally easier to sustain—until the labor base begins to resist.

5.4 Time seizure and “menace of penalty” inside a religious setting

Many exiters describe a basic routine: long worship services followed by closed-door meetings to push financial targets and pledges, sometimes with doors allegedly locked to prevent people from leaving for another one to two hours.

Even if you bracket the most extreme accounts and focus only on the widely repeated pattern—extended compelled meetings under moral pressure—you already have the key analytic point: in forced labor frameworks, the “menace of penalty” does not need to be a weapon. It can be

spiritual condemnation, humiliation, demotion, surveillance, threats to reputation, or the fear of being labeled rebellious. The ILO explicitly treats “menace of penalty” broadly, and its indicator list includes restriction of movement and intimidation as warning signs that voluntariness has been compromised.[2][4]

So when defenders say, “walang pilitan,” the sociological answer is not a slogan. It is a mechanism: coercion can be cultural. Consent can be engineered.

5.5 Debt pressure and asset liquidation as extraction tactics

Our archive includes audio evidence described by exiters where ministers solicit extraordinary financial actions: urging OFWs to use credit lines or loans for “patarget,” and in a separate recording urging members to sell their smartphones to contribute.[6]

This is not a normal feature of volunteer charity. It resembles a classic forced-labor indicator cluster: abuse of vulnerability and debt pressure, which the ILO treats as central warning signs for coercive extraction.[4] The practical effect is harsh. The member converts household resilience into organizational cashflow.

5.6 Political mobilization: labor used beyond “religion”

Our archive also includes memos, permit documents, and testimony describing mobilization of members for party-list campaigning—caravans, sorties, house-to-house visits—conducted through locale networks and coordinated by identified officers in their organizational capacity.[6] Public reporting confirms that Bagong Henerasyon (BH) was proclaimed a winning party-list group in the 2025 elections.[8]

This paper does not claim that election results alone prove religious coordination. Our claim is narrower: the archive documents mobilization of member labor for political objectives without wage compensation or ordinary labor protections, framed again as duty.

5.7 Why members exit: labor extraction as a primary driver

In interviews, many exiters identify labor exploitation as the number one practical reason people detach, second only to disillusionment.[6] That makes sociological sense. Doctrinal doubt can simmer for years. But sleep deprivation, family conflict, debt pressure, and unpaid labor demands create immediate household crises. When you cannot rest before work, or you cannot meet your family's needs, theology stops being abstract. It becomes a budget problem and a body problem.

This is also where The Great Collapse becomes lived experience. As recruitment and attention decline, the organization intensifies extraction from those who remain. That intensification accelerates exits. It becomes a feedback loop.

5.8 How “voluntary” labor is recruited: engineered voluntarism at the point of contact

One reason the claim “voluntary naman” survives in public talk is that the coercion rarely appears as a single explicit order. It appears as a recruitment process.

In our research and interviews, labor roles—whether GCOS (Guest Coordinators), office staff duties, Mothers' groups, DRRT, or QUAT—often begin with one elder or church worker approaching a member personally and “inviting” them into service. The approach is framed as care, privilege, and trust. On paper, the member can say no. In practice, refusal becomes psychologically expensive because the member has already undergone mass indoctrination that ties obedience to love, faith, and salvation, and ties refusal to selfishness or spiritual decline. The member's consent is therefore not a clean, pre-existing choice. It is manufactured inside a moral environment where guilt functions as penalty and where reputation inside the locale becomes a form of social surveillance.

This is what we mean by engineered voluntarism. The system does not need to threaten wages you never had. It only needs to threaten belonging, moral standing, and identity—especially for new members who are still trying to be seen as sincere. Under these conditions, “invitation” is not neutral. It is the soft entry point of a labor regime.

This mechanism also explains why labor recruitment scales. Once a member accepts a first assignment, the threshold drops for the next assignment. The person becomes legible as

“available,” and availability becomes a moral identity. The role spreads not through contracts but through repeated interpersonal capture.

5.9 The choir as a labor substitute: moral support replacing material support

We also documented a newer pattern that signals how labor extraction expands into domains previously handled by ministers, church workers, or organized welfare: the use of the lokal choir for scheduled visitations—member visits and sick visits—outside regular worship days. In principle, visiting the sick can be a real work of care. The problem is how the institution structures it.

First, it shifts outreach labor away from trained church workers or ministers and reallocates it to ordinary members with already overburdened schedules. Second, it converts what could have been concrete support—medical assistance, transport help, or financial relief—into a low-cost ritual substitute: moral encouragement delivered as singing. The institution still receives the reputational benefit of being “caring,” but the cost is paid by member time, and the benefit to the recipient may remain largely symbolic.

This pattern fits the paper’s broader argument about materialism and performative charity. When an organization becomes financially strained under The Great Collapse, it often compensates by increasing labor-based performance while lowering material outlay. Singing visits are cheap. Real assistance is not. So the system expands the appearance of care while conserving resources—again by converting member time into institutional output.

5.10 Profession-based labor tapping: free specialist work as an extraction layer

Our research also shows that unpaid labor solicitation in MCGI is organized not only by gender and age tiers, but also by profession. Members are tapped according to what they can provide as specialized labor: doctors and nurses are recruited into medical missions; lawyers are pulled into legal needs; business professionals are routed into accounting, office work, and administration; engineers are mobilized for technical and construction-related tasks.[6]

This matters because it extends the labor regime beyond manual work into credentialed work. The organization does not simply extract time; it extracts expertise—often the very expertise members normally sell in the labor market for survival. In an ordinary setting, professional labor is compensated precisely because it took years of education, licensure, and continuing practice.

In MCGI's current structure, that same labor is reframed as "tungkulin," making the sacrifice appear spiritual rather than economic.

Profession-tier solicitation also reduces the organization's real costs. Instead of paying for specialists, it draws from an internal pool. The system becomes structurally capable of expanding "projects" while keeping operating expenses low—so long as members continue to surrender their professional surplus labor.

5.11 Performative charity as recruitment funnel: targeting prospects with conversion capacity

We use the term performative charity not as an insult, but as a description of a pattern documented in our archive: charity activity is treated as both moral display and recruitment funnel.

First, we have documented internal instructions that emphasize prioritizing middle-class prospects during lugaw feeding drives.[6] Second, we have documented videos showing volunteers distributing lugaw and bottled water to people arriving in cars and motorcycles while ignoring beggars and those who walk.[6] Third, this pattern aligns with a ministerial pronouncement we have on file (attributed by exiters to Josel Mallari) stating that target recipients should be those who can realistically attend indoctrination sessions—implicitly, those who can later become active members and contributors.[6]

Taken together, these materials support a clear inference: the "target" is not primarily hunger; the target is conversion capacity. The charity becomes optimized for prospects who can be absorbed into the organization's system of attendance, labor, and giving. The poorest—those most in need—are structurally less "useful" to a recruitment-driven charity model because they may not be able to attend indoctrination, sustain participation, or contribute financially.

This is where the political economy becomes visible. The outreach does not function as unconditional welfare; it functions as an investment in future inflow. In that sense, the charity takes on a Ponzi-like incentive structure: present members supply free labor and resources to generate new members who will later sustain the same apparatus.[6] The point is not to claim MCGI is literally a Ponzi scheme in a strict legal sense, but to describe a recognizable logic of replenishment: a labor-and-donation system that increasingly depends on converting new contributors as older contributors exhaust, exit, or resist.

Under Charismatic Insulation, such mechanisms can be concealed by devotion. Under The Great Collapse, as recruitment weakens and resistance rises, the institution has stronger incentives to optimize “good works” toward prospects who can replenish the system—rather than those most in need.

5.12. Where the surplus labor goes: from “tungkulin” to private comfort

A modern-day slavery analysis is incomplete if it only describes extraction and not distribution. The decisive question is not merely “who works for free,” but who becomes comfortable because others work for free. In an extraction system, surplus labor does not vanish into the air. It is converted into revenue streams, lifestyle insulation, and private comfort for those positioned closest to the institutional center.

In the MCGI ecosystem as documented by exiters and reflected in our research archive, surplus labor circulates through a set of affiliated venues that depend on volunteer labor, captive consumption, and reputational legitimacy. Lokal Stores are the clearest example: members render free labor in production, packing, logistics, and event operations, then the same members are pressured—directly or indirectly—to buy overpriced “captive-market” goods sold through internal channels. This converts unpaid time into cashflow. The claim here is structural: when a closed community produces and then purchases its own goods under moral pressure, surplus labor has effectively been monetized twice—first as unpaid work, then as captive demand.

This pattern becomes politically charged when the distribution side is visible. Exiters repeatedly point to a widening contrast between member sacrifice and leadership-family comfort. The “slave master” dynamic in modern settings often reveals itself through lifestyle asymmetry: one class is exhausted and indebted, the other is insulated and conspicuously comfortable. Reports, screenshots, and public-facing materials cited by exiters highlight lavish consumption tied to the leadership circle—luxury vehicles and motorcycles associated with Daniel Razon; visible travel, dining, and consumption displays associated with Arlene Razon; and a broader pattern of status display that clashes with the moral demand for member austerity.

The same logic applies to affiliate-linked products and media operations. When members provide continuous volunteer labor for media production, events, and logistics, the organization avoids ordinary labor costs and sustains output beyond what a normal payroll would allow. That is why labor extraction is not just a “religious” issue; it is an economic one. It keeps institutions running while preserving private comfort at the top. And when members observe that top-level comfort persists while they are told to tighten belts, accept patargets, and surrender more time, the moral spell breaks. Cost recognition returns.

Finally, our modern-day slavery framing treats this distribution problem as a key driver of exit. In interviews, exiters often describe a moment when sacrifice stops feeling sacred and starts feeling like subsidy. The point is not envy. It is legitimacy. If a system demands free labor and money while its visible beneficiaries live in comfort, then “volunteerism” becomes harder to defend as pure devotion. It becomes what it materially is: extraction that funds a hierarchy.

5.13. Captive-market products and regulatory flags: when “gawain” becomes retail risk

A modern-day slavery framework isn’t only about unpaid labor. It’s also about what happens after labor is extracted: members are pushed into captive consumption. You work for free, then you are pressured to buy, often at inflated prices, inside a closed moral economy where refusal is framed as spiritual failure.

This is why “captive-market products” matter. They show how surplus labor and surplus money circulate inside MCGI’s internal marketplace rather than returning to the household that produced them.

Our analysis gains an additional layer when we include public regulatory signals. The Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued public health warnings advising against certain products reported to circulate in MCGI’s internal distribution networks, including (a) “HW Hydrogenated Water (1000 ml)” and (b) “BES Canned Sardines” variants, both described in FDA advisories as unregistered food products.[9][10][11] The FDA also issued an advisory warning against the purchase and use of an “Arlene” shampoo product described as unauthorized at the time of the warning.[12] These advisories matter because they collapse the usual defense line—“paninira lang iyan”—into a more concrete question: why are products promoted inside a disciplined community being flagged by the state regulator at all?

This does not require exaggeration. The paper does not need to claim every internal product is illegal, or that every item remains unregistered today. The stronger claim is narrower and more defensible: the captive-market structure makes members unusually vulnerable to risky or non-compliant goods, because the purchase is not merely “consumer choice.” It is demanded through moral language, social pressure, and the fear of being seen as “hindi nakikiisa sa gawain.”

A note of intellectual honesty is important here. The FDA’s verification portal currently shows an “ARLENE” shampoo notification entry under a specific registration number with issuance and

expiry dates.[13] That can mean the product (or a variant) later obtained notification after the advisory, or that multiple variants circulate and only some are covered by a warning. Either way, it strengthens—not weakens—the logic of why captive markets are dangerous: members are not shopping in an open market with ordinary consumer safeguards. They are buying in a closed system where moral compliance substitutes for product transparency.

So the slavery analogy sharpens: extraction does not end at the workplace. It continues inside consumption. You do free labor, then you are told to buy what your labor helped sustain—under spiritual pressure—sometimes even when regulators have warned the public to avoid the product.

6. Integrating the model: modern slavery dynamics inside The Great Collapse

Put the pieces together and the structure becomes legible.

Founder-era charisma made sacrifice feel light. That was insulation. After succession, insulation weakened. Recruitment weakened. Attention weakened. As inflow weakened, the system relied even more on unpaid labor and captive-market fundraising to sustain operations. When those demands rose, members began to resist. As resistance grew, exit narratives spread. As exit spread, fear declined. The cascade accelerated.[3]

In other words, the modern-day slavery frame is not separate from The Great Collapse frame. It is one of its internal engines: as the system loses legitimacy, it leans harder on coercive moral mechanisms to extract what it can. The more it leans, the more it reveals itself as extraction.

7. Debunking “voluntary” as a sociological claim

MCGI’s defense often rests on one sentence: “voluntary naman.”

Forced labor frameworks answer that voluntariness is not a checkbox. The definition turns on whether work is extracted under a menace of penalty and whether the person truly offered themselves freely.[1][2] In high-control contexts, the penalty can be social death, spiritual condemnation, or being tagged as “masama,” “rebelde,” or “walang pag-ibig.” A person may technically “agree,” but agreement under engineered guilt, surveillance, or fear of being cut off from community is not the same as free consent.

Gramsci gives the deeper explanation: domination that lives in your conscience is still domination. It is simply cheaper for the institution.

8. Conclusion: the fight against MCGI is a fight for labor

If your labor is sacred, it should first belong to your household—your children, your sick parents, your rest, your future. That is not selfishness. That is social reproduction, the quiet foundation of any society.

This paper argues that MCGI’s material turn has transformed the organization into a labor distribution system that increasingly resembles modern-day coercion, even when it dresses itself in volunteer language. We publish this as a working paper under open review because the collapse is happening in real time, and the record will not preserve itself.

If the organization wants to rebut this, it should not rebut feelings. It should rebut exhibits: show wages, show real consent safeguards, show free exit without penalty, show transparent accounting, show boundaries that protect minors, show an end to debt pressure, show an end to captive consumption.

Until then, the most practical moral act is also the most material one: stop giving free labor to a system that treats your surplus as its entitlement.

Notes

[1] International Labour Organization, Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), Article 2(1): definition of forced or compulsory labour as work or service exacted under menace of penalty and not offered voluntarily.

[2] International Labour Organization, “What is forced labour?” (ILO topic page explaining “menace of any penalty” and voluntariness).

[3] Post-MCGI Society, Charismatic Insulation and The Great Collapse (Working Paper, Open Review edition; see also the evidence map and exhibits published alongside it).

[4] International Labour Organization, ILO Indicators of Forced Labour (indicator list including abuse of vulnerability, restriction of movement, intimidation and threats, debt bondage, withholding of wages, excessive overtime, and related signals).

[5] Republic Act No. 10364 (Philippines), amending the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act: definition of “involuntary servitude” as enforced and compulsory service induced by schemes or patterns intended to make a person believe they would suffer serious harm or restraint if they did not continue.

[6] Post-MCGI Society Research Archive (Exhibits set on file with the authors): screenshots of labor solicitation; memos requesting volunteer mobilization; photos of deployments; and audio recordings (with transcripts) describing debt-based giving pressure and asset liquidation requests; plus structured interviews indicating labor extraction as a primary driver of exits.

[7] Wish 107.5, “About Us” (states Wish 107.5 is operated by BMPI); BMPI, “Management Officers” (lists Daniel S. Razon as CEO/President and describes his role connected to UNTV operations).

[8] Reporting on 2025 proclamation of Bagong Henerasyon (BH) as a winning party-list group (e.g., GMA Integrated News, June 6, 2025; Philippine News Agency, June 6, 2025).

[9] Food and Drug Administration Philippines, FDA Advisory No. 2024-1255, public health warning against purchase and consumption of the unregistered food product “HW Hydrogenated Water (1000 ml).”

[10] Food and Drug Administration Philippines, FDA Advisory No. 2024-1231, public health warning against purchase and consumption of the unregistered food product “BES CANNED SARDINES Sardines in Tomato Sauce.”

[11] Food and Drug Administration Philippines, FDA Advisory No. 2024-1232, public health warning against purchase and consumption of the unregistered food product “BES CANNED SARDINES Sardines in Tomato Sauce and Chili.”

[12] Food and Drug Administration Philippines, FDA Advisory No. 2023-0810, public health warning against purchase and use of unauthorized cosmetic “ARLENE SHAMPOO Aloe Vera, Coconut Oil, Olive Oil.”

[13] Food and Drug Administration Philippines, FDA Verification Portal, Cosmetic Product Notification View: “ARLENE” shampoo (registration number and issuance/expiry listed).

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