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A Filipino megachurch has bought over 5,000 hectares in the Free State – and is establishing 'eco-farms' for congregants to live on

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The newly constructed Iglesia ni Cristo church building in Ladybrand, Free State (Iglesia Ni Cristo News and Updates, Youtube)

A Filipino megachurch has bought over 5,000 hectares of land in the Free State to establish "eco farms".

The church has hundreds such farms across the world, where it gives congregants food, employment, education, and even homes.

The 2.2-million-member Iglesia ni Cristo church forbids alcohol and relationships with non-members, with the threat of excommunication for not following the rules.

A Filipino megachurch has bought over 5,000 hectares of land, a patch the size of a small city, near the agricultural towns of Ladybrand and Petrusburg in the Free State, [Netwerk24 reported](#).

The land will be used to established "eco-farms" for Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ) congregants to earn a living, [the church said in a video on Youtube](#).

The church has hundreds of similar farms across the world, where the church gives congregants food, employment, education, and even homes.

According to [Netwerk24](#), Iglesia ni Cristo has been spending millions to build a large church on its 508-hectare property in Ladybrand, surrounded by an electric fence.

Large housing complexes have also been constructed on the

<https://www.businessinsider.co.za/iglesia-ni-cristo-megachurch-buys-over-5000-hectares-of-land-in-free-state-2018-7>

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An Iglesia ni Cristo 'eco-farm' in the Philippines (Iglesia Ni Cristo News and Updates, Youtube)

A local Ladybrand resident, who wished not to be named, said she was outraged when she attended a service at the church.

“I was filled with outrage when the women were separated. We did not have access to the rest of the congregation, and there was a high empty chair next to every female congregation member,” [the resident told Netwerk24](#).

“We could only see [the pastor] preach on an electronic screen.”



Inside the Iglesia ni Cristo church in Ladybrand, Free State (Iglesia Ni Cristo News and Updates, Youtube)

Founded in Manila in 1914, Iglesia ni Cristo also has properties in nearby neighbouring Thaba Nchu and Ficksburg, as well as Maseru, just across the Lesotho border. It has an estimated 66,206 hectares of eco farms worldwide.

It claims to be the [one true church formed to restore the original church of Jesus Christ](#). It believes all other Christian denominations have water-downed Christ' teachings.

Congregants who do not live in accordance with the doctrines of the church are reprimanded before being excommunicated.

[Violations include being absent from worship services too long without any solid reason](#), drinking alcohol, or marrying or having a romantic relationship with a non-member.

It is estimated to have over 2.2 million members worldwide.

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