

First Missions – Philippines

First Missions – Pioneering Workers – Philippines

Philippines

Revised December 9, 2022

Philippines

When did the workers first arrive? September 1936

Who were the first brother workers? Howard Iorger and Hubert Sylvester; Then Willie Jamieson who became overseer), Cecil Barrett & Ernest Stanley among 20 million people.

Who was the first native worker: Simeon Sarmiento was the first brother in 1957.

Who were the first sister workers? May Sylvester and Bernice Beaber arrived after WW2 in 1946.

Who was the first to profess? Mrs. Dorotea Mangila; after her was Ramon de Guzman, Mr. Nemesio Basconsillo, two sisters Magdalena and Juanita Barrera and Jose G de Castro and his wife.

Who were the first natives to go in the work?

Conchita Sansano was the first Filipina sister; entered the work in 1950; passed away in 1992.

Simeon Sarmiento was the first Filipino brother; entered the work in 1957, and still active at age 81.

When was the first gospel meeting? December, 1936 in Cavite City

When & Where was the first Wednesday night Bible Study meeting? Nov. 10, 1937 in the front yard of Jose G de Castro's home in Cavite City, as his house was too small to accommodate the people.

When & Where was the first Sunday fellowship meeting? Two weeks after first Wed Night meeting (possibly November 27, 1937) in Mr. Nemesio Basconville's home on Macawas Street, Cavite City

When & Where was the first baptism? October, 1938

When & Where was the first convention? ———?

Where are the conventions currently held? 2 day conventions held in March at: Agusan, Bohol, Bukidnon, Iloilo, Bayog, Davao, Ilocos, Lal-lo and South Leyte.

Who have the Overseers been since World War II:

Henry Eicher, Truman Denio, James Walden, Erwin Hoest, Jim Girton.

WWII Prisoners of War in Philippines: **Willie Jamieson, Ernest Stanley, Leo Stancliff, Cecil Barrett and Herman Beaber** were workers who were interned at **Los Banos Internment Camp** located about 40 miles south of Manila in the Philippines. They were **Willie Jamieson** from Chirnside, Scotland; **Ernest Stanley** from Lower Farm, Ab Lench, near Evesham, England; **Leo Stancliff** of Bakersfield, California; **Cecil Barrett** of England who migrated to New Zealand; and **Herman Beaber** of Hydesville, California.

Reportedly Cecil and Ernest were in Japan when the war broke out, moved to the Philippines in 1941, and were there only a short time when they were imprisoned. Willie Jamieson related his experiences in May, 1945, and these notes were circulated widely. Herman kept a diary during their time in prison and many copies have been circulated, both a condensed version and the original. His son, John S. Beaber, has made his Father's diary available on-line. It is titled: ***Deliverance – It has come!*** His webpage was accepted in the honorable POW/MIA Ring located at: <http://lithascome.bravehost.com/index.html> . Accounts by the other workers there are available on this website also.

THE "TRUTH" REACHES THE PHILIPPINES

The first part of this account deals as to how the Gospel reached the Philippines per narration of the first two workers (Howard Iorger and Hubert Sylvester) to come to these islands in September 1936.

From them I gathered that before leaving the U.S.A., a certain Mr. Ancao, knowing that these men are to going to a land so strange to them, offered his parents home in the highlands of Amadeo, Cavite a town about 60 miles (by road) Southwest of Manila, a place where to stay initially and get settled. Mr. Ancao gave his parent's home-address and directions how to find it.

It was in this town where the first Gospel meeting started. The workers were able to use the nearby school building for a start. The response was very poor because the people didn't understand and can't speak the English language. However, there was a school teacher by the name of Eliseo Ambat who was coming to their meetings was kind enough to teach them some Tagalog words. This

same teacher was the one who suggested that they better go to Cavite City, a place where many could understand and speak English.

Early in December of the same year, Mr. Ambat took them to Cavite City and scout for a place to start a new mission. Entering the city by the main road, they noticed the Caridad Elementary School building and decided to stop and looked further the surrounding area.

The second part of this account is purely of my (Jose G de Castro) own version as to the real start and growth of the Family of God. Somewhere in December 1936 was the first time I saw these servants of God who were able to rent a Nipa hut just opposite my home in Crisostomo St. The hut was about 22 ft. by 12 ft. and contained a bed room, dining and a kitchen. It belonged to **Mrs. Dorotea Mangila, who later became the first person in the Philippines to make her choice for Christ.** By the house there was a yard with a big mango tree with wide spreading branches. It was under this tree where the workers had their Gospel meetings for they were unable to get permission in using the schoolhouse.

My first impression of the workers was not so good. They were baching in a house of ill repute. Before they rented the hut, there lived in that house a daughter of Mrs. Mangila who separated from her husband and used to have American sailors spent the night with her. It was not until the later part of December when these workers started to make canvas benches that I realize their real purpose in renting the hut.

The first Gospel meeting started just after New Years Eve (1937). In that meeting, Hubert played the organ and Howard sang the hymns. Those in the meeting were all children and one adult (Mrs. Mangila). Hubert read the Bible and then asked questions which the children loved to answer.

Every afternoon, the workers went around the neighborhood inviting people to come to the meetings. It was on one of those afternoon that Howard met me and handed a card which had written on it "Gospel Meetings every night, except Saturday at 7:45 P.M. You are cordially invited. No collections." I still remember my answer to the invitation. It was "I am sorry, not tonight, I am going to the movies. Maybe tomorrow night."

The next night as promised, I was there early in the meeting. This night, aside from the several children, were Mrs. Mangila, Mr. and Mrs. Ramon de Gluzman, the Barrera sister (Magdalena and Juanita) and myself. It took several nights before I was surprised to hear that they didn't have any collections, no organization to support them and that they didn't know where their next meal would come from. Also that they left their homes, parents, brothers and sisters and other dear ones for the gospel's sake.

Having a good knowledge of the doings of the different denominations, it was very hard for me to swallow the above assertions. However as if it was the will of God to remove my doubts, something happened one night when we were announced the passing-by of two other workers (Sam Lang and Cecil Barrett) from New Zealand on their way to Japan , their field of work. The visitors we were told, will speak the next night and proceed to Japan the next day. I saw in this a chance to find if the allegations of being poor was true. With the connivance of Mrs. Mangila, the owner of the batch, I enlarged a hole in the partition that separated the room where the boys batched and the dining room where we were. The hole was big enough for us to peep.

Hubert was preparing the night's meal. He was chopping some pork and then mixed it with tomato sauce and beans. Howard came in bringing roasted old bread (cut into small pieces) that was bought for twenty centavos and four bottles of soft drinks purchased from Mrs. De Guzman's small store for ten centavos. They didn't have any coffee nor milk. Seeing that meal, Mrs. Mangila and I both sighed, "They are really poor." We then thought what additional food could be given to them. She went to her kitchen and fried six eggs and I went home and brought four jars of mango jams.

The Gospel meetings continued very well with new faces coming every night. In the first week of February the meeting was tested. Mrs. Mangila was the only who stood and said "From now on, I will make Jesus my King." The next week another test was made and the same lady alone stood up and said the same things she said the previous week. After these tests, I still didn't understand the reason for one to stand and say something. In other denominations, when one is convinced, all he had to do was give his name and address and he is in.

However the next Sunday afternoon, the workers visited me at home and read from the Bible, Romans 10:9 wherein it says "That if thou shall confess with thy lips the Lord Jesus and shall believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." So on that memorable night of February 23, 1937, when the invitation was extended, although Mrs. Mangila was again the first one to stand, I found enough strength to stand and made my choice for Christ. Two others (Ramon de Guzman and Mr. Nemesio Basconcillo) stood also that night. Five other people, namely, Mrs. Luz de Guzman, Mrs. Basconcillo, the two Barren sisters (Magdalena and Juanita) and my wife made also their choices before the Gospel meetings were transferred to another place upon the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Francisco Roncal.

The meetings in this new place started in late March. Those coming to the meetings were of different sects and the workers have to answer several questions every night. The meetings lasted until the middle of May after six persons, namely Mr. and Mrs. Francisco Roncal, Mr. Preclaro, a Methodist deacon a Mrs. Garcia of the Baptist church and two other men professed in that mission.

The Gospel meetings were then transferred to another part of the City upon the invitation of Mr. Jose Garrido and Mr. Fiorentino Poblete, both Episcopal church leaders. The meetings started in the later part of May and had to stop by early July because of the rains. Three men and one woman were the products of the mission. They were Mr. and Mrs. Garrido, Mr. Florentino Poblete and Mr. Modest Tioaquen, all from the Episcopal church.

Early in September when the weather improved, the Gospel meetings resumed. This time it was in my father's yard. The response was very poor and only a Mrs. Mayuga, the wife of a Church of Christ deacon, professed.

While the missions continued in other parts of the city, the workers thought of the need for Bible Studies. Being one of the three couples who decided for Christ, they picked my home as an initial place for the studies. My house at that time was about 20 ft. by 14 ft. only too small to accommodate for about 18 people. I suggested my front yard and the boys agreed for a start. The next day I didn't report for work but started to build a shade made of bamboos and coconut leaves. Borrowed chairs and benches from the neighbors and connected electric lights for the occasion. Not knowing what a Bible study was and being used to prepare 'meriendas' for visitors, my wife and I prepared sandwiches and ice cream.

The first Bible study started on a Wednesday night, Nov. 10, 1937. It began at 7:45 P.M. and we were about 28 that attended. The crowd became large because several of those that professed belonging to different sects brought some of their members to the meeting. Before the meeting started, we were told to select a verse at random and tell how they interest us. We were sitting in almost a circle and the first one stood and read and explained his portion. Many of those that came from the different sects spoke too long that the studies lasted for almost two hours. For us beginners, all we did was to read a verse and sat down.

After the meeting the prepared merienda was passed to each one, including the workers. It seemed that night every one was elated and satisfied. The next Sunday P.M. the workers visited us at home and asked how we liked the Bible study. We answered it was alright except that we could not talk like the others. The boys for their part believed that the meeting was good except that we were not supposed to prepare meriendas. For if we do it, very soon people will come for the food and not for the meeting. It was a lesson well earned. The next Bible study, the crowd of 28 dwindled down to 15. Only the professing attended.

Two Sundays later the Fellowship meeting began at Mr. Nemesio Basconillo's home at Macawas St. in the same block where my home is. The meeting was almost like the Bible studies, where each one took part. It started at 10:00 A.M. and lasted for about 1 hr. and 30 min. There was no Bread and Wine taken until we were baptized in October 1938.

Thus, the first church (The TRUTH) came into being in the Philippines.

By Jose G de Castro
Cavite City

NOTE: His nickname was Pepe deCastro

June 2018

Our Dear Philippine Worker Staff,

We feel it important to inform the whole staff regarding the use of **Social Media on the Internet.**

Some of our fellow workers and brethren locally and from abroad have expressed their concern. This input has come from them over a period of time. Several times it has been very clearly requested in our local workers staff meetings that all on our staff would cease using Facebook and close their accounts immediately on this social media. We want to be in unity with our brethren around the world in our stand on matters such as this.

Now, we have been discussing this again and we feel we need to also express this message to our friends in each field here in the Philippines. **We would like to ask each pair of workers in your field to kindly request that our friends discontinue usage of any kind of social media. This would include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, the Web sites True Friends, Filipino Friends, etc.. We are asking that from now on, each would limit their communication to e-mail for personal contact among friends when sending messages, pictures, etc.. No longer posting their messages on social media Web sites which is sent all over the world, reaching our brethren in other nations.**

We feel this will help our fellowship to be focused again on the simple truths of maintaining our relationship with God through prayer, reading the scripture, meditating, attending gospel meetings and fellowship meetings. We thank each of you in advance for your efforts to express this message to our friends in each field.

Your Brothers and Fellow Laborers in Christ,

Jim Girton, John Mastin, Bill Walker, Renante Fermin

TTT Editor's Note: the above information has been compiled by the TTT Editor from the above and other sources. Corrections or additions are most welcome; as well as other historical accounts for this country **Email TTT**