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## A Report On My Trip To **The Philippine Islands**

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### ***Another Great Trip***

I am happy to compose this report and tell you about my 30<sup>th</sup> preaching trip to the Philippine Islands. I had a good friend scheduled to go with me on the trip, but due to the corona virus scare his wife begged him not to make the trip. I carried on and stayed *very* busy with all of the classes. This trip included preaching for 12 churches and one day at a prison, with a total of 45 sermons or classes, several question/answer sessions and special classes for the children taught by two of the sisters. This report will give you an idea of just a sampling of the things that were accomplished.

### ***Departure/Arrival***

I left from the airport in Nashville, Tennessee, at 7:20 a.m. This took me to Atlanta, for my connecting flight to Tokyo, Japan (13½ hours). I then flew from Tokyo to Manila (another 5 hour flight), arriving at 9:30 p.m. on Thursday night. I had several friends waiting for me at the arrival hall, **Jerry & Teresa Toreja, Del & Esther Camposagrado, Elias Cruz, and Edwin DePedro**. We then drove to our “home” in Manila, the home of **Jerry & Teresa** and Teresa’s sisters, brother, and in-laws. Teresa is the daughter of the late **Ben Cruz**, who was responsible for establishing many churches throughout the Philippines and for training many of the young men that are now preaching. About 18 people live in this house. **Jerry** works as an engineer and in security for Air Asia Airlines. **Teresa** is a medical doctor and has a small clinic in the corner of their house. Throughout this report, their home will be referred to as “B-01” (the street address).



### ***Kapitbahayan Church***

Our first day of classes was with the Kapitbahayan Church in Metro Manila, where Jerry serves as an elder. This church was one of the first congregations in the Philippines to train the men and develop an eldership. The church is very involved in evangelism, going door knocking every Saturday afternoon. They also have a call-in radio program on Saturday afternoon. The building sits next to the sewage river. The brethren did most of the labor themselves for the construction of this building. They started with just a lower level. As the contribution increased and the membership grew, they then built a second level. Since Jerry works with the airline company, Air Asia donated the seats from a plane they were retiring. These are some of the most comfortable seats I’ve sat in. They are leather chairs, with a neck rest.



We started classes 8:00 a.m. and continued until 5:00 p.m. **Edwin DePedro** taught a lesson on *After We Begin, What Then?* I then taught six lessons: *The Role of the Preacher, The Work of an Evangelist, Being A Member of a Local Church, Preachers Work Under the Elders, Use of US Funds In Foreign Work, and A Laborer Is Worthy of His Wages.*

## A Busy Sunday

On Sunday, I started the morning with the Kapitbahayan Church once again. They start their Bible study at 7:30 and I taught a lesson on *Growing By Serving*. We then moved into the worship service and my sermon was *Living For Heaven*. After the normal worship service, the elders divide the congregation into different groups, based on age or gender. They asked me to teach a training class for the young men that participate in the worship services.

Leaving Kapitbahayan, we traveled an hour to the meeting place of the Judge Jimenez Street Church in Quezon City, where **Allan Dacoco** preaches. They meet on the 3rd floor of an office building. I feel this is one of the more affluent churches, due to most of the members being professionals, whether school teachers, computer programmers, or bankers. Since all of them have higher education, their Bible knowledge is a bit stronger and their desire for deeper and challenging studies is greater. I gave a lesson on *Preparing To Teach Others* and then *Did Dinosaur & Man Live Together?*



The brethren provided us a quick lunch and then we had another hour trip to reach the meeting place of the Meycauayan Church, where **Jimmy Bobis** preaches. You get your exercise visiting this congregation, as they meet on the fourth floor and you have to use the stairs. Several brethren came from Manila and several of the denominational friends of the members were in the classes, so the attendance was 42. I taught two classes: *Becoming A Friend With God* and *Spiritual Significance of the Birth of Jesus*.



## Traveling North

On Friday morning, we got a VERY early start for our L-O-N-G trip to Santiago City. As we climbed into higher elevation, the temperatures lowered and the air became cleaner as we got away from the smog of Manila. Because of the ten-hour trip, we made several stops for gasoline, comfort room breaks, and to eat our



prepared food at a little park. The trip was long, not because of distance but because of the crooked road that you can see on the map. I used a rented van for the trip. Several brethren traveled with me: **Del & Esther Camposagrado, Jerry & Teresa Toreja, Vicente & MonaLisa Cay, Elias Cruz, Edwin DePedro, and Daniel Sikat** (from the island of Mindoro). Many more brethren wanted to travel with me, but we would have needed a Greyhound bus to take everyone. We had a great trip, allowing for many hours of questions/answers and hymn singing along the way. Dr. Tess brought her medical bag and provided free medical exams at each of our locations.

## Santiago City

We arrived in Santiago City at about 3:30 p.m. We were met by the preacher, **Samuel Graneta**, and he led us to his house. The brethren have constructed a small chapel in the side yard at Samuel's house. His wife and daughter-in-law prepared dinner for us. We then went into the chapel for classes. **Del** taught a class on *The Church That Belongs To Jesus* and then I had a class on *Bearing Fruit That Honors God*. After a question/answer period and the long, long trip, we were happy to get to bed at about 10:30



## Cabarruguis Prison

On Tuesday morning, we drove 1½ hours to the home of **Willie Pastor**. He had arranged for us to have classes in the prison near his house, where one of the members of the church works as a security guard. They have classes here every week and average about 32-35 students, but we were all pleasantly surprised that our attendance was 105. The warden said it was due to the interest of several of the men wanting to see and listen to an American preacher. **Jerry Toreja** gave a study on *Perverved Gospel* and then I did a lesson on *It Is Possible To Know Whether Or Not You Are Saved?* The men listened attentively and made complimentary comments as we finished. After classes, we went to Willie's house and his good wife, **Kathy**, prepared a delicious lunch for us.



## New Chapel

We did not have time on our schedule to preach for the Pangal Norte Church, where **Willie Pastor** preaches, but he did want us to make a quick stop to see the progress they have made on their new chapel. The brethren have done all of the labor on the building themselves and have built it in stages, depending on when they had finances to buy the needed supplies. They are nearly completed with the construction and hope to have their first assembly in a week or two. Several readers of this report had made some donations to help them buy blocks, cement, or electrical wiring.



## Malapat Church

After visiting the new chapel in Pangal Norte, we then traveled a little over an hour to visit the Malapat Church (about 5 miles west of Santiago City). **Samuel Graneta** and his son, **Emmanuel**, rotate on who preaches here each Sunday.



Their chapel is very small and some people have to sit outside and look through the door or the side windows. **Daniel Sikat** delivered a lesson on *Salvation and the Church* and I had a sermon on *Standing Against Evil Forces*.

## San Pascual

After our visit at Malapat, we then drove an hour to the home of **Roel Arcalas**, the preacher for the San Pascual Church. His wife provided a nice meal for us, before we traveled to the chapel. Their building sits at the top of a large hill, so there are several steps to climb. It is a challenge for the older ladies, but they make the sacrifice at every service.



We were able to have two services in the evening, making it six lessons for the day. **Vicente Cay** taught

a lesson on *The Church That God Wants* and then I had a lesson on *Getting Ready To Sacrifice*. While we were having these lessons, **Dr. Tess** and **Esther Camposagrado** had some special classes for the children. There were 45 children in the class. At the end of my sermon inside the chapel, one young lady made her good confession of her faith in Christ and we went to the river to baptize her into Christ. With a lovely moon overhead, it was so pleasant to be at the river and witness her obedience to Christ.

## Ammogawen Church

On Wednesday morning, we drove thirty minutes to visit the Ammogawen Church, where **Pacquito Ammog** preaches. Attendance was 38. The brethren have a very small and basic wooden structure for their services, but have started construction on a block chapel. They do a little work at a time, waiting for their budget to allow them to buy more bricks and cement.



**Edwin DePedro** taught a lesson on *Jonah Flees His Obligations* and then I taught a lesson on *Grace, Love and Authority*. We only had time for these two lessons, since we had to start the long drive back to Manila. We stopped along the way to eat and arrived back at B-01 at about 9:00 p.m.

## Sta. Maria Church

On Thursday morning, we traveled about 1½ hours to visit with the Sta. Maria Church. **Dominador Guevarra** is responsible for the establishment of this church. He studied all of the lessons on the *Executable Outline* website from **Mark Copeland** in Kissimmee, Florida. When I got the contact information from **Mark**, I then turned it over to **Jerry Toreja**, one of the elders at Kapitbahayan. He and three other preachers went there for a full-day of Bible study. **Domi** immediately told them, "I've read all of Mark's materials. I know that I've been in error in my denomination. I know that I'm a sinner and need salvation. I know that I need to be baptized for the remission of my sins." He had been a regional director for the Worldwide Church of God, the Sabbath-



keeping cult started by Herbert Armstrong. As soon as he was baptized into Christ, he immediately started trying to teach and convert his family and all contacts in his former denomination. His wife is such a supportive, kind, and hospitable lady. She operates a catering business and provided a delicious meal for us. His son, **Marvin**, helps in the rotation of preachers for the worship service. Domi is also a very successful business man, owning several businesses. He constructed a three-story building for his hardware business, using the two lower levels for storage, but added a very large room on the third floor where the church can assemble.



He is such a dedicated searcher for souls that he even promised all of his employees that he would give them their regular salary for the hours they would attend the Bible lectures.

We had five lessons, plus a question/answer session. I taught classes on *Giving All Diligence To Grow*, *The Work of the Preacher*, *Daniel Was Loved By God*, and *Running the Race*. **Jerry Toreja** taught a lesson on *Saved To Serve*. We ended our studies at 4:00 and then drove back to B-01, getting there at about 5:30.

Thursday evening is the regular midweek Bible study for the Kapitbahayan Church and they asked me to teach two lessons: *Staying Strong When Things Go Wrong*, and *The Church's Role in Developing Elders*.

## Minuyan Church

On Friday morning, we had to get up early to start the trip at 6:00 a.m. due to a government regulation in Metro Manila. Because of the heavy traffic congestion, the government has restricted automobiles to only drive on certain days, based on whether your license plate number ends in an even number or odd number. We had the wrong number for Friday, so we couldn't be on the streets from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

We were able to get on the main highway before 7:00 for the drive to Minuyan, where **Vicente Cay** preaches. The church has converted an old pig sty into a comfortable chapel for the brethren. We had five classes. **Daniel Sikat** taught a class on *Sin of Sins*. I taught three lessons: *Glorifying God in Romans*,



*Divine Plan for Giving*, and *Do You Love Me?* **Arjay Marasigan** taught a class on *What Will I Do To Jesus?* The brethren provided a nice lunch for us, each family donating something, so that **Mona Lisa** was not responsible for all of the food expense.



After the last class, we had a question/answer period to discuss our Sunday contributions. After the Q&A period, we then drove to the home to visit the family of one of the Christians, where there had been a death. The casket was covered with glass across the top. There were many floral arrangements.

## Calumpit Church

On Saturday morning, we had an early breakfast and then drove two hours to Calumpit. It was another morning of leaving Manila very early, due to the coding of the license plates. Our schedule had been arranged by **Melzarga Tacbad**, a preacher that I've been very close to over the years. Mel was left paralyzed from the waist down due to a tumor on the spine. He also underwent two serious surgeries, removing part of a lung and part of his kidney, but you never hear him complain. He is mostly confined to the bed, but tries to sit up in the wheelchair when he can. He's a very humble man and is always appreciative of all that the Lord and his brethren have done for him. He offered apologies because we often have all-day classes at his place, but due to the pain and that he had dialysis twice this week, so he wasn't able to sit up for a full day. We only had classes until 1:00 p.m. and then **Cristina** provided a delicious lunch for all of us in attendance. Wow, her shrimp was awesome! Mel's son, **Jonas**, helps with the preaching at times. We had 44 in attendance.



I taught two lessons: *Forgiveness* and *Sitting At the Feet of Jesus*. Two of the area preachers then taught one lesson each: **Allan Dacaco** taught on *Resilience* and **Del Camposagrado** taught on *Dark Days of Faith*.

## Canlubang Church

On Sunday morning, we drove two hours from Manila to be with the Canlubang Church, where **Edwin DePedro** preaches, one of the young



men that had been trained in Mindoro by the late **Eliseo Sikat**. The Canlubang brethren just recently went through a tragedy with a volcano explosion. I'm showing pictures of what the city looked like before the eruption and then after. Many of the brethren had



to seek shelter at other locations, as their houses were filled with ash. Many of the roofs collapsed, children were having breathing problems with so much ash in the air, and food & water was unavailable for several days. My foundation was happy to send relief.

The church at Canlubang meets in a back room in the home of **Roberto Marasigan**. He has a large family, composed of some of the most dedicated sons and daughters you could ever find. All of the children are married and are valuable servants for the Lord. I taught two classes: *Conflict Resolution Among Brethren* and *God's Plan for How the Church Raises Its Money*. After our classes, we then enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by Mom and all of the girls.



After our lunch, we said our good-byes to **Jhun Layusa** and some of the young men that traveled with him from Caloocan, about ten hours away. The four of them rode



on two motorcycles. Their journey had to be tiring, but they wanted to be with us for as many days as they could and attend as many of the Bible classes as possible.

## Kay-Anlog Church

After our lunch at Canlubang, we loaded into the van and drove to the Kay-Anlog Church. This is a relatively new congregation that **Arjay Marasigan**, the son of Roberto, helped to start. He may be young, but he is dedicated in his service to the Lord. The brethren are renting a small room (pictured here) for their services. We had time to teach two lessons. **Del Camposagrado** repeated his lesson on *Dark Days of Faith* and I repeated my lesson on *Sitting At The Feet of Jesus*. Our attendance was 32, which included several neighbors that Arjay had invited. After a question/answer period, we then loaded up and drove back to B-01 and made it back at about 7:30.



## A Special Thanks

I am appreciative of the brethren that donated to my foundation (Assisting Hands Foundation, Inc.) which allowed funds to be used to help several brethren with several different needs. We provided boxes of food to some of the widows, facial masks for children, antibiotics in two regions, one funeral expense, children's vitamins, and a used computer to one of the preachers. What might seem like a small thing for many of us, they are received with deep appreciation and they send thanks to all who contributed.

No evangelistic trip is possible without the prayers of many saints back at home. I want to thank everyone who had a special interest in this trip and said many prayers while I traveling.

Just before leaving the brethren, we ended our time with a prayer and all agreed that we felt that good was accomplished. We just hope that God feels the same way!

### A Prayer Request For Future Trips

May 21-29 – Alaska gospel meeting

July 27-August 14 – VBS with 2 churches in Belize