



PHILIPPINES

THE MARTINS
Your Missionaries in the Philippines

November-December, 2018

Dear Friends:

In October the 38th annual Pastors & Workers Conference was held at Iloilo Baptist Church. There were several workshops including one led by Paul Kingsbury, Ben Burks, and Scott Cowling of Reformers Unanimous. Delegates who came early were blessed as they learned how to help persons with addictions. They also taught how to use the program to help new converts in their church to grow.

Brother Kingsbury has been in the ministry about 45 years and has dedicated his life to helping others who have lost hope. The Reformers Unanimous program or "R.U." is well known in the USA and in the Philippines many R.U. chapters have been started in the last three years.

Another speaker was Pastor Eddie Gerodias, one of the first graduates of the late Missionary Bob Hughes' Bible College in Cebu. God used Brother Hughes to send me to the mission field. Brother Gerodias has been in the ministry 46 years and pastors two churches. One is in Toledo City, Cebu Island and another is in San Carlos City, Negros Island. They are about an hour apart and you have to take a boat.

His son-in-law pastored one of the churches but he went to Heaven this past year so Brother Gerodias took on that load. He has battled cancer for many years and he's been an inspiration to me because of his faithfulness. I suppose he's spoken at more of the IBC Conferences than any other pastor. His humble spirit and burden to reach people is contagious.

Wednesday Dr. Don Sisk preached. He is a long time friend and has been a blessing to Iloilo Baptist College. We started building our first dorm in 1980. We had little money but started anyway. I asked the Bible



Dr. Sisk preached for Pastor Billy Caalem, a graduate of IBC (left); We had to cross this bamboo bridge to get to Pastor Caalem's church(right)

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College boys to start digging the foundation and they were pretty tired, working late at night. One night they were up late digging and I sent someone to the girls' dorm to ask them to get up, bring a guitar, come to the site, and sing to the boys while they dug! That did the trick! The boys got excited and worked as long as the girls sang to them! Somehow Brother Sisk (then Far East Field Director at Baptist International Missions Inc.) found out. He got some money together and helped. Finally the 2-storey dorm was built. For 19 years Brother Sisk was President and General Director of BIMl. The 2nd night of the conference he preached on Heaven. Brother Sisk's wonderful wife, Virginia, was a great help to him during their 65 years of ministry. When Virginia went to be with the Lord recently it was a great loss but Brother Sisk has been a blessing to many since that time. Becky and I had a lot of fun with him in the week he was with us.

After the message we honored five preachers and one preacher's wife who has been in the ministry for at least 50 years, or was at least 80 years old, and still in the ministry. I had the privilege of introducing each to the pastors and workers. The first one was Brother Sisk.

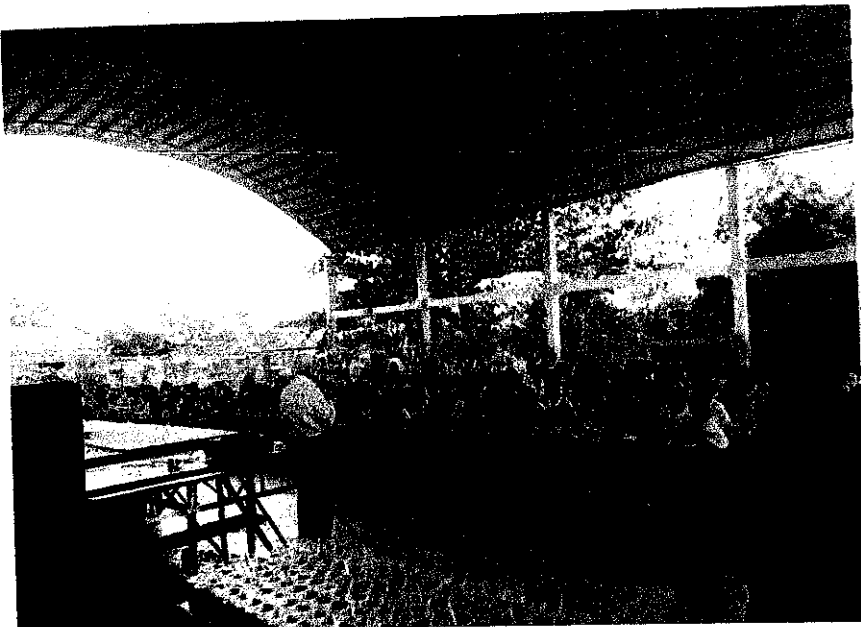
The second was Dr. Armie Jesalva, who Bob Hughes trained to pastor his church in Cebu City. Brother Jesalva was supposed to be one of our speakers but he got sick and couldn't come. I told how Dr. Jesalva impacted my life. When I took my survey trip to the Philippines I went to his church in Cebu. When I mentioned my plan to go to Mindanao and start a church he encouraged me to consider three other places instead. He took me to the pier in 1976 and we got on a boat and went on an all night trip to Tagbilaran, on the island of Bohol. I didn't feel led to start a church there so he sent me to Bacolod City, Negros and finally Iloilo City.

When we started a church in Iloilo City the next year, he brought a singing group from Cebu and preached for our opening service. Once a medical doctor, he's now 84 years old. He has spent 50 years preaching the Gospel and training young men to start churches.

We also honored Pastor Baldomero Pasagingan who has been a faithful pastor for 55 years in the northern part of our island of Panay. When we first started sending IBC graduates to that part of the island he would go out of his way to encourage them and teach them things that would help them in their ministry. He did that for many pastors and we owe a debt of gratitude for his unselfish service to the many pastors and workers he helped.

Another preacher we honored was Dr. Antolin Zamar. When Becky and I arrived in Iloilo we got to know him, as he was president of Doane Baptist College in Iloilo. He was kind to us. I played basketball with his sons many times. He trained his students to go into the streets and win people to Christ. He is now 89 years old and in a wheelchair. After the service we had several guests in our home. When all the others left he and his wife stayed and we talked about the days when he was serving the Lord here in Iloilo. After his first wife went to heaven and he moved to Davao City and pastored a church.

Another godly Christian that we honored was Mrs. Youela Felasol who served together with her husband for over 50 years. Her husband, Pastor Pat Felasol, gave up a position in a stable Christian ministry to go to a



Dr. Sisk preaching at a public school (left); Pastor & Mrs. Gerodias (right)

town on our island, Oton, to start a church along with BIMI missionary Jim Joines, and Brother Diostado Tabuena in 1980. Several pastors had tried to start a church there and failed but God blessed these three men and their families.

About a year before this Dr. Armie Jesalva sent 25,000 New Testaments. The last year of his life, Bob Hughes traveled the USA, raising money to print them. I gave a lot of them to another missionary who took them to Oton and gave them out door to door. Before long the priest went up and down the streets, ringing his bell, collecting the Bibles. He took them to the center of town and burned them.

When the three men heard this they were determined to start a church there. God has blessed the church and their Bible College has sent out graduates to start churches for the past 35 years. Mrs. Felasol is 80 years old and still faithfully serving in that church. Early last year her husband went home to be with the Lord.

The last one honored was Pastor Jun Andigan who was a member of Bob Hughes' church in the 70's. He then moved to Iloilo in the 80's and began attending IBC with his family. He was in the pharmaceutical business. I would often joke him and say he was a drug pusher! Fortunately he has a good sense of humor!

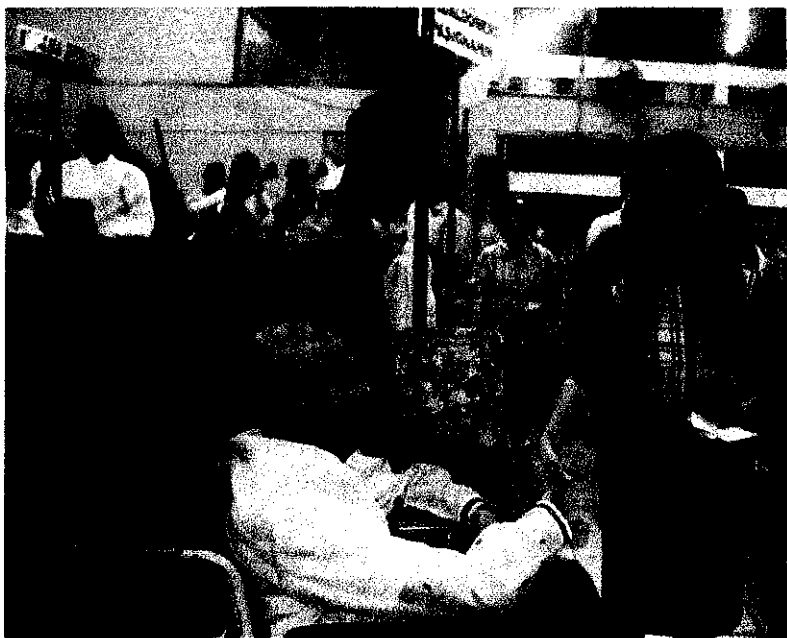
When Brother Andigan was traveling for his company, he would check into a hotel and ask the manager if he could hold a Bible study for the hotel employees at a convenient time. Surprisingly, the manager would agree and some of the employees got saved. He was very productive in the outreach ministries of our church. At the age of 59, in 1994, he retired and told me he was praying about starting a church in the town of Balasan on our island. I told him I would pray for him. The next week I told him I really felt he should. Now at the age of 83, 24 years later, he is still pastoring.

After recognizing these six faithful Christians we asked the delegates to come up during the offering and give a gift to one or more of them. It was very touching to see the younger pastors and workers express their gratitude to these six with a monetary gift, a note, and a handshake.

I see them as survivors because faithful and fruitful Christians are always being attacked by Satan.

Thursday morning we had two split sessions for ladies and men and one session for everyone. During that service we asked all pastors who had been in the ministry 25 years or longer to come up on the platform. There were over 70! During the 25th Pastors & Workers Conference in 2005 we honored pastors who had been in the ministry 25 years or longer. There were only 11 out of the 700 present who had served that long. There are many pastors now who are making life long commitments to serve God.

At each Pastors & Workers Conference on Thursday afternoon we have a distribution of Bibles to the pastors. For years B.E.A.M.S. Bibles and Bearing Precious Seed have sent a container of Bibles and New Testaments for the pastors and workers and they are so grateful. One of the greatest needs in this ministry is Bibles. Recently a very generous donor provided 20,000 Ilonggo Bibles, which were recently shipped to the Philippines.



Young Christian workers thanking Antolln Zamar for his faithfulness (left): Pastor & Mrs. Andigan (right)

Philippines is to see how the Bible Colleges go out of their way to encourage the leaders and students of other Bible Colleges. It is one of the many reasons God is using these humble Christians to start many churches each year. There are 4,300 barangays (villages) in Region 6, where we live, which includes the islands of Panay, Guimaras, and Negros with a population of 8,000,000 people.

There is a real possibility that in the next 7-10 years there will be more churches than barangays. Today there are approximately 862 Catholic priests and 2,100 independent pastors in our region (Region 6). The Catholic churches are very large but most people are Catholic because of tradition, not because of understanding their doctrine. There are about 2,600 independent Baptist churches in our region with about 500 pastors pastoring two churches especially in the rural areas. Please pray for more churches to be started.

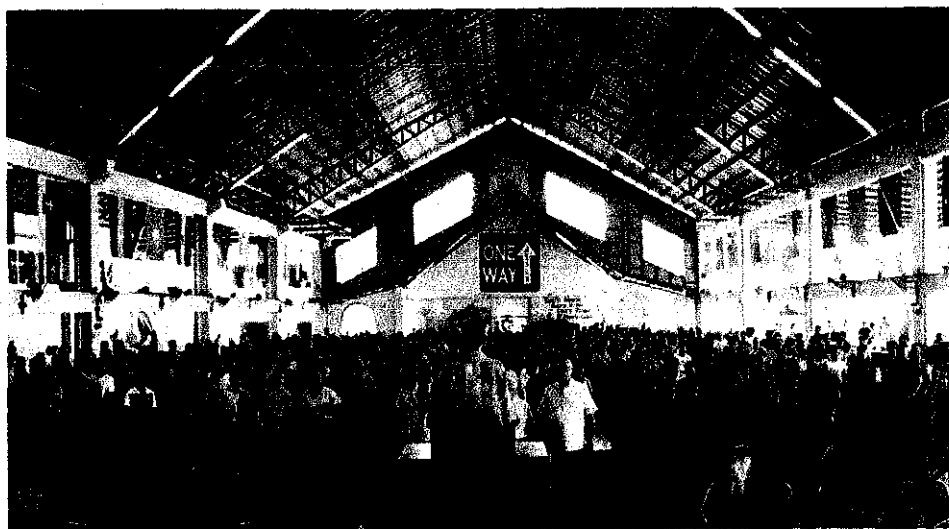
RADIO MINISTRY

1. We have applied with the National Telecommunications for stations in the following cities: Iloilo City, Marawi City/Iligan City (Mindanao), Paranaque (Metro Manila), Davao City (Mindanao), Cebu City, (Cebu Island), and Tagbilaran (Bohol Island). We also plan to apply for two more: Dumaguete City (Negros) and San Remio, Antique. All six stations have churches and pastors who we believe will be able to open their stations.
2. Gene Sharp of Independent Baptist Media is planning to come in December and stay 1-2 months to set up some of the stations.
3. The radio station at IBC is back on the air. The NTC does not allow stations to broadcast once they apply which we did last October. We are almost finished with the process but they have already allowed us to go back on the air.
4. The process of starting stations is a little easier now. The NTC is allowing us to send in our church papers and documents when applying for a station in another city. This will save much time. There were 18 pastors who attended the radio workshop at the Conference. Presently there are 26 towns and cites that we are praying for. Please pray for wisdom in finding a way to get a signal into the city of Marawi. It is more complicated than the other stations.

PLEASE PRAY FOR EVENTS IN DECEMBER: (1) 15TH Annual Police Appreciation Day December 2; (2) Evangelistic Meeting December 22 with our graduates who are pastors in and around the town of Tapaz, Capiz. We plan to have a Christmas program with the orchestra. Pray many will come to know the Lord; (3) Help the Needy Program - December 17-21; (4) Christmas Musical December 16th, 23rd, & 26th.

In closing, Becky and I want to thank all of you who pray and give for the Lord's work here. We hope and pray that you will have a wonderful Christmas and that God will richly bless you in the New Year!

Rich Martin



Alumni meeting for IBC graduates the day after the Conference (left); Pastors were thankful for receiving Bibles (right)