

Good News on the Philippine Work

Herbert W Armstrong

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A Thriving Work

A vigorous Work of sowing the seed of God's Word — and reaping a good harvest — is taking place in the Philippines, a republic of about 48 million people speaking more than 80 different native dialects.

Through a guiding Hand in history, this archipelago of more than 7,000 islands in the western Pacific passed into American hands in 1897. The legacy Americans gave to the Filipino people is largely responsible for the thriving Work in this nation now.

Before the Americans became involved, the Spanish dominated the country for some 330 years. No widespread public education had been provided, and literacy among the natives was thus low. Had this condition continued, perhaps God's Work would not have enjoyed the same growth.

Among the first things the Americans did here was to introduce the public school system, using English as a medium of instruction. Because of this, the Philippines today has one of the world's largest English-literate populations (about 20 million).

Thus it was that in the 1940s some copies of *The Plain Truth* started to find their way to the Philippines from the United States, and eventually some readers proved to be fertile soil for the seed of God's Word.

By 1962 an office of God's Work was set up in Manila, the nation's capital. Advertisements in the then leading national magazine, *Philippine Free Press* (now defunct), swelled *The Plain Truth* mailing list in a matter of months. Many people were being brought to repentance, and today there are more than 2,150 baptized members of the Worldwide Church of God in the Philippines. That is the fifth largest concentration of God's people in the world.

The Plain Truth goes to about 50,000 readers today. But that doesn't tell the whole story. Over the years tens of thousands of Filipinos have been on the magazine's mailing list at one time or another. A conservative estimate of the number of people reached by the magazine here over the years would be about four million.

Besides the widespread acquaintance with written English, other factors helped make God's Work a success here.

The Philippines has a constitution that was almost wholly derived from the American model. Freedom of religion and speech have made it possible for God's truth to flourish.

The special relations the Philippines maintains with the United States also make it easy and convenient for God's Work here to transact business with the offices in Pasadena and other offices of God's Work worldwide.

An important factor in the success of God's Work here is the Filipino people's friendliness and openness to foreign influences. The Filipinos especially admire Western standards and trends. So it is not surprising that the Filipinos would turn out in great numbers to welcome God's "foreign" ways and truth.

Regional Office and Church

An all-Filipino staff assists regional director Guy Ames in the Work in the Philippines. The group includes eight office personnel and 12 fulltime church pastors.

The Philippine Work's headquarters are housed in a suite of offices being purchased by the

Work in Makati, Manila's main business center. The office area includes a mail processing section, literature storage space and a function room for ministerial conferences, Spokesman Club, Women's Club and YOU activities.

During 1980 God's Work here enjoyed a healthy overall growth. Some 95,757 pieces of mail were received, an increase of 17 percent over the previous year.

Income was 30 percent more than during the same period in 1979.

Meanwhile, on the media front, advertising began receiving new emphasis during the latter part of 1980, and the results have been encouraging. An ad for the booklet Does God Exist? ran in Panorama Magazine of the Sunday Bulletin in August and broke all previous records for advertising in the history of God's Work here. Responses at last count totaled 4,366.

Until April, 1980, The Plain Truth was printed locally for Philippine subscribers on newsprint, using local funds.

Thanks to a generous subsidy from the Canadian Office, the magazine is now being printed in the United States on better quality, glossy paper and is directly shipped to the Philippines.

With this help from the Canadian and American areas, the Philippine office will be able to strengthen its ministerial and church development.

A total of 99 people were added to the Church in the Philippines in 1980.

And to ensure that God's flocks were taken care of, God raised up more elders to pastor them. At the Feast of Tabernacles nine new elders were ordained and two more were raised in rank. The manpower development program begun in 1977 was bearing fruit.

At the end of 1980, there were 21 churches, with 12 full-time ministers and local church elders. Attendance is around 1,900.

Because of the country's geography and inadequate transportation, there is a need to establish more church congregations and employ more full-time ministers. Great emphasis is therefore placed on leadership in the churches here.

Philippine Director

Guy Ames began listening to The World Tomorrow broadcast as a teenager in the early 1950s.

He came to Pasadena from his home in northern California and enrolled in Ambassador College in 1959. Mr. Ames was sent to the Philippines after 3 1/2 years of college to manage the fledgling office in Manila.

In January, 1965, Mr. Ames was ordained a local elder and returned to Pasadena to complete college. He graduated in 1966 and served for two years in the Mailing Department.

In 1968, Mr. Ames moved back to the Philippines to help carry the increasing work load. From 1970 to 1973 he served in the Work in Australia.

In December, 1973, Mr. Ames moved to Singapore to establish an office. While living in Singapore from 1973 to 1975, he traveled extensively in Southeast Asia, baptizing members in Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore.

For the past five years Mr. Ames has been an assistant pastor in Pasadena.

Mr. Ames and his wife, the former Helen Beecher, have two children, 14-year-old Karolyn and 11-year-old Gilroy.

Mr. Ames returned to the Philippines in January to become regional director when Colin Adair, who had served in that capacity for 10 years, was transferred to the Vancouver, B.C. area.

Reaching the Public

In 1974 Herbert W. Armstrong held a public campaign in Manila, Philippines. Having first visited the nation in 1970 and met with government leaders, the way was cleared for him to reach the citizens with the good news of the Kingdom of God. At the Araneta Coliseum, several thousand people heard Mr. Armstrong expound the human potential of man, over a three-night period.

Follow-up lectures were held by regional director Colin Adair, and some growth was experienced in the Church.

Mr. Armstrong returned to the Philippines in 1975 for a number of visits involving government leaders, and was able to speak to the Manila congregation once again.

Mr. Adair started holding public lectures in the country's main cities in 1975. On numerous occasions these meetings were carried live by area radio stations. From 100 to 500 people attended each lecture, and follow-up Bible seminars were conducted with encouraging results.

These lectures have continued to the present, although now they are geared more to the readers of The Plain Truth than to the general public. Local pastors follow the lectures with forums of their own, and a number of new people have started attending church as a result.