

WHY THE PHILIPPINES?

The Work of God continues to grow rapidly throughout the world. One of the fastest growing areas is the Philippines. Why has God chosen this particular nation in which to raise up and prosper His Work in Asia? Here is the fascinating answer.

by Arthur Docken

Manila, The Philippines

CURVING gracefully across the blue China Sea like a string of pearls, lie the 7,000 beautiful volcanic islands that comprise the Philippine archipelago.

Over 50,000 PLAIN TRUTH magazines are mailed to the Philippine Islands every month! Because of *The WORLD TOMORROW* broadcast and monthly ads in a national magazine, the *Philippines Free Press*, this figure has been increasing at a rate well over thirty percent per year.

Jesus Christ, the living Head of this Church, promised that doors would be opened to His disciples so that His message—the Good News of God's coming Kingdom—could be preached to all the world and published among all nations. But why was a door opened to us in this particular nation of South-east Asia? Only by understanding the Philippines can we understand God's reasons for opening His Work there.

Historical Background

When discovered by Magellan in 1521, the islands were already inhabited by natives of Asiatic stock, mostly Malayan. Magellan was killed here when he became involved in a local power struggle between warring tribes. Those power struggles still exist!

In 1565 the islands were subjugated by the Spanish, and Manila was founded in 1571. It was the Spanish who named the islands after their king, Philip II.

Spain dominated the Philippines for the next 350 years and the Roman Catholic Church established many missions and schools. The Spanish-Catholic rule was strict and cruel, and often the natives tried to rise up against them. The revolt was always quelled, and

many natives lost their lives in the struggle.

Finally Germany became interested in the Philippines. They negotiated with Spain, and actually made arrangements with Spain to purchase the islands. But before anything definite could be done, the transaction was cut short by the Spanish-American War in 1897. God was beginning to set the stage for the final days of this Work!

The United States navy, under the command of Commodore Dewey struck the Spanish fleet a deathblow in Manila Bay in 1897 and this was instrumental in the overthrow of Spanish rule of the Philippine islands. The United States paid Spain \$20,000,000 for the islands and they came under American jurisdiction.

The American rule was different from that of Spain. As they ruled, they also worked to develop a Filipino government. This government was based on that of the U. S. and used a monetary system identical to that of the U. S. dollar. It was the desire of the United States to turn control of the Philippine Islands over to the Filipinos as soon as they could rule themselves. Also, the United States allowed missionaries of many different religions to come to the islands thus ending the Roman Catholic monopoly of religion here.

The Republic of the Philippines was formally inaugurated on July 4, 1946. Independence at last! But independence did not mean freedom—nor did it really mean freedom from dependency upon the United States. The ravages of war and the weakened condition of the country's economy was too great a burden to bear alone.

Independence did not bring the expected and desired peace and prosper-

ity to the Philippines. Problems of survival sapped the strength of the new nation that had never known true independence. Peace was still a long way off.

In 1950 the Philippine government requested the United States to send an Economic Survey Mission to the Philippines to study and make recommendations on the economy of the country. The mission uncovered corruption, inefficiencies, injustices and economic backwardness. They recommended far-reaching reforms that were necessary to bring about stability in the government and the economy, but today, sixteen years later, the picture is little changed. The corruption is worse than ever and economically the Philippines continues to stagger. President Marcos in his inaugural address last January told the nation that the government was going in debt at the rate of three million pesos a day (\$750,000)! Inefficiencies are still tying up government and business in hopeless tangles of red tape. Some courts are clogged with hundreds of cases that will take years to handle at the present rate. Even so, many courts meet for only three or four hours a day. The Philippine government is still in trouble.

The Crime Picture

Crime is a way of life. Smuggling is taken for granted in spite of a concentrated government drive to stamp it out. The anti-smuggling program is hampered by the fact that many officials, army, navy and police officers are apparently involved in the smuggling operation. These officials, underpaid, feel they have to go into crime to make ends meet. The government, going further in debt every day, is unable to pay any more and because of the smug-

gling operations they figure they are losing over five hundred million pesos a year in unpaid custom revenues alone.

A crime syndicate called the *Octopus* has great power and controls many local government officials, and indeed whole communities. A government task force has been set up especially to combat this organization, but although arrests are made weekly there seems to be no end of members of the gigantic "octopus" that has a stranglehold on the nation.

Robbery has always been prevalent, but recently well-planned and executed jobs have been taking place with uncomfortable regularity. Only recently a daring daylight robbery took place just two blocks from our offices. Although the police were tipped off and surrounded the building *during* the hold-up, all members of the gang mysteriously and miraculously escaped.

One of our office staff was robbed of a watch and money at the Manila post office when he went to pick up mail on one of the many religious holidays.

All office buildings are forced to have their own private guard detachments on duty 24 hours a day as a result of the high crime rate. Some manufacturing plants have guard towers and barbed wire fences making them look like prison compounds, and workers are searched as they leave the plant in the evening. All guards carry pistols and often they carry other, more powerful weapons such as sawed-off shotguns, carbines or submachine guns.

Many congressmen have their own bodyguards to protect them from their political rivals, and the weapons issued to the bodyguards come from the government! Is it any wonder then, with men in high office resorting to such tactics, that crime and violence are taken for granted in the Philippines?

The Agriculture Problem

Rice is the staple of the Filipino diet. It is eaten three times a day by most Filipinos and takes the place of bread, potatoes, cereals and most vegetables on the Filipino dinner table. Rice and fish is the normal menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner. All of Asia grows and eats rice as it has for centuries past.

Long a rice exporter, the Philippines is now forced to import rice. The ironic thing about it is that it is becoming increasingly difficult to purchase rice from the other rice-producing countries in the area. The Filipinos have imported rice from the United States, but generally the price is too high for them to pay and most of the other rice producers are having difficulty producing enough for themselves. The continuing population explosion is draining off all surplus, and rice production lags further and further behind.

The Philippine population is growing at the rate of 3,000 per day (or 3.2 percent per year—one of the highest in the world) and every day brings them closer to a real crisis. It is estimated that by 1980 all available farmland will have been exhausted—if things should continue as they are going now, which we know will not happen. The officials don't want to think about what will happen that far in the future. But of course they will have to face the horrifying facts much sooner than that, especially if the present drought conditions continue.

Philippine Religion

Many religions have become established here. Because of the 350 years of Spanish rule by far the largest group is the Roman Catholic Church encompassing over 90 percent of the population. It is a Catholic country with the government controlled by Catholics and the nation observing all Catholic holidays.

The religion, however, is mixed with local traditions and mysticism inherited from other oriental religions such as Hindu and Moslem. One interesting celebration is John the Baptist Day when fun-loving Catholics "baptize" unsuspecting pedestrians by throwing buckets of water on them.

It is here in the Philippines that the practice of being nailed to a cross at Easter time is found. Not widely practiced, the ritual is often scorned by the public and condemned by the church, but every year at least one zealous religionist allows himself to be pinned to a wooden cross by nails through his hands.

Flagellation, the cutting and beating

of the body to take upon the individual the supposed same sufferings as Christ endured, is still practiced in rural areas and the streets are red with the blood of these "devout."

Candlelight or torchlight processions are also an important aspect of the Filipino's religious life. Usually these revolve around a statue of one of their favorite saints, such as Santo Niño or the Black Nazarene, and generally, beautiful girls dressed in flowing white robes are an integral part of the procession. They adore their statues and hold city-wide celebrations on the statue's special day.

Mysticism and mystery are found everywhere. Strange lights illuminate statues of the "virgin Mary" and the superstitious natives flock to these strange occurrences. Young girls seem to be imbued with healing powers or other spiritual gifts.

Attitude Toward Americans

Although the number may be dwindling, there are still thousands of Americans living here. Some have been here most of their lives and call it home. American children are born here, educated and eventually go into business here. Thousands of American servicemen are stationed at several naval and air force bases located in the Philippines.

The Filipinos seem to love the American, and the familiar greeting, "Hi, Joe!" is still heard from the children. But there is a fresh breeze of anti-Americanism that is stirring up a dust cloud of resentment which will probably lead to a general feeling of distrust and eventual ill-will toward Americans. There is a steady diet of criticism aimed at the American foreign policy and U. S. relations with the Southeast Asian countries in particular—especially the war in Viet Nam. Although the Philippines is sending a contingent of non-combatant engineers to Viet Nam, and officially the government of the Philippines backs up the U. S. war efforts, influential columnists and congressmen are pouring out a daily tirade against Americanism and Americans in general. They criticize American customs, music, motion pictures, and the famous American hypocrisy as well as its government.

American military might is once again in evidence here since the war in Viet Nam has grown to such proportions. The Philippines is an ideal depot and base for many of the units fighting in Viet Nam. There are several air and naval bases here, and that means many servicemen as well as civilian employees. Sailors on shore leave are seen constantly as ships return from the fighting to refuel and replenish their stores.

With the American military and civilian population in the Philippines the United States is well represented and exerts a strong influence on the Filipino economy as a result. Without Americans here the country would continue, but their absence would be felt in many levels of business and government. Many Americans are in executive positions in business and all Americans purchase food, clothing and appliances here — they rent homes for highly inflated prices — they pay taxes to the Philippine government. The Filipinos would be sorry to see the Americans leave but this feeling could change rapidly of course.

God's Work in the Philippines

So much for the Philippine background. What about God's Work here? As long ago as 1948, *The PLAIN TRUTH* magazine was coming to the Philippines, perhaps carried by Americans or sent to Filipino missionaries. In 1957, Headquarters received a letter from a man by the name of Pedro Ortiguero who said he was a minister in the Church of God (Sardis church) and was interested now in the Radio Church of God. Correspondence followed and in 1958 Mr. Ortiguero broke all ties with his former church and became the representative of the Radio Church of God in the Philippines. Mr. Waterhouse visited Mr. Ortiguero in November of 1958, and could see the potential here.

More and more requests for the literature came from the Philippines, and finally in 1961, after Mr. Ortiguero had attended the ministerial conference at Pasadena, Mr. Waterhouse and Mr. Portune made a trip to the Philippines to survey the situation and study the possibility of opening an office here. What they found was discouraging, but

as the Work continued to grow, the Philippine office was established by Mr. Waterhouse in 1962. In early 1963, Mr. Guy Ames was transferred to the Philippine office from Headquarters. Ads were run in the *Philippines Free Press*, and the mailing list grew even faster. Many were being baptized, and by the spring of 1964, a regular Bible study was established with 16 attending.

Mr. and Mrs. Ames were returned to Headquarters in August 1965, so that he could complete his training and Mrs. Docken and I were transferred here. On September 25, 1965, the first church service in Manila was held, and the first Spokesman Club was formed a week later.

Meanwhile, on the island of Mindanao, another group was being called by God. Several other ministers of the Sardis church were beginning to understand more truth than they had received in their previous church, and they guided their followers into this new truth in the Radio Church of God.

Mindanao is a virgin territory. Only in recent years has the government opened the land for development and homesteading. Some of the church leaders in that area obtained a large tract of land from the government and started a regular community based on God's teachings. Not having a trained leader from Headquarters, they made mistakes but they continued to grow and develop. They have since built a large tabernacle for services, and often over 500 attend services there. The language is generally a local dialect called Visayan (Cebuano) but some can speak English. During a recent trip down there to investigate the drought and famine that they were suffering, I had a wonderful opportunity to meet the brethren and see the country firsthand.

The climate is very much like that of Southern California. Gently rolling fields, broad valleys and lushly covered mountains make it a beautiful country. The rich soil supports a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. I saw pineapples, corn, mangoes, rice, bananas, and many other crops being grown commercially. There are vast acres of neatly planted pineapple plantations that are really beautiful viewed from the air.

Although the people in Mindanao do not have the close direction of Headquarters-trained personnel as do the people in Manila, they are nevertheless growing and developing into a stronger church area.

Why the Philippines?

The Work has continued to grow throughout the Philippine Islands. Over 100 attend services in Manila every week, and 161 showed up for the Feast of Unleavened Bread this spring. Growth, yes. But why here in the Philippines? Why not Japan or even British-influenced Hong Kong?

With the background we now have, it is quite simple to see the reasons God has chosen the Philippines to be the center of the Work in Southeast Asia.

One: Exposed to Western Religion

The Philippines have had an exposure to or familiarity with God's Word, the Bible, in a way no other oriental country has. The Spanish introduced their "Christianity" over 400 years ago, and the Filipinos are therefore familiar with the name of Jesus Christ and some of His teachings. Missionaries have been to China, Japan and other countries in this corner of the world, but because of the vastness of the countries and their firmly established state religions Christianity had little influence in these other countries. But Spain *ruled* the Philippines, and they forced the people to observe their religion. Because of this influence, the Spanish religion, Roman Catholicism, remains today as the state religion of the Philippines. While this is not the true religion, it nevertheless has given the Filipinos an introduction to God's Word, and has helped make God's Work here less conspicuous. As Christianity was considered just another Jewish sect during the apostolic days of the church, so here today, as in many other parts of the world, God's true Church is looked upon as just another Christian sect. This helps avoid much persecution that might otherwise be experienced. Although eventually we will be persecuted by the Catholic Church, there is still enough ecumenical spirit and a desire to avoid religious persecution on their

part that we operate in complete freedom here in a dominantly Catholic community.

Two: Freedom of Speech

The second major reason God has established His church in the Philippines is the freedom of speech enjoyed here. Israel has had a powerful influence on the Filipinos for the past 50 years. If Spain still ruled the land, there would be little chance to broadcast *The World Tomorrow* program, or advertise in the national magazines. Spaniards are just not that tolerant. American policy has always been to allow complete freedom of speech. This American philosophy has been adopted by the Filipinos. The Spanish are not tolerant — if they had remained in authority any longer than they did, their influence would still be felt here even if they did not rule. But the Filipinos believe in freedom of speech, just as Americans do, and while that results in some anti-American comments in the papers it also allows the Work of God to preach and publish the truth. As long as we have freedom of speech we can continue this Work. This could not

be done in China, Indonesia or any other country in the area, at least not for long.

Three: Widespread Use of English

The third reason God chose the Philippines is the large number of English-speaking Filipinos. This is also due to American influence in the islands. For a while there was even talk of making the Philippines one of the States of the United States of America. Just as Spain required Spanish to be taught and spoken when they ruled, so America introduced English in the schools when they took over. The Spanish influence was felt long after the Spanish left, and Spanish continued to be used in the courts until 1930, but English was made the official language in 1913, and was taught in the schools. Today there are at least eighty-seven dialects and languages spoken throughout the archipelago! About forty-nine percent of the people know English although it is often difficult to understand because of the accent. They read it well, however.

Tagalog, the official language, is

being taught in most schools. Very recently some public meetings have been conducted in Tagalog and this year the graduation ceremonies of some of the schools were conducted all in Tagalog. But Congress and most governmental activities are conducted in English, the largest circulation newspapers and magazines are published in English. But Tagalog is being pushed. Stop signs say, "Hinto" instead of "Stop" and "Lakad" instead of "Go." Many signs use both English and Tagalog, but the English words are painted out as people become familiar with the Tagalog.

Because almost half of the Filipinos speak English, nearly as many as speak Tagalog, it is simple for us to use our present English language broadcasts and literature without having to translate into many dialects. Some church groups have large staffs trying to translate the Bible into the dialects, but by using English we reach almost as many people as we could if we used Tagalog. Generally the English-speaking people are more educated than those speaking *only* the native dialects. True, they do have a little difficulty understanding English, but those that God is calling are learning and growing in spite of this slight handicap. If the church were to grow any faster it would be difficult to handle the increase. God is calling people who can understand and are willing to learn. The church is growing and the members are growing, proof that English is the language God is working with now. No other country in this corner of the globe has such a large percentage of English-speaking people.

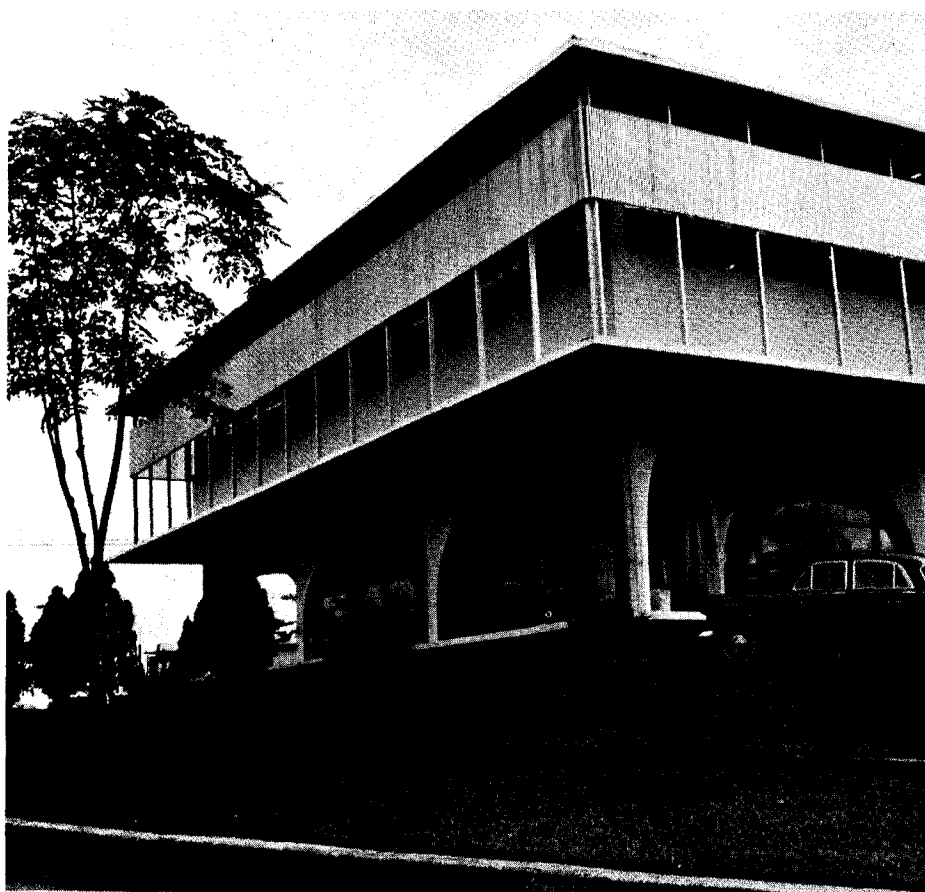
Four: Good Followers

The natural ability of the Filipino people to follow will be used by God to great advantage in the Church today, and in His government in the World Tomorrow. The people will follow those in authority and are obedient to them once they are converted. For this reason God has chosen the Filipinos to be His people today in the Far East. He knows that they will submit to authority readily and obey that authority. They have been trained to submit to authority during 400 years of foreign rule. Unconverted, they will often stick



Ambassador College Photo

First Philippine Feast of Tabernacles at Kiara, Mindanao.



Ambassador College Photo

The Philippine Office fills a suite of rooms on the top floor of this fine building.

tenaciously to the letter of the law, and fail to keep the spirit of the law. But once God has called them and they become converted, understanding the spirit of the law as well, they readily submit to authority. The attitude of the Filipino people is really an inspiration, and it seems certain God considered this outstanding trait when He chose the Filipinos today. They are meek, humble, courteous and friendly as well.

They are especially receptive to American influence, and the Filipino is familiar with American habits and American ways. In fact the Filipino is very much like the American and enjoys American products, movies, music and Americans in general. The hostility and suspicion of most Asiatics toward Americans and Westerners in general is not as strong here — at least not yet. Often they will trust an American where they will not trust their own people. If an American says something they will usually accept it, and as a result those that God is calling accept the authority of the church more readily than other Asian peoples might.

Five: Poor Reputation

Strangely, the reputation — what other nations think of the Filipino — is also a factor God considered when choosing this particular people. In this part of the globe Filipinos are looked down upon by other nationalities. During World War II the Japanese showed little mercy on the Filipinos, calling them monkeys and treating them as if they were. Thousands of them died at the hands of the merciless Japanese military, and they still fear and distrust the Japanese to this day. Although Japan is making overtures of friendship for mutual economic development, there is little reason to believe the Japanese have acquired a real love and respect for the Filipino since the war.

The Chinese are also aggressive and would like nothing better than to take over the rice paddies and cornfields of the Philippines. Indonesia is the same. All look to the Philippines as their natural prey because they have no respect for the Filipino and they covet his land.

This disrespect and derision is one

reason God has chosen the Philippines to carry on His end-time Work here in the Orient. Here, the people are learning to obey their Creator, the God of Israel. In the World Tomorrow they will be used as a showcase to other Asiatic countries, including Russia. When these countries see the blessings being experienced by the Filipinos whom they have always felt unable to produce for themselves and unworthy of special blessings, they will naturally want to know how they too can prosper. They will be told in response to their queries that the blessings come because of obedience to the Laws of the God of Israel. The Filipinos will then proceed to teach the other nations of the Far East how to live, GOD'S WAY.

One of the most hated and disesteemed nations of Southeast Asia, the Philippines will then be a respected leader used to teach God's truth to a war-weary Orient during the Millennium. God will truly use the "weak" to confound the "strong."

Six: Similar to America

In spite of Government inefficiencies and other problems, it is still comparatively easy to do business here. The mails are reasonably efficient (although often slow) and regulations are lenient for our type of work. Business transactions and modern banking are necessary to God's Work. Here in the Philippines we have business and banking methods as well as a monetary system almost identical to that of America. For these reasons it is very easy for an American to come into the country and transact the Work of God without having to learn new systems and monetary units. Housing, food and clothing are on a par with what can be purchased in the United States. Most American foods are available here for quite reasonable prices considering the distances involved. In many ways the Philippines is not a "foreign country" to Americans but a miniature U. S. Some of the Filipinos even jokingly call themselves "little brown Americans." God's Filipino people can see the example and enjoy the blessings of Israel and understand what God's blessings mean to them in a physical way here and now. We can

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Ambassador College Photo

A brood chamber from one of our own hives on the Bricklet Wood Campus. Mr. Silcox is pointing to a bee biting its way out of a capped cell. Will it be a Queen, a Worker, or only a Drone?

God's answer is clear — PRODUCE GOOD FRUITS!

"And beside this, *giving all diligence*, add to your *faith* virtue; and to *virtue* knowledge; And to *knowledge* temperance; and to *temperance* patience; and to *patience* godliness; And to *godliness* brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness *charity*. For if *these things be in you, and ABOUND, they make you that ye shall neither be BARREN nor UNFRUITFUL in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (II Pet. 1:5-8).

Are you a really fruitful Christian, or are you a spiritual drone—a drag to God's Work and to His Church?

Brethren, God Almighty wants us to "bear *much fruit*" (John 15:8)! It is not His will that one single child of His be unfruitful or barren in anything (II Pet. 1:8)!

This much, you can be absolutely certain of! You will *not* be barren or unfruitful if you willingly submit yourself to God Almighty — diligently serv-

ing Him to the very utmost of your ability!

If you do this, you will not be a spiritual drone! Your life will be fruitful — and you will make it into God's Kingdom!

The Philippine Office staff today. Left to right are Mr. and Mrs. Pedro Ortiguero, Mr. and Mrs. Victorino Tuangco, Miss Verano, Miss Eunice Ortiguero, Mrs. Benjamin Ortiguero, Mr. Tuangco's boy, Mr. Docken's older girl, unidentified woman, Mr. Waterhouse, Mrs. Docken, Mrs. Nicolas and daughter, Mr. Docken, Abraham Ortiguero, Filamer Santos, Franklin Gonzales, Mr. Docken's daughter and Dominador David.

Ambassador College Photo



Why the Philippines?

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conduct God's Work easily, economically in familiar surroundings and using familiar methods of business that are compatible with those used at Headquarters.

Seven: Strategic Location

The location of the Philippines has a great deal to do with their being chosen by God today. Situated right in the middle of all of these nations, it is the natural position to use as a center for training other nations in the World Tomorrow.

At the same time the islands are far enough removed from the other countries to provide at least some protection from them right now. Because the U. S. is fighting a war in Viet Nam, two hours away by jet plane, and since we are so close politically to the Philippines, these islands are a natural base for U. S. combat units. With such a large build-up of U. S. fighting strength as we have here, there is little chance of other nations attacking the Philippines at this time and for some years to come — long enough at least to accomplish God's Work here.

These are some of the more obvious reasons God has chosen to start the Asian Work in the Philippine Islands. We may yet reach Japan, or other na-

tions in the Orient, but it looks like the Philippine work will be the most important now at the close of this age.

Problems

Just because God has opened the door here does not mean we do not have problems. This is a poor nation and as a result the Work cannot pay for itself in the Philippines, and is naturally somewhat restricted in growth. The minimum wage here is \$1.50 per day, but the average is much less. Unemployment is as high as it was during the depression of the 1930's. We need more co-workers that's true, but the Philippine brethren need to be prospered more, as well, so they can help finance God's Work themselves and enjoy some of the blessings of this world including three good meals a day. Many do not enjoy this "blessing."

The language barrier is a problem. While they understand English reasonably well it is difficult for most to follow the rapid-fire delivery of *The World Tomorrow* broadcast. For this reason the written ads in the *Philippine Free Press* bring in more than ten times the response that the broadcast does. Many of the brethren are working on themselves to improve, but it is a slow process. Only God can really give them the understanding they need.

In spite of American military might God must protect this nation or one of the other nations could step in and take over. The Communists that terrorize the outer provinces could certainly become powerful enough to overthrow the government; they almost did it once before. We need God's protection so that this Work can be accomplished and completed. The Philippine Islands are volcanic and there are still live volcanoes here. Only God can control these destructive explosions which could blast the whole archipelago out of existence.

The Philippines is a land of contrast. It is beautiful, but in many ways ugly. It is rich and poor. Happy and sad. God loves these people and He is blessing them with His truth so that they may learn the right Way and never be wretched, poor nor sad again. It isn't easy for these people to overcome.

But they are eager to learn of their God and are faithful to serve Him.

The Work here is just one more facet of God's ever-expanding activities. You and I are members of the body that is making it possible to reach all nations. No matter where we are or what color

we are, we are one in Christ performing the most important and interesting task on this earth today. Pray fervently for the Work here in the Philippines and around the world that these problems can be overcome and God's will be done on this earth today in us.

Why Do You Want to Be In God's Kingdom?

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lership because we have been prejudiced by the gross injustice of man's system of government. We are surrounded with the misuse of authority in positions of government. Today, greed, graft and corruption are synonymous with high office. The public official is anything but a servant of the people. Rather, he is frantically striving to get his while the getting's good.

A Wrong Approach

Even the men selected by Jesus Christ to be trained as apostles were guilty of having a wrong concept of greatness. Notice the account in Matthew 20. The mother of James and John had come to Christ, requesting the two most exalted positions for her sons (verse 21). When the others overheard the conversation, their carnal jealousy caused them to become highly indignant. They too desired the most exalted positions *for themselves*.

Jesus Christ then contrasted the avenue to greatness as followed by worldly aspirants to the *true way* which His life exemplified. Jesus said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles [governmental leaders] exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them" (verse 25). Here are the tyrants, the despots, the petty dictators who have earned the infamous title of "strong men" by their pompous parade of power—usually at the expense of their own people. They revel in seeing people tremble before them. They live in pampered luxury and affluence and deign to do anything that some fawning servant could do *for* them.

This is not God's way of ruling. These are the governments of men—not the Government of God.

Key to Greatness

What then should your attitude be? What is a rightly motivated desire? Christ made it very clear when He said, "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister [servant]; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant [bondman or slave]: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to GIVE his life a ransom for many" (Mat. 20:26-28).

Service is the gateway to true greatness! Christ has set the standard of performance. It involves GIVING of your time and energies—in unselfish service. God is the greatest being in all the universe because He serves the most.

Need for Authority

Consider what the right use of authority could accomplish. Haven't you frequently been brought face to face with the wretchedness of man's way and been deeply moved by the pitiful plight of hapless individuals who have been victimized by their own folly? Haven't you WISHED YOU HAD AUTHORITY TO STEP IN AND MAKE THEM OBEY THOSE LAWS OF GOD WHICH WOULD SOLVE THEIR HEARTRENDING PROBLEMS. *Of course you have!*

Human nature isn't going to naturally obey God. It will automatically resist the very thing which would bring it every good thing which it so desperately wants. This is why Jesus Christ is going to have to rule this world with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:27). Men are going to be *forced* to obey God's laws, whether they want to or not. They are going to be forced to give God's laws a chance. Before too long, they are go-