

RICK & BECKY MARTIN

MISSIONARIES TO ILOILO CITY, PHILIPPINES SINCE 1977

PO Box 88 Iloilo City, Philippines 5000 | martinsiloilo@gmail.com | BIMi- PO Box 9 Harrison, TN 37341 |

Dear Friends,

For several months our newsletters have centered around the theme of having a strategy to start churches on the mission field. The last part in this strategy is sending Filipino missionaries to other countries around the world. In this newsletter we want to share the work of some of the graduates of Iloilo Baptist College who are serving as foreign missionaries.

In 1990, we began to pray for a country where a Filipino might be able to go. The Lord impressed the country of Haiti on my heart to the point that I decided to go to Haiti and survey the country. After a short visit there with Missionary Don Dryden, I believed that our church should try to send a missionary there. The Lord also seemed to say that we should send one of the staff members of Iloilo Baptist Church, who had experience working in the Bible College so that he could start a Bible College in Haiti. There were 13 men on staff at that time. As I prayed for each one, I became convinced that the Lord had chosen Leny Funtecha.

Upon returning, I had a meeting with those 13 men and asked them to pray that the Lord would show which one of them should go. A few days later, Leny Funtecha came to me and said he believed he was the one. Having already come to that conclusion without saying anything to him, I was confident the Lord desired that he become the first missionary. He was very fruitful as a staff member. He had a lot of initiative and did well in his work in the Bible College. He also had a great wife that I believed would stick it out in that primitive country. There only remained one "small" problem -- how would we ever get him to Haiti?

Leny Funtecha when he was ready to go to Haiti in 1992.

It was at this time that we had to think about the principles we would follow in sending out foreign missionaries. Being a missionary with Baptist International Missions helped much in developing a philosophy in sending out missionaries.



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We felt it was important their support should be raised in the Philippines. This meant that the missionary would have to raise his own support. We also felt that in the beginning we should send our missionaries to countries that were open to the Gospel. The obvious disadvantage financially was the large amount of money it would take just to travel to and from the field.

Since the cost of going to those far away countries was so great, we asked our missionaries to be willing to stay for at least six years before coming back to the Philippines for a short furlough. We asked our missionaries to do the following, before returning here, if at all possible:

1. Learn the language
2. Start a church
3. Start a Bible College
4. Have their first graduation
5. Have someone that they have trained (not another missionary) to lead their work while they go back to the Philippines for a while.

Although there were plenty of advantages that American missionaries had there were also some advantages for the Filipino missionaries. The first is that it was easier for them to adjust to the field. An American missionary grows up in a country where things work most of the time. This is especially true with basic needs like running water and electricity. I remember coming to the Philippines years ago. We had "brownouts" (power shortages) all the time. We weren't used to that. We had to fill up the water tank each day to have running water in our house. There was no hot water. We took cold water baths with a bucket and a scoop. Once we had a bad typhoon and did not have electricity for three weeks. We didn't have water for a week. I thought we were going through the tribulation.

However, most of the Filipino missionaries that have gone to countries like Haiti grew up in villages without electricity. To go to Haiti and have a power outage is not a big deal to them. They had to carry water from a community well to their home every day when they were growing up. For an American missionary to adjust to a lot of new kinds of food can also be hard. But Filipinos were thankful if they had even two meals a day. Just about any kind of food looks good to them. Also, most missionaries from the Philippines would have a standard of living much closer to the people he serves which makes it easier to relate to those they are trying to reach.

Another advantage is that the Filipino missionaries almost always had a great opportunity in learning the language as they almost all speak at least 3 languages, English, Tagalog (the national language) and Ilonggo (the local dialect).

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A few months later Brother Funtecha started deputation but quickly found out that most pastors doubted that he would ever make it to Haiti. There had been a Filipino out of a good Independent Baptist Church who had recently gone to another country in this region but came home not long after he got there. After two years, in July 1992, Bro. Leny and his family were able to raise his support and left for Haiti.

Below is Leny and his wife Marjorie and one of their children about 10 years ago at Iloilo Baptist Church



Bro. Funtecha started his church in an unusual way. He started Bible studies in the homes of unbelievers. He had a Bible Study in the home of 7 different families each night of the week. Many of the family members accepted the Lord and after a couple of months he had all 7 of the families meet together for regular services. For a long time, his church met in the makeshift tent below.





Later, he was able to get land and build a building. When he arrived in Haiti he started a church in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. In 1994, he started a Bible College and began to train men to start churches. In 1998, they had their first graduating class. The picture below is of their 26th graduating class.

Normally he will have 3 or 4 men graduates each year who go out and start a church. His next step was to train

his graduates to train men in their churches by having a small Bible Institutes for married men. These were men who could not go to a full time Bible College and support their family at the same time.

Graduation of students from the Bible College



Here are a couple of the first churches his graduates started in 1998-1999.

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Bro. Funtecha himself recently started a church in the Dominican Republic. They are building a temporary building right now and the church is meeting in the open air.

Below is Bro. Funtecha waiting for people to gather in the open air for the service.



About 15 years ago Bro. Leny decided to start sending missionaries to the Dominican Republic which borders Haiti. He has quite a few of his men in the Dominican Republic now. Some of these missionaries are training men in their churches to be pastors. This year 3 of them graduated and started churches.



Leny and Marjorie have been serving as missionaries for 33 years now. They are spending much of their time in the Dominican Republic presently. Bro. Funtecha is about 65 years old and has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and not long ago he had a stroke. We covet your prayers for his health.

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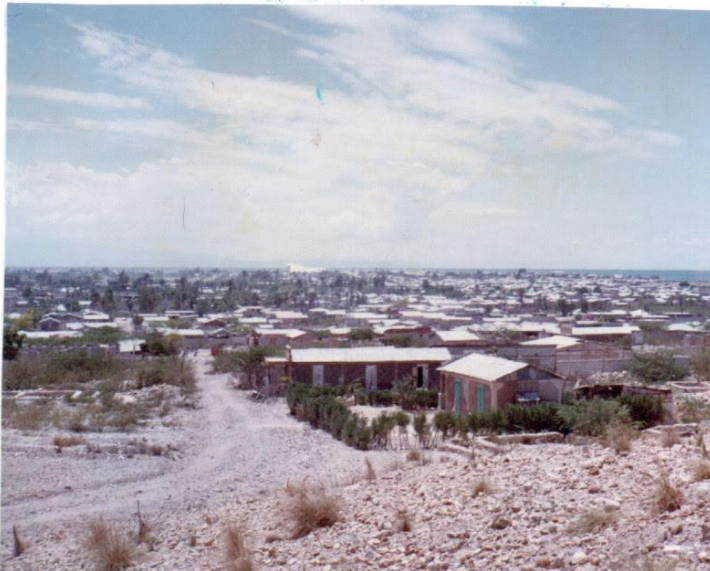
Juanito Genada Family, Missionaries to Haiti



The second graduate who went to the foreign field was Juanito Genada.

Bro. Juanito started his deputation in 1992, and like Bro. Funtecha, two years later he left for Haiti. He started a church in the city of Gonaives, which probably has the worst living conditions I have ever visited.

The desolate city of Gonaives



Haiti is filled with witch doctors and voodoo priests. You can usually tell where they live by the flag they have above their house and the way their house is decorated.

Home of a witch doctor



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Bro. Juanito's church reaches lots of children. Below is a junior church service on a special day at their church.



Early children's service

Members getting ready for the Main Sunday morning service.



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The Genada's church has an orphanage. Through the years many of these orphans have gone to his Bible College, graduated and become pastors.

One of the orphans



In 1996, Bro. Juanito started his Bible College to train men to start churches.

Bible College students



Between 1999-2025 there were 26 graduating classes.



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Like Bro. Leny Funtecha, Bro. Genada also began to send some of his graduates into the Dominican Republic as foreign missionaries.

Below are 9 of Bro. Juanito's graduates of his Bible College who are missionaries in the Dominican Republic



A few months ago, Bro. Genada and his church let us know that they are sending a graduate to the country of Senegal, which is in West Africa. Haiti has a connection to Senegal as many of the slaves that populated Haiti came from Senegal.

The vision and faith these Filipino missionaries have to do what seems to be the impossible amazes me, but of course we have an amazing God! Haiti is still the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and yet these Haitian missionaries have the faith to not only go into the nearby country of Dominican Republic but across the Atlantic Ocean to Senegal!

Bro. Genada has been through some very difficult trials before he surrendered to go to Haiti. When he was 18 years old, he got saved at a youth camp and surrendered to go to Bible College here in Iloilo. His father disowned him and hated him for leaving the family as he was the oldest of 9 children. During his time in Bible College one by one he led his brothers, sisters, and mother to Christ. They all came to Bible College and graduated and today are still pastoring or married to a pastor.

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Eventually even his father got saved! There was one of his brothers, Mario, who didn't get saved at that time, but Juanito continued to pray for him.

In our next prayer letter, you can read about Mario and how he came to know Christ as Savior and became the first Filipino missionary to Africa.

Please pray for the Genada family. Juanito and Rose Eden have not been able to leave Haiti in six years. They had an opportunity to leave but decided to stay. Their passports and visas expired several years ago. Haiti is one of the most violent countries in the world with practically no government or any way to protect the civilians, including renewing passports. Please pray for their safety.

God bless,

Rick and Becky Martin