



PHILIPPINES

THE MARTINS
Your Missionaries in the Philippines

September-October, 2018

Dear Friends:

A few months ago a fire started in the home of a police officer here in Iloilo City. It was 4:00 am and the officer was on duty but his family was in the house asleep. Tragically, his wife and 15-year-old son died that night, along with his aunt and mother-in-law. His sister-in-law, and two nephews ages 7 and 8, were taken to the hospital.

When I found out I visited this police officer. Needless to say, he was heart broken. His only other child, a 19-year-old son, had died the previous year of a brain aneurysm. Now both sons were dead along with his wife. He told us that his younger son wanted to be a doctor and his older son wanted to be a seaman and now they were gone.

The bodies were burned so bad that he had them cremated. I was at the funeral when this officer laid four family members to rest.

Richard Gerafusko has been a police officer for 22 years. About a week later I was surprised to see him at our church. He arrived quite early before the service started and so we talked for a while. That night during the service he received Christ as his Savior and when he made a profession of his faith in Christ he told our church how much he appreciated the help we had given him.

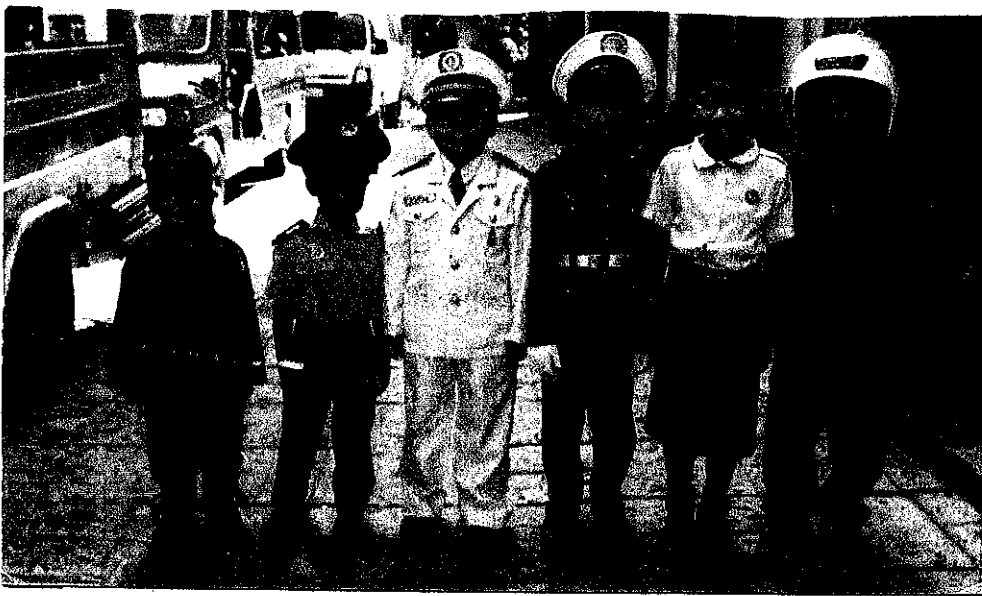


Richard, Avelino, & Richard's sister, Cristina

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Getting ready for the Veterans and members of the Armed Forces



Future Marine greets World War 2 Veteran



Coast Guard children saluting Coast Guard officer

The father of his two nephews had been working abroad in Kuwait. He arrived in Iloilo just shortly before his younger son died. It was heartbreaking to see the body of that little 7-year-old boy in the casket. The father, Salvador Avilino, told me his 8-year-old son was struggling to survive but the outlook for his wife was better.

A week later his 8-year-old son died. The father said he couldn't get himself to tell his wife that both her sons were dead. The next week his wife also died. The Bible speaks about "sorrow upon sorrows" and there are times when it seems that the clouds will never go away. Time went by and on Sunday night, July 22, Salvador Avilino came to our church and received Christ as his Savior.

On May 26th IBC hosted its 14th annual Veterans and Armed Forces of the Philippines Appreciation Day. Officer Gerafusko came, along with his brother-in-law.

The AFP includes the army, navy, air force, marines, and coast guard. Eleven of our church kids dressed up in replicas of the uniforms of the five armed forces and served as greeters as the veterans and soldiers arrived.

This year all services except the navy were represented. It was the first time we had marines and air force officers attend. There were 8 veterans of World War II who attended and each year I worry if it will be the last year that we will have a W.W. II veteran present. Two of them were over 100 years old. Between 50-60 Philippine army soldiers came. There were many veterans of military campaigns inside the Philippines. Many widows, sons, and daughters of veterans also attended.

General Cesar Binag, head of 13,000 police officers in our region attended. Gen. Binag is a wonderful Christian and Colonel Pena who was the ranking officer

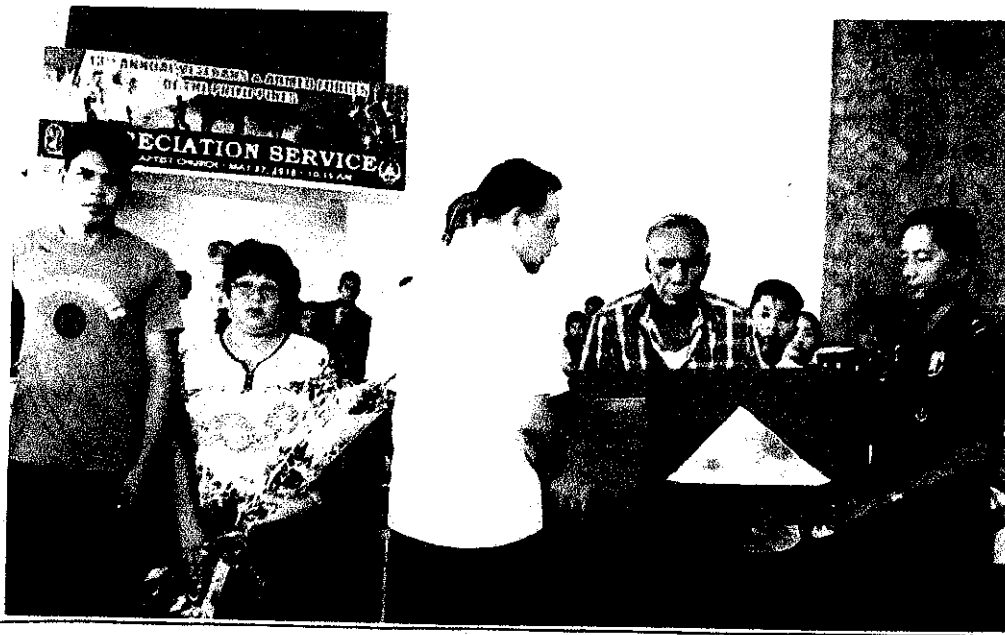


of the armed forces is also a strong Christian. Both men are active in leading their men to Christ.

At the top left, you can see the young police officers that were a part of the color guard. It was their first time to do this. These officers stayed on our property for six months as they were taking their field training, which is necessary before being assigned to a police station. These 25 officers are the fourth group of officers to stay at the church. Many of them have received the Lord as Savior. They often attend church services and we also conduct Bible studies for them each week. Please pray for these officers.

During the service there were families of seven soldiers from our island who had been killed in the Battle of Marawi last year. This was the city taken over by the Isis fighters in 2017. Another family represented another soldier from our island that was killed recently by the New Peoples Army, the communist rebels. His family lived only 30 minutes from Iloilo City.

During the service we honored these 8 soldiers and several of their family members received Christ as Savior.



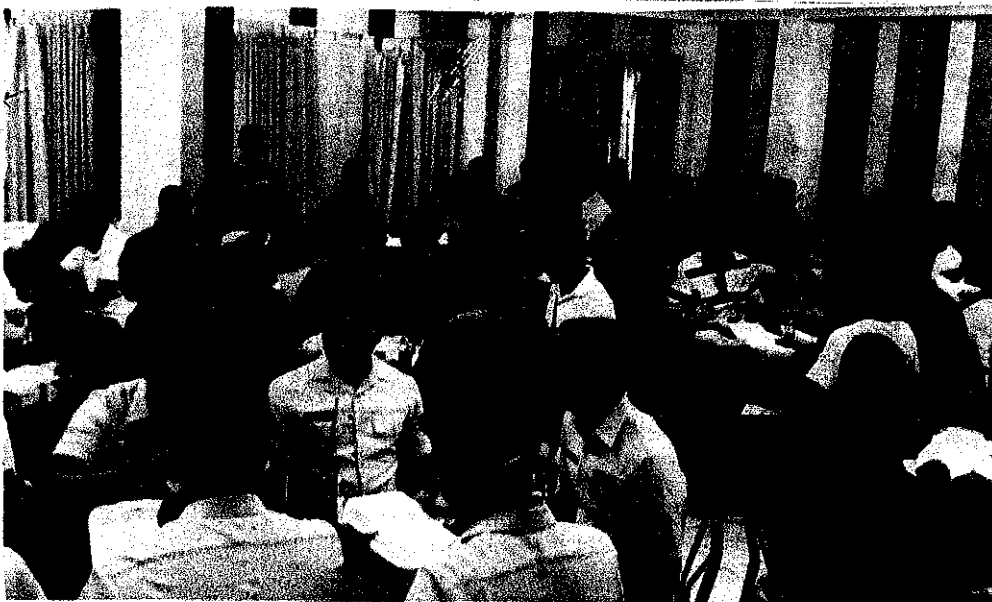
Family of fallen soldier being honored by Congressman Trenas and Gen. Binag

TWO WEEKS IN AUGUST

There are endless opportunities to get the Gospel to people here in Iloilo City. The first two weeks of August are an example.

On August 5th, Sunday morning, the church held its first Senior Citizens Sunday. 307 senior citizens attended. Most of them were from government groups located in our part of the city. They enjoyed the program that day and were very responsive during the invitation.

That night we recognized and said goodbye to the young police officers mentioned earlier



Eating after the church service

who stayed at our church property for the past six months. The group consisted of 25 trainees and four older police officers that were in charge of their training.

The following Saturday, August 11, at 9:00 am, a fire broke out just 1/3 of a mile from our church. 76 families lost their homes. 284 people had their lives turned upside down in an hour. The next morning about 150 of them came to church. We gave them some very needed supplies such as a blanket, a pot for cooking rice, and large water containers, etc.

There is never an easy time to help people as it takes finances and we don't have a budget for these kind of things. School uniforms were given to the 24 elementary and 45 high school students who were affected by the fire.

One of the men I talked to Sunday morning was single, about 40 years old. He said he had just returned from a job in Saudi Arabia to take care of his ill parents, and he had no job. Both of his parents recently died and Saturday morning he was looking for a job. When he returned he saw that the fire had destroyed his house. He lost his job, his parents, and his home. However many of these poor people received the gift of salvation Sunday morning.

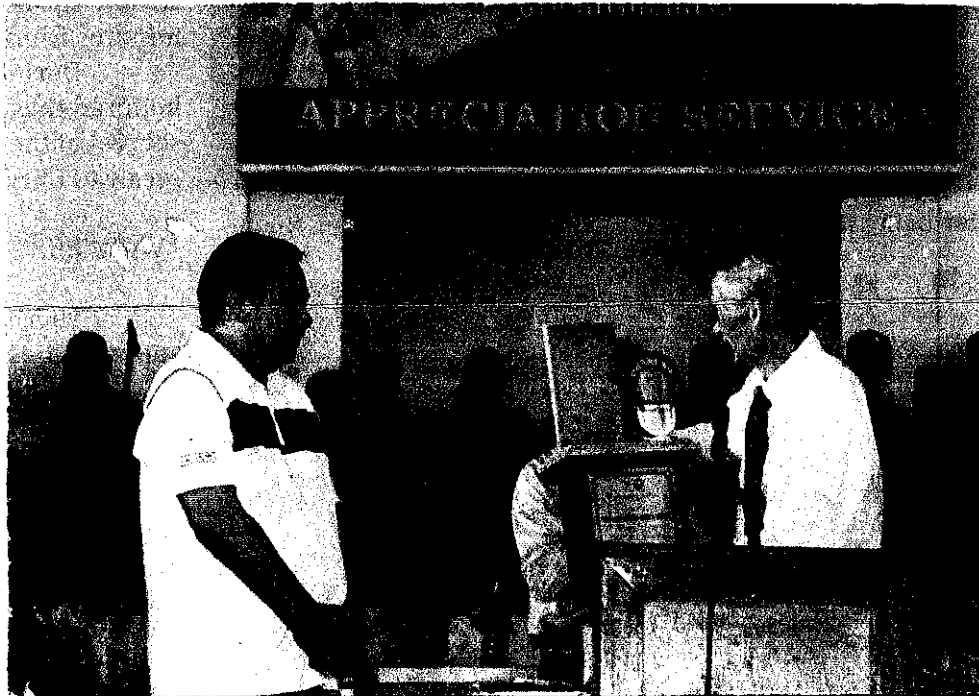
During the Sunday night service almost 100 police officers attended the service. Most of them had never visited our church. These police officers were a special group who are stationed at the regional office and provide extra security when it is needed in other towns and cities. They are younger officers who are very visible and accessible to the public. Our City Police Director has been a good friend to the church, and me and arranged for them to attend the church service.

During the invitation about 30 of them were personally given the plan of salvation by workers in our church. About 20 of those made a public profession of faith. When they told the church that they had received Christ as Savior, most of the police officers were clapping and excited! It was one of my favorite services ever! After church we had a meal for these officers.

Next is our annual Pastors & Workers Conference the first week of October. Please pray for that week. It is our 38th year of hosting this conference.

Thank you for your sacrifice to help us reach the people of this country. We are so grateful!

RMA



On Veteran's Day, a plaque of appreciation was given to Congressman Jerry Trenas for getting a bill passed in Congress allowing Iloilo Baptist Church to start radio stations throughout the country. His father was also a World War 2 veteran.