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November 28, 1939
Naga City, Camarines Sur

Becoming a Deaconess



The call to serve God was in my heart after I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and savior. My pastor and his deaconess wife, Rev. Eduardo and Amy Cajiuat, were instrumental in bringing me to Harris in 1957. I will always be grateful for the four years of Harris training. The experiences I had have helped me in my journey of service. I graduated in 1961 with a major in Kindergarten Education.



Conference Assignments

1961-1963 Kindergarten Teacher, Methodist Student Center (Kapatiran), Manila

This was my first appointment from the Philippine Annual Conference. The Methodist Student Center located in the university hub was directed by Miss Madeleine Klepper, an American missionary. The Center includes Hugh Wilson Hall, a dormitory that catered to women students where I was a resident. Living at Wilson Hall gave me an opportunity to be a part of the Center's ministries to the students.



Hugh Wilson Hall Dormitory

My classes at the Student Center were full of joy. I appreciated the parents who were very much involved in the lives of their children; the parents participated in almost all of our class activities.



My kindergarten class also served as a Laboratory Class for the Harris Student Teacher for observation and practice teaching.

One advantage I had in this appointment was having free weekends. I was able to visit my family and did my errands on Saturdays and went to church on Sundays. Knox UMC was within walking distance from the Center and it became my home church.

By the end of my second-year appointment at the Student Center, Miss Klepper made it clear that she wanted me to continue working there. Miss Johannaber, a missionary staff at Harris, offered the opportunity for further studies in preparation for a teaching job at Harris. Dr. William Pickard wanted me to join the staff at Knox as the director of Christian Education. Bishop Alejandro asked me where I preferred to be appointed to. My answer was that I will gladly serve where the Lord wants me to serve.

1963- 1965 Director, Christian Education, Knox UMC, Manila

Knox UMC was a mega church with 4 congregations: Tagalog, Pampanga, Ilocano and English. It has been a church rich in talents and leadership. Since Knox was my home church, I was already familiar with the clergy and the leaders of the church. My main responsibility was coordinating the different church program of activities; I treasured my work with the young people, young adults, and the children.



Young adult fellowship at Knox

By almost at the end of my second year at Knox church (close to the end of my four-year term of service as a deaconess) there came a day when I gave a church tour to a visiting group of American Methodists led by Rev. Percy White of Virginia. At the end of the tour, Rev. White asked me if I would like to go to the states for further studies; I immediately felt God's blessing! (As long as I can remember, I had this feeling in my heart that God will send me to America. I had my chances before, but I kept my promise to the Lord to finish my studies at Harris and to finish my four-year term of service.) WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, THE LORD WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN. Isaiah 60:22.

Back to School – USA

1965-1968 Aldersgate UMC, Hampton, Virginia; Scarritt College, Nashville, Tennessee

I departed Manila on May 6, 1965, for Hampton, Virginia, where the Rev. White and his family with the members of Aldersgate UMC received me warmly! As my sponsor, they paid for my air transportation, living allowance and paid for the three-year college expenses. I gratefully treasure my time at Scarritt; my first snow, deep and lasting friendships with Sonia Vidal, daughter of my Ilocano pastor at Knox, Adelina Tobias, another Harris graduate,



Carmela San Diego of PCU and Elvessa Silao of Knox. I attended classes at Scarritt, at George Peabody College, and at the Vanderbilt University. I was also part of the International Student Club. I took on part time jobs as a babysitter, professor's assistant, Avon Lady, and a library clerk. I came to the states at the height of the civil rights movement. I witnessed many incidents and I was terribly bothered by the turbulent time brought about by discrimination.

I graduated in 1966 with a Bachelor's Degree in Christian Education and a Master of Arts degree in Inter-cultural Studies (Cultural Anthropology) in 1968. Thank you, Lord, for Rev. White, Aldersgate UMC, and Scarritt College.

Back to Work

1968 Church Secretary, Edmonds UMC, Edmonds, Washington

1969 Kindergarten Teacher, King's Garden, Seattle, Washington

It was during my tenure here at King's Garden where I met Don Pastrana; we married in 1969 with God's blessings!

1970 Community Worker, Homes for Children (Northern Illinois Conference), Chicago, Illinois

Moved to Chicago from Seattle in 1970, I was hired by Homes for Children to start an after-school program. With the help of Rev. Sutton and the congregation of Buckingham UMC, I organized the Buckingham Children's Center for the economically deprived minority children. My work extended to their families. Although I did not speak Spanish, the families trusted me with their problems. Instead of calling 911, they preferred to call me to settle family disputes.



With the help of Don, as an engineer, I was able to meet all the government requirements to get Buckingham Children's Center licensed for operations. Having difficulties with long commutes from the Center to the suburbs, I left the Center after 7 years of service under the care of a Director, Social Workers, and several aides. In an article written about the Center, I was described as a gentle lady, but "Don't let her size and demeanor fool you, the fireball who made it work!" Through the years I have heard from the Center's children who are now grownups; many have become successful in their lives as bus drivers, social workers, teachers, bankers, doctor, and others in gainful employments.

1978-1979 Director, Moody Children's Center, Moody Bible Church, Chicago, Illinois.

Moody Church was founded in 1864, an evangelical nondenominational church. The After-School program catered to the wealthy children enrolled at the selective private Latin School across from the church. What a difference from Buckingham Center. My tenure there lasted a year.

1980-1984 Counselor, Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, Joliet Court House, Joliet, Illinois

The job was to counsel and to provide training to those who were unemployed, those who just got out of prison, and to the newly arrived Vietnamese and Hmong immigrants. The job was challenging, but it gave the opportunity for quiet witnessing for Christ.

1984- Present

Don and I with our children, Millicent and DJ, moved to California due to Don's job transfer. Writing my story for our Deaconess project gave me the opportunity to look back and to realize that if you let God's will in your life and be faithful to Him, you will enter the gateway to His abundant blessings. Years ago, I received a message from Rev. Ben Vinluan about a lady missionary doctor who was looking for me; that at her speech at the NAFAUM Conference held in Virginia Beach she mentioned me and that she had been searching throughout her life for that faithful Sunday School teacher named "Linda" who brought life to her "the light of the grace of God." Next to God, she said, she owed her salvation to Linda. Shortly after, I received an email from her, and I quote:

"Dear Linda,

I am Elma Jocson and I would like to thank you! You will remember when you were then at St Luke's UMC in Marikina during your Harris student days, you started the MYF in our church by organizing us; my friends and I were about 10 to 12 years old. We were sitting under the Kaimito (star apple) tree. You told us we needed to repent and accept this gift salvation. I did. I was 11 years old. I have continued in my faith walk and I continue to be an active member of the church. I am now a general surgeon and commissioned missionary by the UMC. From my MYF group one is now a pastor at a Four-Square church in Los Angeles (Hector Quiambao, Jr.), most are professionals serving God thru their gifts and graces. I would like to personally thank you for telling us about salvation and giving us the opportunity to accept Jesus. Thank you very much. Elma"

In his email to Elma and me, Rev. Vinluan wrote, "It's such a touching story of faith in that on the part of you, Linda, there was not even any iota of expectation that your ministry to some children in the not-too-distant past would yield such a harvest of plenty in you so many years later."



Truly, I am blessed. Thank you, Lord, for giving meaning to my life.

With my husband, Don