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Born: February 9, 1955
Capas, Tarlac



My story is different from other Harrisians in that I entered Harris College in 1972 and in two years I exited to get married. But God's call to serve was strong, so I went right back to church work after getting married. Later I served as fulltime pastor in remote places and served as the coordinator of a church-related community program.

Let me share my recollections of those years in the Philippines.

I dreamed of becoming an airline stewardess. The glamour of flying around the world in style with good salary attracted me, but money was tight to enter that field and that dream became impractical. God sent an American missionary to Patling, Capas, Tarlac, Miss Marion Walker, whose work concentration was with the Aetas. I had an opportunity to work with. Ms. Walker, who was well-loved, especially by the indigenous peoples of Aeta. She convinced me to study at Harris to become a deaconess; on top of that, it was my father's faith and dedication to church work that truly inspired me. How?

Family and My growing Up Years

Father was a Roman Catholic soldier serving in the Army after the Japanese Wartime. It was through an evangelistic service in Pampanga that he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. It was at those services where he met my mom. A few years after their marriage, father decided to be a minister, which mom totally objected to!

Mother, coming from a middle-class family, could not see herself living poor as minister's wife; she arranged for him to get a job at Clark Airforce Base. Dad went instead to the Pastor School. This was the beginning of the "household war" that lasted for a long, long time! We were poor as Dad hardly received salary from the impoverished churches, which infuriated mom and caused her to dislike church work. However, one day, Mother came screaming because she thought a snake had bitten her. She felt she was going to die. She frantically opened the Bible and it opened to Proverbs 8:36, "But he who fails to find me harms himself, all who hate me love death." The verse spoke to her and transformed her into a new person! Since then, mom and dad became the perfect partners in ministry!

Contexts, Challenges and Joy in Ministry

In my adult years, I believe God has called me and I offered my life to Christian service. Church work – while raising a family, I served as my father's deaconess at his churches. Piano/organ accompanist, choir director, Christian Education Director, Youth Director, involved in Evangelism, visitations. This involvement led me to official deaconess assignments.

1985-1991 Patling, Capas – Deaconess, Kindergarten Teacher

Patling is about 20km from Capas town close to the mountains with a growing population of the lowlanders and the highlanders (Aetas). With the help of the School Board, we established the Kindergarten School offering 3 school sessions: 1-Nursery, 2-Kinder, 3-Preparatory. I was the sole teacher without assistant. The young minister there was getting married at that time. He did not return after his wedding. The members met and went to the Superintendent with their letter petitioning me to be their permanent pastor! I respectfully declined due to heavy work at school. The Superintendent requested that I give it a try until he could find a new minister. Months passed but no pastor came! I decided then to enroll at pastoral school, a 2-year course at the Theological Education by Extension in Tarlac.

1991-1992 Culipat, Tarlac – Deaconess/Pastor

Culipat is about 6km from Tarlac; a very small church with 20 members. Aside from the regular church activities, I organized free eye checkups for all the members through the World Vision Center in Manila. Praise be to God.

1992-1995 Sta Rosa, Capas – Deaconess/Pastor

Another small barrio church with very few members. When I didn't see a member in church on Sundays, I went to visit them listening to their excuses. I said, "Everything we have comes from God and God only asked us to keep Sabbath holy to worship him. Is Sunday morning too much to give back to God for everything that God gives you all week?" People listened, kept the Sabbath holy.

1995-1997 Dolores, Capas – Deaconess/Pastor

Basilio Manugue was a 1st generation Methodist in the early 1900. He landed in Dolores with his family about 1917 where he managed farmers and farmlands until his death in the mid-1950. His children remained Methodists through the years. The church building was realized in 1994. The Manugue clan energized the congregation as they represented 90% of membership.

1997-1999 Lawy, Capas – Pastor

Another farming barrio church where we started a kindergarten school. This time it was a blessing to have my daughter, Jennifer, serving with me as the Kindergarten Teacher. Jennifer is a Harris graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Kindergarten Education. We offered: 1-Nursery, 2-Kinder, 3-Preparatory sessions.

1999-2004 Resettlement Program – Associate Pastor

The eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1991 destroyed about 82,000 homes in 364 barangays/villages, and displaced 329,141 families. 7,900 of these families were Aetas, indigenous highlanders of the northern communities in the Tarlac region. The Aetas living near the volcano descended to the lowlands. They were later relocated by the government in the resettlement areas.

The government set up schools and the Korean Mission Work built the church. At that time Pastor Jose Padang, one of Ms. Walker's scholars,



came to revive the church. However, due to cultural and ethnic issues among members, the Aetas requested to have their own church, ministers, and their own conference. Request granted. They were given their own District Superintendent, Pastor Homer Calma, and me as the Assistant Pastor.

Our work was in coordination with the Capas Municipal Resettlement staff. It entailed following up with the Aetas resettlement issues, settling disputes, feeding programs, etc. Many Aetas, however, chose to go back to the mountains, their natural habitat.

We thanked the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) who then provided a grant to assist these people. From this financial grant, we went to the market, once a week, bought food and basic necessities, and drove a truckload of goods on a 5-hour drive up the rigorous terrains of the mountains. There the Aetas cooked the food good for the whole week for the entire Aeta village. While up there we held services, bible studies, and classes for the children. Today the Aetas have produced and sustained their own church workers.



2005 Migration to US

My husband, Nedi, and I joined my parents in San Diego, California, in 2005, leaving behind our four sons and a daughter. Nedi immediately worked as a Sales Associate at the Airport Exchange and currently at the Naval Exchange.

My church work continues – currently I serve as the choir director of the First United Methodist Church senior group in Chula Vista.

Finally, I say that my deaconess work and pastoral experiences enriched my life. I attribute many of my successes in field work from the discipline and education acquired from Harris College. I praise God for every opportunity of service.



With my husband, Nedi, and our children