

HARVEST

Asia

Tent or no tent,

“We keep on preaching the message of love and grace to a broken world.”

Dr. Met Castillo, AEF East Asia Director, and Director of ADMI (AEF Philippines) has led a team to commission and support a new church plant mission in Tamurong, Sta. Catalina, Province of Ilocos Sur along the shores of the West Philippine Sea. The locals depend on small scale vegetable farming and fishing. Historically resistant to the Protestant faith but signs of change are in the horizon.

“Preaching God’s message on a beautiful Sunday morning to a new group of believers seated so orderly under a tent surrounded by various kinds of ornamental and other plants brought to me precious memories. It was in an itinerant tent ministry that I spent part of my internship studies for the ministry.” An average of 15 – 20 adult believers plus a few young people attend the Sunday morning worship services. They meet in a tent set up at the back of the house of one of the members. Very soon the tent will be an insufficient place. The group is praying for a larger space. Property costs are quite high. They need Ilocano Bibles in their own language.



Love Pililla Mission

About 2 hours’ drive east of Metro Manila is Pililla, Rizal Province. An old town founded by the Spaniards who established their religion and a pilgrimage site. This town of 20,000 consists of farmers, fishermen, daily wage earners and new settlers. Now it is famous for a windmill farm producing renewable energy. As well as a new church plant.



Lino and Aurora took early retirement (Lino from a giant chain of supermarkets; and Aurora from teaching in a public school) to spend the rest of their time serving the Lord. Lino finished his Masters’ in ministry and now works as part of the ADMI team. The church plant grew through a series of outreach Bible studies with couples. Lino and Aurora travel to Pililla on motorbike spending the day and night leading Bible studies, times of prayer and pastoral care followed by a fellowship meal. The group in Pililla are praying for a venue where to hold worship, prayer meetings, Bible studies and other ministries. They are eager to have a public identity as believers in Christ. May we help them pray for this concern.

God is Speaking

The Bible wasn't originally written down but was an oral message. The message was heard in order to be remembered and understood, taught and proclaimed, celebrated and translated into life. Even when the oral testimonies were written down they were never meant to be read silently and privately, but to be recited aloud. When a book of the law was found in the temple at Jerusalem in 622 B.C., King Josiah gathered all the people of Judah and Jerusalem, the priests, and the prophets and read aloud the book of the covenant (2 Kings 23:2). When Paul sent a letter to a local church he expected it to be read publicly - 1 Thessalonians 5:27 'In the name of the Lord I beg you to read this letter to all his followers.'

The emphasis on oral communication was not entirely because of illiteracy in the ancient world. Many Palestinian Jews during the time of Jesus were illiterate. Women and slaves could not read and remained dependent on oral communication. Yet Jews in cities like Alexandria and the growing church of the Graeco-Roman world lived in an environment of growing literacy. Jesus was an oral communicator using poetry, parables, and forms helpful for memorisation. The teacher/disciple relationship also encouraged oral communication between the message and the messenger.

We all remember times of transcendence when we have been present during the public reading of Scripture. The passage speaks and unites God's people towards worship and response. In the Philippines, South Asia, Malaysia the public reading of Scripture has deep meaning for the new believer, the not yet believer, the tired, the persecuted, the displaced, the marginalised and those with limited literacy. As you hear about the gospel work of AEF in these parts of Asia and beyond may you reflect on what God is bringing to those eager to hear through His Word. May we listen well and welcome the reading of Scripture. God is speaking.

Pastor Matt Hall



Australian
and International Training Director



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Asia Evangelistic Fellowship International is an indigenous international mission founded in 1960 by the late Dr. G. D. James. AEF identifies, trains, and commissions national workers to carry out pioneer mission work in their own Asian countries. These national workers are organized, supervised and supported by national boards setup in each country under the pastoral care of AEF International Office.

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Love Dumagat Mission

... continued from cover page

Dumagat means "people of the sea" but are now displaced and scattered in the mountain ranges of the provinces of Quezon, Rizal, Bulacan, Quirino and Aurora. Arvin is a trained and experienced church planter who has developed relationships with leaders of scattered communities. Assisted by local Dumagat men and youth who are familiar with the terrain Brother Arvin has started one on one witnessing and a Bible Study in the base community.



Proclaim the Gospel and establish the Church

Often the question is asked what do you do first – proclaim the gospel or establish the church? Probably the answer is both and. AEF India are doing both. Proclaiming the gospel and seeing new believers come to faith, baptised, and discipled. Church planting training has also become a new initiative of AEF India. Partnerships have been formed with other denominations, mission organisations and churches. But because of continual pastoral care and visitation, Bible studies and discipleship, AEF India were continually asked as missionaries and evangelists by new believers – will you please start a church that we can be part of?

AEF India realised that people coming to faith through their mission work were wanting to remain within the AEF India community of faith. Thus, the need to develop church planting and leadership training amongst the team. The proclaiming of the gospel led to the establishing of the church. This work in the field can be difficult with some not favourable to the gospel. However, the team are encouraged and supported through supervision and ministry training.

One of the interesting aspects of ministry training that has arisen is the need to learn listening skills. As Rev. Edwin, Director of AEF South Asia and India said recently in the news bulletin, 'preachers tend to speak all the time but have poor listening habits.' No doubt we too can learn something from this. Maybe AEF India are also learning that proclaiming the gospel and establishing the church takes much listening. Listening to the Spirit of God and listening to others that want the church to grow in new places and new ways.



Living Water - For the Orang Asli

John 4:13-15

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again.

But no one who drinks the water I give will ever be thirsty again. The water I give will become in that person a flowing fountain that gives eternal life."

The woman replied, "Sir, please give me a drink of that water! Then I won't get thirsty and have to come to this well again."

The story of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman resonates for the Semai Orang Asli natives in Pahang, Malaysia. They are a marginalised group with a mixed faith background. The local community received 'living water' and pure streams of fresh water. The infrastructure of a well was funded and established to bring clean water to the community to help combat disease in the isolated region.

They too are open to the gospel message as Jesus became clearer to them through teaching of Pastor Mark and Brother Jeff. Local people are leaders in the gospel work. They want to tell other Orang Asli tribes about this man Jesus whom they have met. The community built a mission centre to continue spiritual and outreach activities. The Mission Base and training centre situated in Semalin village is called "The Lighthouse". Tribal villages that are planned for outreach in the next few months, are: Ulu Renggol village, Batau and Gabang. They can be reached by motorcycle and 4-wheel drive vehicles (due to the rough terrain, and streams).



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