

PHILIPPINE HOME COUNCIL OF OMF- INTERNATIONAL

2021 is the 55th anniversary of the Philippine Home Council of OMF-International. PHC was founded in response to the need of Asian workers in missions. As Rev. Max Atienza, who was once the Director of the Far East Broadcasting Company and the founding Chairman of the Philippine Home Council of OMF wrote during the inception of PHC, "Here, Roman Catholicism was introduced into the Philippines almost 450 years ago and it is the religion of the majority of the country's thirty-four million population. But, strangely, the Philippines remains largely a receiving rather than a sending mission field. Of course, evangelical Christianity is barely seventy years old, but with so much background of Christian civilization, this country should have become the chief source of Christian missionaries to her neighbors, but such has not been the case. A Filipino Christian missionary is a rare species." ¹

As the sending arm of OMF Philippines, the Home Council sends Filipino Christians to serve in other parts of Asia, as well as within the Philippines. On April 1st, 1967, the first Filipino workers, William and Eden Layda and Dr. Linda Dumlao, were accepted into the fellowship of the OMF. ² In the East Asia Missions August-September, 1967 issue, William Layda wrote, "As we prepared to leave the Philippines, friends asked us many questions. The classic one was, 'why should you leave our country when we still have tremendous need for Christian workers here?' We explained that our call does not depend upon the present needs of our country. If we wait until the needs in the Philippines are met before launching out as missionaries, then Filipinos could never go. On the other hand, if we Asians would like to see Asia evangelized in our generation, we must ourselves take an active part. I believe God has called us to preach the Gospel to our Asian

brothers. I trust, too, that more Asian Christians will hear His voice and join us for His glory."³

In today's mission context, missiologists say, "Missions is from everywhere to everywhere." Unlike a century ago or even decades ago, missions is well-defined, from the majority world to the 10-40 window. However, migration changed it! OMF-International transitioned its focus from geographic location to ethnic affiliation. From East-Asia to East Asians. Also, the pandemic on the other hand introduced us to a new pathway of doing missions and that is through virtual platform. The challenges are diverse and at times detrimental yet the opportunities are vast and innovative.

Philippine Home Council of OMF-International continued its proactive pursuit in inspiring the Filipino church for missions. From the initial three missionaries in 1967 who took the challenge of leaving the comforts of life in order to "preach the Gospel to our Asian brothers" ⁴, in partnership with Filipino churches, today PHC has thirty active members. They are serving within the Philippines and across Asia in various capacities. More so, PHC is also adapting to the changing mission landscape of world mission and its pathways.

PHC is exploring ways to mobilize churches for missions virtually and in partnership with churches, send missionaries within and beyond the Philippines to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the East Asian peoples. This year, PHC initiates the Diaspora Ministry, a ministry that will focus on reaching the growing population of the Mainland Chinese in Metro Manila with the hope that this ministry will expand to other non-ethnic East Asians here in the Philippines.

No one can do missions alone. Together, let's continue to be proactive in our obedience to make disciples of all nations. As God is bringing the harvest in our very own field, ask the Lord of the harvest to send willing workers (missionaries) from your church and beyond, mobilize the church to send workers - partnering with them in prayer, finances and care and advocate partnership with the missionaries who are already in the harvest field.

Grace Moron DMin
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¹ OMF Archive

² OMF Archive

³ OMF Archive

⁴ William Layda

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