

## 9. Leaving Home

We now had three children to shepherd through the remaining weeks of the Study Fellowship. Eunice had even less time for our sessions. Child care for Scott and Kerry took off some of the heat. We both were now looking toward the completion of Study Fellowship and heading to Dayton for Christmas.

One of the requirements at the Study Fellowship was to complete a paper on our assigned country. Each of us was expected to concentrate on some aspect of life in the country of our destination. Don Smith had set up a decent library covering the countries, the regions and some of the specific functional concerns represented among the candidates. I had decided to take on the land issue in the Philippines. Even though it was not my area of concentration, I recognized that it was the basic social justice issue in the Philippines. The question of land ownership was at the heart of much of the inequity in the rural Philippines. The basic economy of the Philippines was agricultural. Beyond the area dedicated to rice production which was largely for local consumption and therefore widely distributed in small plots, was the plantation system and the mining interests. \*

The Philippines was the classic example of a colonial state - an exporter of raw materials and agricultural goods, largely controlled by a small local elite and outside entrepreneurs, and an importer of manufacturer goods also controlled by outside corporations. Internally the plantation system under which sugar, pineapple, palm oil and copra were produced was central to the Philippine economy. Besides the plantation system, which was controlled by local hacenderos and by outside corporations, there were the copper, gold and silver mines controlled jointly by Filipinos and outside corporate interests, usually American.

\* An U.S. Economic Mission (called the Bell Mission) reported in October 1950 that the 1,700,000 million farms in the Philippines had an overall average of 10 acres. Over half the farms (900,000) were below five acres in size, while 22,000 were over 50 acres. On ownership of rice land nearly 50% of farmers were owners, 15% were part farmers, and 35% were tenant farmers. The basic ownership pattern shows the predominance of subsistence agriculture.

I had never studied a colonial economy, but my readings and discussions about the Philippine situation made me aware of the economic imbalances which existed in the country. I also saw that the land economy, particularly the plantation system and raw material sector, was fertile ground for labor organization. My interest in the natural resource sector of the Philippine economy was piqued. This was the essential economic sector of the Philippines. It was on the plantations and in the mines that the largest number of workers existed outside the growing, but still small, manufacturing and industrial sectors. What was the nature of the churches' presence in these areas? I began to realize that it was here I would need to pay more attention as I began my work in the Philippines.

As I got more deeply into my paper on "The Land Problem in the Philippines", I made inquiries about labor programs in the Philippines. Early on I had learned about the Labor Education Center which was attached to the University of the Philippines. I had heard that the Director, Dr. Cicero Calderon, was a Protestant. I wrote Dr. Calderon at the Center and made inquiry about books that I might read on the nature of the labor movement in the Philippines. By mid-October I had an informative two page reply written on behalf of the Director by Lita Velmonte, a research assistant. Ms. Velmonte provided an excellent survey of the then current labor scene and she also gave me the name of a labor contact, Ildefonso Remolona, when I arrived in the Philippines. Ms. Velmonte also suggested that I get in touch with Victor Reuther of the United Automobile Workers who had some contact with the Philippine situation.

The letter was invaluable in setting my agenda before our family left for the Philippines. I knew I had to make a trip to Washington, D.C. to get insights on how the U.S. labor movement perceived trade union development in the Philippines. In the meantime, I continued to read and gather information for my paper. My readings further confirmed the colonial dependent relationship which the U.S. encouraged in the Philippines. What was even more damning was the fact that our own High Commissioner of the Philippines, Paul V. McNutt, agreed. McNutt wrote after his tour of duty in the Philippines:

When you say trade in the Philippines, you mean national economy.

It is a trading economy. And I might and should say here and now that we, the United States, managed it that way. We are responsible for the sole dependence of the Philippines on the American market. Our businessmen and our statesmen in the past years allowed the Philippines to become a complete economic dependency of the United States to a greater degree than any single State of the Union is economically dependent on the rest of the United States. \*

As my reading and writing continued I was developing a framework for understanding the economic situation in the Philippines. I saw that while we had supported the basically colonially dependent nature of the Philippines, ie. to keep the Philippines "a hewer of wood and a carrier of water", we did little to help industrialize the country. Prior to World War II, U.S. investments in the Philippines were only 1% of its total foreign investment. And most of that was the savings of U.S. nationals living in the Philippines. U.S. economic attitudes toward the Philippines when applied to the land issue had supported a feudal landlord structure. When related to industrializing the country, we had absented ourselves.

It was not surprising that in the face of the inequities on the land, a radical peasant movement would be organized. Peasant dissatisfaction began to take root around World War I. Both an indigenous Communist movement and a Socialist movement grew in the countryside and in the city. In 1930, the Communist Party was outlawed by a ruling of the Supreme Court. After 1932 the Socialist Party began to grow and its leadership called for a redistribution of land. When President Quezon granted amnesty to the Communists in 1938, the Socialists and the Communists merged in a Popular Front. With the Japanese invasion in 1942, the peasant movement became a guerrilla action against the Japanese and took on the name of Hukbalahap, or People's Army Against the Japanese. The Huks drew heavily on Marxist ideology and became a main Communist offensive not only against the Japanese, but against the landed aristocracy, particularly in the sugar plantations of central Luzon.

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\* Shirley Jenkins, " American Economic Policy Toward the Philippines", ( Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 1954) p. 59

After the war the Huks continued their struggle now wholly against the hacenderos, or plantation owners. The struggle continued after the Philippines won their independence from the United States during the presidencies of Manuel Roxas and Elpidio Quirino. As Secretary of National Defense in 1951, Ramon Magsaysay put forward a program of "Land for the Landless." He proposed settling ex-Huks on public lands in Mindanao and organized and sent the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) to survey and divide the land for resettlement. On the basis of his program Magsaysay was elected President in 1952. The judgment by the mid-1950s was that Magsaysay's land resettlement program in Mindanao was proving successful. The initial program had severed the Huk rank and file from the ideological Communist movement. This was the situation to which we would be going.

My research had provided me an overall perspective on the central issues of the Philippine economy. I recognized the volatility which the land issue continued to have in the Philippines. I saw it as indicative of the inequities of a feudal past. The question I finally raised in the paper: And what of the church? What stands can Christians take in the midst of the nation's economic struggles? I knew that this would be one of the questions I would be pursuing when we got to the Philippines. As the Study Fellowship came to a close in late November, we were accepted to be commissioned as fraternal workers to the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. In early December we were among those who attended a commissioning service of outgoing missionaries and fraternal workers at our Presbyterian Church offices in New York. Eunice was not able to make the journey since she was carrying the burden of caring for three children. We now began the process of preparing ourselves for journey to the Philippines.

We bid our farewells to Sam Sains, his wife and the crew at the Hotel. It had been a unique experience. Not only did we have a super-abundance of great lecturers during our time at Mount Freedom, but the setting of Sains' Hotel had provided a most unusual cross-cultural experiment. I always felt that those who followed us in their training at Stony Point had missed an on-the-ground engagement in the everyday cultural realities. Some of our number at Sains' Hotel had made connections with the men who were serving on the hotel kitchen staff. Several of these men had alcohol problems. We knew that they were

wanderers with no set home base. After we had left, they were heading for the warmer climate of Florida. Dick Gibson, a single man bound for Egypt, spent his free hours in conversation with at least two of the men. His concern for them became an immediate ministry to their problems.

Before we left Mount Freedom, we made arrangements with my sister Erna for an early Christmas with my Dad in Coytesville, New Jersey. Erna had been working for several years at Prentice-Hall publishers in Englewood Cliffs and had an apartment with my father in nearby Coytesville. We also met our future brother-in-law Tim Galardi, a co-worker of Erna's at Prentice-Hall. At that time we agreed to visit the Rehling family in Tom's River on the New Jersey shore. We had not seen the Rehling's for many years. They wanted to see us before we left for the Philippines.

The Rehlings had been my mother's closest relatives. Liesel Schölzel Rehling, my grandfather Paul's sister, had died some years before. Carl, Tinie, and Leis lived together and their sister Emma and Harry Pfeiffer lived close by. Erna and my Dad made the trip down together. We made the trip to Tom's River for what would be one last visit. By the time I saw any of them again, Carl was the only survivor and he was confined to a wheel chair.

We returned to Mount Freedom to bid good-bye to those to whom we were bound by our common mission. Some we had been with since July when we attended the Meadville Conference. Others we had met for the first time when we gathered at the Sains' Hotel. But all of us felt that we had been connected with a new understanding of the mission of the church, and that we were going to be a part of it. We took care of last minute arrangements with the Board office in New York. That meant checking out the latest word on our visas and on travel arrangements to the Philippines. We also spoke to the shipping office to determine arrangements for sending household articles to the Philippines.

We packed our belongings in our station wagon. This time we were careful not to overload our rack on the car roof. One month old Johanna replaced Kerry in the basket in the back of the car. Kerry, now one and a half, would have her own car seat alongside her three and a half year old brother Scott. We were filled to capacity as we made our way to the Pennsylvania Turnpike and onward to

Dayton, Ohio for Christmas at Grandmother's. She was waiting to do what she did with great elan - throw a Christmas Party. Before we would leave Dayton she would have put together more than one party and we would have celebrated our leaving with many people.

Christmas in Dayton was always a delight. From my first visit to Dayton in 1951 on the occasion of Eunice's and my engagement, I thoroughly enjoyed 1921 Adirondack Trail. It was a proper house for an engagement, a proper house for a wedding party and a proper Christmas House - especially a Christmas House. We were a family that loved celebrations. We had arrived in time to participate heartily in decorating. Scott joined in with enthusiasm, Kerry toddled through the decorations and Johanna gazed in amazement at the lights and colors all around her. Never had there been such a collection of youngsters in Grandmother's house to enjoy the thrills of Christmas.

As Christmas became New Year's and January snows filled the lawn and the back yard of grandmother's house Scott and Kerry delighted in the snow covered environment. Scott shoveled the walk and the driveway. Grandmother found Uncle David's sled and her backyard provided the perfect slope for Kerry to enjoy a sled run. This was to be their last snow for four years and they took to it with great abandon.

Each day we looked for word from New York about our visa and traveling arrangements. Our traveling arrangements could not be finalized until there were visas from the Philippine government. We knew that some of our friends bound for India had not been granted visas. Betty Jo and Taylor Potter had looked forward to an assignment in India. Taylor's professional qualifications as an architect had not been accepted, so a revision in plans was in order. Thailand was willing to accept the Potters so they rearranged their itinerary from New Delhi to Bangkok. We knew that we were slated to sail on one of the President Line ships from the West Coast, but until we heard from the Philippine Embassy we would not know which line.

We had assurance from the church that our assignment in urban-industrial work would meet the approval of the Philippine government. This was a new work, we had been told, and there were few Filipinos ready to meet the qualifications.

We just had to wait until we received official clearance. In the meantime, I planned a trip to Washington, D.C. to follow up on contacts at the Asia desk in the State Department and meetings with Harry Goldberg in the International Office of the A.F. of L./C.I.O. and Stanley Ruttenberg in the International Office of the United Automobile Workers. At this time in the U.S. labor movement Walter Reuther, head of the United Automobile Workers, was distancing himself from the more conservative views of the A.F. of L./C.I.O. leadership. The A.F. of L./C.I.O. under the leadership of George Meany had inherited the more conservative business unionism of the A.F. of L.'s trade union philosophy. The U.A.W., and the Reuther brothers, carried with them the more aggressive social justice stance of the industrial unions. I felt it was good to get both points of view since I needed to sort out where U.S. labor movement policy stood in relation to the growing industrial unionism in the Philippines.

My meeting at the U.S. State Department was perfunctory. I had already read the paper on Labor in the Philippines issued in December 1956 by the U.S. Labor Department. There was little the person at the Philippine desk at the State Department could add to what I had read. My visit to the International Office of the A.F. of L./C.I.O. was more volatile. Harry Goldberg, who headed the office, was excitable and ideological. I had heard about Goldberg before I met him. During my days at the International Ladies Garment Workers, Harry Goldberg's name was bandied about with a certain respect by the old-timers and an emphatic disdain by the younger folk.

During the 1930s, like many Jews in the labor movement, especially the garment workers, Harry Goldberg had been a Communist. In the ideological shifts in the international communist movement in the late 1930s many of the Jews lost faith, became disillusioned and turned passionately anti-Communist. They were followers of Jay Lovestone one of the principal ideologues in the group. Goldberg was a Lovestoneite and he saw in me a candidate for inculcating his deep-seated fear of anything left of his position. He cautioned me about certain people in the Philippine labor movement who were "Communists" or dupes of the "Communists." There were only a few Philippine labor leaders that could be trusted. I came away from my meeting with Goldberg with an eagerness to meet some of these people he so defamed.

Meeting Stan Ruttenberg of the U.A.W. was like a breath of fresh air. I felt completely comfortable coming in his office. He had a laid back attitude which allowed for easy conversation. He knew that he did not know everything about the Philippine labor movement. But what he did know he analyzed from an anthropological perspective. He was interested in its culture and how people reacted to different situations. He was also interested in the power situation within the Philippine labor movement. He did not divide up people so easily into sides as did Goldberg. He told me whom I should get to know and what to expect. He advised me to do very careful analysis of the situation and keep a certain distance, until I really felt I knew what was happening. I got much good advice from Ruttenberg and also names of people to meet when I got to the Philippines. He did tell me that Cicero Calderon at the Labor Education Center was a man I could count on.

I got back to Dayton feeling my trip to Washington had been rewarding. I learned our visas had arrived and we were scheduled to sail on the President Wilson from San Francisco at the end of February. We now had a date and we had to complete last minute affairs. Westminster Church, where we were married, gave us a farewell party. Hugh I. Evans, for many years the head pastor, had retired. Now Jim Westhafer and Joe Jensen shared a co-pastorate. Jim Westhafer was an old friend. He had been at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church as a Union Theological Seminary intern during my growing up years. I had been in one of his Church School classes. He also was a graduate of the College of Wooster, where his father had been a professor, and had been overseas at Allahabad in India as the Wooster-in-India representative. Eunice and I had made an earlier decision. We would ask Jim Westhafer to baptize Johanna. On a Sunday in late February 1957, as we prepared to leave the United States, Johanna Carol was baptized. History has a way of being tied together. My years at M.A.P.C. in New York, my time at Wooster, were connected in this baptism of our third child in Dayton, Ohio. We were leaving home, but we were tying our world together.