

## **Mission Sonlight-Traditional Script-Mindanao, Philippines**

**Narrator:** Welcome to Mission Sonlight. The Southern Asia Pacific Division is the focus of our travels this quarter. Students who attend Seventh-day Adventist schools in this division will benefit from your gifts on 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath.

Today we will visit Mindanao, Philippines, the second largest and easternmost island in the country. Mindanao is also one of the three island groups in the Philippines along with Luzon and Visayas. With a population of over 21 million, it is the eighth most populous island in the world. Mindanao is surrounded by the Sulu Sea to the west, the Philippine Sea to the east and the Celebes Sea to the south. Its terrain consists of high, rugged mountains as well as rolling plateaus and broad, swampy plains.

Islam spread to this region during the 13<sup>th</sup> century and it was during this period that sultanates, an Islamic form of rulerships, were established. By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish ships had visited the area and their military forces began the process of occupying the area.

Zamboanga City is a major region of Mindanao, located on the southwestern most tip of the Zamboangan Peninsula and is 850 kilometers south of Manila. Throughout its existence Zamboanga City has played a role in historical events. It was here that a major Spanish fort was built during Spain's occupation. During the American colonial period General John J. Pershing served as a regional governor. Before World War II, American troops who were part of the US Army's 43d Infantry Regiment were stationed at Pettit Barracks. Invading Japanese forces landed here on March 2, 1942 and established

defense headquarters that remained until 1945 when US and Filipino forces overtook them.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was first introduced to the Philippines in 1905, when Robert Caldwell, a missionary from Australia, arrived and began a literature ministry. Years later, the mission office is nestled at the end of this alley, where the work is organized.

But, the greatest effort is happening throughout the city, through the lives of the Adventist members. Church members meet in places like the garage of the Western Mindanao Mission to quiet corners tucked behind the homes of local people. The children learn in their Sabbath School much like Adventist children around the world, through music and story. Members are witnesses in the local industry that they run, such as this fishing company owned by an Adventist family. The members are eager to be fisher's of men and have a special focus in Zamboanga City for their own children as well as the children of their friends and neighbors.

There is a new school being constructed in Zamboanga City to minister to all these children and will be named in honor of the early pioneer of this work.

**Elvin Solarda: (03:58-4:11)**-This will be Caldwell Adventist Academy. This is in honor to Caldwell, the first missionary who visited the Philippines as a literature evangelist.

**Narrator:** Ministry in the area of Zamboanga City presents special challenges and even dangers.

**Edwin Gulfan: (2:23-2:45)** Two unique challenges that we have in Zamboanga city is the fact that we have the largest concentration of Muslims—the intellectual Muslims in the

country. And at the same time we have the only Spanish speaking Philipinos in this city, the Sabacanos, which is very strong Catholic.

**Narrator:** There have been Christians kidnapped for ransom by radicals opposed to Christianity, seeking to gain financing through these ransoms for their work. Through all of this the mission of the church is being effectively carried forward through the Seventh-day Adventist schools and the teachers who are dedicated to telling the story of Jesus to each of their students.

**Edwin Gulfan: (2:46-)** With this unique situation we have our being at the center of the biggest Muslim territory of the country and our being in the Spanish speaking Roman Catholics in the country we have seen that our most effective approach is the educational approach.

**(4:15-4:27)** In our survey quite a number of Muslim parents have indicated that they like Adventist teachers because we are the ones closest to them as far as lifestyle is concerned.

**Narrator:** The Adventist way of living appeals to these parents and some are now sending their children, while some wait for the completion of the building. Caldwell Adventist Academy is being constructed in phases and your 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath Mission offering will not only help finish the school, but it will give an opportunity to lead many young Muslims to a relationship with Jesus.

**Hazel Voone Bayola: (1:49-1:56)** In June 2007 we were able to put up the first phase of our building project. That's the first floor with six rooms. We still have the old room for the kindergarten so we did use the sixth room school building for the grades 1-6.

**Narrator:** Local church members believe strongly in the mission that they face in Zamboanga City. They support the new school in action and with financial means as well. Supporters of the project realize that students who attend are being prepared for a relationship with Christ and eventually a kingdom that is not of this world.

**Hazel Voone Bayola: (2:18-2:29)** We got our funds mostly from donations from our brethren. We are so glad they're so generous in giving their money to build this project, although some have given for us not as donations but as investments.

**Narrator:** When the local contributions ran out, construction came to a halt. Even though the building wasn't complete, the decision was made to continue with plans of opening the secondary portion of the school. Today, there are both elementary and secondary students attending Caldwell Adventist Academy, with numbers expected to increase when construction is completed.

**Hazel Voone Bayola (8:30-8:38)** We can help many students, especially this school year. We have 40 percent of our students are Muslim.

**(9:12-9:21)** Despite different religions they come here. They listen to the word of God. We're so glad we can minister to them.

**Ainee Sabino (01:00-1:18)** I am in grade four. I love the teachers here because they're kind, they're loving and I'm happy to have a new school building so that many kids can go to school here.

**(02:04-02:31)** I have lots of friends that are non-Adventists and they're also happy to go to school here in an Adventist school.

**Narrator:** The need is great for completion of this outpost of light in an area where there is much darkness in the hearts of many.

**Elvin Solarda: (01:21-01:29)** We are really very happy to the world wide church for helping this project that we have here in Zamboanga City.

**(02:36- )** We are soliciting more prayers to all our brethren throughout the world to help.

**(02:43-03:01)** It's a good challenge here in Zamboanga City because of the mix of culture that we have here—the Muslims, the Spanish speaking people and of course our own people—the Christian community.

**Kid 2: (5:46-5:52)-** Thank you for building our new school.

**Narrator:** Your 13<sup>th</sup> Sabbath offering gift will make it possible for young people to hear the story of Jesus on a daily basis. How will you join your brothers and sisters on the island of Mindanao to invest in souls for heaven?

Reporting from Mindanao, Philippines, in the Southern-Asia Pacific Division this is Mission Spotlight.