

Cyril and Anna Brooks have been serving the Lord in the Philippines since 1922, with few interruptions — a total of 59 years! Their three children, Len, Ken, and Rose, are all in full-time work.

September's article on Emmaus Bible School's outreach, "These Forty Years," mentioned the use of Emmaus correspondence courses by The Bible School of the Air. This article is a fitting sequel.



The Gospel Messengers radio program in 1940. C. H. Brooks is in the right background. The quartet leader is American, the soprano and alto Filipino, the tenor Indonesian, the bass Chinese!

Some missionary-minded parents watched their little son, perched atop a wooden sawhorse, lustily singing, "Speed away, speed away with the life-giving Word." They had dedicated their youngest son to the Lord for God's service and named him "Cyril" after a missionary who had died in Central Africa. None of them realized how prophetic were the words sung in innocence.

When the Psalmist wrote "His Word runs swiftly" Psalm 147:15 (N.I.V.) he was thinking of the rapidity of God's commands throughout His creation. In this modern age we may apply those words to the swift spread of the Gospel by means of radio and literature. Here are a few dates significant to us as having a personal part in the dissemination of God's Word.

February 12, 1922 in Hackensack, N.J. For the first time listened to a sermon on the radio but never dreamed that radio would play a large part in our ministry in the Philippines for which we were then

preparing. Incidentally, the sermon wasn't very good, being more about Abraham Lincoln than about Jesus Christ!

February 24, 1935 in Manila. Spoke for the first time on the radio as a guest of *The Gospel Messengers* program. The message, "True Satisfaction" was later printed in the September issue of *The Philippine Evangelist*.

March 15, 1936. Took over as the regular speaker of *The Gospel Hour* on KZRM, a commercial radio station in Manila. Apart from furlough time, 1937-1938, continued this ministry with many interesting and fruitful contacts. Heard of a large group in Guam who listened regularly. Received many testimonies of souls being saved. Twenty years later we met a lady who had been saved through that program.

December 7, 1941, Spoke on Four Freedoms with a spiritual application, unaware that Japanese bombers were already on the way toward Pearl Harbor and the Philippines. Thus was terminated that phase of

radio ministry, during the years of Japanese occupation and rehabilitation at home until our return to the Philippines.

April 17, 1950. The first program of the Bible School of the Air over the facilities of the Christian radio station of the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC) in Manila.

THE BIBLE SCHOOL OF THE AIR

As we prayed about the type of radio program to offer and whether we should use FEBC or a commercial station, we received in early 1950 a copy of a new course published by Emmaus Bible School. The Lord's guidance became clear as we read through *What The Bible Teaches*. A program of Bible study based on a correspond-

"HIS WORD RUNS SWIFTLY"

— Cyril H. Brooks

ence course which would be offered free to listeners. The guidance was confirmed by the cooperative response of Mr. Robert Bowman of FEBC. The station had been in operation then for nine months. With his help we came up with the name *Bible School of the Air* because the significance of "Emmaus" would be lost on prospective listeners.

1950 was not the most auspicious time to launch this new project. Tension was high throughout the Far East. The Korean War was soon to start. Insurgency was rife in the Philippines. The U.S. Embassy had warned U.S. citizens not to travel at night

The Story of The Bible School of the Air, Manila

outside of the city. Gun shots were often heard as we drove out to FEBC to air our programs on Monday evenings. But the Lord was leading, of that we were sure, though we little realized *where* He was leading. Had we known we would not have had the faith to start! This work has developed in two directions; radio programs and correspondence courses.

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The Radio Ministry

This has consisted mainly of a half-hour program once a week. At the beginning my wife had a part in reading letters and



Bible School of the Air office staff. Back row: Bernadetto Caubang, Letty Licera, Cora Aragon, Luz Lazaro, Nelly Licera. Front row: Elinor Aragon (manager), Rolly Espirito.



Bible School of the Air, 1950's. Ken and Mary Lou Engle, Cyril Brooks, and Ken Brooks sorting mail in the studio.



Blas Tachiendo and Oscar de Leon. Blas, saved through the correspondence courses, started the assembly at Nahapay. Oscar is a commended worker from Malolos (north of Manila).

questions. In 1951 there was the welcome arrival of Kenneth Engle with his radio experience at WMBI as a student at Moody in Chicago. The next year our son Kenneth also arrived to help in this work. All of the programs (1600 plus to date) have been based on Emmaus courses with varying formats. Part of the time there was a forum type when three or four would spend a few minutes discussing questions on the lesson. In recent years it has been thought advisable to have just one speaker so listeners would identify a voice with the program. For some years we also had a fifteen-minute program three times a week in addition to the half-hour program.

The advent of tape recorders was a great

boon. Programs could be prepared ahead of time at our convenience. The recordings could be preserved for use at some future time. While on furlough I could record programs wherever it was possible to get the use of good quality equipment. It also made it possible to air the programs over some commercial stations in other parts of the Philippines. This was being done prior to the time of the institution of martial law in September 1972. Then all stations were temporarily off the air. FEBC was one of the first to resume operations after a few days. However as commercial stations resumed broadcasting they raised their rates considerably. Since the response had been rather meager it was thought inadvisable

to negotiate new contracts.

For some time the feasibility of a Tagalog program was considered. In March 1978, it was commenced with one of the national workers, Brother Rey Cervantes, as speaker. Naturally this is more limited in its outreach than English but the Lord has richly blessed these Tagalog programs. They have been well received and in fact have drawn more letter response than the English programs during the last three years!

It was time for a change in the English program, for a younger voice and preferably a Filipino voice. Recording sessions were proving rather tiring at my age. Our fellow missionaries were already so busy they were reluctant to take on this work. One of

the national workers, Mr. Rudy Ponce de Leon returned last year from three years of study in Bible college in New Zealand. With extensive radio experience and spiritual qualifications he was well fitted. However he became deeply involved in other aspects of the work and didn't feel free to devote time to preparation. (I find it takes at least a day to prepare a 16-minute radio message.) Rudy suggested he could read a script if someone else prepared it. This arrangement has been working well for some months now. I prepare the script of the message. Rudy reads it and his nephew, Pete Barotilla, puts the whole program together.

The Correspondence Course Ministry

At the beginning, the only way of advertising the courses was through the radio program. How thrilled we were with the initial response — before long 500 requests and soon it was up to 1000. Students were soon asking for the course for their friends. We printed a form where they could list names of others. Christian workers would send lists of church members and interested friends. Though direct response from the radio program decreased, total requests rose. It was not uncommon to get over 3,000 in a week. Advertisements placed in weekly magazines brought a good response though this was rather expensive.

What The Bible Teaches was soon translated into Tagalog. A curious mistranslation was caught before it went into print. The word "deliver" as in deliverance from sin, was translated with a word meaning to deliver a package! Later on this course was also translated into Cebuano, Ilocano and Hiligaynon (Ilonggo). These four are the principal Philippine languages. Courses are also offered in Chinese.

After seventeen years a million requests

In March 1975 the total responses passed the one-and-one-half million mark.

had been received. A rally was held and Bibles were given to five Manila students enrolled in that week. Rallies held on other occasions were not very encouraging. They were attended mostly by interested friends but not by correspondence students. In March 1975 the total responses passed the one-and-one-half million mark. Since then growth numerically has been slow because of a change in our methods. **Now enrollments average between five to six hundred a month.** However the percentage of completions is higher.

The earlier method was an evangelistic outreach. So even if students did not return their test papers, they still received a book-



Assembly testimonies at Luisita Sugar Estate, Tarlac; Nahapay, Guimbal; and Bahay-pare; all the fruit of the Bible School of the Air correspondence courses



Rudy Ponce de Leon in a pensive mood. He is a speaker on the Bible School of the Air English program.

let with a clear gospel message. After using various booklets, such as *The Reason Why*, and *Here's How*, we wrote a booklet specially suited to local conditions and problems. Many have written to testify of salvation through this booklet. Now a shorter course, *Men Who Met The Master*, is being used as the introductory free course in the place of *What The Bible Teaches*.

The introductory courses and also the Philippine language courses are all printed locally. The advanced courses are purchased from Emmaus Bible School. Some of these advanced courses have been translated into Tagalog. We are trying to encourage Christians to use these in their own personal Bible study. Some local churches are also using them for home Bible study groups, and Sunday Schools.

THE SPIRITUAL RESULTS

Only in eternity will we learn the true spiritual results of all the effort and expense that has gone into the Bible School of the Air. Yet the Lord allows us to see some of the fruit now. The Gospel has gone forth to all parts of the Philippines with its 45 million population and also to many other countries. No count has been kept but hundreds, possibly thousands of letters have testified of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Many Christian workers in different groups have testified of the help received from the courses, either in their salvation or in the enriching of their spiritual lives.

On a large sugar estate in Tarlac, Central Luzon, a few men were saved through courses. Seven or eight certificates adorned the wall of one home. We contacted them after they had been meeting for Bible study. What a hunger they had for the Word! On a Saturday evening, a couple of us met with them from seven till midnight. The meeting stopped then because we had

a three-hour drive home and a busy Sunday ahead. Now there are two assemblies in that area with an outreach to other places.

In the Candaba swamps, a rich rice-growing area north of Manila, there was little gospel witness, if any. Insurgency was rampant and night travel was risky. Now there are five assemblies there; a result of a young woman being saved as she studied *What The Bible Teaches*. The first meeting in her home in Bahay-pare in 1963 is unforgettable! Twenty to thirty neighbors were invited in. It wasn't a formal meeting just a friendly talk. For an hour I explained our mission and the way of salvation. When I invited questions, one man said, "We have seen a change in Tessie and we want to know what it's all about." It was three hours before they finally left to get their evening meals.

In the central part of the archipelago, in Guimbal, Iloilo, a man was saved and began witnessing to others. From their studies they learned about the local church and built a chapel in which to meet. Their only outside help has been from occasional visits of national workers. Reports of other such groups have been received and they have linked up with other groups of evangelicals. God's Word runs swiftly and does not return to Him empty.

Another spiritual result has been to see God's faithfulness in supplying the needs. One morning in my quiet time I was praying about the immediate need of about \$500.00. Later while eating breakfast, Ken Engle brought in the mail which contained a gift for just that amount. Like everywhere else, costs have been rising. Bills for printing have increased; postage has risen from two centavos to forty on each piece of mail. In 1980 operational costs were somewhat over \$22,000.00 but God has not failed — He cannot fail.

The actual operation of the Bible School of the Air is now in the hands of a Filipino



The Bible School of the Air office manager, Elinor Aragon, and his family

staff. The office manager is Mr. Elinor Aragon who is an elder of the assembly in Binangonan and actively engaged in other phases of the Lord's work. Working with him are Miss Luz Lazaro who has been with us in this work since August, 1950, and two sisters, Misses Letty and Nelly Licera who have also been with us for several years. These devoted workers are serving not only for the salary they receive but also as a service for the Lord. An advisory committee meets periodically to oversee the work in general and to set policies.

Pray for the Bible School of the Air in its radio outreach and use of correspondence courses. Praise God that its voice "has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." *"Thy Word runs swiftly." Psalm 147:15 (N.I.V.)* ■

PLANNING A MISSIONARY CONFERENCE?

LOOKING FOR A SPEAKER FOR A MISSIONARY MEETING OR STUDY CLASS?

Here's something that may help:

A list of missionaries on furlough or temporarily in Canada or the USA is available on request. An address where the missionary may be contacted (not always the physical location as they may be moving about the country) as well as tentative arrival and departure dates are included. Write to:

CMML, Inc.
P.O. Box 13
Spring Lake, NJ 07762

MSC, Inc.
1562A Danforth Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4J 1N4