Montana, Leodegario Entoma (1920–1999)

RICHARD DEAN M. MASANGCAY

Richard Dean M. Masangcay is a pastor in the West Visayan Conference. He is a second generation minister. He is married to Emmylou Magbanua. They have two children: Richard M. Masangcay and Ayessa Evani M. Masangcay. He finished his B.A. in Theology at Central Philippine Adventist College, Murcia, Negros Occidental.

Leodegario E. Montana was a pastor, evangelist and church administrator from Cebu. He served the church in different capacities as a colporteur, district pastor, director, administrator, and evangelist for thirty-four years and
Early Life

Leodegario E. Montana was born October 2, 1920 as the only child of Nicolas Montana and Gleceria Entoma in Casay, Cebu, The Philippines. Nurtured in a Roman Catholic home, Leodegario from early childhood was a voracious reader, especially religious books. In his early 20’s an elder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church happened to meet him and gave him a Bible study. That one meeting extended to a series, with the elder not only showing the young man new Bible truths, but also introducing him to truth-filled literature. Leodegario eventually accepted the Adventist message and was baptized December 8, 1945.1

After completing high school at Cebu Provincial High with high honors, Leodegario attended Cebu Normal college to be trained as a teacher. After teaching in a public school for seven years, he chose to work for the Adventist Church—a career choice that made him a leader in different capacities and responsibilities within the denomination. Being a studious learner brought him the privilege of attending several extension centers of Andrews University and Loma Linda University, thus sharpening his skills as an Adventist church leader. His leadership skills emerged when he moved from teaching to literature evangelism in September 1948, eventually becoming both a top salesman and an active “souls man.” Soon he was appointed as the local mission publishing director, recruiting literature evangelists and promoting sales in the field.2

Leodegario Montana married Aurora Andrade of Camotes Island, Cebu. The couple was blessed with two children Dulzura and Angelito, but while the children were still small, Aurora passed away. In 1951 Montana married Lourdes Lirazan who was then serving as assistant publishing director of West Visayan Mission.

Ministry

Leodegario Montana’s leadership in literature ministry took him to different missions within Central Philippine Union Mission (now Conference)—in 1949 as assistant publishing secretary of East Visayan Mission3 in 1950-1951 as publishing secretary of Southern Mindanao Mission4 in 1952-1956 as publishing secretary for East Visayan Mission5 and also as the public relations officer.6 In 1956 Montana was ordained to the gospel ministry and was appointed as a district pastor in the same mission.7 In 1958 Montana was elected to serve as South Philippine Union Mission departmental secretary for temperance and public relations, and also as associate publishing secretary.

With the rapid growth of the church in the Philippines and new openings for evangelism, Montana served from 1964 to 1966 as the Central Philippine Union Mission evangelist, radio-TV and Bible Correspondence School Director. Those three years saw an evangelistic leap throughout the Central Philippine Union Mission, with eight evangelists teaming up with Pastor Montana to reap one of the largest soul-winning harvests in the Philippines.8

In 1967 Montana was appointed the Ministerial Secretary of Central Philippine Union Mission9 and from that office gave leadership to pastoral nurture and evangelistic thrust throughout the Union, particularly with direct involvement as Union evangelist from 1968 to 1971,10 with additional responsibilities as radio evangelist.11

Beginning in 1972 Pastor Leodegario Montana was invited to be more and more involved in the administrative and leadership work of the church, even though he continued his interest in ministerial and evangelistic roles. The was elected as the president of East Visayan Mission, to so serve up to 1974.12 East Visayan Mission was one of the oldest and challenging missions in the Philippines. It was organized in 1914 and reorganized in 1965, consisting of Leyte del Norte, Leyte del Sur, and Samar provinces, and during his leadership the mission peaked to 52 churches with a membership of 8,095.13 From leadership of a mission field, Montana moved to greater responsibility of serving as president of Central Philippine Union Mission from 1975 to 1980,14 with the Union covering four mission fields--Central Visayan, East Visayan, Negros, and West Visayan Mission15—with 307 churches and nearly 44,000 church members during his administration.16

In 1981, Montana was back to evangelism again, serving as the Tri-Union Evangelist, providing evangelistic leadership and innovation to the Northern, Central, and Southern Philippine Union Missions.18 During this period, evangelism took on new strides across the globe under the worldwide direction of General Conference. As part of this stride, Montana worked with the three Philippine Union Missions to a joint venture in Cebu City a massive evangelistic campaign. Montana and Robert Spangler of the General Conference Ministerial Association led out in the Cebu campaign, which led to the building of the Capitol Center church in front of the capitol.19 As an evangelist and ministry leader Pastor Montana excelled in organizing new churches, motivating evangelism, and promoting new church construction,20 the last one leading to the building of the Casay church on a plot carved out of his family compound and gifted to the church just before his retirement.21 Throughout his 34 years of service and leadership in the Philippines, Pastor Montana was respected by pastors, literature evangelists, and church members as “modern Moses” because of his character of meekness.22 His colleagues loved him as a humble servant leader.23

Montana retired denominational service on April 1, 1982 at the age of 62.24 While his retirement years in his beloved Cebu were filled with joy and happiness in continuing his ministry to the church he loved, he found time to rest and relax with family, relatives, and friends. He found time to visit the places and the churches where he had worked before and enjoyed fellowshipping with church members whom he guided in their spiritual journey. His own life journey ended on May 13, 1999 after two years of illness.25
Sources


“Retirement Committee Far Eastern Division, record of Pastor Montana,” Central Philippine Union Conference Archives.


“Worker’s Record of Pastor Leodargio E. Montana.” Central Philippine Union Conference Archives.

Notes

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
22.
23. Pastor Renato Domingo, Sr., retired West Visayan Mission President, interview by author, August 2018.

24. Hanani Mopia Masangcay, retired West Visayan worker, interview by author, August 2018.


26. Ibid.