

# Arrogante, Florencio Monterde

## (1916–2014)

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Florencio Monterde Arrogante was a writer, church leader, administrator, and eloquent speaker from the Philippines.

### Early Life

Florencio Monterde Arrogante was born January 3, 1916, in Daanbantayan, Cebu, Philippines, where he spent most of his childhood. His parents were both Adventists. He accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior in March 1929 at the age of 13, in Cebu City, and was baptized by Pastor Manuel Kintanar.<sup>1</sup>

### Education and Marriage

Florencio studied for an Associate of Arts degree at Philippine Union College (now Adventist University of the Philippines in Putingkahoy, Cavite) Baesa, Caloocan City, Philippines. He spoke four languages: English, Spanish, Cebuano, and Panayan. While studying at Philippine Union College, he worked as assistant preceptor from March 1940 to March 1941 to support his studies. Florencio married Lolita Exito Jardinico from San Enrique, Negros Occidental. Lolita was born March 12, 1927. She was a teacher by profession and was baptized September 12, 1945. Florencio was 36 and Lolita was 25 when they married on July 15, 1952. They were blessed with five children, four girls (Lelita, Lily Belle, Zelle Flor, and Lysenia) and one boy (Florencio, Jr.). Unfortunately, Lily Belle lived for only five years and died September 30, 1960.<sup>2</sup>

### Ministry

Beginning at the age of 13, from April 1929 to March 1932, Florencio sold magazines for the East Visayan Mission (now Central Visayan Conference). He worked as a medical representative of Aznar Laboratories, a private business enterprise in Cebu, from March 1937 to April 1939.<sup>3</sup> His denominational work as an intern for the East Visayan Mission (now Central Visayan Conference) ran from the latter part of April 1939 to March 1940.

The next 11 months, from April 1940 to February 1941, he worked as a Bible teacher for the same mission. A year after receiving his Missionary License in April 1941 he became the district leader of Bohol for the World War II years from March 1941 to March 1946.<sup>4</sup> While a district leader in Bohol, the Japanese soldiers thought he was a spy against the Japanese government. He was apprehended and sentenced to death by hanging. The news spread among the Seventh-day Adventist church members in Bohol and prayers were offered in his behalf. The Japanese soldiers took him to La Hacienda, Alicia, Bohol, for the execution. Miraculously, a fellow church member from Bilar, Bohol, Santos Cartagenas, arrived to help Florencio. Mr. Santos—who spoke a little Japanese and happened to work in a Japanese Bazaar in Davao City—showed some pictures of Japanese Seventh-day Adventist members in Tokyo, Japan, standing in front of their church. He told the captors in Japanese that the man whom they thought was a spy was actually a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Christian Japanese soldiers released Florencio.<sup>5</sup>

When World War II was over, he served as an evangelist in East Visayan Mission (now Central Visayan Conference) from April 1947 to December 1949.<sup>6</sup> Receiving his Ministerial License in April 1948, he moved to Southern Mindanao Mission in Davao City and worked as Sabbath School and Home Missionary secretary from January 1950 to March 1955.<sup>7</sup> While in Southern Mindanao Mission, he was ordained to the ministry on April 17, 1953.<sup>8</sup> He was moved to the South Philippine Union Mission where he served as Sabbath School and Home Missionary secretary from April 1955 to December 1955. For the next two years he was given the assignment of Bible Correspondence and Radio director. From Mindanao he was called back to Visayas to become the second president of East Visayan Mission in Cebu City, a work he faithfully discharged from January 1958 to December 1959. As the work continued to grow and the need for workers accelerated, he was again moved to Mindanao as president of the Northern Mindanao Mission (now Northern Mindanao Conference in Cagayan de Oro City), from January 1960 to December 1963. From Mindanao he was called again to Visayas to be president of Negros Mission (now Negros Conference) from January 1964 to December 1967. Then he was called to work in the Central Philippine Union Mission as Sabbath School, Lay Activities, and Public Relations director from January 1968 to December 1969.<sup>9</sup> In January 1970, he moved to the East Visayan Mission (now East Visayan Conference) in Tacloban City, Leyte, to take the rein of leadership for two years. He then moved again to Central Philippine Union Mission as president, a position he held for two years, before moving to Luzon—the largest island of the Republic of the Philippines—to serve as the second Filipino president of the North Philippine Union Mission (now Philippine Union Conference) for six years from January 1974 to December 1979.<sup>10, 11, 12</sup> At the age of 64, he was called to the Far Eastern Division of the General Conference as a field secretary, a responsibility he faithfully carried out for three years until his retirement on January 1, 1983.<sup>13</sup>

## Later Life and Contribution

Upon retirement in 1983, he and his wife migrated to the United States to be with their children in California. He continued to serve the local church in various assignments until he died on June 30, 2014, in Montecito,

California.<sup>14</sup>

Florencio was a good writer, leader, administrator, and an eloquent speaker. He served the church for 41 years and nine months and retired at the age of 67 on January 1, 1983. He continued to be an inspiration to the Filipino believers and leaders alike, both in the Philippines and abroad, until he died at a good old age of 98.

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2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

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6. Florencio M. Arrogante, "The Plenteous Harvest of Souls in the Philippines," *ARH*, vol. 124, June 26, 1947, 21.

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