

De la Cruz, Felix Barsena (1910–2012)

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Mary Grace Ladion-De Guzman taught at Lipa Adventist Academy for eleven years, the first established academy within the territory of South Central Luzon Conference. She is a licensed science teacher and holds a master's degree in Science Education. She is particularly interested in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and staff development. Her husband, Marlon De Guzman, is a senior auditor for the South Central Luzon Conference. They have two children. Guzman is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Education with a specialization in Curriculum and Instruction from the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies.



Felix B. De la Cruz.

Photo courtesy of Charles Lay. Source: *Find a Grave*,

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/88249852/felix-b-de_la_cruz

Felix Barsena de la Cruz was an educator, minister/evangelist, and leader from the Philippines.

Early Life

Felix Barsena de la Cruz was born in Banuar, Laoac, Pangasinan, on February 10, 1910, to parents Angelo de la Cruz and Asiang Barsena. He is the third child of four siblings. He spent most of his childhood on the farm where his parents were also born.¹ During World War II (1941 to 1945), a severe crisis devastated the country. De la Cruz's village became the haven of the evacuees. He came across Pastor Juan Afenir, the first Adventist Church planter of Northern Luzon Mission (NLM). After a series of Bible studies, he was converted as a Seventh-day Adventist.

Education and Marriage

De la Cruz completed his elementary education in Pangasinan. Then he finished his high school days at Manaoag High School. Being an outstanding student, he was given a full scholarship to take a Bachelor of Nursing in Hong Kong,² but he decided to enter the organized work of Northern Luzon Mission as a literature

evangelist in May 1928 instead. In June 1929 he enrolled at Philippine Union College and finished the course associate in Theology.³

He was married to Mrs. Julia Bucaino and was blessed with two children, Nellie and Editha. But shortly after having their second child, Julia died. Pastor Felix was remarried to Luz Luna and was blessed with two kids, Lou and Felix Michael Jr.⁴

Ministry

His first denominational call was to teach in a church school⁵ at Lantap, Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya, under Northern Luzon Mission (NLM) in June 1934.⁶ Then he was assigned to the field as an evangelist from 1935 until 1943.⁷

In July 1943 he was sent to teach at Northern Luzon Mission Adventist Academy.⁸ During class break and vacation he worked as an evangelist.⁹ His role was teacher-evangelist from 1943 to 1945. These were war years (World War II) that greatly affected the country and the work of the church. However, de la Cruz remained true to his duty as a minister of the gospel. He visited other mission workers and evangelists in their fields in Vizcaya and Isabela to check their situation. A similar concern he made to the church members as traveling during the time was dangerous.¹⁰

After the war he was called to serve as the education and mission volunteer secretary¹¹ of NLM from January 1946 to September 1949. His dynamic leadership was observed while various activities were forwarded as the country slowly returned to normal routines after the war. He was specifically passionate about the work of the literature ministry.¹²

In October 1949 de la Cruz was voted as the president¹³ of the Northeast Luzon Mission (NELA), a babe mission, that was organized in 1948 and separated itself from NLM. He served in that capacity until March 1953.

When his term ended at NELA, he answered another presidency call¹⁴ at NLM from April 1953 to March 1956. Several encouraging activities happened in his territory including the positive reports of the different departments under his care while the goal of baptism was set by the North Philippine Union Mission (NPUM). Moreover, a rally of the Parent and Home Education Department took place to encourage family worship and character building among children.¹⁵

He went back to NELA to serve as the president for the second time around from April 1956 to February 1957.¹⁶ However, due to some financial constraints, NELA could not stand independently as a mission; so, it became a part of NLM again. With this, de la Cruz returned to the mission field as a district leader until his retirement.¹⁷ He remained actively involved in various ministries and had been a constant member of the mission's Executive Committee.^{18, 19} Several evangelistic efforts were made because of the efforts of Pastor de la Cruz that brought many souls to Christ.²⁰

He served the denomination for 36 years and 5 months, and he retired on March 1, 1970.²¹

Later Life and Contribution

In 1960 de la Cruz submitted his retirement letter and went to the United States of America and served as a pastor for several years. He spent his sunset years at Loma Linda, California, and enjoyed the company of his children. In April 2012, at the age of 102, Felix Barsena de la Cruz rested in the hands of the Savior waiting for resurrection on that fine blessed morning.²²

His passion for the gospel work in the mission field exercised his leadership capacities to become faithful and energetic. De la Cruz held several evangelistic efforts in the districts where he was assigned. This brought many repenting souls to the Savior. He was also considered as one of the forwarders of the literature ministry in the Philippines.

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Nellie de la Cruz Emock, Pastor Felix de la Cruz's daughter, interview by the authors.

2. Ibid.

3. "Feliz de la Cruz, Service Record," SSD Archives.

4. Nellie de la Cruz Emock, Pastor Felix de la Cruz's daughter, interview by the authors.

5. *SDA Yearbook* (1935), 128.

6. "Feliz de la Cruz, Service Record."

7. *SDA Yearbook* (1943), 113.

8. "Feliz de la Cruz. Service Record."

9. SDA Yearbook(1945), 113.
10. "Feliz de la Cruz, Service Record."
11. SDA Yearbook(1948), 113.
12. "Feliz de la Cruz, Service Record."
13. SDA Yearbook(1950), 123.
14. Juan Afenir, "Report and Progress in the Northern Luzon Mission," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, December 1955, 7-8.
15. Juan Afenir, "Parent and Home Education Rally," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, December 1955, 9-10.
16. "Feliz de la Cruz, Service Record."
17. SDA Yearbook(1970), 140.
18. SDA Yearbook(1958), 99.
19. SDA Yearbook(1960), 105.
20. "Feliz de la Cruz, Service Record."
21. Ibid.
22. Nellie de la Cruz Emock, Pastor Felix de la Cruz's daughter, interview by the authors.

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