

Geslani, Francisco Tamayo (1920–1995)

INGRID IDYLL M. TORNALEJO

Ingrid Idyll M. Tornalejo is a Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science (BMLS) Graduate of the Adventist University of the Philippines. She is currently a second-year student at the Adventist University of the Philippines, College of Medicine.

Francisco Tamayo Geslani was an Adventist writer, medical doctor, and hospital administrator from the Philippines.

Early Life

Francisco Tamayo Geslani was born on January 29, 1920, in Malasiqui Pangasinan, in Northern Luzon, Philippines.¹ His father, Ildefonso Geslani was a member of the police force in their municipality while his mother, Juana Tamayo, was a teacher who later devoted herself to the full-time management of their farm.² Being devout Catholics, his parents named him after a patron saint. Geslani had three brothers and sisters. However, he lost his younger sibling at the age of six due to diarrhea and dehydration.³ This incident was what inspired him to eventually become a physician.

When the Adventist message was brought to their town, Geslani's mother, Juana, was one of the individuals who embraced it. For this, she received criticism and humiliation from her other family members for renouncing their eminent religion. Although it was not easy for her, she held on to the Advent message, her newfound truth. She made efforts to share it with her husband, Ildefonso, and eventually convinced him of its truth.⁴

In December of 1934, at the young age of 14, Francisco Geslani accepted Christ as his personal Savior. He was baptized by Pastor Lugenbeal at Northern Luzon Academy, Artacho Pangasinan.⁵

Education and Marriage

Geslani's early education was obtained at Malasiqui Elementary School, a public school⁶ where he consistently performed in the top bracket of his class. He finished high school as the class president and valedictorian for the very first graduating class of Northern Luzon Academy in 1938.⁷ He was also known as the first alumnus of Philippine Union College (now Adventist University of the Philippines) to finish the doctor of medicine program from the Afafe College of Medicine & Surgery (ACMS), located at Espana-Morayta Sts., Manila, City in 1946.⁸ In that same year, Geslani passed the medical board examination among the top ten.⁹

Throughout his life, Geslani sought post graduate opportunities to enhance his surgical training. In the Philippines, he trained at Manila Sanitarium and Hospital, Pasay, in 1947. He later visited the United States on numerous occasions, training at White Memorial Hospital, Los Angeles, and Paradise Valley Sanitarium and Hospital, National City in 1955;¹⁰ Glendale Sanitarium and Hospital in 1963; Washington Sanitarium & Hospital, Takoma Park, Maryland in 1970; and New England Memorial Hospital, Stoneham, Massachusetts, in 1980. Dr. Welch of Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, granted Geslani special visitor privilege as a clinical observer.¹¹

Ministry

In 1947, Geslani returned to his hometown as a private practitioner. At the same time, he volunteered as a self-supporting medical secretary for the Northern Luzon Mission. Geslani was sent to the Philippine Union Mission meetings, which took place at Philippine Union College, as a delegate where he met Esther Arbias Same, a physics and math teacher at PUC, who would become his wife.¹² The couple married on November 14, 1948, on the eve of Commonwealth Day. The ceremony was officiated by M. E. Loewen, president of the Philippine Union Mission.¹³ The day of their marriage marked the start of their lives as medical missionaries.

The Geslanis had three children: Alexis Alonzo, Ladelle and Bevan Ali.¹⁴

In 1952, the Geslanis with two of their children, Alexis and Ladelle, sailed for Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, Mindanao, where Geslani pioneered the second Adventist hospital in the Philippines. Originally called Lakeside Clinic, it was later renamed Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital (now, Adventist Medical Center–Iligan).¹⁵ The hospital started humbly in two small rooms of a rented house in Iligan. Geslani's wife served as receptionist and office manager making appointments, accepting fees, and arranging the facilities for physical examinations. Satisfied patients spread word, and more and more patients sought the care of the Adventist doctor. As the reach of his practice grew, the need for more assistance and resources increased; hence, construction of the Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital building began. It was located two kilometers from the city proper and spanned a half hectare area.¹⁶ Geslani was appointed the first medical director of this hospital.¹⁷ His influence, good reputation, and friendship with the Maranaos (the majority Muslim tribe in the region) drew elite patients to seek medical attention in this facility. This state-of-the-art hospital when built, also served as a teaching hospital for medical students.¹⁸

In 1956, Geslani was called to pioneer another hospital in Cebu City, the Miller Sanitarium and Hospital named for Dr. H. W. Miller, a distinguished goiter specialist¹⁹ who had greatly helped in establishing the hospital through his expertise and substantial donations. The institution's opening was marked by Dr. and Mrs. H. W. Miller's visit to Cebu City on April 6-11, 1956.²⁰ Geslani was the first medical director of the hospital.

The hospital was entirely self-supporting from the start and flourished with remarkable growth in only a few years.²¹ Beginning with a twenty-bed capacity, it expanded to a sixty-bed healthcare facility with an excellent

occupancy rate. The hospital also became well-known for thyroid surgeries.²²

During their medical ministry in Cebu, the Geslanis were blessed with another child, Bevan Ali, named after their good friend, Governor Ali Demaporo of Lanao Province in which Iligan was located.²³

In 1971, Geslani and his family moved to Bacolod where he became the first Filipino medical director of Bacolod Sanitarium and Hospital succeeding Dr. W. G. Dick and Dr. Ronald Spalding.²⁴ During his tenure, the institution increased three times its original size. An additional wing was added to the building, increasing its bed capacity from fifty to one hundred.²⁵

Geslani served as medical director of Bacolod Sanitarium and Hospital until December 1984.²⁶ He continued serving the medical institution as president from 1985 until 1986.²⁷ After serving for forty-two long years, Geslani retired from denominational service in December 1989. He served as pioneering medical director of major medical institutions of the Adventist Church all over the Philippines for more than thirty years²⁸

Later Life

After his retirement Geslani continued to serve the community. He ran a private clinic and conducted consultations. Just a little more than a month before his 76th birthday, Geslani died on December 10, 1995, due to lung cancer while admitted to Bacolod Adventist Medical Center.²⁹

Contribution

Geslani was a versatile surgeon who held various leadership involvements in the church, school, and professional and civic organizations.³⁰ He served as a head elder of Bacolod Seventh-day Adventist church and was the first Filipino physician to be ordained as a Seventh-day Adventist minister. He was frequently requested to officiate at weddings.³¹ He was also made an honorary alumnus of the Loma Linda University School of Medicine in California. At that time, he was the only Adventist physician from the Philippines to be included in their membership roster.³² He was a fellow of the Philippine College of Surgeons and the International College of Surgeons.³³ He was also a life member-emeritus of the Philippine Medical Association and a life member of the Philippine College of Surgeons.³⁴

Aside from being a medical director of various hospitals, Geslani held other professional and administrative positions. He was an associate professor in surgery at Southwestern University School of Medicine in Cebu City, president of the Philippine College of Surgeons of the Western Visayas Chapter and of the Lanao Medical Society.³⁵ He served as a medical secretary for the Northern Luzon Mission, the South Philippine Union Mission, and the Central Philippine Union Mission.³⁶

Geslani's civic involvements included board membership of the Rotary Club of Cebu West and Bacolod, and the Cebu YMCA. He was a sustaining member of the Kapwa Ko, Mahal Ko Foundation, and a Special Individual

Member & Advisory Council of Community Chests of the Philippines. He also organized numerous free medical and surgical missions. He was also instrumental in building the Bacolod Adventist Center church, the Pallasa Library, the Central Philippine Adventist College School of Nursing girls' dormitory, the Central Philippine Adventist College School of Nursing boys' dormitory, and the Pastor A. C. Same Memorial Center.³⁷

Geslani was a recipient of numerous outstanding awards and citations.³⁸ He was included in the coveted 1989/1990 Who's Who in the World 9th edition. He was recognized by Adventist Health Services/Asia, Rotary Services, and YMCA awards. Other special citations included Most Outstanding Alumnus, Northern Luzon Academy; Leadership Award in Health, Philippine Union College, Outstanding Service Award (PUC Western USA Alumni Chapter); and the Cebu Community Chest Awards.

In his lifetime, Geslani was recognized as a competent surgeon, experienced administrator, passionate builder of health-care institutions, a dynamic builder of Adventist leaders who are now serving in different parts of the world, and a man with an unselfish missionary spirit.³⁹

SOURCES

Francisco T. Geslani Far Eastern Division Retirement Confirmation. Central Philippine Union Conference Archives.

Francisco T. Geslani Personal Service Record. Central Philippine Union Conference Archives.

Gayares, Hector V. "Bacolod Has New Medical Director." *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, September 1971.

Geslani, Francisco T. "Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital." *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, October 1953.

Geslani, Francisco T. "Untitled." *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, November 1956.

Gibb, A. E. "A Forward Move." *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, January 1964.

Gravino, C. O. "Bacolod Sanitarium Opens New Annex." *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, February 1976.

Guzman, Gil de. "Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital." *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, December 1954.

Lumague, Czarqina. "Francisco Tamayo Geslani" in *Adventist Medical Center Bacolod 50th Anniversary Coffee Table Book*. Bacolod, Philippines: Printworld, 2016.

"Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital." *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, December 1955.

Montalban, V. M. "The Miller Sanitarium and Hospital." *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, May 1956.

Santos, R. T. "Medical." *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, May 1953.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953-1972.

NOTES

1. Czarina Lumague, "Francisco Tamayo Geslani," *Adventist Medical Center Bacolod 50th Anniversary Coffee Table Book* (Bacolod, Philippines: Printworld, 2016), 132-133.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Francisco T. Geslani Personal Service Record, Central Philippine Union Conference Archives.
6. Ibid.
7. Lumague, "Francisco Tamayo Geslani," 132-133.
8. Francisco Tamayo Geslani Commemorative Plaque at Adventist Medical Center, Bacolod, Philippines.
9. Ibid.
10. Francisco Tamayo Geslani Commemorative Plaque at Adventist Medical Center, Bacolod, Philippines; "Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, December 1955, 11.
11. Ibid.
12. Personal Service Record; Lumague, "Francisco Tamayo Geslani," 132-133.
13. Ibid.
14. Personal Service Record.
15. Lumague, "Francisco T. Geslani," 132-133; Francisco T. Geslani, "Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, October 1953, 6. See also "Lakeside Clinic," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953), 292.
16. Gil de Guzman, "Mindanao Sanitarium and Hospital," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, December 1954, 6.
17. R. T. Santos, "Medical," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, May 1953, 6.
18. Lumague, "Francisco Tamayo Geslani," 132-133.

19. Ibid.
20. V. M. Montalban, "The Miller Sanitarium and Hospital," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, May 1956, 9.
21. Francisco T. Geslani, "Untitled," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, November 1956, 8.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Hector V. Gayares, "Bacolod Has New Medical Director," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, September 1971, 5. See also "Bacolod Sanitarium and Hospital," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1972), 370.
25. C. O. Gravino, "Bacolod Sanitarium Opens New Annex," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, February 1976, 4.
26. Personal Service Record.
27. Ibid.
28. Francisco T. Geslani, Far Eastern Division Retirement Confirmation, Central Philippine Union Conference Archives.
29. Czarina Lumague, *Adventist Medical Center Bacolod 50th Anniversary Coffee Table Book* (Bacolod, Philippines: Printworld, 2016), 132-133.
30. Francisco Tamayo Geslani Commemorative Plaque.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.; Hector V. Gayares, "Bacolod Has New Medical Director," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, September 1971, 5.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.; A. E. Gibb, "A Forward Move," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, January 1964, 5.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000