Canlas, Avelino S. (1924–1983)

DANilo R. ENDRIGA
Danilo Endriga, B.A. in history, philosophy, and theology (Adventist University of the Philippines), is the district pastor of Manila District II, at Central Luzon Conference, in North Philippines. He is actively engaged in church planting projects in the urban poor of Tondo, Manila. Before serving in Manila, he was a district pastor and area chairman of Quezon City I. Endriga enjoys advocating and integrating the vital element of discipleship in church management and church planting. He is married to Meldy Ann Villoso with three children.

Avelino S. Canlas was a gifted translator evangelist, director, and administrator, and he was the 10th president of the
Central Luzon Mission.

**Early Life**

Avelino S. Canlas was born on November 7, 1924, to Adventist parents, Feliciano Canlas and Maria Sumera of Mexico, Pampanga, Philippines. His father, Feliciano, was a farmer who experienced the goodness of God as he supported his family of seven children. On May 14, 1938, at the age of 14, Avelino was baptized in his hometown by V. Santos.

**Education and Marriage**

Canlas began his education at Mexico Elementary School and finished his secondary education at Pampanga High School on March 20, 1945. During his youthful days, he came to the knowledge of the truth and salvation. This inspired him to commit his life to the salvific love of Jesus and the gospel of grace in his church through the inspiration of Pastor Yutuc and Pastor Alcaraz. At the age of 16, Avelino had already been serving Jesus and His church in Angeles City, Pampanga, as its lay preacher. He spearheaded the soul winning in that city.

He later studied theology for two years at Philippine Union College, Baesa, Caloocan City (now Adventist University of the Philippines, AUP). Avelino married the love of his life, Ma. Encarnacion Calaguas, from Angeles, Pampanga, on March 23, 1948. They had six children: Elmer who was born at Angeles on August 25, 1949; Sharon Canlas-Montemayor, born at Polo, Bulacan, on February 18, 1951; Beulah, born at Angeles City on July 8, 1952; May, born at Angeles City on May 22, 1954; Juliet Canlas-Trinio, born at Angeles City, on July 12, 1956; and Ardina Canlas-Calixterio, born at Angeles City on January 15, 1958.

**Career and Ministry**

Before entering the denominational work and while waiting for his call, Canlas worked in the government as a public-school teacher and school clerk from 1945 to 1946. In the middle of 1946 until 1947, he worked as a Bible teacher in Central Luzon Mission. Then, until 1948, he worked as a translator of Adventist literature from English to the local Pampango dialect. Those same years he was also doing canvassing work. Canlas began his pastoral ministry as a district pastor at Central Luzon Mission, Manila, Pampanga. He was mostly known as a good matchmaker among young people and an eloquent and gifted preacher. He had enjoyed the company of Pastor Pangan in doing the work of soul saving, where they were able to baptize 300 precious souls in one evangelistic meeting. The mission later recognized his gift in soul winning and appointed him as mission evangelist. He served in this capacity from October 1952 to November 1956.

Canlas served the Central Luzon Mission in several capacities and offices, such as the Young People’s Missionary Volunteer (YPMV) director from December 1956 to December 1963 and as Education, Parent and Home, N.S.O., Temperance and YPMV director from 1968 to 1969. The next year, he was elected to a new post as director of the Sabbath School and Lay Activities and the Radio-TV and V.O.P. departments (January 1964 to December 1973) and then as Stewardship and Public Relations director (January 1974 to November 1975). Later on, Canlas, who is also known as “Apo Neno,” was elected as the 10th president of Central Luzon Mission, a position he held from 1976 to 1981.

Canlas was a good chairman in all executive committee meetings. He was firm on his decisions. He is the kind of leader who, once a person has earned his respect, will always support and promote that person. He was a very sociable person, but as an administrator, he always wanted to win. As a leader, he was good at financial management and fund-raising campaigns. Under his guidance, the mission always exceeded the Harvest Ingathering goal. One of the major accomplishments of his administration was the financial stability of the mission. It was during his time that the North Philippine Union Mission borrowed money from Central Luzon Mission. He also raised funds for the concrete flooring of the Central Luzon Mission basketball ground. He served his mother mission for 33 years.

**Later Life**

Later on, Canlas was appointed to the North Philippine Union Mission as its field secretary and associate Stewardship director. During his seven months of service in the North Philippine Union Mission office, he suffered a stroke and became comatose. He later passed away.

On August 21, 1982, Pastor Avelino Sumera Canlas rested from all his labors and ended his 34 years of service to His Lord and His church. His body was laid to rest at Good Shepherd Memorial Cemetery, San Fernando, Pampanga, where he awaits the soon return of his beloved Savior.

**SOURCES**

Far Eastern Division Outlook, 1956.


NOTES


2. Ardina Canlas-Calixterio, the youngest daughter of Avelino S. Canlas, telephone interview, July 12, 2017.

3. Canlas Personal Service Record.

4. Ibid.

5. Ardina Canlas telephone interview.

6. Ibid.

7. Canlas Personal Service Record.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.


12. Canlas Personal Service Record.

13. Ibid.


17. Canlas Personal Service Record.


19. Manlungat, interview.

20. Ibid.