Hearts FOR THE Harvest



Inviting Global Missions to Our Table

Jayn Parenti

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THE PHILIPPINES



Don't be anxious for how many days we have,
but rather, rejoice that we have this very day to serve him.

—Loisruth

The Soil

The Philippines is a Southeast Asian country made up of over seven thousand islands. It is about the size of Arizona, yet it has a population of over 110 million. With neighbors like China, Malaysia, and India, the Philippines has been a significant trade center for centuries and has been influenced by many other cultures. With tropical beauty, stunning beaches, and mountain rice terraces, the Philippines attracts adventurers, divers, and hikers.

The diverse islands are home to various people groups with their own dialects and customs. In the highlands of Luzon, headhunting practices continued into the 1960s. Although real heads have been substituted with wooden statues and relics, ceremonies celebrating rites of passage, rice harvests, and religious rituals to ancestor spirits still take place today.

Despite some wealthy families, the Philippines remains a poor nation, with many living below the poverty level, largely due to corrupt governance. Once richer than Singapore (the richest country in Asia), a history of poor leadership, corruption, lack of education, and a large population has hindered recovery. The Filipino people are known throughout the world as some of the friendliest and kindest. Yet, the nation still ranks among the weakest in math, reading, and science. Twenty percent of the children don't attend school.

Preparing the Soil

In 1521, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, on an expedition, came into contact with the Philippines, naming the islands for Prince Philip, who later became King Philip II.

With Spain's influence, Roman Catholicism was the *only* established religion for three hundred years. The church set policies and governed the country's religious and private lives. Next to Brazil and Mexico, the Philippines is the most Catholic nation in the world. Catholic beliefs and idol worship melded with ancestral rituals and became intertwined with superstitious practices. Many indigenous tribes struggled with their own heritage and convictions. It wasn't until after the United States acquired the islands from Spain in 1898 that military chaplains began to share true biblical grace with the people.

The first Protestant missionaries arrived in 1899 when Reverend James B. Rodgers led the first mission. Sponsored by the Presbyterian Church, James and his wife, Anna, were pioneers in bringing the message of grace to the Filipino people, who had known only an impersonal deity requiring penance and ritual for any hope of salvation—not to mention the fear of not being "good enough" to retain that salvation. Now, the Philippines plays a major role in welcoming Protestant mission work and serves as a sending point for church planting in other parts of the world.

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Sowing the Seed

Meet Harold and Loisruth
(Served 1954–1960)

Harold was born in Plainfield, New Jersey, in 1922 in a home that was Christian in name only. His family was affluent. Even during the Depression, they were relatively stable.

A proficient musician, Harold began writing arrangements for dance bands during high school. Upon graduating, he was a sought-after musician. Yet, as he observed the empty lifestyles of others, he knew that was not the direction he wanted to go.

When World War II broke out, Harold joined the United States Marine Corps and was sent to Guadalcanal. Hoping to serve as a sharpshooter, he was discouraged to be given active duty . . . as a musician! He didn't know God was protecting him for future service in those same waters.

While he was overseas, his older sister came to know Christ and began writing to him about his need for a Savior. Although the letters meant little at the time, those words later became life-changing to the young sergeant.

When Harold returned from the war, he asked a girl he knew out on a date, but instead, she invited him to church. That Sunday night, he heard a preacher speak of salvation through Jesus Christ. The words of his sister flooded back to him, and the Lord came into his heart forever. He soon enrolled in a Christian college in New York City.

Loisruth, born in 1925, came from a different background. During the Depression, she and her brother sold pastries door-to-door while their father went from one low-paying job to another. As a teen, Loisruth attended a church and was introduced to Jesus. By the time she graduated from high school, Lois was certain God would lead her to foreign soil as a missionary, but her family was not impressed with her zeal and commitment to serve the Lord. She attended college in New York City, where she met Harold, who later became known as "Chilt."

Chilt and Loisruth worked hard throughout college, juggling classes while witnessing for Christ. They were also falling in love with each other. In their final year of college, Chilt and Loisruth married. Feeling called to missions but unsure where, they asked to be sent "where most needed." They were called to the Philippines. Arriving in the Philippines with their young son, they worked hard to learn Tagalog, determined to communicate better with the people they had come to serve. Soon they had a daughter, Jayn, and within a few years, the whole family served together, going to remote mountain villages near Baguio with Chilt's accordion, Loisruth's soprano voice, and their children singing in Tagalog about the love of Jesus.

When they weren't preaching and playing music in small villages, Chilt and Loisruth were teaching Bible and English studies at a small mission school in Manila. Some students were from remote villages, planting churches and becoming pastors and teachers for their own people.

Unlike many missionaries in the 1950s, Chilt and Loisruth sent their children to local Filipino schools. Around 1957, Loisruth organized other missionary families to form a Christian school, Faith Academy, for missionary children. A new Christian school was born, and it is still thriving today.

Loisruth also began a women's ministry in the prison system, teaching and sharing God's love and the hope of Jesus with inmates, many of whom lived with their children behind bars. Once, a two-year-old boy said to her, "Welcome to our home." The child knew of no other place as "home."

Many years have passed since the family left the Philippines, but Chilt and Loisruth never stopped being missionaries. Chilt went on to pastor several churches in Southern California and Nevada. Loisruth continued ministering to kids in the juvenile prison system in Southern California.

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Tasting from the Harvest

We asked, Chilt answered:

What did you eat the most in the Philippines?

I do remember a lot of rice . . . breakfast, lunch, and dinner . . . rice! Fish and chicken stand out as typical, but always rice!

Is there anything you had to learn to like?

On a small interisland vessel, Loisruth spotted a pretty young woman standing opposite us, eating a strange-looking egg—she seemed to be enjoying it as much as if she were eating a chocolate bar. Loisruth went over to the woman and, not speaking her dialect, tried to communicate if it would be OK to take her picture with our slide camera (all we had in those days). One endearing custom of the Philippines is that when someone admires something you are eating, you offer it to them. Well, this is exactly what happened. . . . Another custom we were told of is that when someone does offer you something, it would be considered rude not to thankfully accept it. By the time Lois realized what she had done, she found herself holding a *balut*.

Now a balut is a fertilized, developing duck egg embryo that is ready to be hatched, put in the ground to ferment, then dug up to be eaten. Sometimes boiled or steamed, it's eaten from the shell. It is commonly sold as street food in the Philippines. Being new to the country and trying desperately to melt into the culture, Lois gratefully accepted the egg and proceeded to eat it, knowing that had she declined, she may have caused an international incident! After a few small bites, trying to keep her eyes closed (you can pick the feathers right out of the egg), Loisruth was able to finish the treat with a smile, much to the joy of the young woman. Loisruth had been inducted into the hall of fame for missionaries. She had eaten balut and survived.

I was not quite so adventurous. When Loisruth suggested that I also accept the invitation, I made it plain that my next act was going to be jumping overboard if forced to do so . . . maybe it was the look on the duck's face that turned me off! Quietly able to slip away from the small crowd of onlookers, I pretended to know nothing of the situation, nor the fact that I was the only other American on the boat! This was one of many "adventures" my dear wife got us into with her sometimes crazy, lovely, joyful spirit of "try anything" and live as if she were born there.

Does something stand out as one of your favorites?

I remember a tiny citrus fruit that grew there. It was called *calamansi* and served well in making "lemonade" (without the lemons). We also ate *pancit* and *adobo* for many years after returning to the States. They are still our family favorites.

Recipes

Beverage: Calamansi-Aid

Makes about 2 (2-cup) portions

Prep Time: 10 min.

"This fruit is like a cross between a lime, tangerine, and kumquat, with a sourness coupled with floral notes. You can order the fruit online, but some Asian markets carry it."

INGREDIENTS

For calamansi-aid:

1 cup fresh-squeezed calamansi juice, seeds and skin discarded

2 cups ice-cold water

¾ cup simple syrup, or to taste

For simple syrup:

2 cups water

2 cups sugar

METHOD

1. For the calamansi-aid, stir the ingredients together, chill, and serve ice-cold.
2. For the simple syrup, pour water and sugar into a small saucepan and heat until lightly boiling and sugar has completely dissolved.
3. Chill and store tightly sealed in the refrigerator.

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Main Dish: ***Lola's Chicken Adobo***

Serves 6–8

Prep Time: 15 min. / Inactive Cook Time: 1–3 hrs. / Cook Time: 60 min.

"The word for grandmother in Tagalog is 'Lola.' This is what mom is called by our children and grandchildren. I am pretty sure that the way she made chicken adobo is not completely authentic, but it's what I grew up on, and I won't have it any other way!"



INGREDIENTS

4–5 pounds whole chicken (or bone-in chicken thighs), skinned and rinsed well

1 cup apple cider vinegar

1 cup soy sauce

2 cups water

olive or avocado oil

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon black peppercorns (or ½ teaspoon black pepper)

3 bay leaves

METHOD

1. Combine chicken, vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, peppercorns, and bay leaves in a large bowl.
2. Cover and place the chicken mixture in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour; better yet, 3 hours.
3. Cover the bottom of a large stockpot with oil and lightly brown the chicken on all sides (reserving all marinating liquid).
4. When the chicken is lightly browned (don't cook all the way through), add all the liquid back into the pot and add water. Bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer for 40 minutes.
5. Remove the lid and simmer for another 15–20 minutes until the sauce is reduced, slightly thickened, and the chicken is tender and falling off the bone.
6. Pull the chicken out of the pot, keeping all the delicious juice, and remove the meat from the bones, discarding the bones.
7. Add the chicken back into the pot with the strained juice.
8. Serve over steamed white rice with green beans, and sprinkle salted peanuts on top. A side of pancit and extra juice can be served on the side.

Stew: ***Kare Kare (Beef & Almond)***

Serves 6

Prep Time: 10 min. / Cook Time: 3 hrs.

"Essential to this recipe is a sweet, peppery, and earthy spice—annatto powder—that can also be used for soups, marinades, side dishes, and cheese dips. It's a staple in Filipino cuisine, adding a rich yellow-orange color to foods."



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INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons olive oil

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 medium sweet white onion, thinly sliced

2 pounds beef short ribs

4 cups beef broth

1½ tablespoons annatto powder

3 tablespoons rice flour or cornstarch, mixed with 1 tablespoon water

¾ cup almond butter

1 cup green beans, fresh or canned

1 cup eggplant, peeled and sliced into ½-inch cubes

1 cup bok choy, cored and sliced into 1-inch strips

METHOD

1. Add olive oil to the bottom of a heavy pot over medium-high heat.
2. Sauté onions until lightly browned and translucent, about 4 minutes.
3. Add garlic and continue cooking for another minute until fragrant.
4. Add beef ribs to the pot and sear until lightly browned (3–5 minutes).
5. Pour in broth, annatto powder, almond butter, and rice flour.
6. Bring the mixture to a boil and reduce to a simmer for 2–3 hours.
7. When the ribs are fully cooked and tender (meat may be falling off the bones), remove the meat and bones and set aside.
8. Add green beans, eggplant, and bok choy. Continue to simmer for about 10 minutes.
9. Add the short ribs back into the pot and simmer until heated through. If you want thicker broth, simply add more rice flour mixed with water or broth and continue cooking for an additional 5–10 minutes.
10. Serve in a bowl, garnished with cilantro and freshly grated nutmeg. It's also yummy over rice.

Side Dish: *Pancit*

Serves 6–8

"Pancit can easily be made into a main dish by adding cooked pork, garlic, cabbage, sliced carrots, and onions. This is how we eat it—along with adobo. We always serve the two together. Embellish as you wish!"



INGREDIENTS

2 (8-ounce) packages of rice vermicelli

1 cup chicken broth

2 green onions, thinly sliced (reserve a few slices for garnish)

For garnish:

4 lemons, sliced into wedges

6 hard-boiled eggs, sliced

green onions, sliced

METHOD

1. Soak the noodles according to the package directions.
2. Bring the broth to a boil, add onions, and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Add noodles and continue cooking until heated through, about 3–5 minutes.
4. Serve on a large, deep platter or bowl with hard-boiled egg slices on top and sprinkle with remaining onions. Lay lemon slices around the sides.

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