

CHAPTER ONE

The Early Years

One morning in April at the turn of the 19th century, a ship docked in Manila harbor bearing the Rev. James Rodgers. As the vessel dropped its anchor, the heart and soul of the Presbyterian Mission was moored to this foreign land. What transpired that day could be described as the birth of the Presbyterian Mission in Philippine soil.

The home of Pascual Poblete located within Intramuros, the walled city, was to be the venue of worship services during the first month of the residency of Rev. Rodgers in the Philippines. On May 7, 1899, the first meeting was held and seven people attended. Paulino Zamora also opened the doors of his home to a church meeting, and on October 22, nine people participated in the communion service.

Work concentrated on the Binondo and Malate districts, In June 1899, a hall overlooking the Binondo Catholic Church was rented for the worship services. In Malate, the first worship services were held in the residence of David Hibbard on A. Mabini Street. The building which accommodated as many as 150 persons was formerly used as a Masonic lodge.

There were two congregations then: the first consisted of Americans living in the Philippines, and the second, Filipinos from

the Malate-Ermita area. The Americans met for worship on Sunday mornings while the Filipinos worshipped and conducted Sunday school in the afternoons.

Later, two buildings were constructed on Calle Wright --- the Ellinwood Boy's Dormitory and the Bible School for Girls. When the structures were completed in 1906 they were named after Dr. Francis Ellinwood, the Secretary of the Presbyterian Mission for the work in the Philippines who served the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions from 1871. It was through his initiative that the Presbyterian Mission entered the Philippines soon after the Americans began their occupation. The services held on A. Mabini Street eventually transferred to the Ellinwood Boy's Dormitory on Calle Wright.

In November 1903, the Rev. George Wright arrived in Manila and was given the responsibility to oversee the congregations meeting in the Boy's Dormitory as chief pastor. Two services were held each Sunday: the student congregation met at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, while the Malate congregation met in the afternoon. Rev. Wright's main task was to minister to the students in the dormitories and the young people, while the Union Theological

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Seminary (UTS) students took turns preaching at the worship services of the Malate congregation. One of these students was Catalino Paulino. In 1916 he was appointed by the Presbytery of Manila to be the student assistant to the Malate congregation. He graduated from UTS in 1917 and was ordained by the Presbytery of Manila in 1920. The Rev. Catalino Paulino became the pastor of the Malate congregation in 1921. His faithful service spanned thirty-seven years until his death in 1958.

Ellinwood-Malate Church carried on its extension Sunday School and classes at Bilibid prison, as well as two out-of-door preaching services during the week.

In addition to these activities. Sunday School was conducted at the orphan

homes and the Industrial School at Welfareville.

The Wrights retired after thirty-four years of service in 1937. That first church building (presently housing the church's administrative offices and auditorium) stands as a legacy of faithful and steadfast service, a monument to the many lives touched by the ministries of the Ellinwood congregation during those years.

The ministry of Ellinwood Church was continued in 1937-1938 by the three successive pastors Dr. Hooper: Dr. Hibbard and Dr. Hamilton. In 1938, the Rev. Hugh Bousman assumed full pastoral responsibility of the congregation.