



# The Bruce Rice Family in the Philippines

## Field Address

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## Sending Church

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## Mission Board

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Dear Pastor and Church Family:

There are over 7,100 islands in the Philippine archipelago, with only about 2,000 of those actually inhabited. Geographically, the islands are divided into three primary groups: Luzon in the north, Visayas in the middle, and Mindanao in the south. Interestingly, a popular name for females in past generations has been “Luzviminda,” a combination of the three regions. The Luzon and Mindanao groups are named after the largest island in each of those areas. The Visayas has more total islands, but no one island is predominate. Some of the major islands in the Visayas are: Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, Negros, Panay and Samar.



Ancito “Boy” Calibuhan” grew up in a small town on southern Negros Island in a traditional Roman Catholic family. He served as an altar boy for several years and attended an all male high school for young men interested in becoming priests. However, from Ancito’s graduating class, only he and one other young man passed the stringent entrance exam to enter seminary in preparation for priesthood. Surprisingly, Ancito changed his mind and decided to enroll at a secular university instead. He later dropped out of college, got married, and eventually joined the Philippine army.

In early 1993, at the age of 27, Cpl. Calibuhan was assigned to the military base in Cagayan de Oro City on Mindanao. His wife Nancy and their three young children followed him later that year. In October of 1993, Ancito was invited to attend “Friend Sunday” at Lapasan Baptist Church, the first time he ever attended a Baptist church. I preached the Gospel that morning, and he came forward for salvation. Two months later his wife was saved. Immediately “Boy” and Nancy began to grow in the Lord. Three years after Bro. “Boy” was saved, I asked him to take over my Sunday

School class for new believers. The next year he became a deacon.

As Ancito continued to mature spiritually, he also grew professionally. He went back to college taking night classes. He earned a bachelor’s degree in mass communication, then eventually a master’s degree in public administration. He reached the rank of Master Sergeant. Two different times he was sent to the United States for specialized training with the American military. He became an instructor at the infantry training school in Mindanao. Several times Ancito was offered an officer’s commission as a Major in the Philippine army but turned them down. He sensed God had a much higher calling for him and wanted no obstacles when the time came.

After twenty-one years of service, Anecito Calibuhan left the military to prepare to preach the gospel. Two months later, in May of 2009, he moved his family to Dipolog City so he could attend Westside Baptist College of Ministry. Over the next two years Bro. "Boy" and his family began to realize that preparation to serve God is not just sitting in a classroom listening to lectures, but more importantly it includes the lessons God teaches a man personally, often through very difficult trials, difficulties and hardship. Along with the struggles, came discouragement, confusion and doubts. Then their oldest daughter almost died from meningoencephalitis (similar to meningitis). But by the grace of God, Anecito did not give up. He graduated from WBCM in 2011 and became a member of my pastoral staff.

When I resigned as missionary-pastor of Westside Baptist Church in December of 2012, Anecito became pastor of the church. I have often thought back to that Sunday over nineteen years ago when a first-time visitor walked down the aisle at Lapasan Baptist Church to receive Jesus Christ, and now because of the marvelous grace of God, he has succeeded the missionary who was preaching the Gospel to him! That thrills me again as I type this letter.

Possibly the best analogy to describe the relationship between a missionary and a church which he establishes is the one used by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:2. There we find Paul comparing himself to a father who carefully watches over his daughter until the day of her wedding. That is how very similar to how I have felt two times in my life. The first time was when I resigned as missionary pastor of Lapasan Baptist Church almost fourteen years ago and placed it in the hand of the new pastor. Then again in December of 2012, when I resigned Westside Baptist Church and entrusted her to the care of Anecito Calibuhan.

Pastor Calibuhan has shown tremendous progress his first year, and the church has responded very positively to his leadership. His wife has done very well in succeeding my wife in the difficult role of "the wife of the pastor." Her humility and spirit of service have endeared her to the hearts of the people. Please pray for Pastor Calibuhan, his family, and the congregation of Westside Baptist Church as they continue to serve God and seek to impact this world for Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your investment in world missions which is an investment in the lives of people.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bruce A. Rice