

April 14, 1958

My dear Eunice,

Right now we're on our way North – plowing along the Mindanao coast to Surigao. The first conference is over – the next begins tomorrow. We're hoping we can get to Surigao today in time to catch the plane to Dipolog. We are scheduled to fly tomorrow, but we would rather not lose time waiting in Surigao.

This boat trip has been a real experience. I got to Surigao right on time. Valentine was not at the airport so I assumed he had not made it. I took a jeep into Surigao – (the airport is fairly far out) trying to explain to the driver I wanted off at the Protestant minister's home. He stopped in front of the Catholic rectory – but finally my message got across (my Tagalog is non-effective) and I was delivered to the U.C.C.P church. The pastor had gone to the Conference already – driven down to a point just above Tiago with Bishop Rodriguez.

I scouted the town – a port town which has the flavors of a frontier area – Filipino version. I met the pastor's father who is an old lumberman down in the Surigao forests. He resembled an old lumberjack – also a Filipino version. He knows Surigao like the palm of his hand. We went down to the wharves at about 8:30 PM to wait for the Abortiz. *Walang* (trans. “No”) Abortiz until about 10 PM.

Crowds of people – lots of baggage. “This is going to be great fun,” thought I. Mr. Pantejo (the lumberman) had me watch his things, climbed into the Abortiz via the life boat (no gang plank for him) and secured a cot.

The place was jumping! Baggage – people piled on people – cots next to cots – no passage way. But I had a cot thanks to Mr. Pantejo. I think he slept sitting on the edge of someone else's cot. The cots are 5 feet long – one and a half feet wide. I slept with my feet through the railing – in the life boat. Fortunately I was very tired – so I slept.

Some of the people had been travelling since morning from Cebu, so you can imagine how they looked and felt. People heaved up to the right of me and to the left of me. The call of nature came to one old woman. She maneuvered to the rail and took care of her bodily function with neat dispatch.

The nautical miles to Tanday are 67. We left Surigao at 12:30 AM and arrived in Tanday at 10:30 (AM, this is). That's what I call rapid transit – 67 knots in 10 hours – 6.7 knots an hour. Now I know why the Filipinos are patient people.

Tago is really an isolated town. It has bus service to Tandag – 7 kilometers. That's its means of contact with the outside world. But be sure Pepsi-Cola, 7UP, and Tru Orange are there. The town is a municipality – replete with town square and a public stage and a new Roman Catholic Church. One U.C.C.P. church is just being finished – the efforts of a go-getting woman pastor. She had built one before. I think what the Philippines needs are more woman preachers (since it is a matriarchal society). This is not for quote – esp. to Ely Mapanao.

The Conference was lively and very enjoyable. I had a wonderful time. The Frydays were there – they have had a hard year. (also not for quote). The Conference was in Viscayan. In fact all three northern Conferences will be in Viscayan I'm catching on to some Viscayan. I throw in few words of Tagalog just to dazzle them with my foot work. When I get to Davao (I think the Conference is in Tagalog) I'll steer clear of Tagalog to avoid showing my ignorance. By then I should have some Viscayan.

Valentin arrived Sunday – he had attended West Leyte Conference and, travel what it is, he couldn't get through till yesterday. We left Sunday night – the boat was in Tandag but I don't think we left again until 12:30 AM. Valentin did a great job presenting our General Assembly Program – made it very important to people. I preached once during the week and presented the Committee's program.

This Conference is loaded with good young men who are concerned with this problem. It really does have "industrial" churches. Industrial in the sense of lumbering area churches. I think that this area will be one of our key ones in developing an approach to the lumber workers.

During the Conference an "Americano" dropped in – a Filipino brought him down from San Miguel where he had some hectares of rice and coconut. Immediately the people brought him into the meeting and sat him down next to me. He exuded the slight fragrance of Manila Rum. After a while we went outside – he turned out to be an old lumber jack from Oregon – he cut them down with the greatest of them. And I did believe him even though he was well-lubricated. He's been in the Philippines 31 years – a *pensianado*. He owned a sizeable plantation in Leyte till the Japanese chased him and never caught him. He took to Mindanao and there he is now with his Filipina wife. But that's only one of them. "Want a swig, son? Aged in oak barrels. Frank Laird's the name, son. Best damn demolition man in these here woods."

A truly sterling character – a little rough on the King's English and on morals – but a sterling character.

Through all these episodes I might say that I miss my family very much. I'm really eager to get home – just three more Conferences and Dumaguete. Please kiss Kerry for me on her birthday. Tell her "*Maligayang Bati*" and I will give her a special birthday kiss when I get home.

We have now missed our aeroplane – we're still on the boat so that means Surigao tonight. A kiss for Scott and Johanna. A Special one for you.

With all my love,

Dick