

J. Albert Dalton and the Beginning of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in the Philippines

by Robert H. Munson

2025 will be a momentous year for Clinical Pastoral Education/Training. 2025 is considered to be the centenary year of this movement. Anton T. Boisen began training theology students at Worcester State Hospital (in Worcester, Massachusetts) in 1925.¹ From this small start, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) has developed into a major training movement across the world for pastoral counseling and clinical chaplaincy.

That is not the only thing that makes 2025 momentous. The year also marks the 60th anniversary of Clinical Pastoral Education's start in the Philippines. The first CPE group began on June 7th, 1965, at St. Lukes Medical Center in Quezon City, Metro Manila.² This first CPE group was supervised by Fr. James Albert Dalton.

James Albert Dalton (he went by Albert) was born in Wellsville, NY on November 24, 1911. He was ordained by the Episcopal Church and became a certified supervisor in Clinical Pastoral Education. He served in a number of chaplain positions in the Midwest of the United States. Albert married Mary Margaret Lorentz in 1945. They met in Cincinnati, OH. They had four daughters, one of whom died in 1967 due to an automobile accident.³ The others are alive as of the writing of this article.

Clinical Pastoral Care Comes to the Philippines⁴

The vision to bring clinical pastoral care to the Philippines began with the Research Committee of the Episcopal Church in the United States. In 1962-1963 research was conducted for the Missionary District of the Philippines. St. Lukes's Hospital in Quezon City was seen as an ideal place for Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). At the time, there was no certainty that CPE would translate well to the Asian context. As such, the initial CPE program at St. Lukes would be seen as "experimental."

The Daltons arrived in Manila December 1st, 1964. From here things moved fast. The deans of St. Andrews Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary, and representatives of the Episcopal bishops, the United Church of Christ-Philippines (UCCP), the International Commission for Medical Care, and the National Council of Churches all came together with Dalton and the St. Luke's Hospital directors of Medical Education, Nursing Services, and School of Nursing. They formed the "Philippine Association for Clinical Pastoral Care" (PACPC). Silliman University joined soon after. By June of 1965, things were in place to start the "experiment."

The first batch under Supervisor Dalton was made up of six trainees--- five men and one woman, five from Union Theological Seminary and one from Brent Hospital in Zamboanga. Four of the trainees were Filipino, one Indian, and one Indonesian. Each had their impact in different ways, but one of them, Narciso ("Nars") C. Dumalagan had a special role in taking up the work of Albert Dalton. Nars

and one other were granted scholarships to serve for a year as interns in pastoral care at St. Luke's after completing their first CPE unit.

Mary, Albert's wife, also was active in her work at St. Luke's Hospital. She worked with the Hospital's Auxilliary. At that time, the Auxilliary was only made up of American women. Mary worked to integrate the organization so that Filipino women could be members and participate. Throughout her life she desired to help people wherever she could. However, she chose to work behind the scenes whenever possible.⁵

Later in 1965, Rev. Cirilo del Carmen, a UCCP minister, returned from completing his two-year training as CPE supervisor in the United States. Also, shortly after the CPE batch was completed, the program was granted provisional accreditation with the Council for Clinical Training of the USA. Future batches would now be accredited. The first 12-week CPE program was started in the Summer of 1966. Del Carmen was able to work with the Quezon Institute (a tuberculosis sanitarium) to provide an additional site for practical ministry. Between St. Lukes and the Quezon Institute, there were 12 trainees in the Summer 1966 program.⁶

The Dalton's stay in Manila was fairly brief. Fr. Albert was one of the very earliest of the clergy who promoted the sexual liberation movement that reached its peak in about 1980. This created conflicts where he was serving, and by the late 1960s they were back in the US, with Albert taking up a position at St. Luke's Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, under head chaplain and CPE Supervisor Armen D. Jorjorian. After their time there they moved to the Northeast United States for parish ministry followed by retirement.⁷

Philippine Legacy of J. Albert Dalton

Although their stay was short, the results were far-reaching. As noted before, Dalton's trainee, Nars Dumalagan had completed his initial unit of CPE in 1965, he was offered a one year internship at St. Luke's in Quezon City. After that, 1967-1968, through the efforts of Dalton, Nars was sponsored over to St. Luke's Texas Children's Hospital to do a year of residency. After this, he returned in late 1968 to the Philippines as a certified CPE Supervisor. Soon after, in 1969, Dalton turned over leadership as Executive Director of PACPC to Dumalagan.⁸ This Nars maintained through the 1970s. The organization went through a bit of a decline during the late 70s, and so it was revitalized with a partnership from relevant parties from Makati Medical Center, among others.⁹ The organization was rebranded as the "Clinical Pastoral Care Association of the Philippines" (CPCAP). In 1982, the name was changed (again)--- this time to "Pastoral Care Foundation" (PCF).¹⁰ Nars Dumalagan represented the Philippines at Pastoral Care gatherings around the world and continued to be a key figure in pastoral care and counseling in Asia for decades.¹¹

An interesting additional connection with the CPE program in the Philippines also occurred after the Daltons left the Philippines. Albert Dalton, as noted previously, worked for a time at St. Luke's Texas Children's Hospital. Along with Nars Dumalagan was a fellow trainee, Raymond Lawrence. Both serving with Albert, Raymond and Nars became lifelong friends.¹² Lawrence, 20 years later, established CPSP (College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy), and just over 20 years after that, in 2011, inaugurated the start of CPSP-Philippines.¹³ This was not created to compete with PCF, but to expand the work of Nars in the Philippines--- bringing CPE to Baguio City, and later to restore the CPE program to its original home at St. Luke's Medical Center, and St. Andrews Theological Seminary in Quezon City. Today, there are accredited CPE centers in Luzon, the Visayas, and in Mindanao under

CPSP-Philippines, AACPE (“Asia Association of Clinical Pastoral Education,” the new name for PCF), and other certifying bodies.

The Ending

J. Albert Dalton died in November of 1993 in Brownsville, Vermont after a long battle with cancer. Nars Dumalagan died in 2012 in Manila after decades of faithful service. Mary Dalton outlived her husband by over two decades, passing away in 2018 at the age of 98. In her later years, she ministered to senior citizens by delivering food through Meals on Wheels, and driving them (often younger than herself) to doctor’s appointments.¹⁴

According to the obituary of J. Albert Dalton,¹⁵ those who wished to give to the family in terms of money or flowers, were requested instead to give to a memorial fund in his honor. The purpose of that fund was to further Pastoral Care in the Philippines. This seems surprising at first since Albert spent less than 5 years of his 80+ years in the Philippines.

It was, however, his legacy.

Endnotes

1 Robert Charles Powell, *Clinical Pastoral Training, Education and Transformation: The First 50 Years (1925-75) of Learning through Supervised Encounter with Living Human Documents*, 2nd ed. (New York: CPSP Press, 2021), Part One.

2 J. Albert Dalton, “The Beginning of Clinical Pastoral Care in the Philippines” *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, 1983, Vol. 37, No. 2, 86-89, page 86.

3 Jim Kenyon, “A Life: Mary M. Dalton, 1920-2018; ‘She was always doing for others,’” Valley News, February 10, 2019. Accessible at <https://www.vnews.com/Mary-Dalton—She-had-Tragedies-in-Her-Life-Yet-She-Continued-to-Face-Life-with-Joy-23274305>. Also Obituary “Mary Margaret (Lorenz) Dalton,” Valley News, November 28, 2018. Accessible at <https://www.vnews.com/mary-dalton-obit-vn-112818-21808313>

4 Most of this section is drawn from J. Albert Dalton, “The Beginning of Clinical Pastoral Care in the Philippines.” Much of this is repeated in different ways by Narciso C. Dumalagan and Horst Osterman in their respective writings compiled in “Spiritual Care in Eastern Asian Countries,” ed. Ulrike Elsdorfer. Available online at https://www.academia.edu/20358393/Spiritual_Care_in_Asia_English_documents_from_1960_2015.

5 Jim Kenyon, “A Life: Mary M. Dalton, 1920-2018; ‘She was always doing for others.’”

6 About: Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) – Philippines. Available online at <https://cpephils.wordpress.com/about-2/>

7 Raymond J. Lawrence, Email received by author, September 21, 2022, 22:31.

8 Albert Dalton, “Clinical Pastoral Care in the Philippines 1964-1969” in *Pastoral Care and Counseling in Asia-- Its Needs and Concerns*, eds. Narciso C. Dumalagan, Werner Becher, Taizo Taniguchi (Manila, Philippines: Clinical Pastoral Care Association of the Philippines, 1985), 49-50.

9 Horst Ostermann, “The History of the CPE-Movement in the Philippines,” in “Spiritual Care in Eastern Asian Countries,” ed. Ulrike Elsdorfer.

10 “Caring is Healing” edited by Narciso C. Dumalagan and Jose Ma. Espino (Manila: Pastoral Care Foundation, 1992), Back Cover

11 In addition to other sources already mentioned regarding Nars Dumalagan, one can look at the notes regarding him--- Horst Ostermann, “Death of Reverend Narciso C. Dumalagan,” online at <https://cpephils.wordpress.com/2012/03/14/news-news-news-news-news-news/>, and Lorraine Bernardo “Eulogy for Dad-- Narciso C. Dumalagan,” online at <https://cpephils.wordpress.com/testimonials/>.

12 Raymond J. Lawrence, Email received by author, September 21, 2022, 22:31.

13 More information on this is found in “Our History” written by Robert H. Munson on the history of CPSP-Philippines for the organization’s website. This is accessible at <https://cpspphilippines.com/about-us/our-history/>

14 Jim Kenyon, “A Life: Mary M. Dalton, 1920-2018; ‘She was always doing for others.’”

15 Obituary “J. Albert Dalton,” Rutland Daily Herald, November 25, 1993. p. 9.