

Woman's prayers in Hong Kong lead to church in Philippines

By Elma Mago on April 7, 2015. Courtesy of [Engage Magazine](#).



This is Dolores's story. Her conversion resulted in the conversion of her family, and a new church called Mango church, in Natividad, Philippines.

Dolores, 46, is married to Buenvinido Banaga, and they have two sons (photo left): Dranreb just finished a nursing course, and Ervin is in his third year of college studying education. Her family lives in Barangay San Macario Sur, Natividad, Philippines, while Dolores has been working as a domestic helper in Hong Kong since 2001. Everybody calls her Doris.

Before the family came to know the Church of the Nazarene, they were faithful members of El Shaddai, a Roman Catholic group.

Doris has a friend, Mary Bautista, a member of the International Church of the Nazarene here in Hong Kong. Doris would attend church occasionally, only when she was invited by Mary on special occasions. September 13, 2009, Pastor Elma Mago presented to Doris the gospel and she received Jesus as her Lord and personal Savior.

June 9, she was terminated from her work after eight years of faithful service. She had to file a case against her employer for failing to pay her for her long service and other related benefits. Having lost her place to live, she stayed in the church for three months while waiting for her case to be resolved, and started to faithfully attend the Sunday school and worship service in the morning and Bible study for new believers in the afternoon. With the money given to her by sisters in the church – a church made up of other Filipina women who are domestic workers in Hong Kong – from one Sunday to another, she started to give the Lord's tithes.

In November 14, 2011, she had her water baptism. God put in her heart the burden for her husband and two sons and she expressed her desire to have a Bible study started for her family in the Philippines. The congregation decided to send support for the Bible study to be started. With the help of Rev. Galino (pastor of Pico Church of the Nazarene, La Trinidad Benguet, Philippines), and Pastor de la Cruz, the first Bible study was conducted April 14, 2012 at Doris's home in the Philippines. The Hong Kong Church of the Nazarene NMI (Chinese congregation) made a donation for Bibles to be given.

The new group of believers in the Philippines is now called the Mango church because when the attendance is large they gather under a mango tree. It is now in its third year. Pastors Romeo de la Cruz, Eliezer Laroya and Saul Eugenio take turns conducting the worship service and Bible study every Sunday.

Doris's prayer was answered: her husband and two sons finally committed their lives to God and had their water baptism March 31, 2013. She is still in Hong Kong working, now for a pastor and his family, but plans that soon she can return to the Philippines to join her family and the Mango church.

Led by Susan Pagtan, a group of women at the International Nazarene Church in Hong Kong have been financially supporting the Mango church in a partnership between the two churches. They see the Mango congregation as their daughter church. The women donate money to any needs that arise at among the community where about 10-15 meet for worship in the Mango church. The partnership has raised P35,000 to buy a plot of land so the Mango congregation can eventually build a permanent meeting place. Through their efforts to come alongside and support a fledgling church in the Philippines, the Hong Kong church has become truly international.

