

Meet Your Missionaries

Jabe & Elena Barker

Serving with Philippine Evangelical Enterprises, Inc. (PEEI) in Southern Mindanao, Philippines



BIRTH PLACES; Mindanao, Philippines (Both Jabe & Elena)

BIRTHDAYS: December 18 (Elena), April 16 (Jabe)

HOBBIES/INTERESTS:

Jabe: electronics/mechanics, playing guitar, hymns, contemplating Christ's return and reign on earth

Elena: gardening, reading, traveling

CHILDREN: Marlena Joy (married to Josh Lewis), Jed, Jariah (married to Bettina)

FAVORITE VERSES: **Elena** - I Peter 5:8 "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.", **Jabe** - Ephesians 2:10

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before hand, that we should walk in them."

SALVATION AGE: 6 (Jabe), 13 (Elena)

EDUCATION: Jabe: Electronic Engineering Technology, Kansas State University
Elena: MS Curriculum and Instruction, Kansas State University

TESTIMONIES

Elena

I am the third of seven children. My dad was a traveling pastor and was often away preaching to the B'laans or the Manobos (tribal people from the mountains of southern Mindanao). I grew up attending church. My mom was my first Sunday school teacher. Not only did I learn a lot of Bible stories from her class, I also memorized a lot of verses. I thought I was bound for heaven already. Whenever I was asked what I would like to become, I remember telling my classmates and teachers: "I want to be a missionary nurse". Perhaps that was because I saw the sick B'laan and Manobo men my dad brought home with him from the mountain areas where he was preaching.

I was 13 years old, a high school freshman student of King's College of Marbel (a Christian school started by PEEI) when I began to realize that I didn't really know who God was in my life. It was during the school's Spiritual Emphasis Week when I first understood that I needed to repent from my sins and accept Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. So I surrendered my life to Him. After that I became more serious about attending church. I started teaching the Beginner's Sunday school class in my church when I was 15.

After my high school graduation, I was supposed to quit school because there was no way my parents could support my college education. My dad was detained in prison at that time over a land dispute in which he was wrongfully accused. Instead of quitting school, I applied for work and by God's grace I finished my college education after six years.

I thank the Lord for guiding my steps and leading me into his right path. I am forever grateful to Him for allowing me to serve the children of my own people through education. Not only do I apply first aid when students are bitten by wasps, clean up wounds when they get cuts from playing or give them pills when they have headaches... but I also openly and freely share God's Word whenever I have the chance to talk to them. Praying and sharing the gospel with parents when they come to my office pouring out their problems are privileges I enjoy as part of the many tasks the Lord allows me to do.

Jabe

I became aware that I was a sinner in need of a Savior well before the age of six. I knew the Truth that the ultimate consequence of sin is death and hell. I also knew that Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment I deserved. No doubt, being born into a missionary family serving in the Philippines and being very much exposed to my parents' ministry at an early age contributed to that awareness. But looking back, I am convinced that it was God's Holy Spirit at work in my heart that drew me to Himself.

Some time during the first grade, God used my mother to clarify something I desperately needed to know- that once I sincerely asked Jesus Christ to be my savior He would not go away even when I sinned. I didn't need to

“accept Jesus into my heart” all over again each time I sinned. I did need to (and still do) acknowledge and confess my sin and receive the Lord’s cleansing forgiveness that I might stay in close fellowship with Him. At that moment of understanding, my mother prayed with me and I asked Jesus to be my Savior once and for all. He answered that prayer, Praise God- He adopted me as His child! As time has passed, tears rather than words, better express the gratitude I feel for God’s amazing grace in my life.

Being away from home at a school for missionary children for several months at a time (5th,6th,7th grades) caused me to become more dependent on God and begin putting down my own spiritual roots. Back home with my parents for high school, the Lord protected me during my teen years and kept me from sewing too many “wild oats”. During that period I was very much a part of and thoroughly enjoyed the mission work my dad was doing. I gained tremendous experience watching and working along side of him. I also met and fell deeply in love with Elena, the girl who would later become my wife. I didn’t realize it then, but God was clearly preparing many areas of my life according to his plans for my future.

College years at Kansas State University were further evidence of God’s guiding hand in my life. He used some very key and godly people to disciple and mentor me. My faith solidified more as “my own” rather than just something I had grown up with. Toward the end of my third year in college, the “opportunity of my dreams” presented itself in an offer to join the US Air Force and train to become a pilot. The choice for me was starkly clear: I could do what I had always thought I would love to do, FLY, but that would mean the Air Force would “own” my life for at least the next seven years. Or, I could do what I knew deep in my heart God wanted me to do- serve him in some capacity as a missionary, be it in the Philippines or somewhere else. I chose the latter. I have never regretted that choice.

After three years of college, I returned to the Philippines for a year to take a break from school, help out my folks, and marry Elena in 1985. We then returned to K-State where she took up a Masters in Education and I completed my Electronic Engineering degree. By the end of our time at K-State (Spring 1987) we both knew that God wanted us to serve him in the Philippines, perhaps as “tent makers.” We began looking into various employment opportunities wherein we could support ourselves and at the same time be actively involved in building God’s kingdom. However, the further we went down that road, the less peace we had. My parents, Jared and Marilee, began encouraging us to consider returning to the Philippines as full time missionaries with PEEI (the mission I grew up in) and trust God to help us raise needed prayer and financial support. The idea of raising support didn’t appeal to either Elena or me very much, but we finally said “OK Lord, if that’s the way you want us to go we’ll trust you to bring it about.” Immediately God answered by giving us His peace in our hearts.

We applied to and were accepted as missionaries by the board of Philippine Evangelical Enterprises, Inc. (USA). God faithfully met our needs and on December 25, 1987 we arrived back in the Philippines, where we have since been doing the tasks, and using the gifts God prepared for us just as described in Eph 2:10! Our passion is to help build the Kingdom of God and hasten Christ’s return. We are humbled that God allows, welcomes and expects our participation in His work. What a marvelous, wonderful God we serve. To Him be all glory forever!

MINISTRY WITH PEEI

Jabe

A major ministry of PEEI is the TMT (Teen Ministry Team). This is comprised of (currently 34) Bible teachers trained, supported, and placed by PEEI in (currently 74) public high schools across 3 provinces in Mindanao. These teachers hold Bible classes that reach up to 35,000 students (including hundreds of muslims) each week with structured Bible lessons. Very few restrictions are placed on what may be taught. Consequently, the Gospel is presented clearly, and it is not unusual for as many as 4,000 students to trust Christ as Savior each school year as a direct result of these classes. One of PEEI’s goals has always been that the needs of the ministry done in the Philippines (i.e. National staff salaries) would be provided from the Philippines through income generating projects and local means of support. Support projects include Ag-lime production for sale to local farmers and plantations, growing various crops, mechanized custom farm services, and precast building construction.

Much of Jabe's first 20 years with PEEI involved maintaining school facilities, mission vehicles, and farm equipment; designing and erecting precast concrete school, residential and commercial buildings; and presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to teachers, students, and their communities through frequent opportunities to teach and speak. In 2008, Jabe was officially appointed by PEEI’s Philippine board as president of the mission in the Philippines. As such, his tasks expanded to include general oversight of all PEEI ministries, which partly involves making sure various needs of some 100 Filipino national staff are met in order for them to minister effectively as

teachers, administrators, office staff, and farm workers. Stewardship and strategic planning in line with God's leading, as well as continual vigilance aimed at keeping the mission true to its Scripture-mandated purposes and objectives are also part of his concerns.

Elena

Elena directs PEEI's three schools, King's College of Isulan, King's of Lake Sebu, and King's of Lagubang. She has extensive contact with parents, teachers, and government education officials. Elena also plays a major role in the planning and preparation for Lake View Camp, which takes place each year at King's of Lake Sebu. In addition to her many school administrative tasks, she teaches some college-level classes at KCI and has taught at parent and teacher enabler workshops on Mindanao and other islands. The goal is to urge and equip parents and teachers to intentionally raise up the next generation of culture shaping leaders by conscientiously passing the baton of our faith and Godly values to our children and students, deliberately calling them out, walking beside them, and finally, sending them out.

Elena's contact with parents and new teacher applicants has allowed her to share the Gospel on many occasions, and a number of people have prayed to receive Christ right in her office. Some of the parents that she has shared with are muslims, and while we don't yet know of any of these parents becoming believers in Jesus, certainly some of their children have. We trace this back to Elena's sharing God's love with the parents, and the positive experience they and their children have had in the school. These parents have then gone out to recruit more of their young people to enroll at KCI.

Mission Contact

Stan Buss
PEEI Treasurer
116 NE 35th Street
St. John, KS 67576

(620) 546-4500

Personal Contact

Jabe and Elena Barker
PEEI, P.O. Box 7982
Koronadal City 9506
Philippines

Jabe's Philippine mobile# +63 917 702-8187
this number receives text messages too
Email: jaelbar@peei.org

If you don't yet receive our news updates via email but would like to, please send us an email at jaelbar@peei.org