



MJH@117: Sustaining GREATness  
for Global Health Challenges

# Healing Together and BEing Well



# A Mission Hospital's Humble Origins

By Fort Nicolas

On December 10, 1906, within the grounds of the Bible School for Women in Sta. Cruz, Manila, a modest room named "Dispensaria Betana" opened its doors. Equipped with just a desk, a chair, an enameled bowl, and an old pitcher, this humble clinic marked the beginning of a remarkable journey.

The driving force behind this was Dr. Rebecca Parrish, an American missionary who had the heart to provide comfort and care to the sick. Word quickly spread, drawing Manila residents to seek relief from pain and illness. What began with three assistants from the Bible School soon expanded with the addition of two medical aides—a pharmacist and an interpreter.

By 1908, the Dispensaria Betana relocated to its present site in Tondo, Manila, thanks to a generous donation of land by Mr. Daniel S.B. Johnston, a Methodist layman, in memory of his late missionary wife, Mrs. Mary Johnston. Here, a two-story building was erected to accommodate up to 55 patients at a time.

For over a century, the Mary Johnston Memorial Hospital faced numerous health crises and other adversities, including a cholera epidemic, milk shortages, financial hardships, fires, earthquakes, and typhoons.

Yet, amidst these challenges, the institution persevered and flourished. Today, what began as a modest one-room clinic 118 years ago has evolved into a thriving mission hospital of the United Methodist Church.

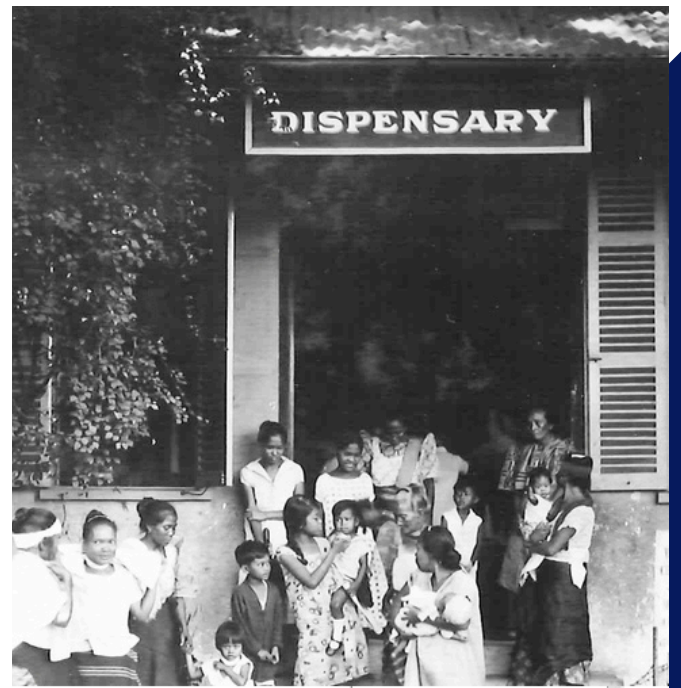
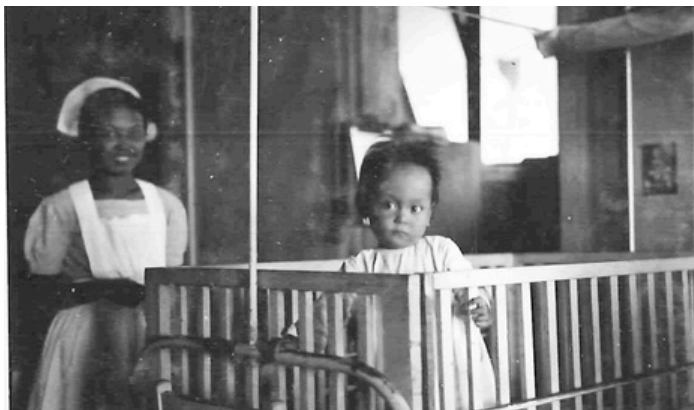
Let us journey back in time and revisit the epic beginnings of this revered institution through a collection of captivating photos from its early years.





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# From the Executive Director

By Dr. Glenn Roy V. Paraso

What in the World is the Wesleyan Health System?

John Wesley, the pioneering figure of Methodism, may not have been a medical practitioner, yet his timeless three simple rules —"Do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God"—has profoundly influenced the ethos of Mary Johnston Hospital (MJH), giving rise to what we now term the "Wesleyan Health System."

For us, the Wesleyan Health System (WHS) embodies a holistic paradigm that encompasses every facet of an individual's health and well-being. It impels us to safeguard mental well-being ("do no harm" to the mind), promote physical wellness ("do good" to the body), and cultivate spiritual vitality by nurturing a profound connection with God ("stay in love with God" to nurture the spirit).

The overarching aim of WHS is to foster the holistic health of each person—body, mind, and spirit. Though our path toward this noble vision is fraught with challenges—a rugged, winding journey—our steadfast Christian values propel us forward. A strong mindset of resilience is badly needed.

When I was tasked to head the Mary Johnston Hospital, it was fraught with challenges. The institution itself needed healing. I figured every stakeholder, especially the medical and non-medical staff, must participate in this process. I was met with a restless workers' union so I concluded that relationships in the institution are broken and must be replaced with one that redeems, revives, and renews. But I knew this could be done overnight.

We conducted various programs and activities aimed at fostering trust and camaraderie among the staff. Through such activities as Bible study sessions we call "Serendipity," communication among participants improved tremendously. I am proud to say we are harvesting good fruits out of these efforts. Today, we are like one big family.

Healing of relationships is a continuing process. Challenges will always pop up, but we now have grace. The MJH as an institution, I will say again, must be resilient. To navigate this journey methodically, we have devised a WHS Quadrant comprising four fundamental pillars: Capacities, Information, Health Financing, and Sustainability. This framework is designed to propel MJH towards our ultimate objective: delivering quality health services.

When we speak of "capacities," we are referring to our human resources, the delivery of healthcare services, and the acquisition of cutting-edge medical equipment. Equally crucial is the availability of accurate, timely, and actionable information facilitated by an efficient health information management system.



Naturally, effective health financing is imperative to sustain the diverse health initiatives of our mission hospital. Our ambition is to consistently deliver high-quality healthcare over the long term, necessitating the enduring leadership and governance of MJH, hence, the need for sustainability.

The success of implementing the four pillars of MJH — capacities, information, health financing, and sustainability — requires collaborative efforts beyond the institution itself. MJH needs to engage with partners both locally and internationally, including individuals and groups, to realize these goals effectively. This is where my role comes in, as I actively work to forge partnerships and spread the word about MJH's mission and its eight major legacy projects (See separate article).

Whenever I visit churches in the United States, I make it a point to share a message or sermon. Speaking to an audience that includes Filipino expatriates, I often ask, "Who among you have heard of Mary Johnston Hospital?" and "Who was born in this hospital?"

To my amazement, I would see several hands raised. This moment highlights the deep connection, like an umbilical cord, that ties so many United Methodists and even non-United Methodists to MJH. It is this connection that forms the basis of partnerships that can flourish in various directions.

These partnerships are crucial for several reasons. First, they help in expanding the hospital's capacities through resource sharing and expertise exchange.

Local and international partners can provide advanced medical equipment, technology, and training, enhancing MJH's ability to offer top-notch healthcare services.

Second, collaboration improves information flow, ensuring that MJH stays updated with the latest medical practices and innovations, which can be shared through seminars, workshops, and joint research projects.

Health financing is another critical area where partnerships play a vital role.

Financial support from donors, grants, and fundraising activities organized by partners can provide the necessary funds to sustain and expand MJH's operations.

Finally, sustainability is achieved by building a robust network of supporters who are committed to the hospital's long-term goals, ensuring that MJH continues to serve the community effectively.

Thus, by forming and nurturing these partnerships, MJH can continue its mission to "do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God," ensuring a brighter, healthier future for all those it serves.

The journey ahead is formidable, but with the Wesleyan Health System as our guide and the collective determination of the MJH community, we remain resolute in our commitment to realizing our vision of transformative healthcare rooted in Wesleyan principles.



# 8 Major Innovative Legacy Projects

Be our partner.

Collaboration and partnership with the initiatives of Mary Johnston Hospital are essential for healing more individuals and communities together. Healing involves a relationship where individuals heal collectively. When a relationship is fractured, we work towards healing it. When a relationship is fractured, we work towards healing it. When a relationship is fractured, we work towards healing it. Being well involves a relationship where individuals heal collectively.

## 1

### **Wesleyan Medical Health Systems (WMHS)**

Towards holistic health, the WMHS, a UMC-inspired health approach is envisioned to serve church members where they may be, and as an intentional community connectional ministry.

With its flagship Tondo campus and the expansion to the MJH Trece Martirez Campus, in Cavite we will see a patient- centric designed multi-specialty medical center, where geriatric care and medical research for Asian diseases will be made as a part of a full-service hospital.

Likewise, geographically situated diagnostic and hemodialysis centers branded as InnerHealth in Sampaloc, Baguio City, Pangasinan, and Ilocos, will be established. Whereas in Tuguegarao, Cagayan and in Kidapawan, North Cotabato 25-hub, bed full-service hospitals will be erected.

Developing international covenant health partnerships increases responses for the healing ministry and provides mission engagement opportunities in the connection towards healing together and being well.

## 2

### **Project 111**

Established in its 111th year in 2017, the project is about integrating evidenced-based, patient-centric design in developing the MJH healing spaces and building facilities to provide quality services to the community.

A special feature of this partnership commits the health partner donor to be part of the prayer ministry of patients that will be confined in their donated rooms. Participative, integrative healing is advanced.

This is building another century for Mary Johnston Hospital and its envisaged spiritual and green inspired healing spaces to continue to deliver its mission of providing quality health care through a partner faith approach, appropriate physical infrastructures and buildings.

# 3

## **Mary Johnston Learning Institute (MJLI) and Rebecca Parrish Fellowship Program**

MLJI serves the purpose of pursuing continuing education for the hospital's three hundred (300) medical and non-medical personnel as well as institutionalizing a Clinical pastoral education system for its spiritual health initiative.

# 4

Cognizant of the fact that education remains fundamental in advancing and achieving quality health care, strengthening the education ministry is essential for this purpose.  
The Legacy Wall

is our 'Honor Wall' resource generation fund program envisioned to aid the next generations of Mary Johnston Hospital mission facilities and efforts.

It aims to highlight and channel endowments, bequests, and gifts to focused health endeavors from benefactors through a donor finance management system.

# 5

## **MJH Red Flame Initiative (RFI)**

this representative bloodline connects our human and Wesleyan heritage. Aimed to facilitate the establishment of a voluntary self-sustaining blood supply and ministry with locally and globally committed partners and churches, as a blood network of donors and services.

This will likewise upgrade the MJH Institutional capacity to process special blood and blood components for a broader need and community.

# 6

## **MJ Green**

Creation care is central to the Mary Johnston Hospital as it embraces an environment-focused response to the worsening climate change condition. MJH would like to make a difference by reducing its carbon footprint using renewable based energy resources, becoming energy self-sufficient.

This flagship 389 KWp solar PV system called healing light cross subsidizes indigent HIV/TB patient health costs while saving 30% of its energy needs; recycling and repurposing materials and plastics waste management; as it considers a green healing space concept. Now a member of the Global Green and Healthy Hospitals, its green health agenda is being pursued.



# 7

## **Child First**

It is a Health Service Provider Delivery Network (HSPDN) of midwives to reduce maternal and child mortality through a more accessible and strategic approach towards personalized care, standards development and referral systems.

This is our mission of providing available health access as a response towards poverty alleviation by making the services socially inclusive.

It will include a human milk bank delivery system as well as a solar powered neonatal incubation system as innovations to quality health services.


# 8

## **Jacobs Well (ness)**

Clinic (HIV AIDS response). HIV AIDs case increase in the Philippines are now the highest in the region in. In 2019, MJH received its national Department of Health (DOH) Certification as an HIV/AIDS Treatment Hub.

MJH is looking at the initiative - continuity response, even post pandemic co-morbid COVID effects; MTCT – maternal to child transmission prevention; now to consider co-morbidities with the resurgence of drug resistant TB (Tuberculosis).

As recipient from the 'Healing light' project, it defrays costs for its basic diagnostic tests for indigent patients.



## ***Looking Forward to Another Century of Christian Service and Healing***

### **Question: How did you get involved with Mary Johnston Hospital (MJH)?**

Answer: The journey began years ago when Ms. Nieves “Bing” Osorio, then Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (BoT) of MJH, worked together in a team that investigated a crucial issue that plagued the United Methodist Church for a time. We discovered that we share many values and our work styles are compatible. One day, she invited me to join the MJH corporation.

I remembered how this decades-old medical institution was part of the Puno family's life. MJH had been a refuge for many of my relatives, including my mother, during times of illness.

Personally, as a sickly child, I was a frequent visitor. That is why MJH holds a special place in my heart—a sentiment that prompted me to view Bing's offer as an opportunity for payback.

So, I accepted.

To my surprise, I was elected to the Board of Trustees in the first General Membership meeting I attended. Talk about a whirlwind romance!

### **How do you see the impact of Mary Johnston Hospital (MJH) on the UMC community and its immediate community?**

For decades, MJH has been a place of healing for thousands of pastors, deaconesses, and members of the United Methodist Church (UMC). Throughout this time, our hospital has extended substantial discounts and even free treatment to them. MJH accepts promissory notes, a testament to our commitment to compassionate healthcare.

In the past, MJH was a destination of choice for affluent individuals and families from across the nation, drawn by the expertise of our prominent doctors and medical staff. As the healthcare landscape evolved, new medical centers emerged in Metro Manila and urban centers, attracting new generations of healthcare professionals seeking broader opportunities.

At this point, MJH has started investing in advanced medical technology and talent to regain its competitive edge on a national and global scale.

This presents significant challenges, particularly given MJH's location in the economically disadvantaged Tondo district of Manila. Yet, as a mission-driven institution, we remain steadfast in our decision to stay rooted in our community, where our services are most needed. Rather than relocating, we have opted to expand our reach across the country, trusting in God's guidance to lead us to success.

Despite financial obstacles and external pressures, MJH remains resolute in its mission to serve the underserved as a dedicated mission hospital. We firmly believe every individual deserves access to quality healthcare, regardless of their socioeconomic status.



## What is the direction of MJH in the short and long term?

First and foremost, I want to affirm my unwavering confidence in the leadership team of MJH, spearheaded by the hospital's Executive Director, Dr. Glenn Roy V. Paraso. I have known Dr. Paraso and each member of the management team predates my involvement with the Board of Trustees (BoT), and I can vouch for their integrity. But that's just on a personal level. Recently, I've had the privilege of witnessing their excellence in their respective fields and their collective commitment to implementing the policies set by the BoT.

Upon assuming my role as a Board officer, I became aware of the hospital's financial challenges. Dr. Paraso, who had only taken on the role of Chief Executive Officer a couple of years before I joined the BoT, shoulders a significant burden. Our goal is to foster a spirit of teamwork between the BoT and the entire MJH staff, especially the management team.

A successful institution requires not only a competent Board of Trustees that can craft good policies but also a capable staff to execute these policies. It's a must to strike a balance between governance and operational execution.

MJH, like any other organization, has experienced the ebb and flow of socio-economic seasons, facing both controllable and uncontrollable factors that impact its trajectory.

Fortunately, our Board members possess exceptional strategic skills and visionary thinking. Through prayer, hard work, and perseverance, the BoT and management team have achieved financial stability, overcoming short-term challenges.

Since MJH is now in a better financial situation, we took the liberty to dream. We recognize the need for expansion and prudent saving. In a serious visioning process, the BoT and management team deliberated on MJH's future, asking: What will it look like in 100 years?

Our vision, of course, is ambitious: we are intentional in developing our 3.8-hectare property in Trece Martirez town in the province of Cavite; we aim to rival the nation's top medical centers by building full-service Mary Johnston Hospitals and satellite facilities in the three Episcopal Areas of the Philippines—Manila, Baguio, and Davao, and other projects. Beyond this, we aspire to global expansion, establishing sites worldwide.

I can't begin to imagine how staggering the logistical requirements MJH has to meet to meet these goals. Are you positive that will be able to turn your dreams into a reality?

Believe it or not, I am. We are! Our faith is great that God will show us the way because MJH is doing His work. He holds our hand and leads us to the right path and the right individuals and groups.

I believe the Board has formulated amazing program plans and some groups are offering joint ventures. We have already initiated talks with contractors, particularly for the Trece Martirez property.

Generally, we want to go through due diligence. We are now making sure all our documents are in order and soon we will form a separate entity that will focus on fund-raising.

**The logistical challenges MJH has to face to achieve these goals are truly staggering. Can you assure the stakeholders that you'll be able to turn these dreams into reality?**

Believe it or not, I can. We can! Our unwavering faith in God's guidance fuels our confidence, knowing that MJH is doing His work. With His hand to guide us, we trust that He will lead us to the right path and connections.

The Board has crafted exceptional program plans that have attracted interest from groups eager to engage in joint ventures. Talks have already begun with some contractors, particularly regarding the Trece Martirez property.

But our focus is on due diligence. Right now, we are busy ensuring all necessary documents are in order. Soon, we'll establish a separate entity dedicated to fundraising efforts. This strategic approach underscores our commitment to realizing MJH's ambitious vision

**With this busy pursuit of financial resources, do you have concerns about MJH losing sight of its original purpose?**

I have full confidence that Mary Johnston Hospital will never stray from its foundational mission. Our commitment to serving as a mission hospital remains unwavering. I can state categorically that MJH will stay at our existing location in Tondo, Manila, where many impoverished individuals rely on us for essential but affordable medical care.

Always at the top of our mind is the core of our vision John Wesley's timeless three simple rules: "Do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God." Inspired by it, we introduced a holistic healing approach we call the Wesleyan Health System.

As the hospital of the United Methodist Church, this ethos guides our every endeavor. The Board of Trustees of MJH is steadfast in ensuring that the heart of the hospital remains true to its purpose. Our focus will always be on contributing to the world of healthcare by prioritizing each person's comprehensive well-being—mind, body, and spirit.





# Looking Forward to Another Century of Christian Service and Healing

By Fort Nicolas

Few individuals exemplify a commitment to the United Methodist Church (UMC) quite like Mr. Reiner Puno, the current Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (BoT) at Mary Johnston Hospital (MJH).

Mr. Puno's contributions within both ecclesiastical and humanitarian domains are remarkable. He holds a prominent leadership role within his local church, the renowned Knox United Methodist Church, and has been entrusted with positions of significant responsibility at district and annual conference levels as Lay Leader.

He also holds distinguished positions on the Board of Trustees of various national UMC institutions, including the Philippine Christian University, Kapatiran-Kaunlaran Foundation Inc., Decker Homes, Philippine Haggai Institute, and Philippines Emmaus Walk Community.

Additionally, he actively serves UMC's global agencies, having recently concluded several years as a director for United Methodist Communication (UMCOM) and now preparing to serve as one of the directors of the Connectional Table.

In this interview with Mr. Fort Nicolas, Mr. Puno, who hails from a respected family whose name is deeply entwined with Methodism in the Philippines, shares insights into steering the 118-year-old mission hospital for the past two years as chairman of its policy-making body. Join us as he reflects on his leadership journey within the United Methodist institution and its promising future.

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