

***Engage* magazine**
Five-minute Mission Moment
September 2013
Episode 5: God at the Races
Speaking script

Pronunciations

Tamayo – Teh MY on
Taytay – TIE tie
Manila – Muh NEE luh
Luz – LOOSE
Escusa – Eh SKOO suh
Gualberto – Gwahl BER toh

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The following a mission story from Engage magazine takes place in the Philippines.

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Sam Tamayo grew up as a pastor's kid. His father, Pastor Vern Tamayo, also served as the district superintendent of the Metro Manila District.

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Vern was an avid motorcycle buff. He gave his three sons motorcycles. Sam got his when he was 12 years old.

By the time Sam was 16, he was racing as an amateur, winning several championships. Vern served as the chaplain of Sam's racing team.

When Sam was 19 years old, in 1999, they were on their way to a race and got into a severe car accident. Sam sustained a broken jaw and broken ribs. His father was killed.

"It was a turning point in my life," he recalled.

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Until that time, Sam had been running away from God's call to ministry. He'd seen firsthand the troubles and trials that come with the work. He decided to be a "committed lay worker" and go into a career in which he could become rich and support the church financially.

Losing his father changed everything.

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"I said, 'OK, Lord. I'm not going to run away from your call. I'm going to be a pastor.'"

But that answered call was going to have to wait.

While attending college, Sam returned to racing, sharing Christ at every opportunity such as TV interviews.

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When Sam was 23 years old, he finally made it as a professional rider on the Shell-Yamaha team. His rookie year, a global oil crisis forced Shell to cut back on expenses, and they decided to cut sponsorships to motocross teams. The team lost major funding. The sport began to die down across the Philippines.

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In 2005, Sam decided it was time to get serious about his call to ministry. He joined the pastoral team at Taytay Church of the Nazarene, where his mother, Luz Tamayo, was serving as a senior pastor.

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Sam and his cousin, Jordan Escusa, founded a youth ministry called Generation Congregation in which about 200 young people now participate every Sunday evening.

He also became the pastor for the English-speaking congregation, which meets for worship on Sunday mornings.

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Early last year, the mayor of Taytay, knowing Sam had been a professional rider, asked if he would organize a motocross race for a city festival in February 2012. Sam recognized an opportunity to influence both the mayor and other government officials, as well as the whole town, for Christ.

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He convinced his mother to turn a piece of family property into what is now the MX Messiah motocross race track.

The event was a major success. Top professional riders from around the country came to the race and thousands from across the city attended.

“I saw, wow this can be a big ministry avenue.”

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Sam asked the Honda corporation to consider sponsoring ongoing races at the private track. To his shock, they agreed.

“I wasn’t expecting them to partner with Christian ministers!”

Throughout 2012, MX Messiah hosted amateur racing events.

The Honda Motocross Series 2013 this spring took the race track national.

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Sam preached the gospel before the race to the thousands of attendees and race participants. He also preaches to the fans every Sunday before the races.

People from the community are exposed not only to good racing but to the Gospel. The objective is to eventually start a church among the motocross fans.

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"This ministry is a creative way of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have a passion for the sport of motocross," said Stephen Gualberto, field strategy coordinator for the Philippines Field. "Professional and amateur riders who would not go to a traditional church will have the opportunity to know and trust God while engaging in a competition and expressing their love for this extreme sport."

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I hope we can all see the parallels with what Paul states in Acts chapter 20:

"My only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace."

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