



## 2020 Update Letter #1

... Striving together for the faith of the gospel; Philippians 1:27

### Dear Pastors & Praying Friends,

We praise the Lord for the opportunity to serve Him during this time of uncertainty. There are many challenges and even some disappointments, but seeing what is transpiring around the world during this pandemic, and the fear it is causing, leads us to rejoice in our Saviour and the opportunity He has put before us for the furtherance of the Gospel.

We are currently in the middle of a month long lockdown due to the COVID-19. Like so many other churches around the world we are live streaming our services for our people. Our pianist and sound guy join the two of us at church in order to put our services online. April, being summer here, is usually our busiest month of the year but it has all been put on hold or cancelled. It seems like so many missed opportunities, yet we know that the Lord is in control and obviously has greater things for us to do. Pray for us to have wisdom in rescheduling, when it is safe to do so, as we also pray for each of you and your ministries.

We absolutely believe God wants to and will accomplish great things this year. The momentum at the beginning of the year was incredible with numerous activities taking place, souls being saved and several following the Lord in baptism. Even though it seems like much of it came to an abrupt halt we are trusting the Lord and continuing forward.

We would like to share some of the many **BLESSINGS** in spite of the health crisis facing the world today:

- Cierra, from Colorado, arrived on Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> to serve as an intern until the end of April. She came to help in our school but willingly involved herself wherever possible. She was a tremendous help to our teachers and students with English phonics, language and reading. We also enjoyed her musical ability. She returned to the US early because of the issues with COVID-19.
- Jecko, a Filipino intern from Cebu was a great help leading our choir, song leading and teaching our young people. He arrived in November and served until March. He returned to Cebu for his Bible college graduation. God's timing is always perfect, providing Jecko at a time of need but also raising up our men to fill the positions.
- Two more men joined our Bible Institute classes beginning in January. The BI classes have been a great blessing with the involvement of the students in ministry but also in their spiritual growth and walk with the Lord.
- The Lord opened an additional High School for us to teach values education. We saw dozens profess Christ as their Saviour.
- One of our men began a Bible Basketball Group, meeting each Saturday for a 30-minute Bible study then coaching the teen boys in basketball. He had twelve young men participating with four faithfully coming to church. Pray for this ministry.
- The week after Valentine's day we held a Youth Banquet and had fifty young people of which 22 were visitors. Most of them were counselled and ten received Christ as their Saviour. Chris was able to begin a Bible study with one of the young men.
- We have had a number of other fellowships for youth, couples, ladies, and men. Each has been a blessing because of attendance but also because of the Spirit. The Lord is working in hearts and it shows in their actions and attitude. Praise God!
- We began live streaming our services because of the COVID-19 lockdown and now realize that we are able to reach far beyond our membership with the Gospel message. Praise the Lord for technology and forcing us to use it.
- In mid January the Taal volcano erupted about 55 miles from us. It began "snowing" ash. Long before COVID-19 was an issue, all masks were sold out in the Philippines because of volcanic ash in the air. We are thankful that the effect on us was minimal, just requiring a couple days of cleaning to eliminate the ash from our home and church. Two weeks later, Chris had the privilege of preaching in a church about fifteen miles from the volcano, with an Evacuation Centre just down the street. About a dozen evacuees came to the service and at least six received Christ as their Saviour. It is a blessing to watch God turn trials and even tragedy into triumph through Christ.

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# THE HURST FAMILY

MISSIONARIES TO THE

# Philippines

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### Prayer Requests:

- The COVID-19 pandemic situation; God sustaining us and you through this.
- Sensitivity to the Spirit and wisdom from the Lord in fulfilling the Great Commission. Pray for imaginative and creative ways for us and others to reach people with the Gospel during this time.
- Pray for our son Andrew to finish his college well through video and graduate
- New believers to be baptized and discipled. Praise the Lord for the 5 last month
- Our Bible Institute students to remain faithful.
- That all three of our school ministries would continue next school year. Pray for our relationship with the Principals, teachers and students.
- For the Bible Basketball Group to be able to begin meeting again soon.
- My Bible study with Ivan; pray for him to make God honoring choices.
- Children's church and Bible clubs: After COVID19 we can regather children.
- Pray for our Orchestra to continue growing
- For our Academy: Student enrollment for next year; another intern or U.S. teacher to help with English; an Administrator for the school.
- Continued spiritual growth in our people.
- Bro. Alrey and Bro. Rocky as they work with our young men.

Thank you for your faithful partnership! We look forward to continue striving together for the faith of the gospel throughout 2020 and beyond. We continue praying for the Lord's harvest here in the Philippines and around the world.

Christopher & Ivy Hurst



Great group of young people for soul-winning



Above: Cierra teaching the Kindergarten class  
Below: Sunday evening Bible Institute Class



Above: New ministry at a local High School

Right: A very excited librarian at another High School after we and the Prussia's delivered more boxes of books. Thank you to those who gave.



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