



Interconnections

Ministry Update from Rene and Lani Quimbo serving in the Philippines with PMI

Dear friends,

It is our desire to see the members of our churches obeying God's commands and enjoying the blessings for doing so. Making both ends meet has always been a challenge to most church members. We decided to conduct a short seminar on the **Theology of Christian Giving**. Now, most of them understand why it is *more blessed to give than to receive*, that tithes/offerings that are sacred to the Lord must be brought into His treasury, and to get rid of all that God has chosen to be devoted for destruction (keeping for themselves what belongs to the Lord, and keeping anything that God has devoted for destruction are why they "can't stand against their 'enemies'"). A very **marked difference is evident** in their attitude towards giving of tithes and offerings. And, those members who understood to get rid of things devoted to destruction, are trying their best to pay off their debts knowing that not paying debts is injustice done against someone who was there for them when things were rough in their life. We share the apostle John's joy in 3 John 1:4 "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth".

Finally, we are all done with all the quizzes of our **Bible Content Overview** class. First Wednesday of April we are going to hold the long exam covering the New Testament lessons. *Zeal without knowledge is dangerous* (Romans 10:2-4). We started with 12 church members in this class. One left recently to return to her hometown in a distant province. Our prayer has always been for our congregations to be rooted in



*Bible Content Overview class students
(four students are not in this picture)*

their faith and obedience to the word of God. We encourage them to read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and there are those who have started to do so (for those who cannot read, they listen to an audio version). As the story of God's love for His people unfold, Romy (from Lacolac congregation) gave this testimony:

"Now, I know more about who God is, and I understand more about His love for us. **This gives me hope.**" -Romy

It gives us joy to share with you that there are Bajaus/Samas who are attending **Alternative Learning System (ALS)** offered by the government. Apart from the writing/reading education they are receiving, they are also growing in social interaction with non-Bajau classmates and teachers resulting in an increasing confidence of what they can do.

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Alternative Learning System (ALS) students

Before, we always assisted them when they go to hospitals, or any office, but now that they have learned to do it themselves, they feel a sense of accomplishment and adequacy.

Housekeeping work as a means of livelihood is difficult for Bajau women to do as they used to live in bamboo stilt houses back in their hometowns. Aside from small buy and sell business (like used clothing, pre-washed and pre-sliced vegetables sold from house to house), they also do laundry and house cleaning for people in the neighborhood. This is not a small achievement considering that back in the day, it was typical to just beg for money, food, and clothing in the streets. They even travel as far as Manila during Christmas season to do so. Now, some of them have learned to “labor, doing honest work with their own hands” (Ephesians 4:28). They make us proud.

For the second week of March, 3 people who come to the **Lacolac church** died within the week: an old man, a teenage boy and a month-old baby boy. It kept us busy with vigil services (sometimes two in one evening), and internment services held one day after another. ***But it was also a great opportunity to preach Christ’s gospel of grace*** as people in the community and even relatives from far-away places gathered to express support, comfort and encouragement to the bereaved family. There were nights when close to 200 people come to attend vigil services even when it was raining. It is part of the community mindset that is ingrained in their culture. They’d rather skip happy events but they must come for sorrowful times such as this.

The ministry in Lacolac is helping 5 high school students this year. They all go to a national high school campus situated about 3 *barangays* (villages) away. They stay in a boarding house on school days and come home to Lacolac on the weekends. There are many other students in the same boarding house coming from neighboring *barangays*. So, we encouraged them to start a group devotional meeting once a week in the boarding house. But later, other students wanted to join them, and were welcomed to the Bible study. We are praising the Lord for the willingness and boldness of our church young people to be a channel of God’s blessings to other young people (1 Timothy 4:12).



High school students participating in Tuesday evening boarding house devotional meeting



Sis Gina (standing on Iking's right) shared a powerful testimony of God's redeeming love

We welcomed three church members from Lani's sister's church in Tacoma, when they came to visit our city. ***Gina shared a powerful testimony of the Lord's goodness and faithfulness in her life, and eventually, in the life of her entire family.*** As Filipinos, coming from similar background as Gina's, her stories of God's love and redemption in their family moved many forward in trusting that God's plans for His people are always to prosper them.

The construction of the new church building is moving a bit slow due to the sickness of the construction workers and one falling down from the second floor to the ground. Only because of *God's*

mercy and grace, this carpenter did not have

any broken bone and deep wounds (close to the ground where he fell where slabs of wood that had nails sticking out). We are so grateful to God for His protection. We are hoping to be able to transfer to the new church building next quarter.

Brothers and sisters, please know that we truly appreciate your partnership with us in the different ministries. We and the people we serve will not forget all your support, prayers, and kindness. We mention each of you to God regularly in our prayers. May they be a sweet aroma to Him who is able to take care of anything we entrust to Him by faith. Our confidence remains in His steadfast love.

In Him,

Rene and Lani

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Second floor of the new church under construction, ongoing work on the the main building and bathrooms/comfort rooms.



Every Sunday worship service in Lacolac, five children will recite a memory verse.



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