



THE MARTINS
Your Missionaries in the Philippines

PHILIPPINES

January-February, 2019

Dear Friends:

This past December 2nd, IBC had its 15th annual Police Appreciation Service. During the service there were five families present who came from different parts of our region as we remembered their loved one who died in the line of duty. It is hard to understand what these families have experienced and how they feel. The ways some of these officers died is tragic and heartbreaking. When we talk to the families each year and invite them they almost always come and every year some of the family members receive Christ as Savior.

They call the chief of police in our city the "City Director." Col. Martin Defensor is our new city director in charge of almost 700 police officers. I met him at the turnover ceremony and the next day was at a meeting with him at the city police office. He shared his vision of helping the poorest and most needy people in the city. During the meeting someone mentioned there had been a large fire a few days before in a very poor neighborhood and that our church would be distributing items for the fire victims on Sunday. After the meeting was over I was surprised when he told me he would see me on Sunday. Sunday morning he arrived with 10 police officers and a truckload of clothing and other things for the fire victims. The heartbroken fire victims who came to church were so touched to see the chief of police there trying to help them.

That morning he told me how he wanted to have feedings at 10 elementary schools located in the poorest and most crime-ridden neighborhoods. I told him we would provide the food and would have the police go with us and pass it out to the kids. A week before the Police Appreciation Service we had a feeding at a school chosen by Col. Defensor. I



Officer Defensor helping this boy try on his shoes



Little boy whose daddy died in the line of duty

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arrived early at the school to see if the workers from IBC were ready with the food, which consisted of juice, bananas, bread, and a native kind of soup called Arroz Caldo. I was surprised to see Col. Defensor and police officers there. They bought 600 pairs of shoes for each of the children.

The police commander of the first district, Lt. Col. Pablito, was also there as the school was located in his area. I've known him for a year and a half since he was transferred to Iloilo. We always preach to the children when we go to schools and go through the plan of salvation with them. Lt. Col. Pablito is a very strong Christian and a soul winner. I visited his jail a few months before. There were seven prisoners there. When he introduced them to me they greeted me and one of them said that they had just finished their Bible study together. He and the others shook my hand through the bars. They smiled and told me they would be praying for me. It seemed more like a church than a jail! Officer Pablito, I am sure, is the one who led them to Christ.

Getting back to the school feeding, Officer Pablito told me that the police officers personally donated most of the money for the shoes. The police don't have much of a budget for that kind of thing and I admire their sacrifice. I asked Officer Pablito why he and Col. Defensor chose this school and he asked if I had noticed how malnourished many of the kids were. I noticed that some looked much younger than their grade. One thing I liked was the way the officers gave out the shoes. They would kneel down and personally put the shoes on the little feet of the children. I noticed a little boy there who didn't have any hair and his face looked different. I asked a teacher what was wrong with him. I thought maybe he had cancer or something. The teacher said he had a skin disease that was rare, irritating, and itchy. She said it was hard for him to stay focused on his schoolwork. When it was his time to get shoes Col. Defensor knelt down and put his arm around him and put on his shoes. I don't think those children will ever forget the day the police officers came to their school.

The theme for IBC in 2019 is "A Servant's Heart." As we honored the police officers on Police Appreciation Service I reminded the members of Iloilo Baptist Church what I had learned about being a servant from our police officers. In our next newsletter I want to share some things that happened this year in the "Help the Needy" program Iloilo Baptist Church has every Christmas. This year it was December 17 -- 21. I'm sharing what Becky posted on her Face Book page about the upcoming "Help the Needy" program.



Bible College student made sure
this man was not forgotten

"It's time for our "Help the Needy" project that we have every Christmas! Our Bible students, church members, and staff give up their Christmas to ...well, help the needy! Our folks go all over: jails, widows, orphans, handicapped, bed-ridden, fire victims, and the poorest people giving out gifts and love. They go to wards for the underprivileged in area hospitals and pass out tracts, sing Christmas carols, and witness to people so they can get saved - THE BEST Christmas gift!

Young men in our Bible college repair broken down shacks the indigent call "home." Many donate clothes to bring to fire victims who've lost everything - this may not sound like a big deal but most of these kids only have one or two outfits themselves. Our people go to the prison and sing carols to the inmates, preach the Gospel, and pray for them. They have feeding programs for needy children. We minister to the widows, elderly, deaf, blind, and mentally slow. Precious church members give up a lot to conduct medical missions.

These "forgotten people" cry when our folks show up at their homes caroling, and bearing gifts. Our wonderful church members deliver food baskets to our fire and police departments, as well as our veterans. They visit the disabled, heartbroken, and lonely; pray with them, and become the hands and heart of Jesus.

Many of our Bible students fast because it's the only way they can give - to go without eating themselves. They sacrificially give to buy food to give to impoverished widows, and women who've been abandoned by their husbands.

Instead of going home for Christmas our Bible students go to the Leper Hospital and sing carols, bring food,

and mostly bring joy. They have Christmas parties for children in the slums; they do these things everyday over Christmas break, with little thought for themselves. They work overtime to earn money, just so they can give. They have done this every Christmas for many years. I am so touched and humbled by their selflessness.

The girls clean houses and do laundry (by hand of course!) for people in the destitute areas and have games and candy for the children. These Bible students and church members, who many times are as poor if not poorer than the people they help, amaze my husband and I with their generous spirit. Like me, they will miss their families at Christmas time, but I know Jesus smiles when He sees them spending themselves for "the least of these."

Our staff kids have a Christmas party for children who lost everything to a fire. They donate books, toys, and clothes, even though they have precious few themselves. Our devoted people have a Christmas party for the children who have no home but live on the streets of Iloilo City. Doctors donate medicines and give kids free checkups. Friends donate a meal and gifts. Last year there were over 200 street kids and eight doctors. Most important, we tell them how to ask Jesus into their hearts to be their Savior. It's one of the highlights of our year—loving street kids equals loving Jesus!

On Christmas Sunday I give kids and adults on my routes a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, washcloth, comb, and shampoo. Can you imagine an American child sitting by the tree, unwrapping a gift, and finding a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, and washcloth?! LOL! Yet the poor people on my jeepney route will be thrilled. I give a kilo (2.2 lbs) of rice to every adult on my routes that come to our Christmas musical. Can you imagine an American on Christmas morning, opening a gift and finding a little bag of rice?!

It's heartbreaking to see these suffering little children, absolutely no Christmas for them because their dads (sometimes moms) are drunk. No gift—even worse, no food because the money is spent on liquor and drugs. It's pathetic. I lay in bed at night and cry thinking about their sad lives. I want so much to give them a little joy. Forgive me for bragging; I'm proud of our church people who so generously give their time and money to help Jesus. "Jesus?" you ask? Yes! If we do it for the least of these we do it for HIM! These ministries go on all year long—but Christmas is BIG here at our church! It's a special time to "love the unlovely" and thus love Jesus!

"Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

If you are receiving our letter by email, you can see the attachment of our trip to the town of Tapaz, located two hours from Iloilo City. December 11th we had a Christmas program with the purpose of reaching those present for the Lord and also opening doors for the graduates of IBC who have started churches there. Tapaz only has about 4000 people but has 58 barangays (villages) outside the town. About 16 IBC graduates who have started churches in Tapaz brought church members to help us during the invitation. They also brought unbelievers. Below you can see the wise men giving out candy, apples, and toys to kids who came early. They kids loved their toys! The town mayor spoke and did much to help us have this event. During the program we taught them about the different instruments in the orchestra and asked questions and gave out prizes to those who could answer them. There was a manger scene with Joseph, Mary, a baby, four lambs, and a couple of goats.



This town had a nice civic center



These shy children were grateful for their toys

The speaker was Pastor Joseph Galicta, a member of our church years ago that moved to Manila and started a business. He became a pastor about three years ago and started a church. He is from Tapaz originally so I asked him to preach. He did a great job and there were many people who received the Lord as Savior that night. He is the one starting a radio station Paranaque, Manila. It was a memorable night.

This also marked the 15th year IBC has had a musical with actors, orchestra, choir and live animals. One of our newer students told us how excited he was in telling potential visitors about the program. He said he told them, "We have a choir, an orchestra, animals, and live actors," with an emphasis on the "live actors." I told him I hoped our actors were alive! The first two presentations are for first time visitors who would normally not come to a church like IBC. That night 424 senior citizens (a government sponsored program) came. They were a great audience and so open to the Gospel. There were many other "groups" our workers invited as well as many individuals and families. The first night over 1,700 first time visitors came!

Before and after the service we set up "The Town of Bethlehem," with tax collectors, synagogue, fruit market, toy store, two inns, a stable, and a manger with Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus. There was a bread store, animal market, moneychanger, and a second manger with children actors. About 40 of the actors were there including the shepherds with their sheep, King Herod, Roman soldiers, the innkeeper, and others. About 10 of the actors were children. The wise men gave each child a toy, an apple, and a piece of chocolate. The first 300 children who came with their parents or grandparents got all three gifts.

The second night, a few minutes before starting, there was a citywide brownout but we are so grateful someone donated a generator to the church that was large enough to carry the load needed. Over 1,200 visitors came the second night including groups of police officers, barangay officials, and 48 DSWD workers (government social workers). They also helped us bring over 200 more senior citizens that night. Both nights a lot of the families and friends of those in our church who are a part of the R.U. (Reformers Unanimous) program for addictions came. So many people received Christ as their Savior those two nights. The Lord just keeps opening doors to reach people on special services like these.

In closing please pray for the radio ministry. Gene Sharp of Independent Baptist Media is coming soon to set up several more stations. Each station is a miracle! We are so grateful for the faith of Brother Sharp. He has prayed much for the equipment. If you are interested in helping him financially to start these radio stations I can't think of many projects more worthy than this. You can contact him at: gene@ibmradio.com; cell number 419-320-3557; mailing address: 1022 S. Main, P.O. Box 263, Clyde, OH 43410.

Thank you for all you have done for the Lord's work in the Philippines!

Rick Monti



King Herod



Member of IBC leads a lady to Christ at the musical