

Philippines Update - Mark Minnella

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Preacher: Mark Minnella

- [0 : 0 0] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Hey, good morning.
- So, we've got three parts here. The first is a greeting from Daniel. We'll play a little video. Then the second video, one that many of you have seen, would be compiled from my trip last year and sort of an overview of the ministry.
- And then the third part, I have some slides, which would be more of an update of what's going on currently. One of the things that I'm seeking to do is to give you an overview of the whole ministry there.
- And so, for Daniel, that's sort of two parts. One part would be there's three churches that are what they call Bessayan churches because that's the language they speak, Bessayan. We would probably call them three-brethren churches because that's what they are, kind of. And so, that's a big part of his ministry. That would be where Steve and Dottie are at BFD.
- [1 : 0 6] And then the two offshoots of that, Ballyoc and what I call Bread Village, which is where Gilbert is. And then the Sama ministry, which is completely different, where Daniel, together with Pastor Bong and some others, are reaching these disenfranchised folks, if you want to call them that.
- That's what the government calls them. And so, there are three Sama communities in and around Davao there. One day, when I had some time, it's really cool.
- You can actually go on Google Earth and you can see all of this stuff. It's pretty neat. I actually found the house where we were at. Pretty cool stuff. Anyway, and so those are the two areas.
- And the real prayer for him is how to divide his time with these ministries. So, without that, we'll kick off the two shows and then I'll come up and try to give you a sense of what's going on.
- Greetings from Davao City, Philippines. Guys, I just wanted to say that these last four years have really been something special.
- [2 : 1 4] I can't really express the honor that I feel just being able to work full time and just seeing how you guys encourage me and how you pray for me.
- It really means a lot. I've grown in so many ways since I've been here. Been through all kinds of adventures in both faith and all around different parts here.
- And I can say that none of this would be possible without you guys. You encouraged me from the beginning. You prayed for me. You supported financially.
- And the work that's going on here through the power of the Holy Spirit is amazing. To see the growth in each individual lives, how things are expanding, to be a part of it is just such a privilege.
- And not a day goes by where I just wake up and think, wow, God is good. And I wanted to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for you guys.

[3 : 24] Sorry I couldn't send anything live. The internet connection here is not real great. But I wanted to send some thanks and some love here from the Philippines to you guys.

Thank you so much. The Philippines is a country made up of over 7,000 islands and has over 100 languages.

I had an opportunity to visit a major city in the south called Davao. Steve and Dottie St. Clair have been serving God in the Philippines for over 50 years. I have known the St. Clairs for much of that time.

And the ministry was something I was excited to see in person. And of course my son Daniel has been living there for the past three years. Daniel assists Steve and Dottie with things related to computers, cell phones, running errands, and generally helping in many ways when they have need.

One of the notable ministries where Daniel has been serving is working with the Sama people. The Sama are a unique ethnic group that has its own separate language, culture, and challenges.

[4 : 27] The majority of the Sama are Muslim. However, the subgroup that Daniel works with the most, the Sama de Laut, or Bajau, as they are called by the local Filipinos, are traditionally animistic and nomadic.

While most of the Muslim Sama are fishermen or have integrated into the local mainstream culture, the Sama de Laut are frequently seen selling little souvenirs or begging on the streets in cities all over the Philippines.

Life for them is difficult because most are uneducated, live in unsanitary environments, and are stigmatized by the others for being Bajau. The good news is that the gospel has reached some of these communities and is changing their lives for the better.

This is where Daniel comes in. He teaches life skills, facilitates opportunities to preach the gospel, and encourages the Sama believers in these communities to grow, learn, and share with their own people.

He works closely and lives part-time with a pastor named Bong Pacheco in a Sama de Laut community in Isla Verde. Daniel also preaches on the first Sunday of each month in a mostly Christian Sama de Laut community in Dapsa and blesses the believers in another community in Matina, Aplaya.

[5 : 41] There are three communities within the city of Davao, and I was able to visit all three of them. Daniel has learned to speak their language, Sinama. He eats their traditional foods and connects with them on a close, personal level, which gives him many opportunities.

In the past 10 months, Daniel has been able to work with a Muslim group of Sama in the city of Digos, a one-and-a-half-hour bus ride away. Each Saturday, he assists a Sama believer, Noel Sin, to run a youth Bible club.

There are an average of 45 children who faithfully attend, learn memory verses, sing Christian songs, translate it into their language, and hear the good news every week. Apart from the Sama ministry, Daniel is working with a Bessayan church started under the leadership of Steve and Dottie St. Clair, called Bible Fellowship Davao, or BFD.

The church has about 50 attendees, around 15 of which are homeless, people who sleep in the park down the road, but love God just the same. Dottie opens up her home to provide people with small jobs to earn money, medicine for the sick, food for the hungry, and assistance for education, and a few of the young girls even stay with them.

Another ministry is helping with various kinds of paperwork, all while finding opportunities to teach the truth of the Bible. Steve still teaches part-time at Faith International Academy, but has a ministry at BFD, teaching occasionally and meeting each morning at 5 a.m.

[7 : 15] with mostly homeless folks for prayer and a short devotional time, the chance for a shower, and sometimes including free bread and coffee. BFD also has an active youth group led by Daniel, who does much of the teaching as in charge of the games.

There are a couple young people who also teach Bible clubs in their neighborhood, and the young men at youth group comprise a majority of the leadership at BFD. The leaders of the group are four young men, Adonis, Jesse, Richard, and Ivan, and a man named Alan, who fills a deacon-like role at BFD.

He's the cook. The young men rotate between taking part in the music team and preaching at Sunday service along with Steve and Daniel. The leadership at BFD is so young because the previous full-time worker, Gilbert Soner, stepped down in his role at BFD.

He has now started another congregation in an area north of downtown Davao. That congregation started with only 12 people in a small rented room, and a few months later is over 40 members and bursting out the door.

A couple of young people from BFD also joined Gilbert to assist him in outreaches and Bible clubs. Overall, Gilbert is doing very well with the freedom to lead in the style in which he's comfortable and truly be a shepherd.

[8 : 38] One issue is that his house is near a river which floods about once a year. His house was nearly destroyed by the most recent heavy rains and flooding which washed away or soaked everything they own.

It was up to the roof. Gilbert trusts God and continues to smile. I am sure, however, that it must be difficult. When we met, he was still living with his wife's parents while they were trying to make the house livable again.

He is praying for a building that can fit his congregation with the possibility of a living space outside the floodplain. An outreach of BFD turned church in Cabantillon is led by a man named Alberto Dulong.

There's no youth group there but the young people frequently visit the St. Clair House for work and teaching, sometimes joining the youth group at BFD. In another area called Ballyoc where people were relocated from Apo Gulf, I met an impressive young man named Adrian.

At 24, he is shepherding and discipling a church which is growing fairly rapidly with a mostly young congregation and many new believers. One week after I preached at BFD, he was visiting at Jay, Stephen Doughty's house, and pulled out a piece of paper showing me the points of my message entitled, When God Changes Your Plan and explaining how God changed his plan by having him skip his last year of university to attend Bible school so he could pastor the church.

[10 : 10] The struggle they have is the church building. The flooding has swept away the soil on the property and many of the items inside the church. Despite all of that, the Ballyoc Fellowship just continues to flourish.

Overall, I am so blessed to have seen the amazing work that is happening in the Philippines. The challenges of the culture, language, and dealing with various kinds of people are overcome by the provision of the Holy Spirit and the faithfulness of the saints.

I highly recommend visiting and seeing the work there for yourself. My eyes were open to so many new things and I was touched by watching the impact of the gospel as it changes people's lives.

I was privileged to worship with people from different cultures and visit so many different areas, each with their own problems and needs. In virtually every place that I visited, the last thing they said was, will you pray for us?

I thought I would do that by recap for those of you that hadn't seen it and for those of you that have, it gives you a little basis for the work there. One of the things that I noticed is that we didn't communicate very well the difference in the two ministries.

[11 : 24] Daniel put this together. It's my voice and we did it kind of, I read the script under a blanket in one of Dottie's rooms because there's no quiet place.

So it doesn't separate the two works very well. It just kind of intersperses them. So with this current slide show, I'm going to seek to hopefully help you appreciate that these are completely separate ministries that Daniel is involved in.

So slide number one. Okay, so this is the youth group Christmas party. This is BFD. This is the church.

They just celebrated their 20th anniversary. This is where Dottie and Steve spend most of their time with this group of folks. So over the years, Steve has taught at Faith Academy.

That's what he was brought to Davao for. And Dottie has had a ministry in and around her home. She actually, up until the last year or two, she got around quite a bit.

[12 : 29] She is really well known around the community and reaches a lot of people. So Daniel has been working primarily with this young group here because most of the older people that do come to BFD are homeless.

Steve has a Bible study at 5.30 in the morning, either five or six days a week, with all the homeless folks. The reason that is they sleep in the park and the government lets them sleep in the park.

But at 5 a.m., they come and kick them out. It's time to go because the park is for everybody. So 5.30, Steve shows up at BFD. They've got a place in the back with two or three showers and restroom facilities and some things where they can kind of clean up, brush their teeth, et cetera.

And Steve has a little Bible study there every morning. And so about 10 or 12 of these folks attend. Still homeless, but some of them are saved.

Pretty cool. So anyway, so this is the youth group at their Christmas party. I'm not going to point to individual people. We'll talk about that individually if you want because this could go on for too long.

[13 : 42] All right? Okay. Okay. So on the left here is one of the leaders that his name is Josh. His wife's name is Jai-Jai. Those of you that went over there, I think Tom said he knew them.

Josh is now 28. Jai-Jai is 25. They have four children. Josh has real leadership potential. He's a real solid guy. But four kids and the fact that their house is now one hour by motorcycle away from the church is a bit of a challenge.

Daniel is hoping that Josh, who currently is able to get up and lead singing and things, within a year or so that he will be able to be able to take the pulpit and speak.

This is the real challenge for that. The guy on the right, I put this slide because last year when I was there, this little guy is one of the homeless guys. He's one of the younger homeless guys. His name's Dodong.

And for some reason, his English isn't great, but we kind of hit it off. And one day, we were sitting around and him and his buddies and we were singing songs there at BFD and one of his friends played the guitar and I kept trying to explain to him, I don't sing very well, but he didn't care and so we sang.

[14 : 53] Shortly after I left, he received Christ in a personal way. The guy made his faith known and he was very overjoyed to say that he belonged to Jesus.

And so the day that he was to get baptized, he got picked up by the authorities for some little petty crime that he had committed in the past. Doesn't sound like it was anything too serious, but the government over there is a little different than here.

They don't like crime, so they deal with it pretty severely. And with the homeless guys, a lot of times, rather than do the paperwork, they just toss them in the river or somewhere else.

And so Steve was pretty sure that we would never see this young guy again. And Daniel sent me a text and said, you remember, well, the officials picked him up and we haven't heard a thing and so they assumed the worst.

Seven months later, he shows up at BFD and says, yeah, they locked me up for six months and that, but I'm back. And that's pretty much, that guy walks around with a smile on his face all the time.

[15 : 58] And so it's really cool to see people who have nothing that the world has to offer. And this guy was really happy to see me and me to see him. And he got baptized when he, he said, remember that baptism thing?

I want to get baptized. And he got baptized when he got back. So that was kind of a, kind of a cool thing there that we got to see. That's the homeless guys.

Okay. The exception would be the two guys on the far left are part of the youth group. So this was kind of a men's day. Kind of a men's party. It was supposed to be for the homeless guys, but a couple of the youth guys on the left there attended.

And the guy kneeling down in the middle with the glasses, that's Alan. Alan's the cook. Alan was a guy that was homeless by choice. So Alan has a job. He's a cook at a hotel, a really fine hotel.

He works two to three days a week and then he cooks for BFD the rest of the time. But he wanted to send his kids to advanced schooling and that costs money. So he gave up his apartment about 10 years ago, moved into the park and was homeless by choice.

[17 : 01] After his kids got through school, he said, okay, I got a little bit of money and so he's got a small room, I heard, that he stays in. So now he's not homeless. But he really functions like a deacon. He really, you could pray for him.

He's really a good guy. So that was that same party that you saw where we were passing the spoons and everything. That was this year's version of that. Okay, so this is Jade.

That's Stephen Dottie's house. It's called Jade because they live at the end of Jade Street. And if you tell a taxi driver Jade Street, nobody can get you there. So I have a language barrier.

Most of the taxi drivers don't speak English and you could tell them Jade Street and you could tell them Faith Academy and most of them have no idea how to get you there. So I kind of had to learn the area a little bit and I go, okay, when we get to Garnet and Amethyst and all these little stones, okay, I'm close and I'll find Jade and you can find Jade.

But yeah, so it's a little short street and they live at the end. But, so this is like the covered patio and a lot of stuff happens here.

[18 : 09] This was a New Year's party that Dottie had for a lot of the folks and a lot of neat stuff happens there. You'll see some tracks out on the back table there and so they assemble these tracks and these little wordless bead things and just, it's just a place where people can gather together.

It's really important for all of us but it's really important to realize you're not the only one that's living for the Lord. So a lot of stuff goes on here. Last year when I went by myself I stayed here.

It's like Grand Central Station. This year we didn't. But, so that's one of the things that goes on there at Steve and Dottie's or at Jade. The picture on the left is Adrian and myself.

You saw Adrian in the slides. So Adrian told me that he's been doing the keto diet and he's been going and exercising and he lost 17 kilos. That's about 30 some pounds and I told him I found about half of it.

So this slide looks a lot different than last year's slide where I was thinner and he was bigger. But, Adrian is a remarkable man. I bring him up for prayer because, man, things are going so good.

[19 : 23] I just know that, man, he is 26 now. He's the pastor of this fellowship. So you saw the flooding. Okay? Two different flooding.

Gilbert's house house and their church, Ballyock. Okay. Since that time, some people donated some pretty serious money.

They built a big cement barrier in front of the church because the problem was the street kind of goes down like this and when it rains, all the water comes down the street and into the church.

They built a big barrier. They increased the size of the barrier and then what happened, it was going around and washing out the foundation. So they built a concrete church, reinforced it as much as they could, doubled the size of the church and by the grace of God, we don't know how, the government came in and redirected the water and it now is like two houses away.

So, yeah, the government spent, we heard, a half a million U.S. dollars to make this culvert totally unrelated to the church. They obviously didn't do it for the church but praise God, right? So they have a permanent building, really nice, twice the size, it's full.

[20 : 34] When I went on, to do a Christmas message there, I gave the Christmas message, I was privileged to be able to do that. The place was full and people were standing outside. Way cool.

Really pray for this fellowship. I mean, they have six or seven kids who speak and they're kids. I mean, they're teenagers and they're, my son said, these guys take the pulpit, Dad, they know the word.

I saw a kid that was 15 get up at breaking of bread and share and while I didn't understand exactly what he said, I knew the passage and I mean, the kid just shared from the word and it, I saw a message by Adrian.

He does about a third English so I could kind of follow him. It's amazing. At Christmas time, they, you know, they're off school just like we are here. Adrian had a Bible school five days in a row and I heard there was like 20 people there.

It's amazing to see the growth at Ballyoc. Just, just, so many stories but here's a quick one. I met a young man who, what was the victim of a terrible accident.

[21 : 44] He was, there was a, a flood had come through and he was swept away and when he was grabbing for something he grabbed an electrical wire and as a result, he, they, they amputated both of his hands.

So you see this guy and he just has two, you know, and of course there's no fix for that in that country, right? These young men at that church care for this guy every day.

I mean, he can't feed himself, he can't bathe himself, he can't comb his hair and, and, and Steve said, you know, here's a real example of the body of Christ caring for someone who can't care for themselves.

So, I didn't take a picture of him because I just, just didn't feel right but, but what a neat thing to see these young guys. It's just amazing to see how young these people are and how much they love the Lord and how, how willing they are to, to just step up and function and, and that's very, very exciting.

You know, I, every time I talk to Daniel, I'm like, you know, how's Adrian doing? Why don't you go encourage those guys? And he's like, Dad, they got it right. They don't, they don't really need me to go over there. They're doing a good job.

[22 : 51] So, that's a really cool thing and, and I would just say that, that it's just so exciting. There is an opportunity and I think, I think, I talked to the leadership here and I think we're going to step up.

They built this really neat, a building but they don't have a bathroom. So, if you go there, you can't go to the bathroom. Okay. So, not even them. I mean, there's not, so, so anyway, I think we're going to donate some money and put, they're going to put a bathroom on the side.

They already got the place marked out for it so that's kind of cool. Their bathrooms aren't nearly as elaborate as ours so, so, BFD, Balayac, now I think we'll move to, ah, that's another Balayac.

Okay, the kid on the left I probably should mention, this kid's now 15. When he was 12, he was the runner-up for American Idol Philippines. The kid was 12 years old and he finished second in American Idol Philippines.

He's an unbelievable singer. His, his grandmother, Dottie, knew. So, apparently his grandmother's a believer and as a very, very young man, he was in Sunday school for a time so maybe he was about eight.

[23 : 51] I think that's the story. When he was 12, he won this big thing. They wanted him to move to Manila and tour the country and be a singer guy. His mother said no and at 12, he couldn't protest very much.

So, God has a plan, right? At 14, he got saved and this kid is now 15 and he's really, really committed.

This is the kid I saw share at the Breaking of Bread and of course, he's in charge of the music ministry at Valley Ock and I heard he does a heck of a job. So, this is, that was him and Adrian doing a duo.

Gilbert Soner and Len and their little girl there and so, Glenn John was out visiting somebody when I was there so I didn't get him but I did get to spend a day with them.

Denise and I went and had lunch with them, stayed in their house and their English is good so we had a really, really great time. You saw in the last year's video that they were praying for a building, there's the building, there's the prayer.

[24 : 52] Okay, that building was not built by them, it was already there and it was donated. So, they had five years rent free at that building.

Pretty cool. So, Gilbert says, well, we were paying 7,000 pesos, sounds like a lot to them because it is, it's 140 bucks. They were paying \$140 a month to rent that little office room and so he said, now we use the 7,000 pesos for ministry.

And so, two times while I was there when we were walking around in Davao, here's Gilbert on his motorcycle and he pulls over, hey guys, how you doing? We're out doing visitation. Really cool.

Gilbert is energized. Daniel says it's the best he's ever seen. Him and his wife are doing really good. That's a cool thing. So, really, really exciting.

I would say that prayer for them, they need to finish their bathroom, not a big deal. They are, their building is full.

[25 : 52] The building holds probably 40 to 50. They run 40 to 60. So, that's kind of a neat thing. The other prayer for them really is, we left Gilbert's house that day after lunch and he had a car, he borrowed Dottie's car that day and he took me to the church.

It took 45 minutes by car. It's pretty hard to have a, be a pastor of a church and have a ministry that's 45 minutes by car away and you don't own a car. He has a little scooter but the whole family doesn't fit on the scooter.

So, the other half of the prayer from last year and still I would say is a prayer is that, is that really, it would be a real blessing I think if he could move closer to the church.

The flooding thing, their answer to the flooding thing because it's still going to flood, they built the second story and said, well, if the bottom floods, we'll just put our stuff on the second story. So, that was their adaptation. You know, the house for what it is over there isn't really that bad of a house but man, to get there is, you just keep going down and down and down and down and you can really see where it floods.

I mean, my wife and I were like, okay, we got to walk through the mud to get to your house. Okay, we didn't say that, you know, but, you know, I mean, it's just, there's one little road, it's dirt and the vehicles just trash it out and it's just muddy because all the water flows downhill.

[27 : 14] So, it's just, you know, okay, he could survive the mud but, 45 minutes is a long way so that would be a prayer for those guys. Okay, that's the new sign for the new building.

Okay, so see, Bread Village, that's, so I would say BFD, Ballyak, Bread Village. Those are the three Bersaian churches or Brethren churches and that's how you keep those straight. Okay, next month, well, it is, no, it isn't next month, February, the leaders from these three churches are going to a conference, a CMMML deal, it's like three or four days long and they each get to take somebody.

That's, that's kind of cool. Daniel is taking a guy named Jesse. Last year when I was there, Jesse was like, yeah, he was kind of a leader but he was afraid to speak. He would share in prayer meetings a little bit.

Now Jesse's the best speaker of the bunch, one year. I saw him lead two meetings. Daniel was sick so he, Dan wasn't even at one of them. The guy just got up, started the meeting, ran the meeting and he's, Daniel says he's a better speaker than he is.

So that's a real answer to prayer. So we need two more. Josh and Ivan is who we're praying for to step up. So Daniel's taking them, Gilbert's taking a guy from another fellowship at La'ak and Adrian is taking a young lady who's his Sunday school superintendent.

[28 : 37] I don't know, not a good word but, and then in April, Davao gets to host the big area-wide Brethren Assembly conference.

It's a really big deal. They said 12 to 1500 people will be there. So Daniel said if anybody wants to go that would be a really, really great time to go. Okay. Hey, 10 minutes left.

Okay. We'll move on. So the other thing that Daniel does is spends a lot of time with these folks called Sama or Bajau. Bajau's kind of a derogatory term.

So, three Bessayan churches, three Sama churches. Okay. Three Sama areas. Sorry, not churches. In and around Davao, there are three communities of Sama people all right on the coast there.

And Daniel works in all three. He spends the most time at a place called Isla Verde. Isla Verde is the worst of the three by far. Isla Verde has no electricity, no running water, and most of the people there have no jobs.

[29 : 41] That's where Pastor Bong lives and he has a school there and a church building, sort of. And I talked about the school and I said, well, where's the young lady that was the teacher for the school?

Because there's some Korean missionaries that paid this lady to be a teacher. And he said, well, she quit and so did the next one and the next one and the next one and the next one. He said, three weeks.

That's about how long the teachers last. The problem is the kids are raised by doing whatever they want, whenever they want. Some of the people don't understand how to parent at all. They don't read. And so now you have to take these kids that have been running around for five, six, eight, ten years and you go, no, you need to sit still while we talk about stuff you don't understand.

It's really frustrating. So, Bong continues to try that. One of the things that I say is if you want to see a real, live illustration of what the gospel can do in the lives of people, it's the Sama people in Davao.

Because Isla Verde, not many Christians. Okay? The ones that could say, they leave. Maybe not the right thing, but that's what they do. They leave. Then, you go to the other Christian Sama community.

[30 : 56] Oh, that's, okay, by the way, let me just stop this slide for one second and make a pitch. Okay, so Daniel is trying to, these people, all they do is beg. They send their kids out to beg. That's why they don't want to send them to school because the kids are better beggars than the parents.

And Daniel's trying to introduce something that they can do for a livelihood. And this is one of the projects that he and Pastor Bong developed. So, this little bag here, and this has been field tested with 20 pounds over six months.

It holds up really, really well. They have some bright colored fabrics. They made a pouch for a cell phone and it's lined. And so, they're hoping that we can find a way to sell these for about 20 bucks.

And so, I only brought a few samples home. But if we think we can come up with a plan to sell a few of these, then that might be something that they can actually do. And so, there's a lady.

She's actually making some pants, I think, in that particular photo because this is the material that they wear. You can tell the Sama when you're in town because they wear pants like this and nobody else does.

[32 : 00] So, anyway, that's what a Sama community looks like from the water. They build above the tidal flats and so, they're not homeless. They have houses but in East La Verde, no running water, no electricity.

Now, this place is a Christian community. 30 to 40% of the people are saved. This is called DAPSA. I met these guys last year and Pastor Lailati is the guy on the far left.

He took me out on a boat and we did some free diving. The Sama guys are the best free divers on planet Earth. You can go on YouTube and type that in.

You can go on, I think, National Geographic and you'll see these Sama guys going down 80 or 100 feet and they walk on the bottom and they shoot fish. It's amazing. Daniel has had opportunity to be a liaison for the government with one or two of these free divers that want to come over and dive with these guys and because he speaks the language he gets to be along for the ride.

So, the government has now recognized Daniel, Pastor Bong, one lady that I don't know and Luke and so now they are anthropologists and translators and so from time to time they actually get to be part of ministering for the government and so Daniel and those guys helped with the government translation and writing of books, curriculum, educational material.

[33 : 36] It's okay. It's good for saying who you are and it allows Luke to go into the Muslim communities without getting hurt. So, so Isla Verde, this is Dapsa.

Daniel speaks once a month at Dapsa, all right, and I got to take his place there that particular Sunday and then Pastor Bong translates into their language.

That, I got to worship with them last year. It's a remarkable experience. I'm telling you, you can't understand everything that goes on there but it is a remarkable experience. These, these people really love the Lord.

They, this, this is a time where I had finished speaking and a lady, an older lady came up to me and she was trying to communicate. I don't speak any of their language and she kept putting my hand on her stomach and I'm like, okay.

She had a pain, a really bad pain in her stomach. Daniel said, well, she wants us to pray for her. So, that's us, the whole church. Right after just spontaneously, we prayed for this lady for 15 minutes she hadn't been to the hospital or a doctor.

[34 : 48] That's the first thing they do because they know that God can heal them better than the doctor. It's not that she won't go to the doctor if it keeps up but they go to the Lord first. Maybe a good lesson. That's the boat I got to go on last year.

I kind of decided that maybe it wouldn't be too fun for Denise so we didn't, we didn't go out this year but, but on the boat you can see some shoes so I'll bring up the shoes in the next slide I think or maybe one after.

Okay. All right. So that was Dabsa, this is Matina Playa. Matina Playa is also a Christian community pretty much. You see that it's a lot cleaner, it's a lot more organized than what you saw there at the first place which is Isla Verde.

This, this guy, this pastor guy we visited last year, Pastor John, he is an evangelist, he's led lots of people to the Lord and he's a real cool guy, he doesn't speak much English but his son is fluent and so I get to communicate a little bit like that.

This guy when I was there this guy had a something like this with about ten times thicker than this and he said do you know what this is?

[36 : 00] I don't know what it is. He said this is the book of Daniel. There's a guy who Stephen Dottie know, I don't. He's a CMML guy who's the translator for the Sama language and they had just finished the book of Daniel and this guy had the first copy and so they've translated the New Testament and nine Old Testament books, Daniel I think is the tenth so this guy was excited.

I have Daniel in my own language, how cool is that? This guy's a great teacher and a really neat guy so his name's Pastor John so this slide on the left is one of the things and this is kind of the difference when I talked about the gospel making a difference here's how it does.

These people don't beg. They don't like it. They don't think it's godly to ask somebody else for stuff. They work. So one of the things they figured out to do is they can buy these big batches of old shoes, used shoes that people donate.

Some of them come from Japan, some from Korea. I don't think many come from the Philippines but maybe even some from here but I think it's Japan and Korea. So they had these big things and they pay somebody whatever the shipping is.

Daniel said it's about 20 American to buy like 100 pairs of shoes. They take them, they clean them up if they need gluing or stitching or new laces, you see all the laces up there and then they take them to market and they sell them.

[37 : 24] Okay, so if an American pair of sneakers is 100 bucks, nobody's going to buy it hardly except really rich people but you have the Nikes and the better ones and you put them out for \$10, they'll buy them.

So this is one of the things they do for work. So that's that guy doing that. On the right, Pastor Bong is the far left guy. The next guy standing up, that is the son of Pastor John.

That young man will be the, he's one semester from graduating from university and he will be the first Samadilaut in Davao to graduate from university.

He's 37. Yeah. He speaks really good English. He's a cool guy. His name's Jonathan. I met him last year. When he graduates, he's not leaving.

He's staying in the community to be a teacher. He's great. My son says he also has the gift of teaching and that's very, very exciting. He does quite a bit of teaching there at the church.

[38 : 24] There's another young lady who's one year behind him. My son has undertaken this. I brought it up briefly last year. I'll bring it up again if you want a ministry. Here's a cool ministry. His books are about \$120 a month.

The tuition's paid for by the government but it's about \$120 a month for books and transportation back and from. My son gives him the money but if you want to participate that would be a cool thing.

Jonathan's worth it I think. So there, his dad is the one in the white. Oops, sorry. His dad is the one in the white. That's Pastor John, Denise and I. So I want to say one cool thing about running late.

Okay. So the lady in the red there. That's Pastor Bong's sister. I could tell you lots and lots of Pastor Bong stories. He's amazing. I'll give you this one. Several months ago she was involved in a very serious head-on collision.

She was on a motorcycle taxi thing and she flew off of it hit her head on a rock, split her head open and was in a coma. They took her to the hospital and they went to a private hospital because it was so serious.

[39 : 28] She was in the hospital 30 days and they said yeah, she's not going to wake up. So you got this big bill, you can't pay the bill. Here's what the hospital does. They come in, they go, we need your family to sign this thing that says the hospital is not responsible.

We're going to unplug all the stuff. We're going to put her over here in hospice. Three days she's probably going to be dead. So Bong calls his brother and the rest of his family and of course they've been praying for her for the whole time.

My son said very late on in the month, he said about 27 days into this, he and Luke went and visited her and prayed for her and he goes, Dad, I left. I was so sad because I knew it was going to, even though she's a believer, you know, it was going to really have an effect on Pastor Bong and he said, I just knew that, you know, you could just look at her, she's not going to make it.

So they move her into, obviously you know the end, but they move her into this room for hospice, one day, two days, three days, she wakes up. Okay, so she wakes up to the point where by the fourth day a couple doctors come in and they said, this is remarkable.

The hospital doesn't want to have anything to do with you and you have this big bill that you can't pay but we're going to take care of you anyway. And they said, but you need this other operation and this other operation costs, I don't know, I want to say about \$1,600 if I'm doing the math right.

[40 : 48] They don't have any money. So, they pray about it and a week later they go, well, guess what, you don't need the operation. See you later. There's Pastor Bong's sister.

I could tell you 10 more like that because Pastor Bong trusts the Lord and the Lord provides. The other neat thing that this particular day sitting in this guy's little house there, Pastor Bong said to me, you know, 26 years I've been doing this psalm of ministry.

26 years. He had a, his family has money and he walked away from that. He had a gold mining business. That's what he did. He ran a business where they mined gold and the Muslim guys came in and trashed the thing and beat everything up, not him, and told him, get out or we will take care of you.

And so, he had to leave everything behind. And he said, boy, I don't know what I'm supposed to do here, Lord, but I guess maybe I'll go to that Bible school. So, at 25, he went to Bible school and the Lord called him to the psalm of ministry and he said to me, 26 years I've been doing this, I have never asked anybody for anything.

Only the Lord. He knows my needs. I never ask anybody. And then he stopped him and he goes, well, to be honest, the first year, I did go crying to my mama a couple times and she would rub my head and give me a little money and some food.

[42 : 05] But after that, I've never asked anybody for anything. And he really does. This guy, if he has a need, he lifts it up to the Lord and the Lord wants me to have it, I'm going to have it and if he doesn't, okay, I just move forward.

And one of the things that him and Daniel connected on really early on was that he really, he had a little computer screen in a car battery sort of thing and he was showing some videos to the kids.

They don't read or write, right? So videos are really important. So he's showing videos and he's trying to get across biblical truths to these kids and run a Sunday school and a church and he said, I was really praying for a solar panel.

I really need a solar panel to charge the battery and it's really hard to transport the battery back and forth. There's no electricity so he has to go outside to get a charge. Really praying for a solar panel.

My son said, yeah, one day I'm at the store and I see the solar panel and I think, boy, Bong could really use that solar panel and that's a really good deal. I'm going to buy this solar panel and I'm going to go bless Bong with this solar panel.

[43 : 05] So he brings the solar panel to Bong and Bong says, that's the exact solar panel I wanted. It's the exact one I've been praying for. He never told Daniel.

And he said, where did you get it? And my son named the store and he goes, and I prayed that it would come from that store. And so anyway, they bonded pretty quickly but that's just another Bong story.

All right, we'll move along. We're getting late here. I'm sorry. So this on the left there, that's how you get to the houses in between. So if you fall down, you fall in the mud or the water depending on what, if it's high or low tide.

So this is really how they live. There's some of the material that they make their clothes out of. So kind of cool. These two little girls were cute. They follow you around if you're American. So anyway. And there was a park right by where we stayed.

So one of the other things that we got to do was spend time with our son and that was a real blessing. We hope we were encouragement to him and he certainly was to us. We thought this was funny so we took a picture in front of a display in a country where there's no snow.

[44 : 08] They have polar bears and fake snow and all kinds of cool stuff. Christmas for the Philippines starts in September and it ends about the middle of January. And yeah. So they really, Christmas is like the big thing and that's why it's expensive to fly there at Christmas time because all the Filipinos go home.

But I can't go any other time. All right. I think that's pretty much it. I think, I think, I think. So, all right. So overall here's a couple of things.

Needs and prayers. All right. All right. Pray for these leaders in the Sama community in this way. The pastors and Bong shared this with me because he speaks good English.

He said, these guys are serious about what they do but they each have their own little congregation. So this pastor has a little group and this pastor has a little group and this pastor has a little group. It's not that they don't get along.

They do. But they really don't fellowship with one another and they really don't have a whole lot to do with each other. He's been encouraging that and so now they're starting to trade speakers. This guy speaks over here and this guy speaks over here.

[45 : 14] But they just really, there's materials that have been developed in their language and some of them don't even know it.

And so they really want to have these guys reach out and say, look, there's Sama believers all over the place here, guys. Last year when I went, I flew over to an island that's clear on the other side.

Took two hours by air, by commercial airplane. And got to stay with a really neat lady named Marley who used to take care of Dottie way back in the day. And we, Daniel found two Sama communities on this island, Palawan.

And we found some Christians. Way cool. They don't even know. I mean, so, really what Bong wants to do is he wants to take several of these guys and go on a missionary journey.

So that's a big prayer, but that's, they really want to go beyond their communities and see them work together. There's about a million of these Sama. So they're a pretty big people group.

[46 : 14] They are shared by a common language, but most of them are Muslim. The big tall guy that is Daniel's friend from Indiana, his name's Luke Schroeder, he feels called to work with a Muslim Sama.

And he's pretty much been a guy that's worked with a Muslim since he got out of high school. He just really feels like that's where the Lord wants him. Much slower going. Much slower going.

But anyway, they're home on furlough. I'm trying to get them to maybe come here. It would be interesting to hear from them. So, then, I would say, hopefully, I've given you a little bit of difference in these two ministries.

You know, between BFD, Ballyock, and Bread Village, and then Isla Verde, and Dapsa, and Matina of Playa. You have two ministries, a Sama ministry and a Bessayan ministry.

For the Bessayan ministry, Daniel is fluent in Bessayan. He is able to teach and preach and speak in Bessayan on a regular basis. He teaches Friday Bible study, and he has a real good command of that language.

[47 : 20] So much so that he translates for Stephen Doughty. But, in the Sama community, he's able to get around, he speaks, but he can't quite preach in that. So, when I spoke, Bong translated for me.

He said it's a really complicated class four language. He has enough of a handle that he connects with the people. He has enough of a handle that he can communicate and even share.

He just can't preach. But, and I guess he has, he's one of four white guys that speak the language, by the way, and the other three are professional linguists. So, pretty good. And the government hires him from time to time.

The language he's currently working on is Tagalog. Tagalog is the trade language of the country, if you will. So, if you go to Manila, they speak Tagalog.

So, they teach Tagalog and English. And then all these others are subbed to that. So, he's working on Tagalog. He said, last time he went to the CMML thing, he met a guy that was a professional linguist and he talked to the guy and said, what do you think it would take for me to learn Tagalog?

[48 : 24] And the guy said, I'd give you one semester if you've got six hours. And he said, so for about five or six hours, the guy sat down and gave him a whole semester. And Daniel's like, I'm pretty good, but I'm a little away from learning it.

But that's kind of the next language for him. That would allow him to travel more and speak to more people. So, really wise use of time and health.

You know, in and out of that, he actually lived in the Sama community for months, but in and out of that Sama community is really a challenge health-wise. So, what he started doing is he takes six of the kids at a time, puts them in a public transport, takes them to his apartment, gives them the shampoo with the lice remover in it and says, go in there, shower up, use the lice stuff, here's the lice comb, comb the lice out of your hair, cleans them up, brush your teeth, you know, and kind of teaches them some hygienic stuff.

And they spend the night and then he takes them back. And he does that about once a week or so with six different kids. They lost 14 kids in that community this year, two of which were very close to Daniel.

So, so, yeah, and one of them, he said, the girl was at my apartment two weeks ago. She had a little cough. I don't know what it was, but now she's not here. So, yeah, and she was real close to getting saved if she wasn't already.

[49 : 47] So, I would just say, you know, pray for health for sure and pray for wise use of time and prioritization. It's real difficult to know where to spend his time. You know, Gilbert was the pastor for 12 years at BFD.

He left two years ago and that left a big vacuum. And so, he would like to see BFD functioning on their own so that he would be freed up to spend time in the psalm of ministry, which is where he feels the Lord calling him.

I said, we would pray with him about that. So, that would be the biggest prayer for my son. And for those, for those leaders, it's really hard to stand against the current in many cultures, even here, I'm sure, but there for a young person.

So, so that as well. Let's pray. Lord, God, we just thank you that you're the God of the universe and you're the God around the world and it's just exciting to see the hearts and minds of people turn toward you.

And Lord, we're given eternal life as a free gift. Nothing that we could do could earn that. And it's just exciting to see people who don't have the things of this earth because it seems like sometimes they're, they're living for the next one better than we are.

[51 : 07] Lord, I pray that you would, within each of us, that you would stir up a desire to serve you first. Lord, I pray for those, those young ones in the Philippines.

God, that you would just help them to be committed to your word and that the circumstances around would fall away as they would seek to be closer to you. I ask for Daniel, for his health and for, Lord, for wisdom that he would prioritize his time and use it in a way that you would best you think.

We ask all this.