

The Gormleys

Your Missionaries to the Philippines November 2020



Dear Pastor and Church Family,

The days have turned into weeks and the weeks have become months, we can only hope and pray that it will not extend to a year. The pandemic has turned our lives upside down. Our timetables have been interrupted. Our travels have been halted. Awareness of health and hygiene have been heightened with focus on masks and social distancing. Ministry was brought to a standstill in some areas and yet extended and reached farther in other ways.

As we write the letter, on the eve of the elections in America, we are lifting up the nation, our family, friends and the local churches in prayer. The news we receive from our home is distressful as we consider what the outcome of the election may mean. In addition to the pandemic, this year has also brought political division, social unrest and left us hurting and concerned for the future of America. It is easy to become discouraged and fearful, however, it is our desire and even more so, our responsibility, to seek Him now more than ever. To ask, what does God have for me at this time? What blessings, gifts has He showered upon us, that we are taking for granted? What should we learn about ourselves, those to whom we minister and, more importantly about our God, through this seemingly impossible time of chaos and uncertainty? Our most sincere prayers for everyone during this tumultuous climate.

New Prayer Card: There are so many things to be thankful for at this time, and for us in particular, it would be our family. You will notice that we have enclosed our new prayer card. There were probably a variety of thoughts upon seeing this card: Who are all of these kids?! Look how big, aren't the girls like only 12 years old? Or why are their adult kids still on their prayer card? Believe us, we have had all the same thoughts. These are all our children, 4 by physical birth, 3 births in our hearts, but all loved and given by God. Our daughters have grown into beautiful young ladies; completing college, working, and discovering what God's will is for their lives. And yet, they remain on our prayer card because they are still such a vital part of our ministry. In the midst of their own busy lives they continue to live, serve and partner with us. Their plans for the future have been put on hold as they wait for diplomas and the freedom to travel. It has not been an easy time for them, but we are thankful for how they are being used in spite of it. Until God takes them somewhere else, it is our joy and prayer that they continue to be considered just as much your missionary as Michelle and I. Please pray for them personally as you pray for the ministry, that they would continue to love and serve Jesus as he guides their future.

Pandemic Updates: In terms of ministry during the last 9+ months of lockdown and quarantine, we have been in a bit of survival mode. Admittedly so, those aspects of the ministry that we would like to be focused on have been sorely missed. We are currently in the process of slowly opening the church and its outreaches as much as possible. We are gradually inviting attenders who were regulars from last regular church services. We look forward to the Christmas season and reaching out again to this new community of Hope Baptist Church and inviting people to become a part of this new church. We look forward to baptisms with several of the older children as well as staff members who have come to know and accept Christ during this time of pandemic.

Pursuit of Education: The better part of our time and energy has been put into the school, Calvary Christian Academy. We have directed this school since 1997 and it has grown into a pillar of the community, nearing 500 students before the pandemic. Through the school, many families have been reached with the gospel and trained in becoming strong Christian leaders. When the pandemic hit, it was a time of upheaval for the school. Not only did we have to consider the students and families to whom we have ministered for more than 20 years, but also the entire staff of teachers who have dedicated their lives to CCA as their ministry and livelihood in caring for their families. The decision to temporarily close the school was very tempting, it would have been the easiest thing to do. But, we knew that we had a responsibility to the students, families, and community, so we dug in our heels and started preparing for distance learning with modules. Our teachers set to work at creating a brand new system of learning through learning packets. Not being in their comfort zone, there was a long period where we questioned our decision. But after the first 9 week period, we can say that our teachers have been overwhelmingly successful in their efforts. Students are learning, parents are happy, the gospel and Bible teaching continues and our teachers still have a job. We did have a drop in student enrollment, with only 330 students signed into our abbreviated school year. However, we are thankful to be thriving at a time that could have been very devastating. We long for face-to-face learning and resuming every aspect of the

school's purpose and influence, including its gospel outreach into the homes throughout the community. Please pray for the financial recovery of the great losses that the school suffered during this time.

Provisions and Paperwork: It has been mentioned through previous letters and Facebook accounts how God has met every need of the children's home during this very trying time, and we continue to be thankful for how God has showed his power and provision in every aspect of this ministry. We are especially grateful for the processing of paperwork and administrative accomplishments attained in spite of the pandemic. In the last two months, we have placed 2 children with their forever families, reunited one with his biological mother and currently have 9 more children 'in the system' waiting for their documents to be approved for adoption and placed with their forever families. All of these would have been great accomplishments, even under the best circumstances, but to have been able to do it during a time of government office shut downs and quarantines is really just God's guiding hand and grace upon these kids. We praise Him and give Him the glory.

We are also grateful for the staff that has stuck it out with us and for the influence they have had on the growth and development of each child: learning life skills, controlling their behavior, learning about loving and living for Jesus as well as cognitive development in general academics from our on-site education center. Our staff has been amazing at making the very best of a not so great situation. Our kids have not left the Bahay Sibol campus since March 11. If you can imagine, with 28-32 children living, playing, eating, working, and doing school together could be ... well, pretty chaotic. It felt a lot like 5 months straight of youth camp. God is good and great things have been happening with behavior, spiritual growth, relationships, and education. We are beyond grateful for every person who has had even the smallest part in the success of this children's home.

As we move on to the closing of what has been an unbelievable 2020, we would like to bring before you, our supporters, prayer partners, and comforters in the ministry, the following **prayer requests and serious needs:**

1. **Completion of the Ministerial Building:** This is the building that neared completion last year and yet remains incomplete. This currently houses Hope Baptist Church, Hope Education, as well as a temporary living area for our family, the Gormleys. This is especially needful because of the onset of rainy season. With the heavy winds and constant rains that accompany rainy season, the unfinished parts of the building have been compromised and are showing unnecessary wear and tear on the building. We are in immediate need of about \$15,000-\$20,000 to get the remaining part of the building permanently finished.

2. **Hope Baptist Church:** Since the pandemic hit during the early days of this new church, we have not yet been able to truly establish the attendance with regular attendees out side of our kids, staff and a few that were regulars before the pandemic hit. Please pray that as we work our way back to a new normal that we would once again be able to go out into the community, inviting visitors, ministering to children and families and growing this new church.

3. **Government Accreditation:** We recently finished a government inspection that will determine whether we will continue at a level 1 accreditation or if we will be granted the next at level 2. While there are not many grand benefits for this recognition, it does give us a bigger voice in the overall regulations and inner workings of DSWD. In short, it will give us a stronger influence when it comes to the expedient processing of the children's papers works.

4. **Hope Education:** Originally established to help those kids who were not able to attend regular school because of a large gap between their biological and academic ages, God had other plans. With the closure of schools and no face to face learning, we were able to convert this to accommodate our 23 school age children. Please pray that we can continue to meet the academic needs of each child and the financial needs of our zealous teachers.

5. **Director's Residence:** Our family has been planning and preparing financially for our home to be built on the campus of Bahay Sibol. It was our plan to have already sold our house in another area in order to finance this new house. Unfortunately, with the onset of the pandemic, we have not been able to sell the house. Regardless, we are moving on by faith in order to see work continue on this home. Please pray that we would be able to sell the house soon in order to have the needed finances to finish building.

We apologize both for the lateness in our update, since last May, and for the lengthy letter. We hope to be more regular in the coming months in order to avoid both. Thank you for your prayers, your partnership, your many sacrifices in our behalf, and for your enduring encouragement. It is that sort of exhortation and knowledge of your fellowship in the gospel with our ministry that keeps us going day to day.

With Sincere Gratitude in Serving the King,

Bro. Carl, Michelle, and the Kids!