

May 12, 2021

**Dear Pastor and Partners in the Ministry,**

Upon reviewing our most recent update, from February 18, 2021, it was a bit surprising how things have changed so much, again, in such a short time. The upsurge of COVID cases and the new variants have forced our government and communities to once again put strict guidelines and lockdowns in place. While our family and ministries have not been particularly affected by the sickness itself, at times the restrictions have felt burdensome and even unnecessary. However, in recent weeks we have been forced to confront the pandemic on a more personal level with several church members, close friends and fellowship pastors suffering in the wake of COVID.

The founding pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Carl's 1987 classmate from Bible Institute, died while waiting outside a hospital in Manila. He had gone to the hospital to be treated for COVID, but with no available beds, he was left untreated. Soon thereafter, a good pastor friend passed away just a few short days after testing positive. He was a strong, healthy man in his early 50's, yet with hospital care and a wife who is a registered nurse, he was not able to fight the disease. We spent some time with this man's family and church over the weekend and the heartbreak for this faithful, servant-leader who was one of the sincerest men of God we know, was heavy with longing and sadness. But, his life of service and love for Jesus were joyously celebrated. We realize that in America this pandemic has become politicized and used as a source of division, but here, we are simply dealing with it as a real, long term part of life that we must adjust to and suffer from. Our prayer is that, in spite of and because of COVID, we could be stronger in our unity as believers, more dedicated to the cause of telling and showing others the love of Jesus, and steadfast in cultivating and building the precious relationships that God has put in our lives.

**Hope Baptist Church:** Church services have once again been put under more restrictions and we are only able to have services for the persons 18 – 65 years old. We have once again put our Baptism Sunday and church organization on hold, however, we are still planning and look forward to that by the end of May, Lord willing.

As we mentioned in our last letter, to offset the lack of church services, we have been able to start new home Bible studies wherever and whenever possible. We are currently focusing on establishing Bible studies in the homes of those families we have encountered through Bahay Sibol. Once a child is reunited with their family, we offer a weekly Bible study as part of the child's after-care and monitoring. Each family has been open and receptive to this opportunity for their family to reestablish a strong foundation, after having suffered various difficulties or trauma. We have even been able to minister to one family who gave their child up to be adopted by a more capable family. These are not easy decisions to be made and these families are looking for solutions, peace and hope in the midst of a life that seems forever broken and without hope. We are thankful for the opportunity to offer them the one way to true hope and help in this life, Jesus!

**Calvary Christian Academy:** We are painstakingly bringing our school year to completion, almost two months later than the regular schedule. This puts us in the difficult position of having school during the extreme heat of the summer. We are thankful that our kids have endured and excelled in their studies in spite of it all. We will be forced to begin the next school year only one month after the close of this school year in order to get our schedule back on track. With a drop in enrollment and a strong hit to our budget, we have had to trim down our staff, adding work and responsibility to a smaller staff. Please pray for our wonderful, dedicated teachers that have sacrificed much in order to keep the school moving forward during a very difficult time. While we can not financially match the worth of their efforts, we pray that God will bless them in greater ways.

Here are a few updates on prayer requests that we had in our last letter.

1. **Completion of the Ministerial Building:** Please continue to pray that we will receive the needed funds for this. With rainy season fast approaching we must seal up and strengthen some of the weaker parts of the building in order to avoid damage and disrepair during the heavy monsoon rains.

2. **Hope Baptist Church:** Pray that as restrictions will once again loosen up, that we will be able to get back to the work of 'establishing' this 'new' church and push through with our baptism Sunday.

3. **Government Accreditation:** We would like to praise God that all of the needs were met for documentation, our inspections went well and we are completely accredited for the next 3 years, when we will need to be inspected again.

4. **Director's Residence:** We look forward to putting the roof on this month and then moving into the finishing stages of the plastering. After that, major funds will be needed for windows, doors, tiles and furnishings.

**In the Service of King Jesus,**

Brother Carl Gormley and Family