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# RICK & BECKY MARTIN

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## Missionaries in Iloilo City, Philippines



January-February, 2020

Dear Friends:

December is my favorite time of the year. There are so many opportunities to reach people with the Gospel. One is an event we call, "Help the Needy" the week before Christmas. Our Bible college students, church members, and staff give up their Christmas to help the needy! Our folks go all over the place: jails, widows, orphans, handicapped, bed-ridden, fire victims, and the poorest people giving out gifts and love. They go to the wards for the underprivileged in area hospitals and pass out tracts, John & Romans, 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 the fire victims who've lost everything—this may not sound like a big deal but most of these students only have a few outfits themselves.

4000 toys were given  
to poor children.

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They go to the prison and sing Christmas carols to the inmates, preach the Gospel, and pray for them. They have feeding programs for needy children. They minister to the widows and the elderly, the deaf, the blind, and the mentally slow. These “forgotten people” cry when our folks show up at their homes caroling, and bearing gifts. 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 have been abandoned by their husbands.

Instead of going home for Christmas our Bible students go to the Leper’s Hospital and sing carols, bring food, and mostly bring joy. They have Christmas parties for children in the slums. Some of these Bible students and church members, who many times are as poor if not poorer than the people they help, amaze us with their generous spirit. They miss their families at Christmas time, but I believe Jesus smiles when He sees them spending themselves for “the least of these.”

Here is the testimony of one of the staff members of IBC, Mario Mallorca:

*“In December our group raised an amount and bought groceries and gave them to the most needy families in a section of City Proper. One was named Jaime. He is 73 years old and has been bedridden for four years. He lives in a tiny shack, about 4’ X 5’ wide. One of his children lives in the upper part and he lives below. It was very dark. It seemed he was inside a large cardboard box. There was no bed, Jaime slept on the cement floor. When I went inside I had to bend down. I couldn’t stand up straight.*

*Four years ago there was a fire where Jaime used to live. He was trying to help people but was run over by a vehicle and both his legs were broken. The doctor said he needed an operation but he didn’t have any money so he never had surgery. He cannot walk, stand, or even sit.*

*He often cries and tells himself that he can’t do anything, that his life is useless. We shared the plan of salvation with him and he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. We told him someday he’ll have a mansion in Heaven and he’ll be able to walk again. More important, he will get to be with Jesus.*

*I thank God for IBC’s “Help the Needy” program. There were so many people who seem hopeless but they were given hope as we shared the Gospel with them. Even though the amount of groceries we shared with people was very small, still it brought a little joy to people’s dark lives. But of course most importantly, is the joy salvation brings.”*



**Bro. Rijanie's group went to Cubay. This bedridden man wept when he was not forgotten at Christmas; he also received the best gift anyone could ever get- the gift of salvation!**



**Our Bible students gave this disabled lady a new house.**

Here is another testimony of another IBC staff member, Joy Geamal:

*“Christmas is a time of giving. There are a lot of people who need help, but there is one family we really pitied, the family of Vivian, 51 years old. She was born with hydrocephalus dwarfism. Her brothers and sisters don’t live here and they have their own families to take care of so Vivian lives with her mother. They’re so poor. I can’t imagine how they survive their everyday living. They have no source of income except some of their kind neighbors share food with them. Sometimes her siblings send them money, but never enough. Her mom is old and slightly blind. They have no electricity. Vivian can’t stand alone without help. 12 years ago she got sick and her legs were affected so she just crawls around the house. She tries not to burden her mother. She cooks and washes dishes and does laundry by hand. Last October one of our Bible students, Cris Jhon, visited them and invited them to go to church but because of her condition Vivian felt it was too hard, but her mother went. Chris John kept trying to persuade Vivian. One day Chris Jhon rented a motorbike to bring her to church, even though it was expensive for him, as he was only a Bible student. When Vivian finally came, one of our church members led her to accept Jesus Christ as her Savior. She was so happy when she got saved that she started going to church every Sunday.”*

Joy said Vivian and her mother overheard one of the neighbors say, “Maybe until they die their house will never be fixed.” They just lived in a pitiful little shack. Joy and some others raised money to build a small bamboo home for Vivian and her mom. They could barely feed themselves, how could they ever have a decent home? Joy goes on to say that Vivian told her mother, “Don’t worry, God is merciful. I know He sees what we need. It won’t be long we can have a better place.”

Joy said, *“While the Bible students were building Vivian’s house at night, the Barangay Captain would carry a light down for them, so they could see while they worked. Also, the driver of the motorbike that they rented every Sunday for church saw Vivian’s conditions and had pity on her. He was encouraged when he saw that we were building a home for Vivian. At the next Barangay meeting he suggested that the Barangay foot the bill to put a street light right in front of Vivian’s house so they could benefit from that light at their house, and they did. Our students are not really experts in building houses but they did their best to build Vivian’s house. They made bamboo walls and flooring, and a cabinet for their clothes. They also fixed*



**Young police officers at the Musical accepting the Lord.**

*the bathroom. I just hope this mother and daughter will see how good God is. I hope their lives will be an inspiration to Christians in terms of giving. Our little sacrifices have a big impact on the lives of others so let us not be weary in well doing to lend our helping hands for those in need for Christ's sake."*

### CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

For 14 years Iloilo Baptist Church has presented the Christmas story with music, actors, and live animals. This year about 235 people were a part of the program. At the end of the one-hour musical the Word of God is preached and many people received the Lord Jesus as their Savior. There are three presentations. The first two emphasize reaching people who need the Savior. 35,000 tickets were given out by the hundreds of workers for four weeks. The first night we were expecting a large number of visitors and 2,500 visitors came, even more than expected. The 2<sup>nd</sup> night there were 1,300 visitors.

Besides the workers of IBC bringing visitors, some workers tried to get groups of people to come. The first night about 500 senior citizens from Iloilo City came. There were many poor families that the government helps that came, also police officers, fire victims, persons with disabilities, government workers, schools and others. The hardest job is the actors. Mario Mallorca, (who wrote one of the testimonies about Help the Needy) one of the IBC staff, has anywhere from 16-20 practice sessions for 2-3 hours each. Even though we have basically the same scenes each year with a few changes, it takes a great amount of work and dedication from the actors.



Our grandson, Landon in the Musical



Landon (wise man) ready to give toys to children.



Rachel, Becky and granddaughter Charlotte meeting King Herod before church.

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## FAMILY

Christmas was very special this year as our daughter Rachel and her two children, 9-year-old Landon, and 18-month-old Charlotte were able to be here for three weeks, along with Rachel's friend, Amy Kielas. Landon joined our staff kids in dressing as a policeman during our annual Police Appreciation Night December 8<sup>th</sup> and he also took part in the Christmas Musical. Weeks before their arrival Becky and I began to pray that this trip would have a spiritual impact on Landon.

Becky and I want to thank you for your prayer and financial support. May God richly bless you in this New Year!

Sincerely in Christ,

*Rick & Becky Martin*



Landon with Officer Cesar Penuela, one of Iloilo's best police officers.

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