

From April 27th—May 18th we were part of a team of six that travelled to the Philippines on a mission trip. This was our 4th visit to Negros, a large island in central Philippines, where we have established a great relationship with several churches. One of the churches, City Harvest, was our base for the time we were visiting.

We were invited to join the team because of our interest in supporting, enhancing and encouraging marriages and families. We were involved in many different activities including speaking to young people and couples, as well as being part of a recommitment of vows ceremony for several couples, who were previously married in registry offices.

The theme of our trip was “Building Strong Christian Families”. Consequently, we spent much of our time at two separate conferences; one for women and one for whole families. One of our best memories is the respect the young people showed towards the elderly. It was great to witness the sincerity in their relationships with their parents and grandparents. They also treated us with genuine respect and acceptance.

We visited 5 slum areas of the major city, Bacolod, where we prayed with parents and children, and saw the homes and families of sponsored children. One of the Pastor’s wives has established a sponsorship program for children from the slums, called Mission Possible for Future Generations. We were involved in the graduation ceremony for the 140 children in the program. Sponsorship of \$150 per year provides school fees, books, transport to school and school uniforms. Without this support none of these children would be able to attend school, as education is not compulsory in the Philippines and is an expense beyond many families. It made us realize how truly blessed we are to have such wonderful opportunities to access the very best educational facilities and delivery... and how little we appreciate and value it.

We had so many different experiences during our stay:

While we were there the Philippines held their elections for all 3 tiers of government. It was amazing to witness the advertising posters on every available wall, tree and building. There were literally millions of them. In this election they were using electronic vote counters for the first time, which resulted in chaos. We heard testimonies from church members who had stood in line for up to 7 hours in 40degree heat, so they could vote! If they left the line, they lost their place and had to go to the end of the line. Voting is not compulsory. So their desire to participate was very humbling.

Two faith building, but awesome testimonies concerned two people connected to City Harvest Church.

The first was a child of 5 years of age, Alpha Grace, who drowned in a swimming pool on Christmas Day 2009, on a Church outing. She received CPR, but she was pronounced dead by doctors when she arrived at the hospital. By this time she had been dead for an hour, but the Pastor’s wife and others continued to pray, anointing her with oil and declaring life over her and she recovered! While we were there, she led the Kindergarten group in a recitation of Psalm 23, speaking with authority ... “Yea though I walk the valley of death, I will fear NO evil.” She really stressed the “I will fear no evil.” Amazing!

The second happened during our stay, while we were in Patag in the mountains. A man at the family camp shared about his brother who had a stroke and died. The family prayed and believed for a miracle and he was restored to life. He told of his out-of-body experience,

where he saw his non-existent 'twin' brother lying down with his pastor alongside praying for him. He decided to join his 'twin' and returned to his body and life.

On the final day we were involved in baptizing 34 Christians aged between 10 and 50. This was an amazingly joyful and fruitful time! How wonderful to see these brand new Christians clutching their new Bible as the treasure it truly is, and witnessing the amazing transforming experience of their entering the Kingdom of God.

Going to the Philippines has been life changing for many reasons, some of which are:

- * The Philippine people are so hospitable and generous, in spite of basically having nothing.
- * They are so joyous, even though they have, to our minds, so much to complain about.
- * They are enthusiastic about their relationship with Jesus and enjoy sharing their testimonies and their deep faith.
- * They never grumble about their circumstances and always appear to love life, living it to the full.

Thank you for praying for us.
Wayne and Patricia Blazely.