



# Interconnections

*Ministry Update from Rene and Lani Quimbo serving in the Philippines with PMI*

*Dear faithful friends and prayer partners,*

Dear friends,

***“For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him”***  
***Philippians 1:29.***

After much rejoicing for how supporting churches, families, and friends sacrificially gave generously to the rebuilding of Arena Blanco Ministry Center, we encountered a mountain of problems in the person of the local leader and the local government officials who strongly opposed the rebuilding of Arena Blanco Ministry Center. This happened after we were about done with the foundation of the building which was constructed on water, and about to begin construction of the main building. We were insulted, bad mouthed, and given the run around. We prayed until our throat hurt, cried until there were no more tears to cry,

pleading with God to give us victory as we struggle and endeavor to make agreements with the said personalities that we may be allowed to continue rebuilding the center. We did not realize at first that God was redirecting us.



*Our picture of victory was that we would be granted permission to finish the rebuilding project and minister to the people in Arena Blanco in Arena Blanco.* But in time it was clear we must look for another place to relocate. The big challenge was both cost and location. Then property in Mampang became available---it is on an elevated area, just about 20 meters from

the seashore. On the water are about 1000 Muslim families (Sama and Tausug) who are taking up residence in government built houses, a relocation site for families displaced during the Zamboanga City siege in 2013.

**We began on December 23 and completed the sanctuary in time for our first worship service on January 29. The ministry center was completed the first week of February.**



Photos: early stages of ministry center construction in Mampang, Lani cooking for construction crew



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While preparing the sanctuary for worship the following day, we prayed that the Lord will fill up the chairs we were setting out with true worshipers. **We were filled with excitement as the Lord not only filled up the place, but the testimonies given proclaimed God’s amazing grace and mighty work in our midst.** Before we found this place in Mampang, 7 families in Arena Blanco begged us to take them with us to Cagayan de Oro (CDO) City. They said they are going to sell their boats, their houses and other properties and relocate to CDO.

We assured them that we will not leave them behind (though we had no idea how to make this work). We told them that during the trials they gave their all to us, they identified with us, we will also give our all to them. They changed their mind when they learned we are building a new center in Mampang. One of them gave her testimony in tears (hardly anyone was dry-eyed that day) that when we were forced out of Arena she had doubts about the power of God...*is He really Almighty? How come He “lost” to those who opposed our presence in the community?* When she saw our new ministry center for the first

time, she said, “this is what victory looks like. **This is why God took us out of Arena and brought us here.** Now, we have the cross, now we can sing as loud as we can, and proclaim Jesus Christ and His redeeming grace without reservation. And we are just a stone throw away from the harvest field.”



Rene & Lani at Mampang Ministry Center completed in February 2017

Indeed such adversity became like a winnowing fork where the wheat was separated from the chaff. Said, one of the young men, volunteered to help out in the youth and children ministry and desires to be discipled. This coming June, he will begin to take informal short Bible courses here at the center.

**Our adversity is in God’s hands just like any other area or circumstance in our life. God is in charge at all times.** His power works on our behalf to accomplish His purposes. Through this adversity we have a

glimpse of what Paul said in 2 *Corinthians 4:8*  
*“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”*

And as to how we were able to secure the land here in Mampang and provide for the additional building materials, God’s way in meeting these needs was nothing short of miraculous. We all came out of this trusting God more and more, moving from faith to faith, from strength to strength, from grace to grace to the glory of His name!

As of the end of March we should have finished most of the building and repair work on the living quarters and other areas of the ministry center up in Lacolac. Beginning this April, we will start construction work of the **House of Hope Ministry Center** in its new location in Opol, Misamis Oriental with help from Midway Presbyterian Church. Since the funds provided were only for repair (as was proposed because it was the need at that time), we are praying for more funds to relocate due to the Philippine Port Authority’s project that will utilize the area where our current House of Hope Ministry Center is located.





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Photo: our neighbors in Mampang about 20 meters from the new center. Sea water comes under these government constructed houses during high tide. Close to 1000 Muslim families displaced during the Zamboanga City siege by Muslim rebels are taking up residence here

We have just completed reproduction of the **Bible Study for Women materials** and we plan to hold short seminars on how to use the materials this April. We are also preparing to hold Daily Vacation Bible Schools in 8 venues during the month of May.



Photo: Suaib, our faithful friend in Arena Blanco, gave testimony of God's faithfulness during our first worship service on January 29.

The **prayer walk in Lacolac** brought us to over 100 households. A family who opened their home to a weekly Bible study has started worshipping with us on Sundays at the church. We also held a short seminar on **Faith Comes from Hearing** attended by church leaders.

The third week of March we traveled to **TawiTawi to distribute Tagalog, Cebuano and Sama Bibles, and Bible study materials in Tausug**. This project was made possible through the help of Central Presbyterian Church. We also gathered together for an evening of fellowship at JIL Church in Bongao.



Photo: After the distribution of Sama, Tagalog, and Cebuano Bibles and Tausug Bible study materials at JIL church in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, we gathered for an evening of fellowship declaring God's mercy and grace towards His people and work, and proclaiming the mighty things He did and is doing in our midst.





Photo: Rene preaching at a Sunday morning worship service

These past two years have been very hectic with the various challenges that construction projects bring, in addition to regular ministry programs, and yes, we felt overwhelmed at times, physically exhausted, emotionally and mentally spent, but we also felt blessed and extremely grateful to God for opportunities to grow in the physical and spiritual aspects of ministry in our own lives, and in the lives of those we serve in His name. **Our confidence comes from the fact that God is for us, and He wins, always. He declared in His word that He will not surrender His glory to another nor His praise to idols (Isaiah 42:8).**



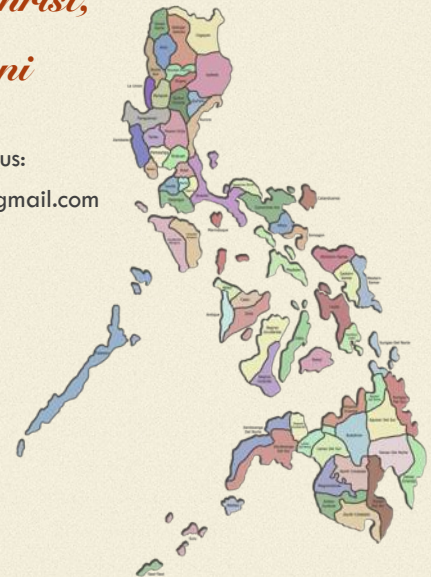
Photo: Eugene (leftmost), the assigned ministry worker in Zamboanga City with Said (center) who has committed to attend informal Bible classes; and Alpad (rightmost) who is currently enrolled at Ebenezer Bible College and Seminary

Dear friends, we have covered much ground in this letter. None of this is possible without your generous investment for the spiritual prosperity of the people we serve in the various ministry centers. Thank you for your faithful prayers.

Our ministry support is in need of new and additional monthly and one-time support. Our account could use the help of your friends and your church community. **Would you consider new or additional support?** Every monthly and one-time gift helps support the growth of God’s Kingdom in the Philippines. May you have the joy and peace of God and may you continue to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Yours in Christ,*  
*Rene & Lani*

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