



# Interconnections

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

*Dear faithful friends and prayer partners,*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! It has been our desire to hold a VBS for children and youth in Opol church to strengthen their faith through teaching the word of God and fun activities that remind them of the character of **Champions for Jesus**, our VBS theme. We prayed that the quarantine status of our community will continue to allow us to meet face-to-face (though we have to follow strict quarantine protocols). Finally, on the third week of May, we conducted the VBS. Everybody had a great time. Though it was physically demanding, the outcome was way worth all the effort, glory to God.



It is a blessing to have this dedicated Opol VBS team!



Children in Lacolac with their VBS completion certificate

Because some worshippers inquired if we could hold another church membership class, we scheduled church membership classes in the month of May. Ten people completed the classes, and gave their testimony and public profession of faith.

During the month of June, the church in Opol would be celebrating its **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary**. However, due to rising Covid-19 cases in our province, the president of our country upgraded our community quarantine status starting June 1,

all assemblies are limited to five people, and those 65 years old and above, and those 18 years old and below are not allowed to go outside of their places of residence. Since the beginning of the pandemic until now, we hold online Sunday worship services, Friday prayer meeting and Bible study, and Thursday youth fellowship online (even during the times when our quarantine status allow us to meet face-to-face) because we have families with young children and several church members with co-morbidities.



Lacolac Hillside Ministry Center VBS Team



Iking teaching one of the youth VBS lessons

During the lockdown, we continue to hold **Bible studies through phone group chat** (not everyone has a computer and internet connection), and hold worship services in small groups (2 groups: in Bajau home, and in a Cebuano home). This June, we started holding weekly Bible study and fellowship especially for the **Bajau worshippers** where we can teach in their own language. This way, the Bajaus are more active in participation and interaction because they can better express themselves in their own language. We are grateful to the Lord for **Iking** has only one subject left to complete

his online Bible school *Graduate Diploma in Christian Education* degree. Please pray with us for the downgrading of our quarantine status so we can return to in-person worship services and other ministries.





In Lacolac, at the **Hillside Learning Center**, we conducted the VBS for youth and children the last week of May. We are grateful for those who prayed for us, since two weeks after the VBS, a lockdown has been declared in Lacolac due to rising Covid-19 cases. The Sunday before the lockdown, we were able to celebrate our **17<sup>th</sup> church anniversary**. We all humbled ourselves before the Lord for it is He who faithfully brought us to this day!

A **church membership class** was also held in the month of May for 9 worshippers. On June 13<sup>th</sup>, during our church anniversary celebration, the first and second batch of church membership participants gave their public profession of faith.

We are excited for the four families with whom we assisted in their farming livelihood projects (small backyard piggery, small backyard poultry, vegetable gardening such as bitter melon, eggplant, sweet potato, and cassava). Each project is now helping each family make both ends meet.



17<sup>th</sup> church anniversary celebration in Lacolac



Public profession of faith of one of the ten participants of the recently concluded church membership class



Public profession of faith of those who completed church membership class n Lacolac



One of five Bajau families worshipping in Opol church



Rory is one of two VBS teachers

Please pray with us for a domestic violence issue that involved our church worshippers. Two teenagers (girls) were physically abused by their step-father. Their mother is currently in another country processing her papers to become a domestic helper. We were advised to ignore the issue since the step-father is the younger brother of a community leader, and no one wants to mess up with their family. Convicted by Isaiah 1:17, we decided to report the incident to the people in-charge in the community regarding said issue. Please pray with us, that the girls will get justice.

The beginning of May, we received a message from the Borja family (*the new missionary family we brought to Zamboanga City March this year to serve the Lord in the Muslim community*) that they have lost the joy of serving

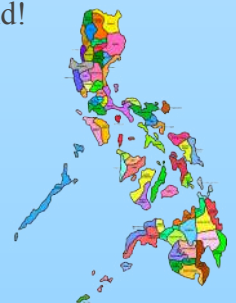
in the area. They informed us that they want to leave at the end of June. We cannot help but get disappointed by these turn of events. But we believe God has a good plan and will continue to raise up workers for this Muslim ministry. Two missionaries working with us in the mountain ministry in Lacolac (not same ones who served in Zamboanga City before the Borja family) have committed to stand in the gap. We cannot thank God enough! Please pray with us as we travel the third week of July (right after our second dose of the vaccine) to bring the **replacement missionaries** to Zamboanga City. A negative swab test result is required. This test is quite expensive, and there are four people who needed to get this. Please pray for God's provision. Hopefully, we will be able to conduct a VBS for youth and children first week of August depending on its quarantine status. We also ask you to pray with us that the quarantine status for Zamboanga City will be downgraded, since the beginning of May, face-to-face assemblies are not allowed, and other strict quarantine protocols are enforced.

Thank you, dear friends. As always, our heart is filled with gratitude to our God, the Hope of believers, who holds everything in His hands. We remain grateful to you, too, for your ministry of prayer and financial support to us, and to the people we serve in the various ministries. May the Lord continue to uphold us all with His victorious right hand!

In Him,

*Rene & Lani*

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**Rene & Lani Quimbo - Presbyterian Mission International**

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