



gceinternational.org

DECEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER



CHINESE CEMETERY SCHOOL AND CHURCH

Earlier this year, we were told to vacate the mausoleum where—for the last five years—we have conducted our preschool and church. The owner needs to relocate the graves to a new cemetery as the Cebu Chinese Cemetery will be demolished. Many families have relocated elsewhere, but when I visited last month, there were still 100 families remaining. They said there was a change in demolition plans and asked us to continue the preschool. I have found another mausoleum, a much larger space, and negotiated with the head guard to use it for our preschool and church. By the grace of God, we hope to resume classes and services soon.

WEDDING CAMPAIGN 2018

We thank God for opportunities to be able to bring the Gospel to the unreached. One of these places is Gilutongan Island, where we regularly deliver nourishment formula to some of the children in our program. (We must journey over open seas in a small motor boat for 45 minutes to get to Gilutongan. In August, the waves were so high that we thought the boat would capsize.) We told the parents about our wedding campaign: we host a huge wedding ceremony every year to provide opportunity for poor unwed

couples to marry and thus gain a marriage certificate. A marriage certificate is required for children to have a birth certificate. And a birth certificate is required for children to be eligible to attend school. 17 couples asked to be married! We are grateful to the Lord to give identity documentation to the many currently illegitimate children on that small island.



Scholar Ryan leading bible study with nourishment program parents

Please pray for us as we start twelve bible study locations to serve the couples that have signed up for our Oct 27, 2018 wedding, including the couples in Gilutongan. Pray for the two fearless GCE staff who will lead the weekly studies starting this month.

REACHING THE POOR AT CHRISTMAS

Scholars Reggie and Ian give away rice and noodles to families.



Please pray with us that we will collect donations to giveaway Christmas packages to the poor that are not already in our nourishment program. We have done this every year: go house-to-house surveying the community and give rice, noodles, and soap to the families that have nothing. Living and working 17 years among the poor, God has taught me how to look between the cracks, to serve the widows, orphans, and those in despair. One sack of rice costs US\$40.

We are also bringing a Christmas celebration to a community in a terrorist-infested mountain area, north of General Santos, in the predominantly Muslim island of Mindanao. Please pray for our safety at

this upcoming event. We have been working in this area for the past two years but this is the first time that we are gathering people together to celebrate Christmas. Pray that a grenade will not be thrown as we are right in the center of two mountains which are both base camps for two notorious rebel groups. We plan to give one sack of rice to this community, 2kgs per family.

When ISIS captured the Mindanao city of Marawi, many terrorist groups were empowered. After months of gunfire and unrest, we rejoice in the recapture of Marawi City by the Philippine military a few weeks back. Marshall Law continues in Mindanao indefinitely. I believe God has produced fearless men out of the boys in our scholar program for this special work to reach the people of Mindanao.

ARROWS SCHOOL / GCE TENTMAKERS

I went to Palawan Island with three of our graduates to survey a tribe that, up to this day, has no college-educated people. It was a six-hour journey into the mountain. We hope to bring 10-15 boys to Cebu, put them in Arrows School of Ministry for two months, and a one year values formation program through the Word of God. After 14 months, the ones that do not quit on us, we will interview and choose one or two for college placement.



This year's spring cohort of Arrows Ministry school certificate-earners

Three other graduates came with me to challenge 14 churches in Teroray, North Cotabato to plan for their next generation of leaders and church planters. We encouraged the pastors to send their young people for Bible training at Arrows School of Ministry next April 2018. We will follow up from there to see who we can retain to invest in for the future of the Cotabato churches. This is an 80% Muslim area, a very strategic location. We have given out 20 enrollment forms. Please pray with us that the churches will respond.

Also, please pray with us for the teachers that will be coming to teach at Arrows School.

As Christmas draws near, many families are making plans for get togethers. Some come from far away to reunite with their families. It has been four years since we had Christmas together with all our children. We are looking forward to this occasion. Sharon will be in Seattle for a month and return to the Philippines in mid-January 2018.

We want to thank you, our supporters, for this year of prayers from so many and especially your financial giving. Thank you.

In His Vineyard,
Sharon and Manny

If you wish to support the nourishment of a child, sponsor one of our scholars or graduates, or give personal support to Sharon and Manny, please send a check payable to:

Grace Community Empowerment
1084-D G. Ouano St.
Brgy. Cambaro
Mandaue City, Cebu 6014
Philippines

Or go to worldmin.org, click "Give", select Grace Community Empowerment, and the program you wish to support.