



“Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.” (2 Samuel 7:22)

In our last update, we highlighted a few prayer requests:

- *Safety for our journey from Winkler, Manitoba to Vancouver, British Columbia*
- *Protection during Shirley’s appointments*
- *Shirley’s health and healing*
- *Trip to Sagada in January*
- *Ministry in Sagada—souls to be saved and believers to grow*

I am reminded of the great promise in Psalms 34:17, **“The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.”** Thank you for being part of the righteous who cried out for us. I am excited to share how God answered your prayers.

Our Journey

Our journey from Winkler to Vancouver was certainly an adventure! Due to the severity of Shirley’s allergies, we needed to rent a Class C RV to take the journey across. We could not risk exposure to her allergens in public places. Traveling in a self-contained RV offered her a safe environment.

The Lord protected us as we travelled in extreme winter conditions. The RV was equipped with an “Arctic Pack”. This kept the entire RV fully self-contained, functional, and warm even when one night the temperature dropped down to -51°C . Some weather delays made the trip a day longer than we had planned, but praise God we arrived in BC safely! We praise the Lord that our home church, Victory Baptist Church, has covered the entire cost of the trip. Our family is very grateful for their deep love for us!

Trip To Sagada

Even with the uncertain state of Shirley’s health, the Lord made it clear to us that Matthias and I should take a trip to the Philippines. We needed to begin preparations for the time when God will allow us to return. The church people also needed us to be with them for a while. Only four days after our arrival in Vancouver, Matthias and I flew to the Philippines. The Lord blessed our trip and kept us safe as we travelled by bus every weekend between Tarlac (where our van is stored) and Sagada. This was a 12-hour journey each way. Our goals for the trip were to: repair our rented house, assess the state of our vehicles and repair them for our return, register the vehicles, renew our Philippines driver’s licenses, and minister in and through Central Sagada Baptist Church. Praise God, all of these things were accomplished!

The most essential task at the beginning of the trip was to repair our vehicles, particularly the van. We had hoped to have it fixed the first week, drive it to Sagada for our first weekend there, and be able to stay in Sagada for the majority of our time in the Philippines. The initial assessment overwhelmed us. The van was in bad shape. It had sustained body damage, including a shattered windshield due to falling Indian mangos. The extreme heat of the sun caused external damage and encouraged mold to grow inside. The van was not at all cared for by those we left to watch it. It was filled with garbage and had been left to be played in like a children’s playground. Mechanically speaking, the van had many engine performance issues. This was not how we left it. We suspect that either dirty gasoline or even diesel was put into the system. We could not be sure right away exactly how much damage had been done to the fuel system and engine.

Over the course of five weeks, God allowed us to repair the van. The damaged hood was repaired, and the shattered windshield and broken rear window were replaced. We were able to diagnose and solve the fuel system and engine problems with the help of a few



experienced mechanic friends in Canada. Because parts for our van must be shipped from the US, the job took longer than “normal”. Praise God, He helped us to travel with most of the tools we needed for the job so this was not something we needed to acquire. The van is now fixed!

Our SUV, which was parked in Sagada, sustained even greater damage than the van, as it has been through a few earthquakes and two serious typhoons while we have been on furlough. This Nissan Patrol has been an amazing vehicle for life in Mountain Province and an essential part of reaching many areas in Sagada which are only accessible with a 4x4 vehicle. “The truck,” as we all affectionately refer to it, is twenty-seven years old and has been well used. If a truck could talk, this one would have many stories of the difficult places it has driven to help get the gospel to the Igorot people. While the truck will need to retire, God gave us a blessing during the time we were in the Philippines. An individual from Winnipeg will be helping us to purchase another similar vehicle to replace the Nissan. We are in the closing stages of finalizing the financial transfer. Our hearts are lifted in praise to God as this will greatly aid us in taking the gospel to the people in these hard-to-reach places!

Matthias worked tirelessly to repair the house in Sagada. He and Brother Godfrey worked on building a shed at the back that will protect our local-style washing machine. In the Philippines, it is normal to wash the laundry outside. Matthias used this project as an opportunity to teach one of our young people how to weld properly. Matthias and Brother Godfrey also began to renovate the kitchen. They removed the rotting wood doors from the cement cupboards and replaced them with steel framework, leaving the cupboards less pest-friendly. The kitchen sink was also given an overhaul.

My job was to strip about forty years of grime off of the wood floor in the living room with Matthias’ new cordless sander. This sander, which was given to Matthias by a kind man at Pembina Valley Baptist Church, was an invaluable tool in this long-overdue

job. When we return, the floor will get a proper finish unlike what the locals use to wax the floor. With this finish, my wife will easily be able to keep the floor clean. As per the local culture, our living room door stands open much of the day, and all who desire may enter. You can imagine how much dirt gets tracked into that room! My other task in Sagada was to “clean the mountain” on our property. “Cleaning the mountain” is the local term for chopping down or removing all the weeds and grass down to the level of the rock. While this is not an easy task, it’s always a rewarding one!

The Ministry

Our first Sunday back in Sagada was both exciting and discouraging. I could tell that Brother Godfrey was disheartened by the decline in the children’s Sunday school attendance as well as that of the adults in the main service. The adults that were supposed to help in the ministry have either stopped helping or left the church altogether. There were 10 children in attendance, with only 5 adults in the main service. However, in the five weeks we were there, we saw the attendance grow both in Sunday school and in the adult service. We spent a few hours every Saturday visiting children and other folks in the community. Each week the attendance steadily grew. By our last Sunday, 33 children and 16 adults were at church! Praise God, a young lady about 12 years old, Freya, accepted the Lord as her Saviour!

On our last Sunday, I challenged the adults in the church to stay faithful and to be involved in the outreach ministries. One couple in our church rededicated themselves, promising to support Brother Godfrey and to be involved. Brother Godfrey sent me a picture of himself with his elderly mother as well as this couple, visiting the Sunday school children on Saturday morning.

Please continue to pray for our church’s spiritual growth and protection. Being in Sagada was a vivid reminder of the great need for the glorious light of the gospel of Christ to shine into the blinded minds of the Igorot people. The paganism has kept them in bondage for centuries. God gave me the privilege of witnessing once again to a lady we have prayed for

since 2017. Agnes is in her late eighties and is one of the most prominent elders (witch doctors) in Sagada. As I shared the gospel with her again, I could sense a battle within her, ultimately causing her to refuse the gospel. Many have prayed with us for Agnes; please do not stop. She has yet to receive Christ as her Saviour, and her time is short.

Each Igorot suffers from the onslaught of the devil. His overlord is a “normal” part of their existence. Those we have been most involved with are the young people because they are the ones who are openly looking for freedom from this bondage. Will you please pray specifically for two of these precious young people? As I counseled with Shelby (age 13) and Mary (age 11), it was not hard to see that both of them suffer from a wounded heart which has left them open to the attacks of the enemy.

Matthias and I arrived back in Canada safely along with all of our luggage last Tuesday, February 27th. Thank you so much for praying for us. Please pray for those whom we had the privilege of sharing the gospel with in the airplane, in the check-in counter lines, in airport waiting areas, at hospital visits, and in Sagada. We are eager to go back again!

Update on Shirley

God has sent a definite confirmation that He is indeed giving us His blessing to go home to Sagada. He has miraculously healed Shirley! For nearly three years, no doctor in British Columbia has been able to discover why Shirley has been so ill. The doctors in Manitoba saw it first-hand as they helped her through six episodes of anaphylaxis. Our first week here in Vancouver, Shirley was taken to the hospital by ambulance for a seventh anaphylactic reaction. However, many of her doctors in BC have chalked it all up to anxiety and would not even request the records from the hospital in Manitoba. After yet another discouraging appointment where Shirley was basically told she uses her EpiPen to soothe her anxiety, the future looked very uncertain. Since the doctors did not believe she had allergies there would be no way she would be recommended for the therapy we had hoped would heal her. Something happened in Shirley, though. We had prayed for Shirley’s healing in a formal setting a few times over the last two years (and obviously many times a day in our own private lives!). After the last appointment with the allergist, Shirley suddenly had the desire to eat a peanut—her most deadly allergen. She has not had the desire to

eat a peanut since her first time in the ER last October. After more prayer, and with scriptural confirmation that this was God’s will, we decided that we must allow her to do this. She expressed to us that she needed to take this step of faith. Sitting in the car, parked in the parking lot of the BC Children’s Hospital Emergency Department and with EpiPens at the ready, Shirley ate the first peanut she had eaten in four years. We waited anxiously to see if anything would happen. Over the course of an hour and a half, she ate three peanuts with no allergic reaction! She’s eaten peanuts every day since and began eating peanut butter last week! Of the 20 foods she had needed to avoid, she has eaten 19 with no reaction! **Our Great Physician has healed Shirley!!**

With Shirley being healed, we are making plans to return to the Philippines in June of this year. We are elated that we can finally set a date! A few matters still need to be attended to before we head back, including passport renewal and other immigration matters. We also have one last supporting church in California that we need to visit. The next two or three weeks will be spent sorting and sending our belongings from Vancouver. Thank you in advance for praying with us in all our needs as we prepare to return home! We rejoice in what God has done!



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