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Jon and Gina Murrell Missionary Report #42 / December 2024

1 message

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Greetings from the Philippines,

As we approach the new year, I've been reflecting on the events of the past year—both the challenges and the blessings.

In April, we said goodbye to my grandmother, Margie Wilkey, who passed away after battling cancer. Her loss has left a significant void in our family. November brought a series of six typhoons that struck the northern Philippines in quick succession, leaving many communities to recover and rebuild. We also experienced several earthquakes throughout the year, ranging in intensity, as well as some bouts of illness within our family. Despite these challenges, the work here continues to press on.

Family Updates

The kids are currently enjoying their school break. We've been working to limit their gadget time, encouraging them to engage in more constructive activities. They've spent time with their grandparents, enjoyed sleepovers with their cousins, and helped out around the house. It's incredible what a little boredom can inspire in terms of creativity and resourcefulness. The one thing I wish for them is more space to explore and play outdoors in a safe environment.

Gina has been tirelessly working on preparations for various year-end activities. In the mountains, she organized a year-end party for the children's Bible class, with 80 kids attending. They played games, won prizes, and shared a meal to celebrate their commitment to learning. The mountain congregation also hosted a church party, joined by 10 members of the South-Side Congregation (the main congregation we work with). Gina also planned a special outing for the youth group in the mountains. She took them to the mall—a first-time experience for some of the kids—which they thoroughly enjoyed.



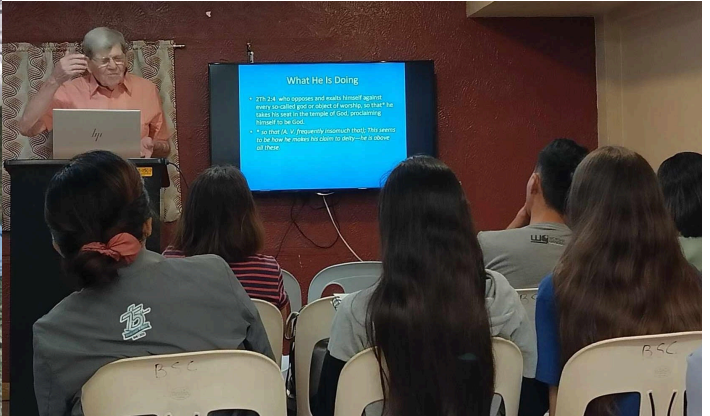
Mountain Top Ministry Year-end Party (Kids and Church)





Bible Study Center Updates

The Bible Study Center concluded the year with a seminar on **2 Thessalonians**, led by my grandfather, Ken Wilkey. We also welcomed a new sister in Christ, Sealane, into our church family. Sealane first met us after her classes at a nearby university. She received a flier advertising our seminar which she came to. Since then she began studying the Bible with us. Just over a month later, she was immersed and now faithfully attends Sunday services.



The Bible Study Center is currently on a holiday break, as most of our students are traveling. We plan to reopen in January with a seminar scheduled from January 8th to 10th, followed by a new session of classes starting the following Monday. We also have started the Saturday Kid's Class at the Bible Study Center to reach out for the children around the area. Your prayers for these plans and for the upcoming year are greatly appreciated.

Recent Losses

December has been a particularly somber month, with the loss of several members of the church. On December 27th, Sister Adela, a faithful member of the congregation, passed away at the age of 83 due to health complications.

On December 17th, tragedy struck in Mindanao when a van carrying 11 of our brothers and sisters home from a church activity was hit by a pickup truck. Three passengers passed away at the scene, and another succumbed to injuries in the ICU shortly afterward. The remaining passengers suffered fractures and other injuries. While their passing is deeply saddening, we find comfort in the assurance that they are now with the Lord, waiting for the day we will all be reunited in His presence.

Looking Ahead to the New Year

As we move into the new year, we are excited about several new plans and opportunities to expand our efforts. After thoughtful discussions with my wife, grandfather, and father, we've decided to extend our work beyond Cebu City to assist congregations in other areas. Now that the kids are older and becoming more independent, we have greater flexibility to travel and support where needed.



We aim to empower these congregations with the skills and tools necessary to further the Kingdom in their regions. One example is Balamban, a town on the other side of Cebu Island where my wife has family. We've visited the congregation there several times, and one of its members is related to someone in our South-Side congregation. Rather than taking over their work, our aim is to supplement it by offering a series of training classes. Topics will include public speaking, lesson preparation, effective Bible study methods, an overview of the Gospels, and other essential subjects.

In January, I also plan to travel with my dad and grandfather to the northern part of the Philippines. This region was recently struck by multiple typhoons, and we'll be assessing the situation to determine how we can assist with their ongoing recovery efforts.

These new initiatives will not detract from our ongoing work with the Bible Study Center. Instead, they will complement and expand its reach, enabling us to support our brothers and sisters across the Philippines in their mission to share the Gospel with the Filipino people.

More details will be given as we solidify plans going forward. We humbly ask for your prayers as we embark on these plans.

As we step into the new year, we remain thankful for your continued prayers, support, and encouragement. Your partnership makes it possible for us to persevere in the work here. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we move forward, trusting in the Lord's guidance and provision.

Wishing you a blessed and fruitful new year!

In Him,

Jon, Gina, Sean, Jasmin and Liam Murrell



"For this is the love for God, that we might keep his commands, and his commands are not difficult." - I John 5:3



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