

## **Mission Work in the Philippines NorthWest Church of Christ**

In the bustling city of Cebu City and in the quiet mountain regions beyond, the work supported by the NorthWest Church of Christ is steadily changing lives. This mission effort, carried out by Jon Murrell and his family, is rooted in a simple but powerful purpose: to share the gospel, strengthen congregations, and bring hope to those who are searching for truth.

To fully appreciate the depth of this work, it is important to understand the setting in which it takes place. The Philippines is a nation of striking contrasts. Urban centers like Cebu City continue to grow and modernize, offering expanding opportunities in business and education. Yet beyond these cities lie rural villages and mountain communities where many families live with limited resources and uncertain income. In some cases, parents leave home to work overseas, seeking to provide for their families but leaving behind children who must grow up with emotional and spiritual gaps in their lives. In these environments, the need for stability, guidance, and truth becomes especially evident.

At the heart of the Murrell family's work is the Bible Study Center in Cebu City. This center serves as a hub of teaching, encouragement, and outreach. Here, individuals gather for in-person Bible classes where they are invited not only to learn but also to ask questions, wrestle with difficult ideas, and grow in their understanding of God's Word. Many who come carry burdens—confusion about faith, difficult life circumstances, or a lack of clear biblical teaching. The studies offered are not merely academic exercises; they are deeply personal encounters with Scripture that often lead to meaningful transformation in both belief and daily living.

Beyond the city, the work extends into the mountain regions, where children and families are reached through ongoing outreach efforts. These visits are not isolated events but part of sustained relationships built over time. Many of the children in these areas come from homes where access to education, structure, and consistent care is limited. Through teaching, encouragement, and simple acts of kindness, the mission provides both physical and spiritual support. Trust is gradually established, and as relationships deepen, hearts become open to the message of the gospel. The fruit of this work is seen not only in individual lives but also in the strengthening of entire communities.

The social fabric of the Philippines creates a unique opportunity for this kind of ministry. Filipino culture places a high value on relationships, family connections, and community life. Once trust is built, the message of the gospel often spreads

naturally through families and networks of friends. There is also a strong religious awareness throughout the country, shaped in large part by the historical influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Many people are familiar with biblical concepts and open to spiritual conversation. However, this familiarity often exists alongside uncertainty or incomplete understanding, making careful, patient teaching essential. The Bible Study Center meets this need by providing clear and structured opportunities for learning.

In recent years, another significant opportunity has emerged through the rapid growth of technology. Across the Philippines, even in lower-income communities, many individuals have access to smartphones and regularly use platforms such as Facebook to communicate and gather information. Recognizing this, Jon Murrell is expanding the work of the Bible Study Center into the digital space. This online effort is designed to reach individuals far beyond Cebu City, offering structured Bible studies that can be accessed at any time. As students engage with these lessons, follow-up efforts help connect them with local congregations in their own communities, turning initial interest into lasting spiritual growth.

This digital expansion also supports a broader vision—equipping local congregations throughout the country. Rather than limiting the work to a single location, the mission seeks to strengthen churches across the Philippines by providing training, resources, and encouragement. Jon has begun working with congregations to help them develop their own evangelistic efforts, equipping them to share the gospel more effectively within their communities. A recent trip to the northern part of the country with his father reflects this growing emphasis on multiplying the work through local believers. In this way, the mission is not only reaching individuals but also building a sustainable foundation for continued growth.

The geography of the Philippines adds both challenge and significance to these efforts. The nation is made up of more than 7,000 islands, making travel between regions time-consuming and often costly. Reaching remote communities requires careful planning, persistence, and reliable transportation. This reality highlights practical needs within the mission, including the current goal of upgrading to a larger and more dependable vehicle. Such a vehicle would make it easier to travel to distant areas, carry supplies, and support the expanding scope of the work.

Like many mission efforts, this work depends on the faithful support of congregations and individuals. Current monthly support helps cover personal living expenses, ministry costs such as facility rent and teaching materials, travel for evangelism, and unexpected needs. While this support has remained steady,

the growing opportunities for outreach and expansion present new needs for the future. Additional resources would allow the work to continue more effectively and reach even more people.

Despite the challenges, the work in the Philippines continues with dedication and faith. The partnership between the NorthWest Church of Christ and Jon Murrell reflects a shared commitment to the Great Commission—to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Through teaching, outreach, and the strengthening of local congregations, this mission is not only spreading the message of Christ but also building a lasting foundation for the future.

Whether in a classroom in Cebu City, a remote mountain village, or through a Bible study accessed on a mobile phone, lives are being touched. The conditions of life in the Philippines—economic need, strong community ties, and openness to spiritual conversation—create both urgency and opportunity. In this setting, the gospel is finding receptive hearts, and the seeds being planted today are already bearing fruit that, with God's blessing, will continue to grow for years to come.