

RICK & BECKY MARTIN

Missionaries | Iloilo City | Philippines

Dear Friends,

December is our busiest time, and my favorite time of the year. On Sunday night, December 3, we celebrated the 14th Annual Police Appreciation Service at Iloilo Baptist Church. More than 300 officers attended including the Regional Director Police Chief Supt. Cesar Binag. He is a wonderful Christian and has led many police officers to the Lord. In our last newsletter I mentioned that he spoke at the Pastors and Workers Conference. He also spoke at this special service where we expressed our appreciation to the police officers.

The officers who died in the line of duty were recognized. There were 8 families of officers who died recently who attended the service. Several of the family members who were in the service received Jesus Christ as their Savior.



Police Chief Binag honoring the mother of an officer who was killed 9 days before this church service.

Through the years, 39 officers who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy in this country have been honored and remembered. The constitution of the Philippines is an amazing document granting much religious freedom to the people. For example it states that religious groups may go into the public schools and teach about their religion on a voluntary basis. Most groups do not take advantage of this but the independent Baptists for the most part have reached a multitude of children and teenagers throughout this ministry. During the service that night we showed a video of the 39 officers.

Police Chief Supt. Binag brought the Iloilo City police chief, the Iloilo Provincial Director, and many of the chiefs of police in several of the towns and the police chiefs of all 6 districts in Iloilo City. There were many other officers from



Police officer being led to Christ

Christmas Musical

Each year the church has a musical with the purpose of reaching people who normally would not visit a Baptist Church. The church was divided up into different groups and asked to work hard to bring people. Those in the musical—the choir, orchestra members, and actors, usually lead the way in bringing the most visitors. Most of the visitors came from the Iloilo City area but this year there have been some groups from other towns. One group came from a village about two hours away.

Workers invited special groups. The staff that work with the police were able to bring 227 officers during the first two presentations on December 17, and December 24th. The government here allows some of the staff of IBC to speak to the poor families who receive assistance on Family Development; using Biblical principles. 464 of



Standing ovation for family members of 8 officers who died in the line of duty.

different provinces and also the City Director of Bacolod City, which is on the island of Negros. Of all the services honoring police officers, I probably was blessed most by this one. One of the officers honored was killed by the communist rebels only 9 days before near a town that is only a few miles from our church. Twelve other officers were injured in that ambush. The funeral had not yet taken place but his mother and father and relatives came. He was single. His mother received Christ at Savior that night.



Converts being introduced at the musical.

Christmas Musical continued...

these parents and children attended the musical. Another group of people invited were the victims of two large fires in Iloilo the past four months.

More than 140 families lost their homes. One of the fires was about 200 yards from our church. About 161 fire victims attended and these dear people who have lost most everything are very receptive to the Gospel.

Another group were those dealing with addictions, especially drugs. The staff member who leads the Reformers Unanimous ministry at IBC brought 119 of them. Many are enrolled in the government rehabilitation program.

Basically each year we do the same Christmas Musical but try to add a little more to try to make the program a little better and more effective. The workers had some good ideas that were implemented and the Lord blessed “O Night of Miracles.”

It’s hard to know exactly how many received Christ as Savior but there were several hundred. There were more first time visitors than any of the other musicals.

Help the Needy



These students who gave up their Christmas vacation to help people like this blind lady are happy they did.



A 24-year old, crippled, young lady

The highlight of December is the “Help the Needy” program. Most of the Bible college students stay here the week before Christmas. They go throughout our city, helping the most neglected people. Here are some testimonies. The first is one of our Bible college students. The rest are from needy people who were helped:

“I’m so blessed because of the Help the Needy Program. I learned how to give and sacrifice. I have nothing so when everyone was talking about helping the needy during Christmas



This man's house consists of bamboo poles holding up a piece of plastic against someone's cement fence.

I thought to myself, "I am a needy person myself!" but because of this ministry I saw that there are a lot of people that are so much worse off than me and they deserved to be helped."

"My husband died in December so my three children and I were so sad. Everyday I worry about how to get money to provide for them. I take in laundry twice a week to provide food for them. Since my income is so little only one of my children can go to school right now. I am always asking God to help us. We were surprised when we heard young people singing Christmas carols outside our house. I started crying. My husband was inside his casket in our house. My children were happy when they saw the young people carrying in a bag of groceries. God is really so good. We are very thankful. This is the first time this ever happened to us. My neighbors were also so surprised. I will never forget."

"I am very thankful the day the young people from IBC came and sang a beautiful Christmas carol, and especially when they prayed. My wife has been in a coma since October. She is fighting for her life. It is hard because I can't work. I have a 17-year-old son. All my life I never stopped praying to God for His guidance and strength in facing all the trials. I love my wife very much. I surrender everything to God because I know whatever happens, it's His plan. The day the young people came and encouraged me brought joy to my heart. It was a big help. They even brought us a bag of groceries. I will always continue to pray not only for my family, but also for Iloilo Baptist Church."

"I am a very busy woman. I have four children and a granddaughter to take care of. I work hard to help my husband to support the needs of our children. I was so blessed when a group of young people came to my house. I was so surprised when they said they were going to

clean my house. I felt so happy but also ashamed because I know it's my responsibility to do the household chores. But, because I'm so busy I can't. I began to cry. I could see on their face they were happy to do this. They also did our laundry. I smiled and thanked God. He is so good to me. After a few hours I couldn't believe how beautiful my house looked. Even my husband and kids were so surprised. That was the first time anyone ever did that for me. I prepared a little snack for them



Feeding lunch to the gang members.

because I knew they were so tired and hungry. The people in our neighborhood couldn't believe the blessing I received that day! That night before I slept I thought back on the day and began crying again and thanked God again. I will pass on my blessing by continuing to invite people to church so they can be saved.”

This year IBC decided to also add an all day event on Christmas Day, bringing different groups of needy people to the church. All the visitors had a Christmas party with a meal, gifts, and games. Afterwards they attended a special music program with preaching. The fire victims (from the two large fires mentioned earlier) were invited to come early and about 180 of them came. The children from this group had a free medical checkup as four doctors donated their



Medical check up for a child of a fire victim on Christmas Day.

time to come and help. Lots of medicines were donated. About 180 fire victims attended.

Another group was the lepers from the nearby leprosarium. About 20 of them came. Another group was the Crisis Intervention Unit. These children have been picked up from the streets of Iloilo for various reasons—some for using drugs, some for prostitution, some for being out past curfew. Some have been abused or abandoned. Becky was in charge of this group. Another group was the PWD, or Persons with Disabilities such as blind, deaf, educable slow, those born with birth defects, and others.

There were 97 of these precious souls in this group with over 100 helpers and family members that came with them. Each group had a separate party.

The last group was members of street gangs in our city. The police have identified the street gangs in the 6 districts. They have programs for them, which has minimized the number of crimes committed. These are minors who have been influenced from the gang leaders. About 80 gang members were here from the 6 districts, with each having a basketball team for an all-day tournament. It started at 8:00 in the morning and ended at 8:00 in the evening with a break from 12:00 to 3:00 for lunch and the music program.

During the Music program I sat with them. I was surprised at how much they enjoyed the music. About 10 police officers came to help. At the end of the day Christmas gifts were given to each of the gang members. You could see that they were touched. I noticed a couple of them that came in bare footed went home with shoes.

Most of the officers were lady officers. They told me how most of these minors were from very bad homes and they would call the lady officers “nanay,” which means “mother.”

The Lord blessed this day as many received Christ during the preaching time and also as workers throughout the day would take aside one of the visitors and show them the Best News a person could ever hear.

Please pray for us as we try to follow up as many of the visitors as we can. By the end of the day most everyone was exhausted but for many it was the best Christmas ever.

Important Prayer Request



Becky and I have a prayer request concerning our daughter, Rachel. She is expecting her second child and is having problems with her heart. When she was three she had a valve replacement that was supposed to last about 10 years. It has lasted 28 years. She has seen several doctors and they are concerned that she may need to have this replaced. She is due June 6. We would appreciate your prayers for her.

In closing, we'd like to thank you for another year of being behind what God is doing in the Philippines.

Sincerely in Christ,
Rick & Becky Martin

Our daughter Rachel, son-in-law Matt, & grandson Landon, are excited about the new baby!

More pictures continued on the next page from the Christmas season at IBC:

