



MALAZO FAMILY

REACHING

SAGADA

MOUNTAIN PROVINCE

“Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.”
 —Psalm 57:1

The current global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 Virus is at the forefront of everyone’s mind nowadays. There is an element of fear and anxiety that is in minds of most people today, but we know that God is still in control. As per current statistics, the Philippines reports 1,418 confirmed cases and 71 deaths. The number of cases is suspected to rise as test kits are becoming more available locally. The Philippines is currently under heavy surveillance as the government tries to control the spread of the virus. Everyone, rich and poor, young and old, is affected in the Philippines. Currently, our immediate area is in a lockdown or what they refer to as an “enhanced community quarantine.” This basically means that we have to observe a curfew (must be at home from 2 pm to 8 am), and only one member of the family is allowed to go out for essential needs such as groceries and emergency medical needs. The borders of our town and our province are barricaded with military personnel standing guard to make sure that no one either exits or enters our town or even our province until the lockdown is repealed by the government. We praise the Lord that some food suppliers are still allowed to enter under very stringent guidelines. The availability of food and groceries in Sagada runs low often even in normal times because of how far we are from the big cities.

Like most churches, we’ve had to adjust to government guidelines concerning mass gatherings. Our normal church attendance far exceeds the maximum number imposed by our local government, so we had to explore creative ideas to minister to our people. Sagada is not as developed technologically as

some other places in the Philippines. We do have access to internet, but it is more often than not slow and unreliable. Services via live stream or other social media platforms are not a viable option for us. What we do have is a community radio station, and we already have a radio ministry through them called “Truth for Today.” Over the last two weeks we have been broadcasting our services through the radio station. Also, last week for the first time we broadcasted a children’s program in place of our Sunday School ministry. Sandra and the kids all participated in it and had a great time! The radio has a wide range reaching other provinces around Mountain Province for which we are thankful and praying that lives even outside of our church are being touched by God’s Word through this particular ministry.

On March 16, 2020, our president declared a lockdown in the entire Luzon area (the largest and most populated area in the Philippines). This meant the imposition of travel restrictions all over the area. In the days immediately following the lockdown, the president ordered the airport closed to all international travel. This left many visitors and tourists scrambling to get out of



Gay-gay

the country by March 20th. This affected our anniversary celebrations that were scheduled for the following week. We were supposed to have many visitors coming from Canada, but they had to make it out of the country before the total lockdown. This obviously was a great disappointment to us and to our visitors as months of preparation had been made, both by us and by them, for the special events. The visitors were family and very close friends, including my parents and Pastor and Mrs. Conner, that have impacted my life and ministry in unspeakable ways. However, we are so thankful to the Lord that all made it safely home to Canada. We felt badly that they had made the investment of time and finances to come only to be turned back. We do not understand completely, but we are confident that God has it all under control.

With so much bad news lately, we can still praise the Lord for His goodness in our lives. We are very thankful for each one of you folks that faithfully pray for and support our family. We are also thankful for the place God has called us to and that He promises never to fail or forsake us. We are especially thankful for what God has allowed us to see over the last few months. We started the year with the theme "By Faith." I have been preaching on the subject of faith over the last few months challenging our people to step out in faith and to live by faith in God.

In our last update, we shared testimonies of people whom God has miraculously saved. We asked for prayer on their behalf to see their loved ones also accept Christ

as Saviour. Thank you for praying! We have seen the Lord answer our prayers. Hilaria's husband, Tyrone, accepted Christ as his Saviour. Hilaria accepted Christ late last year, and she has a great burden for the salvation of her family. Her greatest prayer was answered when her husband finally got saved. Please pray for this young couple. They have been very faithful to church and are eager to grow spiritually and learn the Bible.

A young man, Gaygay (pronounced guy-guy), is the 13-year-old son of Jane. Jane accepted Christ last year and has been praying for her son to receive Christ. Gaygay dropped out of school because of bullying by both teachers and students. He has been in many different schools, but eventually when the bullying starts, he loses interest and eventually drops out. Gaygay's background is really heartbreaking, but his situation is not uncommon. There are many other young people in our community who have dropped out of school for similar reasons. Jane had become very desperate because nothing was helping her son. She had tried countless "remedies" only to be disappointed time and time again. We encouraged her that the only thing that can help change her son in the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ. Over the last few months we prayed alongside her. Thank you for your prayers, because last month Gaygay became God's child. Jane tells us that there's a great change in his overall attitude and character already! Gaygay has been faithful to every single church service and even comes on Saturdays for clean up and preparation of the building for Sunday. I believe that God will use this young man someday. He is infamous in our community as a drop out and trouble-maker. Now when everyone sees him walking through town and they ask him where he is going, he replies, "I'm going in the Baptist!" (English is definitely his second language!) What a testimony for Christ!



If you will recall, a boy named Leshem was saved last November. He was very evidently burdened for his family after his salvation. He was continually trying to get his cousins to come to church and always encouraging his mother to come as well. He mother, Liza, attended faithfully with her sisters for over a year when our church first started. She had raised her hand indicating she knew she was not saved, but never came to speak with us about it. When her sister, who claims to be saved, fell away from church, she stopped coming as well. Some months ago she began coming again with Leshem and their new baby, Hyacinth. In January, Sandra was able to go to her house and take her through the gospel again. Praise God, through tears she accepted Christ!

Leshem wasn't done bringing people to church! Micah and Matthias had the privilege of leading his cousins, Ishan and Jhymwel to Christ. The Sunday morning they arrived at the church Leshem came directly to my wife and said, "Ma'am Sandra, I brought my cousins and they want to get saved right now!" Ishan and Jhymwel had attended with their mothers for that same period Liza had initially attended. The gospel had been taught to them over and over. God used this, and things that had happened in their lives during their time out of church, AND their cousin, Leshem, to draw them to Himself. Micah and Matthias each took one them aside to explain the gospel plan. Both boys were very excited when they accepted Christ and have come faithfully since their salvation. The amazing thing is that these boys are the age that we usually lose boys in this community, but thanks to the burden of their cousin, they are now in God's family and eagerly wanting to learn how to live for Him!

Leshem's prayer, as well as ours, is that his father, Nelson, will also accept Christ as Saviour. We do have a personal relationship with Nelson. Their family owns one of the local grocery stores, and we try to buy most of our groceries from them as an effort to show them our support for their family. When Leshem was a baby, they made some hard financial decisions about quitting jobs and making a life here in Sagada instead of leaving Leshem to be raised by family as they both worked abroad. Our desire is to support them in this hoping especially Nelson will be able to see the hand of God on his life.

A special award for one of our Sunday school children was planned to be presented during our anniversary banquet. Bryan Garcia accepted the Lord and has been very faithful to church. Each Sunday morning, after mounting his little brother on his back, he walks the winding mountain paths to the houses of this friends "en route" to church and picks up other kids to come to Sunday school. All of this takes him about 1.5 hours. He is also coming to the age when boys in this community fall into a life of vices and away from church.

Instead, his desire to grow in his Christian life and to bring others to Sunday school is growing. We ordered a special Bible for him with his name inscribed on it and will present it to him as soon as we are able to reschedule our anniversary celebrations. Bryan knows he will be getting a special award but has no idea what the award is and why he will be receiving it. We are praying along with him that both of his unsaved parents will be able to attend this special event.

We are not sure how long the lockdown will last. So far, the numbers of those infected by the COVID-19 are not going down. In fact, more and more cases are being discovered everyday. The death rate, though still small on average, is increasing daily. Please pray that God will use this pandemic to turn people towards Himself. Please pray for our family to be safe during the lockdown. So far, there are no cases in our area, and hopefully it will remain that way. Thank you once again for your love and support for our family. I know that you are also facing many challenges due to the pandemic. Please know we are praying for your safety as well. May God continue to bless you as you serve Him.

