



# PHILIPPINES

**THE MARTINS**  
Your Missionaries in the Philippines

May-June 2019

Dear Friends:

On March 17<sup>th</sup> we had our annual Fire Fighter's Appreciation service. Over 100 fire fighters from the Bureau of Fire Protection and 40 volunteer fire fighters attended. The two volunteer firefighter groups that attended were recognized as each reached a milestone. The Iloilo City Action Group is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> year and the Federation Fire Brigade is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year of service to the residents of Iloilo City.

The most destructive fire in Iloilo was in 1966 when 20,000 residents lost their homes. This was 9% of the population at that time. A group of Chinese Filipino businessmen decided to start a volunteer fire fighters group to assist the regular fire fighters. Two years later, in 1968, the Federation Fire Brigade was started. Today they have about 15 fire trucks and about 50 firefighters. The head of this group is a member of our church.

Through the years a number of firefighters have received Christ as Savior. One of these is Rolin Hermina. In 2006 a fire broke out on our property and destroyed one of our dorms and four of our staff houses. That night we were sure it was going to destroy our church and house also because they were close to the others. Rolin was one of the firefighters that night. He broke his arm in two places fighting the fire. The chief ordered him to come down. He did—but then he ran down the street where the fire was headed and kept on fight the fire until it was put out. That night 23 houses and buildings burned down, but thankfully, our church and house was spared.



On Family Day these two firefighters received Christ as Savior



This man's father died in another fire in early March. He came to IBC the following Sunday and received the Lord into his heart.

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The day after the fire nothing was left



On Firefighter Appreciation Day these 3 firefighters accepted Christ as Savior



Honoring the firefighters of Iloilo

Three weeks later on a Sunday night, we honored Rolin for his courage. That night he received Christ as his Savior.

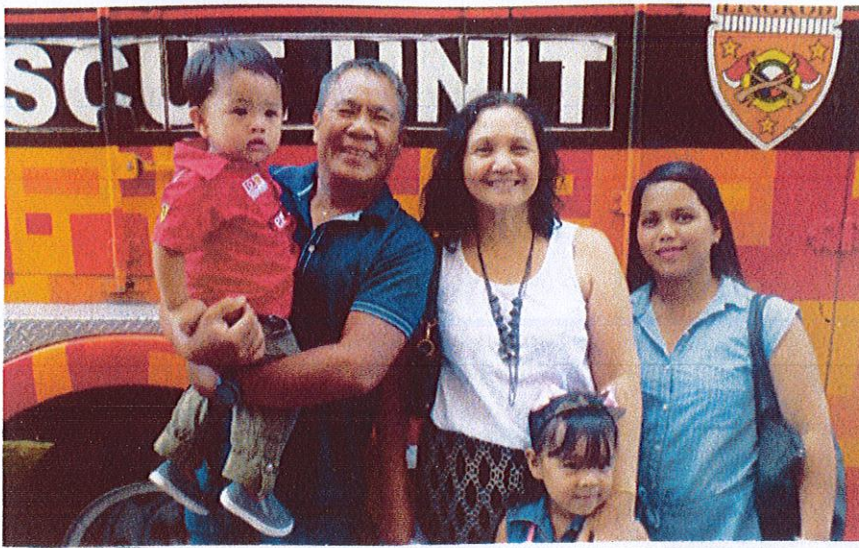
On January 15, 1019, a fire broke out in his own neighborhood. The fire started about 9:0 pm. He was home, off duty. Instead of taking his valuables out of his house, he rushed to the fire and started making sure everyone was out of their houses. His house, as well as his father's house right next to his, burned to the ground, along with all his worldly possessions.

The next day, Wednesday, most of those fire victims came to our church. They arrived before the service and we gave them different items like a rice pot, frying pan, a blanket, and a large water container. Some of the fire victims told me that they lived near Rolin's house and they were able to save some of their possessions because he selflessly left his own home to run and warn people in time and in the process was not able to save any of his possessions. During Fire Fighters Appreciation Night we were able to honor Rolin for the second time.

He told me that one of the items lost in the fire was the award we gave him back in 2006. On Fire Firefighters Appreciation Night we presented him with a replica of the award.

The news said a telephone cable was used for an electrical installation. It melted because it couldn't handle the electric current that passed through it. They said it took over three hours to put it out. Firemen had a hard time reaching the scene because of the very narrow road. It was in a densely populated area so it could have been much worse. Thankfully no one was killed although four were injured. The people stayed in classrooms at Iloilo City National High School, the rest with friends and relatives. The Department of Social Welfare & Development (DSWD) always calls our church because they know we'll donate to fire victims. They tell us what they're giving the victims and then suggest what we can give. The DSWD gave towels,

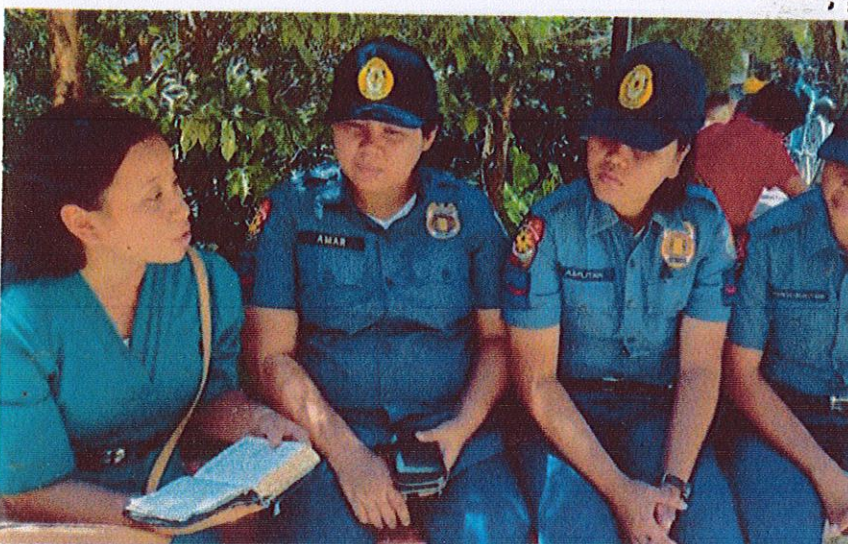




The Firefighter Reserve Unit brought their vehicle on Family Day which we used as a prop for picture taking



Getting items ready for fire victims



Eljane Satunero, daughter of our missionaries in Uganda, is in Bible College here. She led these police officers to Christ on Family Day.

toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, sleeping mats, 50 bags of rice, some canned goods, and bottled water.

It's so sad to see these dirt-poor families, who already have next to nothing, lose everything. Some of our staff went to the site and also the school where the victims were staying and invited them to church Wednesday night. 58 of them came. We had a meal for them and gave each family a large water container, a pot for cooking rice, a skillet, and a blanket. Many of the fire victims received Jesus Christ as their Savior when they came!

#### FAMILY DAY

For many years, Iloilo Baptist Church has held a special day yearly to invite families from around Iloilo. It is a blessing to see people who would normally not visit a church like IBC come. There were more families that visited this year than any other year and many responded to the preaching of the Gospel.

For nine years Pastor Gerald McKelroy and his wife have come for this special day. His messages are always such a blessing.

We follow up on these families who visit for at least 12 weeks. Today, many of the members of IBC remember that their first visit to IBC was on Family Day.

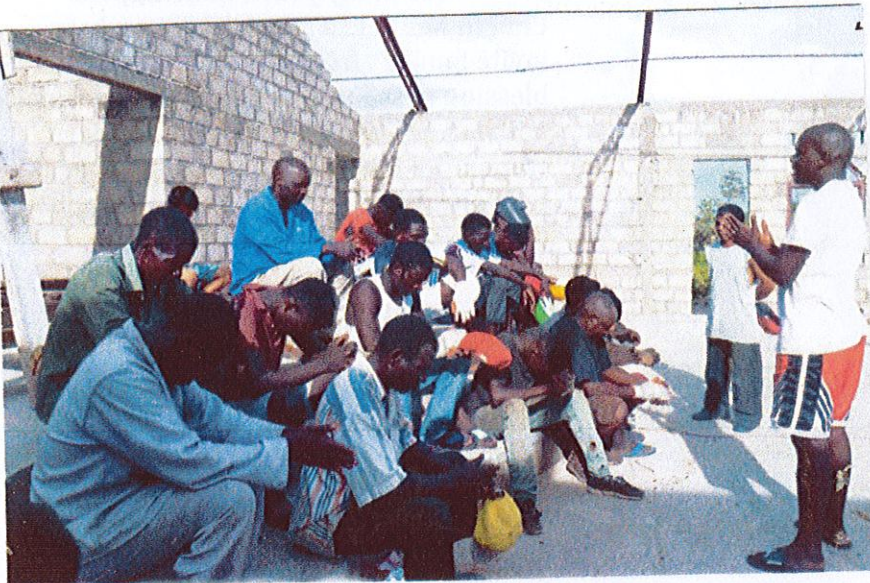
We are always looking for open doors in reaching people on Family Day. We reached out to the "Sangguniang Kabataan" or "S.K." for short, a youth council representing the youth in each barangay (or neighborhood). This government program encourages youth to get involved in community affairs. There is an elected leader from each of the 186 barangays in our city. We asked them if they would encourage the youth in their neighborhoods to bring their families for Family Day that Sunday. 27 SK's came and brought 21 families.

Another group is the Senior Citizens—There are 6 districts in our city





Church of Missionary Eduard Calibayan in Zambia



Those who work on the building take some time to pray

and our District of Jaro is the largest. This is another government program similar to the youth. Each neighborhood has a "Senior Citizens President." 380 Senior Citizens came and we're not really sure how many families they brought.

Also, there is the Department of Social Welfare Development. They work with poor and needy families and they invited many. One branch of the DSWD is the "Persons With Disabilities" which often come to our church services as a group, as they did that Sunday.

Another group under the DSWD is the "Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program," a conditional cash transfer program of the government that aims to eradicate extreme poverty by investing in health/education for kids. They are given school allowance and dietary supplement but the parents must go to monthly meetings. Many of our pastors and men on our staff are asked to preach at these monthly meetings, which is another open door. Many from this also came Sunday.

The last group is our police and firefighters - 26 of them came. There are many more special groups but this is just to give an idea. Our hard working staff in recent years started inviting these special groups (mostly government groups) to our church. They have them come to the front of the church and honor them and give them a plaque of appreciation for their service.

They also brought a fire truck, which we used as a background for the picture taking of the families. They sent the Special Reserve Unit and three of these men received Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Becky and I do not take lightly the sacrifice of churches and individuals who support the ministry here in the Philippines. We are grateful for that and for your prayers.

God bless,

*Rah Martin*



Their building is almost finished