



# DAVE & MARGIE STAFFORD

SERVING IN THE PHILIPPINES



AUGUST 2022

The next few newsletters will be about playing catch up on all that happened during my Easter trip back to Mindanao.

I feel that it's important to keep providing everything we can for the whole person, spirit, soul, and body. And lots of the practical provision is about supporting body and soul and attempting to nourish and encourage the spirit man within, that part of us created to image Yahweh God, the born-again part of us that knows how to commune and "walk" with God, in other words to practice the presence of God as Brother Lawrence wrote about in the classic book of the same name.

One way to nourish the spirit of a person is by the preaching of the Word of God, knowing that faith comes by hearing the [encouraging, strengthening, enlightening] Word of God, both in spoken form and by His person (Jesus the Christ). At Consuelo Community Church I had plenty of opportunities to preach and share God's life-changing word. At the open invitation of Pastor Richard Labor, I am able to speak as much or as little as I wish to. Easter Sunday was my "baptism of heat", stepping off the plane in Mindanao on Saturday and up at the crack of sparrows Easter Day to travel north up the coastal strip from Gingoog City, through Kimaya to Barangay Consuelo, a journey of about 35 minutes when taken by "speed king" Pastor Sherwood Bendoy! (I didn't pick my car rental up until the Monday). It was hot, very hot, with the church building overflowing with about 120 people. The ceiling fans seemed to be totally ineffective in the stifling heat. The message was all about the why and who of the Resurrection and the need to be found in Christ, the proclamation that "today" is the day of salvation (the good news had come and given His life for us!)

The service ran nearly four hours, the last hour being centered around the call to salvation, the return of those who had strayed away from Jesus, the laying on of hands for the healing of the sick, the in-filling of the Holy Spirit and as the Lord would have it the casting out of demonic activity. Can I say with sincerity, the Lord showed up and showed off! I think 14 people came forward to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior of their life, blessed be His Name! More came forward to acknowledge their Christian life wasn't as close as they would want it to be. In the end a wave of people came forward and filled the front space in the church wanting a touch from Yahweh, and He didn't disappoint anybody. I'm very aware that people are responding to the Lord, falling out to the floor under the influence of the spirit and nobody catching but me! Aware of further responsive behavior like laughing and crying, of other vocalization and sad to say a river of moisture dripping from me onto those I'm praying for and laying hands on. I have a hand towel to dry my face as much as I can but the creating of my personal rain forest wins the day! Just being real with you all, it's humbling really. For the most part the Lord sees fit to have me pronounce words of life over those I pray for, not all, but almost all. Sometimes other none-Godly spirits rise up and may necessitate more prayer and more encouragement to leave the affected soul. But you know God wins every time is my experience.



Ladies at Consuelo CC about to sing



Let us Pray



Mountain area children praising God



New shoes... Yes please!



Richard, Coco, and Susan



Pastor Richard with one box of the NTs



Pastor Richard and son Coco

At the end of this “typical” morning time of worship, I am soaking wet, drained and fit for nothing other than putting on a dry shirt and in need a cold shower. (Hot water is resigned to the hotel in Manila, haha) What I’ve described is very much the norm at Consuelo Community church gatherings, be it youth meetings, Pastors meetings or other leadership gatherings. Pastor Richard is a man of the Spirit and the Word, and his desire is to see free moving of the Holy Spirit at every opportunity. Richard would have me with him almost every day if I could accommodate that schedule. He loves the flock under his care and his heart is very much towards reaching the neighboring barangays and tribal families further into the more mountainous areas just beyond the coastal plane. He has galvanized his youth under the banner Christ’s Ambassadors and armed with the word and Spirit of God, backpacks supplied by our ministry and supplies they regularly go into these areas and share the practical love of God and the need to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. I’ve included some photos of Richard’s outreaches into the tribal families in the mountains close to the coastal strip.

The second way to nourish people’s spirits is by giving them the Word of God in their own heart language, which for our ministry is Cebuano /Bisayan/ Visayan. (All the same dialect but called different things depending on where you are) During this trip some Pastors and I drove to Cagayan De Oro to purchase some New Testaments and bibles in Cebuano. Pastor Richard is forever needing copies of the New Testament in Bisayan (Cebuano). The drive over the mountains takes around 2 and half hours and for us it was a morning of heavy rain and thick dense clouds until we began the decent at Claveria and crossed down towards the coast again at Villanueva and then into CDO City itself.

I want to say a big thank you to Pastor Ron Rice, who’s generosity enabled us to buy 140 New Testaments in Cebuano. We also purchased some bibles at the Philippine Christian Book Store in the Gaisano Central Mall. It was an experience for sure. Because of the poor weather coming over, we decided to take the coastal road back to Gingoog City which takes around 3 hours. Bless God for my hire car! Imagine what the journey’s must be like on public transport options!

As I write this August newsletter, all 140 NTs have already been distributed in the name of Jesus and I’m being asked for more! It’s a great position to be in being asked to supply more of the word of God! (If anybody would like to help us buy some more, please send your donation to Globe International and mark the donation for my ministry and let me know you wish to help us buy more) Pastor Labor is working hard to get as much of God’s word into the lives of these children and families that otherwise may never seen a bible or New Testament in their own language.

Thank you all for your continued support, because through you we are ministering God’s message of salvation and love to the whole person. On every level, prayerfully, financially emotionally, you are the engine room for our reaching out to a people in need on Mindanao.

Live Loved and remember, that with Jesus You’ll Never Walk Alone! - Dave & Margie Stafford

#YNWA



Richard joins boys playing basketball to show them that Christians can participate but with a different spirit



Richard distributing Cebuano NTs with Christ’s Ambassadors in the mountains



Richard’s twins Irah and Irish receive your gift of new shoes



Start of Easter morning service Consuelo Community Church



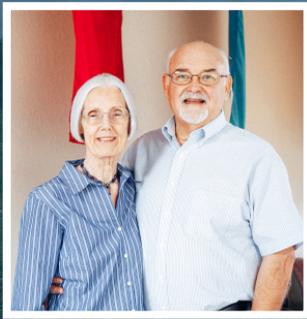
Time for the men of CCC to sing



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# DAVE & MARGIE STAFFORD

## A PERSONAL UPDATE

Well hello everybody, I felt it was time to give you an update on Margie's health situation and my own ongoing situation.

As most of you know Margie was diagnosed in May 2020 with dementia on the Alzheimer's scale. The diagnosis was classed as mild-moderate. Since that diagnosis, Margie has been on medication to help slow down the advances of the mental decay. The good news is that, for the most part, it's her short-term memory that is the most affected symptom. The sad news is that it is growing worse. I do attend a support group when I am able, and Margie is not aware that I attend. She is still very sensitive to any public talk of her ailment, which I understand, and I try my best not to discuss it with others in Margie's company. Margie has grown more comfortable speaking with me about it and it seems that there's been a slow, but growing, awareness within herself of her condition.

As I have just said, thankfully the worsening of her symptoms are currently restricted to her memory loss. She hasn't left the flat to wonder off on her own or left cooker rings on or more dangerous stuff like that. And that being said, she can still be left unattended without danger, enabling me to continue to go to work at the swimming pool company, and in the case of last April, allowing me to go to the Philippines. Getting out to work not only keeps me sane but helps pay the bills. She has a set morning routine which takes her through to around noon time. She is still very coordinated in her dressing and tidy appearance and is keeping good personal hygiene. As you know she hasn't driven for many years, so that's not an issue. We pray for her sake and mine, that it doesn't grow much worse much sooner.

She has a good appetite for an 81-year-old which includes chocolate covered ice cream on a stick! Margie is not on many prescription medications, and she takes additional supplements to support her overall health. She loves going to our local church, Charity Chapel, both on Sunday and the midweek bible study on Wednesday. She enjoys fellowshiping with others, just so long as she is with me. The exceptions being those close friends who visit her and take her out for a coffee, she is very comfortable being with those dear friends and not need me in attendance, Bless the Lord.

Margie has been diagnosed with cataracts in both eyes, and by the time you receive this update, she is likely to be recovering from cataract surgery of her right eye. The ophthalmologist told me that many dementia patients see a general uptick in overall health after the ability to see clearer is restored. I think this will be more so for Margie who is a keen reader of God's word but is struggling with her eyesight. We are looking forward to Margie's recovery.

On a practical note, our Pastor had been encouraging us to get all our affairs in order since my health situation in 2021, coupled with Margie's symptoms. Even the eye doctor asked about it, saying that the sooner the better because if she were to deteriorate then it gets more complicated and expensive to sort out "guardianship" So we have just made out a will based on Florida law (which is very stringent) and two US based, trusted friends have agreed to act as executors of whatever would be left should the Lord decide to call us home. (Thanks Pastor Sean and Susan!) So, we attempt to do as the Apostle Paul encourages us to do "keep, keeping on" None of the Doctors can say how slow or rapid the decline is likely be and so we take it a day at a time.

In respect of my own health, my tongue and my bottom lip continue to give me no end of pain. This seems to be a legacy issue left over from my dying bowel problem which nearly took my life last April. Although we don't know for sure what is causing it or indeed what the root cause is. For sure I know it's not God trying to get my attention, even though He does stuff to get my attention!

I've laid hands on myself, asked for prayer for healing both locally and during my time on Mindanao. Visited many of the varying disciplines of local healthcare, dentist, oral surgeon, 2 ENT's dermatologist, neurologist with currently no effective solution. It looks like I may have to go further afield to the sub-specialists who practice oral medicine at the two nearest university hospitals in Gainesville, Florida and Birmingham, Alabama. Both of which are around a 5-hour drive from Pensacola. But still, I'm in pain and it gets worse when I eat or drink anything!  
But God!

Thanks for reading, thanks for being family to us, thanks for your continued prayers and support. We are rich in blessings because of you.

Live Loved and #YNWA - *Dave & Margie Stafford*



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