

# Paul & Ellen Byars

*Missionaries to the Philippines*

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Jan – Mar 2020

Dear Pastor and Church,

The Philippines has a motto they use for tourism. It is called "It's More Fun In The Philippines". This first quarter of 2020 certainly qualifies for that expression!

We have had a volcano eruption, a couple of strong earthquakes, a so called pandemic, nationwide lockdown and quarantine, roadblocks, rationing, and many other lessening of freedoms. But through it all God has been gracious and faithful.

In January we were scheduled to conduct the annual Missionary Training Seminar for the Asian Baptist clearinghouse. We had over 89 families scheduled to be with us for the missionary training. Our venue was in the mountains, within sight of the volcano. After its eruption, our venue site had to be closed. We begin to look for an emergency site in Manila so the training could continue as scheduled. We move the training to Bethany Baptist Church in Manila and with a little inconvenience,



here and there, we were able to conduct the training for all of the missionary families. There were 20 new families added to the service center of the Clearinghouse this year. That brings a total of 201 missionary families serving in 46 countries around the world. It is an honor to service them monthly with their support and logistical needs. What a blessing it is to see these men step out in faith and go where God is called them to go. One of the new missionaries is a lady from our church, Josephine Pueblo. She surrendered for Uganda and is now on deputation. God has given us four families from BBCTanza for the foreign field.

In February we were in the southern region called Bicol for the 4th Anniversary of the mission. It was a blessing to see 125 people attending and 12 souls being saved.

By this time we were watching the situation growing in China and began making preparations here at the house and church for a possible infection in the islands here. By the time the situation became more severe in the Philippines we were already prepared for whatever might happen with food and water in storage for 2 to 3 months. Some thought we were a little overreacting, but we are now glad we did. We have been able to help many of the people in the church who are less fortunate and in the depressed areas around us where we minister to the children. It is heartbreaking to see so many people suffer during times like this.

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Many ministry events; like youth camp, DVBS, our Mid-year mission conference, feeding center have been cancelled due to the threat of the virus. Even though there was much uncertainty in the air, we were able to join with the MANNA Worldwide Global Impact and promote missions in Manila and Cebu. Also we are thankful for Victory Baptist Church, Paris, Texas, Pastor Curtis Blake, which pushed through with the situation in the Philippines for a mission trip. They were a great blessing to our church.

The month of March is our anniversary month and we were wondering what would happen during this time. To God's glory we were able to have our anniversary as scheduled. Thanks to DJ Harris, Victory Baptist for preaching. It was a blessing to be in the new auditorium. God blessed with over 850 in attendance with several professions of faith.



After the anniversary, Manila started shutting down. Our church activities shifted to concentrate on the needs of our people and the community around us. Our city has been effectively locked down. Quarantine Passes have been issued to each household and people are only allowed to come out during certain times to get food. Thankfully our staff have been able to move around under the guidelines of humanitarian efforts.

It has certainly been a challenging time. Our theme for 2020 was 'Focus On The Word'. We made a challenge for everyone to read through the Bible in 2020 and memorize scripture. The Lord certainly has given us plenty of time at home to do that. We thank the Lord for those that have not been attending are now anxious to listen to God's Word online streaming. We don't know what lies ahead or how long this situation will last, but we do know that no matter what, the message of salvation will go forth. Thank you for your prayers and continued support. I am sure it is not easy in your location, as things ramp up in America. We are praying for you. Please let us know your prayer request so we can pray for you.

Sincerely yours,

Paul and Ellen Byars