

WHATMAG

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ONE VOICE magazine.™

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THE NATION'S DESTINY**
with Bishop Dan Balais

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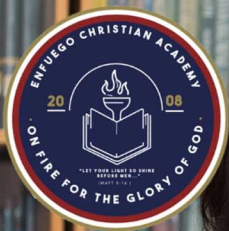
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trust

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understand-
ing; in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.

[Proverbs 3:5-6]

ONE VOICE magazine



Editor's NOTE

DO WE KNOW OUR OWN VOICE?

Dear Readers,

How passionate are we to see the whole of the Philippines encounter God in a REAL way? If we want to see this happen, we need to cultivate a love for this nation. Loving the nation first starts with loving Jesus. It means loving all of Him — including His desires and dreams for the Philippines.

Since loving the nation goes against convenience and does not come naturally, we must seek God, who is LOVE, and ask for His heart to overwhelm our own.

“For God so loved the world...,” the Bible says in John 3:16. This should challenge our capacity for love. Are we willing to have God's heart for the nations? How about His love for our very own nation?

Loving Mindanao

The Philippines is a beautiful land, with Mindanao being a region of unparalleled beauty. Towering trees in the countryside, lush vegetation, peaceful lakes, powerful waterfalls, precious rocks—Mindanao is breathtaking! But Mindanao knows death. It knows battle and blood. It knows poverty—an ironic thing since many of our indigenous people, our root people, are very poor; many not even finishing high school.

The spiritual battle over Mindanao has been relentless, manifesting in a history of violence in certain areas. This should make us wonder: Why Mindanao? Why has it been a hotbed for terrorism and *rido* (clan wars)? Why are there so many prophecies regarding Mindanao? What does this mean for us?

An Empowered People

When we look at the powerful nations of the world, one characteristic that distinguishes them is that their citizens know the identity of their own nation. They know their sound. Their own voice. Their own culture. Their own roots. And I believe that the Philippines can be strengthened when she knows her own sound, her own culture, her own roots. When our people take pride in our roots instead of feeling shame regarding who we are, then we move one step closer to the restoration of our identity.

Through the ages, we have been stolen from, abused by colonizers, and given over to corruption. It is time we walk in God's identity for us and the precious names He has given our nation. What names have we been called? Pearl of the Orient Seas (a precious nation of worth); *Islas Filipinas* or the Philippine Islands or the Philippines (with purpose not just linked to King Philip of Spain, but also to Philip the evangelist); *Las Islas de San Lázaro* (named after Lazarus of Bethany and a picture that we can come back to life); pre-Hispanic *Maharlika* (freedmen); and *Lupang Hinirang* (chosen land).

I find myself gravitating to *Las Islas de San Lázaro*. I gravitate to it because it tells me that we can have a resurrection from our decaying ways. But do we hear our Master's voice? Jesus calls out to our islands, “Lazarus, come forth!” May the Philippines shake off her graveclothes and respond to the voice of her Savior!

Our Filipino Voice

Who are we as people? Do we know what “Filipino” is? Who the Filipino is? Do we know the Filipino voice? The Filipino sound of worship? Who best represents our culture? Our sound?

Unfortunately, our tribespeople”—the gatekeepers of our heritage and culture, many of them residing in the mountains of Mindanao”—see themselves as inferior to city dwellers. They look at their flat noses and dark skin and say they are ugly compared to what they see celebrated in media: fair skin, straight teeth, sharp noses. They slink in shame when it comes to education because only a few of them have a college degree. They see their languages as inferior because everyone else speaks English or Tagalog or Bisaya and not their tribal language. Furthermore, many of them feel abandoned by the Church in general because no one really visits them in the mountains. Some tribes live far away from the city, some in terrorist areas. Yes, who would visit them when the risk is great?

If we truly care for the Philippines, we have to care for our voice, our sound, our language, and our identity. Each tribe in the Philippines carries within themselves an aspect of Filipino heritage. Each tribe matters to the Lord. In fact, when the sound of worship echoes in heaven, there is the sound of every tribe, tongue and nation present:

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice. “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” - Rev. 7:9-10

Heaven’s worship includes the sound of every tribe and every nation”—a sound that recognizes salvation belonging to the Lamb. This includes the worship of the Obo Monuvu, the Matigsalug, and the Blaán; the sound of those in Manila, Batangas, the Ilocos, Palawan, and Leyte; the sounds of the different but ONE Filipino.

Strengthening the Filipino

In this magazine issue—“Gising Na, Pilipinas!”—it is our desire to join our Father in calling the Philippines to her destiny. We join Him in summoning Lazarus to rip away the graveclothes and to walk into strength and a renewed hope.

May this magazine speak to you of our nation’s identity and calling. May we never give up hope for our nation! Let us speak like and love to the Philippines, uplift our people, and work to see this nation reach its fullest destiny; its fullest potential.

Join me in saying, “Gising na, Pilipinas!”

One with you in this journey of life,



Jamina Marie Rivera
Editor-in-Chief
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**2024 Editorial Calendar Print Issues,
Website, Broadcasts, Outreaches**

Jan-June: Gising Na, Pilipinas!

July-December: Jesus Among the Marginalized

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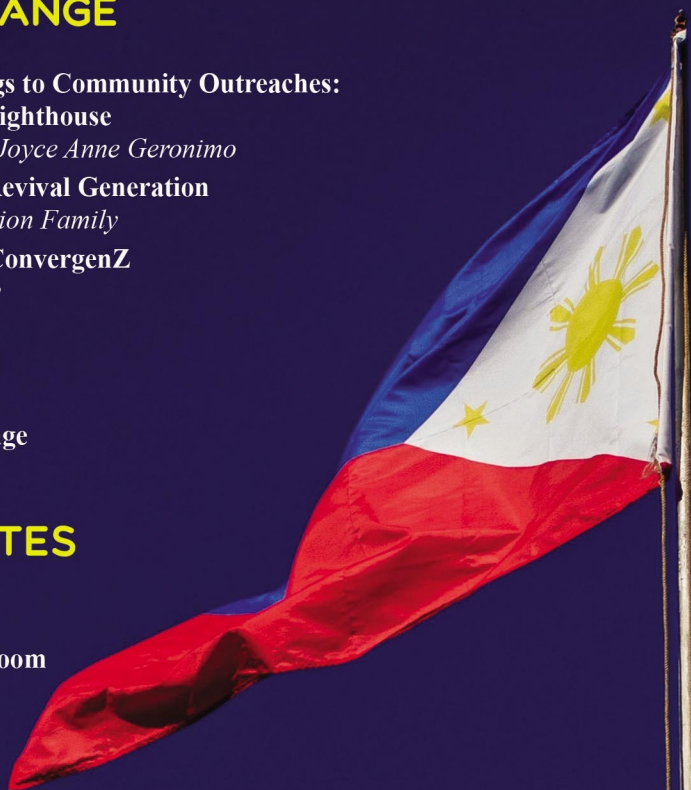
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Liwanag ng Silangan

>>> Isinulat ni Grace Roscia Estuesta

Humuni ang hindi nagpasiil na salinlahi
At ng bayang pilit na ikinukubli.
Umalingawngaw ang tadhanang hinirang
"Bayang magiliw, Perlas ng Silanganan."

Dinig mo ba ang boses ng mga isla
Ang pag-awit ng isang ina sa supling niyang duguan?
Dinig mo pa ba ang boses ng mga isla
Ang lupang saksi sa ibinigay Niyang kapalaran?

Binusalan ba ang umaawit na bayan
Ng hirap at pasakit nang nananamantalang kalaban?
Ha! Dinig mo ba ang huni ng saradong bibig?
Handa nang sumigaw, nag-aalab sa pagkadalisan at pag-ibig!

Nagbukas ang tarangkahan nitong bayan
Sa mga bansa ay naging kanlungan.
Walang isang buhay ang malilimutan
Ng nakakakitang Diyos, Diyos na tapat magpakailanman!

Hindi pa Siya tapos;
Patuloy Niyang sisindakin ang mga mapanggapos.
Maririnig ang boses ng Pilipinas sa mga bayan
Hanggang sa mangyari ang Salita ng Diyos sa sangkatauhan.

Kasama ang boses ng ibang bayan,
Magiging kanlungan ng awit itong ating bayan.
Handa, awit: "Maranatha!"
Hesus, Ikaw ang Panginoon. Babalik Ka!"

Puso Para Sa TRIBU

>>> Isinulat ni Glendell Mae Tupido

Kaya't humayo kayo, gawin ninyong alagad ko ang mga tao sa lahat ng mga bansa. Bautismuhan ninyo sila sa pangalan ng Ama, at ng Anak, at ng Espiritu Santo. Turuan ninyo silang sumunod sa lahat ng iniutos ko sa inyo. Tandaan ninyo, ako'y laging kasama ninyo hanggang sa katapusan ng panahon.” -Mateo 28:19-20

Bago pa man umakyat pabalik sa langit ang Panginoong Hesu Kristo, iniwan N'ya ang habilin na ito sa kaniyang mga alagad. Makikita rito ang puso ni Hesus para sa mga tao at sa susunod pang henerasyon.

Kapansin-pansin na hindi lamang nais ng Panginoon na maipalaganap ang kaniyang salita sa mga Hudyo kundi sa mundo—bagay na ginagawa na rin ng maraming lingkod ng Panginoon sa panahon natin ngayon. Kung susumahin, napakalawak ng “bansa” upang abutin. Marami pang lipunan at pamumuhay ang hindi nakikita ng ating mga mata. May mga sambayanan pang hindi naaabot ng ating mga tulong at isa na rito ang tinatawag nating mga “tribu,” at ang karamihan sa kanila ay naninirahan sa Mindanao.



Sa unang dinig, tila ba'y may kahirapan ang pag-abot sa kanila. Bukod sa layo sa siyudad at sa ating kinagisnan, kinakailangan din ng sapat ng pondo upang hindi lang ito masimulan kundi maipagpatuloy ang mga gawain.

Tuna'y ngang may mga taong tinawag upang biyayaan ng natatanging puso para sa mga tribu. Isa na rito si Pastor Gustavoz Benjamin Menorca Pabellon ng Christ Commission Community Church o mas kilala sa tawag na C4 na matatagpuan South Cotabato. Sa paglalarawan ni Pastor Pabellon, ang kanilang munting lugar panambahan ay simple lamang ngunit may natatanging puso para sa mga tribo ng Mindanao.

Simula pa lamang ay malinaw na kay Pastor Pabellon at sa buong C4 ang kanilang tunguhin bilang simbahan, at ayun nga ay ang magtanim ng mga simbahan, lalo na sa mga tribu ng Mindanao.

Lumaki si Pastor Pabellon na lubos na nauunawaan ang kaniyang misyon. Sa katunayan, ang kaniyang mga magulang din ay tinawag para sa *church planting*. Anim na taong gulang pa lamang siya nang mapukaw ang kaniyang puso sa gawaing ito. Aniya, nagkaroon ng kabigatan sa kaniyang puso matapos s'yang makapanuod ng isang lumang pelikula na kung saan pinatay ang limang misyonaryo dahil sa pagpapalaganap ng Salita ng Panginoon.

Tulad ng ibang gawain para sa Panginoon, nakaranas din ng samu't-saring pagsubok si Pastor Pabellon. Una na rito ang kakulangan ng mga pastor na nakatuon sa gawain. Isang naging solusyon dito ay ang paghahanap ng pastor mula mismo sa mga tribu, ngunit naging mahirap naman ang proseso ng pagtuturo dahil karamihan sa kanila ay limitado ang kaalaman sa pagbabasa at pagsusulat.



"This is the last days. They have the option to serve the Lord with commitment or they can choose to be on the ground or be fooled by the world...maybe choose Jesus and be available to be used by the Lord in this end time...be available."

"Mas madali sa kanilang ipaliwanag ang pagmamahal ng Diyos."

Isa sa mga napatunayan ni Pastor Pabellon sa gawaing ito ay ang pagka-uhaw ng mga tribu sa Salita ng Panginoon. Dahil na rin sa bihira lamang silang mabisita at makarinig ng ibang balita, nagbibigay sila ng natatanging atensyon at intension upang matuto mula sa mga taong naglalaan ng oras sa kanila. Dagdag pa ni Pastor, mayroon silang paggalang sa katagang "Pastor." Ito na marahil ang isa sa mga nagbibigay lakas sa kaniya upang ipagpatuloy ang ministeryong ito.



Batid ni Pastor Pabellon na hindi magkakaroon ng agarang bunga ang gawaing ito. Wala mang nahahawakan o nakikitang bunga sa ngayon, ang pagtanggap at pagmamahal ng mga taong ito ang nagpapatunay ng pagmamahal ng Panginoon para sa lahat. Naniniwala si Pastor Pabellon na ang pagbabago hindi lang ng mga tiga-siyudad, pati na rin ang mga lipunang nasa liblib na lugar ay magsisimula sa pagre-representa natin bilang iisang katawan ni Kristo. Ang ating unti-unti ngunit iisang galaw, ay magdadala ng pagkamulat sa atin at sa maraming tao na hindi pa nakakikilala pa sa Panginoon. Kahit na kabilang sa iba't-ibang pangkat, ang bawat isa sa atin ay may kani-kaniyang gampanin na kung pagsasamahin ay magpapakita ng iisang kilos ng Panginoon.

Sa kasalukuyan, mayroon ng kabuuang 24 panambahan ang naitanim ng C4. 90 porsyento nito ay binubuo ng mga kababayan nating Tboli at Obo Monuvu.

Patuloy pa ring nagpapahinang ng karunungan si Pastor Pabellon sa pamamagitan ng pagdalo ng iba't-ibang pagsasanay sa pagdidisipulo. Naniniwala si Pastor Pabellon na malaki ang gagampanan ng mga kabataan sa gawain ng Panginoon na magsisimula sa kani-kanilang pamilya at paaralan.



"This is the last days. They have the option to serve the Lord with commitment or they can choose to be on the ground or be fooled by the world...maybe choose Jesus and be available to be used by the Lord in this end time...be available."

Ito ang panawagan ni Pastor Pabellon sa mga kabataan. Nawa'y magamit natin ang ating oras upang lubusang magamit ng Panginoon. Dagdag pa n'ya, isa sa kaniyang pangarap ay masaksihan ang Mindanao na nagpapasinaya ng kamalayan at pagkakakilala sa Panginoon. Darating ang araw na ang Mindanao ay makikilala bilang isang bayang sumasamba kay Kristo.



Natagpuan ni Glendell ang kaniyang unang pag-ibig sa pagsusulat ng mga istoryang nagbibigay inspirasyon. Sa ngayon, siya'y may adhikaing maipakilala sa Kristo sa mga kabataan sa pamamagitan ng small / life group.

Saying **YES** to Go!!!



>>> Written by Aldrin Mallia

My heart for missions began in April 2015. I got connected to Jesus' Flock Gateway Church, a church in Cubao, and joined their mission trip to Chiang Mai, Thailand. Back then, I knew little about missions. Although I heard a lot of stories about mission trips from my churchmates in True Faith in Christ Ministries, my home church based in Noveleta, Cavite, I still didn't have a clear picture in my head.

First Exposure Trip

The 13-day mission exposure trip to Thailand gave me a glimpse of our Heavenly Father's ability to fulfill His promises. Despite lacking sufficient funds for the trip, I had faith that the Lord was at work. I followed Jesus' Flock Church's suggestion to raise personal funds through support letters sent to friends, relatives, and churchmates. Surprisingly, I received almost double the amount needed-- truly a testament of the Father's goodness.

During our visit to different villages in Chiang Mai, I learned about the challenges faced by Christian leaders in spreading the gospel to a predominantly Buddhist country like Thailand. There was a lack of knowledge and understanding about Jesus and His teachings. As we hosted a youth fellowship there, I felt a deep connection to the people and realized God had planted something in my heart.

As the plane prepared for departure, tears flowed down my face as I prayed to God, desiring to return to Chiang Mai the following year. Sadly, circumstances prevented me from doing so, causing my passion and desire for mission work to wane over time.

The Pandemic Hits

In 2020, I was excitedly preparing to resign from work and pursue job opportunities in Thailand. However, my plans were interrupted by the COVID-19 lockdown. While walking home one day during the lockdown, I felt a familiar gust of wind that reminded me of my time in Chiang Mai.

It felt like a sign from God, so I paused and looked up at the sky, wondering if He was calling me back to Thailand and if this was His timing.

This encounter reignited my desire to go on another mission trip, but there were challenges. The world was in the midst of a pandemic, and Thailand's borders were closed. Despite these obstacles, I continued working while seeking God's wisdom and leading.

Towards the end of 2020, I received confirmation from the Lord to resign from a job I held for eight years, despite the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic. I believed that once I resigned, everything would fall into place according to my plans. However, just as I was ready to return to Thailand, the second wave of COVID-19 hit, and Thailand's borders closed once again.

Doubts started to creep in, and I questioned why God would allow these obstacles if He truly wanted me to go. It dawned on me that my readiness lacked something. While I knew I was called to return to Thailand, I neglected to seek permission and blessings from my family and the leaders of our church. I had been so focused on my own desires that I forgot to include them in the process.

As I navigated this, I understood the importance of involving my loved ones in major life decisions. I learned that God's timing and the journey towards fulfilling our call may not align perfectly with our own plans. It requires patience, trust, the seeking of guidance from both God and the people around us, and honoring the authorities He has placed in our lives.





photo from compassionatehope.org

After realizing the importance of involving my loved ones in my decisions, I shared my vision with my mentors at church and asked for their prayers. I knew explaining this decision to my mother would be difficult, but I prayed for God's help. Eventually, my mentors and my mother, despite their initial reservations, gave me their blessing to go.

God Answers Prayers

Even though I had made up my mind, there was no definite job opportunity waiting for me in Thailand. Then, unexpectedly, a teammate from my first mission trip to Chiang Mai reached out to me. He and his family expressed their desire to return for a long mission trip and invited me to join them. This opportunity excited me, but I faced a dilemma-- I wanted to teach in Thailand while also engaging in mission work, not the other way around. Once again, I turned to God for guidance. Should I go with my teammate and their family, or wait for another opportunity to align with teaching as the focus?

In February 2022, after seven years of praying, God answered my prayers. My church mentor connected me to a Filipino teacher in Thailand who was looking for volunteer English teachers for Thai elementary students. There was a leap in my spirit and without hesitation, I said "yes." Shortly, I began to process necessary documents and requirements for my visa application. There were hurdles, but God provided everything that I needed.

A Teacher and a Missionary

On June 30, 2022, I embarked on my journey to Thailand. I carried with me the prayers and support of my family, church community, friends, and the hopeful anticipation that God would do amazing things during my time there. I am currently teaching in Phayao, a village nestled in the northernmost part of Thailand. The school, situated in the Village of Hope, is surrounded by breathtaking mountains, rubber trees, and farmland. It serves as a safe haven for the children of the community, providing them with education, facilities, and support.

Village of Hope is a vast compound that includes a church, school, retail store, multiple playgrounds, and dormitories for the students. It was specifically chosen by the Lord to care for children who have been abandoned, sold, or who come from other challenging backgrounds. Some of them have parents involved in drug-related issues, while others come from poverty. Many of the children have never had the chance to know their parents and have been separated from them due to their parents' imprisonment.



Mission of Hope

I feel a deep burden in my heart to pray for these children and their nation, and to assist them in any way I can, even through simple gestures of kindness. The Compassionate Hope Foundation (CHF), founded by Papa Al and Mommy Susan, rescues these children and brings them to the Village of Hope.

Pastor Pratuan Somboon and his wife, Mae Gik, along with the support of the CHF and other organizations, lead the entire village. This partnership guarantees that the essential needs of the Village of Hope are met, and that scholarships are provided for some of the students.

In this remarkable setting, surrounded by the beauty of nature and the dedication of compassionate individuals, I am honored to be part of this mission of hope. In just two months, I was able to establish a deep connection with the children in the dormitory, creating a family-like atmosphere. Despite occasional challenges, we rely on the guidance of our Father and the love He continues to shower upon us to overcome any obstacle. Trust, respect, and love have flourished among us, solidifying our bond.



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A Challenge to Consider

Now that you know my story, let me ask you this -- what if God asks you to go? Are you going to say "yes" to His call? Are you willing to give up the conveniences of life to be in a place of discomfort where you could be surrounded by people who might persecute you? Will you give up your profession or career, time with your family and friends, and/or your personal dreams to answer God's call?

These are just some of the questions that will daunt you, but the work that awaits in the mission field is tremendous. There are still a lot of people who do not know Jesus and the eternal life that He offers. There are still a lot of tribes and persecuted nations that need the light of Jesus.

As a Christian nation, I believe that the Philippines plays a big part when it comes to the end-time mission of God. I've heard a lot of visions and prophecies about the Philippines being a missionary-sending nation, and it is not an accident that there are a lot of OFWs strategically dispersed and assigned to different parts of the globe. Could it be that more than serving other nations, our nation's greatest calling is serving God's redemptive plan across the nations by being covert missionaries, masked by our day jobs?

One thing is obvious: the Philippines has a part to play in God's masterplan for the return of His son. Obeying God and His call for your life demands sacrifices, but once you see that there is unfinished work yet awaiting fulfillment, everything will be worth it.

Until every nation sings unto His return...



Aldrin John M. Malia is a missionary-teacher in Thailand and a child of the living God. His life vision is to share the love of the Father to the fatherless and to the vulnerable kids of Thailand, and to prepare the way before the coming of the Lord by reaching out to the unreached tribes of Thailand. On most days, he loves worshipping the Father through songs and banner dance.

A Second Chance at *Life*

>>> Written By Ruel Dela Cruz

Difficult Beginnings

I come from a poor and broken family. My parents separated and had no stable work to provide for me and my siblings. My mother washed clothes for other people, while my father spent time in prison. From a very young age, I lived on the streets. As a young lad, I was imprisoned many times for robbery and illegal drugs. Growing up, the government would take me to temporary house shelters.

The very first time that I heard the good news about Jesus was when I was a teenager inside a prison for juvenile offenders. There was a 3-day Christian youth camp held by one of the visiting Christian groups, and I was one of those chosen to join this camp. I experienced worship time, playing games, and having fun. We had many biblical devotions and sessions. I listened to a Bible message about Jesus from the *kuyas* conducting the camp.

Because I did not grow up in a Christian family and had never been to church, I did not have any prior ideas about Jesus and what He did for us. I listened intently as the *kuyas* shared what Jesus did for us on the cross to save us, to forgive us, and to bring us back to our Father God's heart. I heard that if I would receive Jesus into my heart, I would have eternal life. Hearing these messages, I felt Jesus' love flowing in me. For the first time, I invited Him into my life. I was not able sleep the whole night because of overflowing joy! However, I did not change totally as a person. Not yet.

Life in the Streets

Outside of prison, I kept company with friends who were like me. Being young, I was not yet firm to say "no" or to step away from bad things that drove me to trouble. I was trapped in vices and having indiscriminate sex with people, whether male or female. I would fight with other boys at school, too.

Years went by. I reached rock bottom to the point where I became crazy, talking to the devil and myself. I would curse my identity, saying I was worthless, with no hope and nothing. I was hooked on many drugs, and I was separated from my live-in partner and eldest daughter.

But in the midst of all this, I had a sudden remembrance of Jesus. It was God reminding me of His love! I remembered the words shared to me from the youth camp. I begged God to give me another chance. "Father God, if You would give me a chance, I will surrender my life to You fully. You can use me for whatever You want me to do, and wherever You want to send me."

Some of my friends gave me the contact number of Help International Philippines Rehabilitation Set Free Center. I took that chance!



Life at the Set Free Center

On July 15, 2002, I arrived at the Set Free Center. When I stepped inside, I was met by people who were like a big family. They did things together and ate together. We were not treated like patients or forced to swallow medicine during our stay; rather, we were treated like brothers and sisters—treated like part of the family. Every day, we had devotional time and worship.

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