

**Disclaimer:** In many of the photos the children & adults are not wearing facemasks, this is because we are visiting them in their homes. Be reassured all the volunteers are wearing facemasks and adhering to the locally prescribed hygiene standards.



*'I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.'*

*Ephesians 1:17*

**August 2020**

## New Opportunities!

by Andrea & James

Although for a lot of people, the last few months has seen a stopping of many things being done in the normal way this included some ministries. However, we thank the Lord that we have been so fortunate to have been able to not just continue with the work here, we have been able to expand and grow it!

### Corona Virus Update

Since our last newsletter, the island has had Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs) returning home to Coron. This unfortunately brought the virus here. Initially three individuals then an additional 2 tested positive, the local government officials acted quickly and managed the situation well, the individuals were isolated in a specially designated quarantine facility and remained there until they had been given a clean bill of health.

The island has not experienced any local transmissions of the virus; however, the risk continues to remain higher as more individuals will be returning home to Coron in coming weeks and months. Please continue to pray for protection.

The impact in relation to employment and economy on Coron is likely to continue to be problematic. Many are still struggling and many businesses in

the town are closed. However, many who previously relied on tourism are now finding alternative work in construction, planting, trading online and home cooking and selling.

Please continue to pray for the difficulties as people adapt to the changes on the island.

### School is Out!

Due to the Philippines' government declaring that there will be no face to face classes this school year and potentially not until a vaccine is available, City Gates Academy will not open this year. Alternative strategies were explored but deemed to not be possible here on Coron. Following discussion between the local Pastor and the UK Sponsors the decision was made to close the school until the situation changes in the future.

We will miss the wonderful interactions we always had with the children and the parents during the school day. However, we will continue to connect with some of the students who live in the areas where we do the feeding programmes and children's clubs in the communities. The schoolteacher will remain employed and will assist with teaching within the children's clubs.



*Teacher Jhen at the Children's Clubs at the dumpsite & Santa Monica.*

### New Strategy

The plan will be to have a focus on building adult small groups and potential satellite Churches within some of the

areas where we have the feeding programmes. We hope to have a focus on discipleship and building leaders so each area will not only be self-sufficient, but will go on to start new groups in other areas in the future.

The school building will be used for Church activities and will be opened for youth activities on afternoons for them to learn musical instruments, bible study and fellowship.

We also plan to explore the opportunities available in the town. We are planning to commence a feeding programme there and aim to have a base in town which could develop into a satellite Church opportunity in the future.

Please pray for reorganising of staff and work roles as we navigate through these changes and move forward with the exciting new strategies and vision to focus on building Gods kingdom and the Church here on Coron.

### Feeding Programs Extended

We are now as a church going into 4 new areas making it a total of 7 areas where we take food for the children each week. We are feeding just over 500 children in total. We praise God for the provision through donations of individuals to enable this to continue to happen. Thank you!



We continue to build relationships and connections in these areas with the vision to start children's clubs and house churches and bible studies in the future. We are still somewhat restricted due to being unable to gather children outside of their home compounds, but we pray for these opportunities when restrictions relax again.



*We often find this group of children down by the river while the mum's wash the clothes! (Not sure how clean the clothes will be washing in this water!)*

### New Children's Club

Currently we have 5 children's clubs which we can hold in family compounds. 2 are with children that attended our previous children's clubs at the church prior to lockdown.

Excitingly, one of the recent additions of a children's club is with a new family we have connected with in one of the new areas we have gone into (Title picture).

This extended family live fairly close to the highway but are surprisingly quite isolated. They have very humble homes made of wood, bamboo and old tarpaulin, none of them have electricity or running water!



They use a paraffin lamp at night and cook over a wood and charcoal fire. It's a balancing act to reach their home as you can see from the picture!



We found this family to be really open to our visits and the children and parents would gather to talk with us when we visited. The children range from a 3-month-old baby to 13yrs old. On speaking with them we discovered that the children up to ages 7 had never been to school.

The first week we introduced the children's club, the children appeared very shy and we realised that hearing and joining in action songs was probably a new experience for them.



The gospel message was heard not just by the children but also the parents who joined in responding to questions. The children were then given some colouring and it was evident that this was also a new experience for them, some of the children did not know how to hold a pencil. Over the last few weeks, we have started to see improvements and they are now becoming more confident and their colouring skills and dancing have improved already!



*The Children were proudly wearing their new clothes the following week.*



The parents remain with us and appear to be enjoying the message. We hope that as the children become more confident with us the parents can have a bible study while the children's club is being held.

We were also able to bless them with food parcels and some of the clothes we had left from the donations we received from family and friends in the UK. Thank you again to all that made this possible.

“Praise the Lord, all nations!  
Extol him, all peoples!  
For great is his steadfast love toward us,  
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.  
Praise the Lord!”  
Psalm 117:1-2

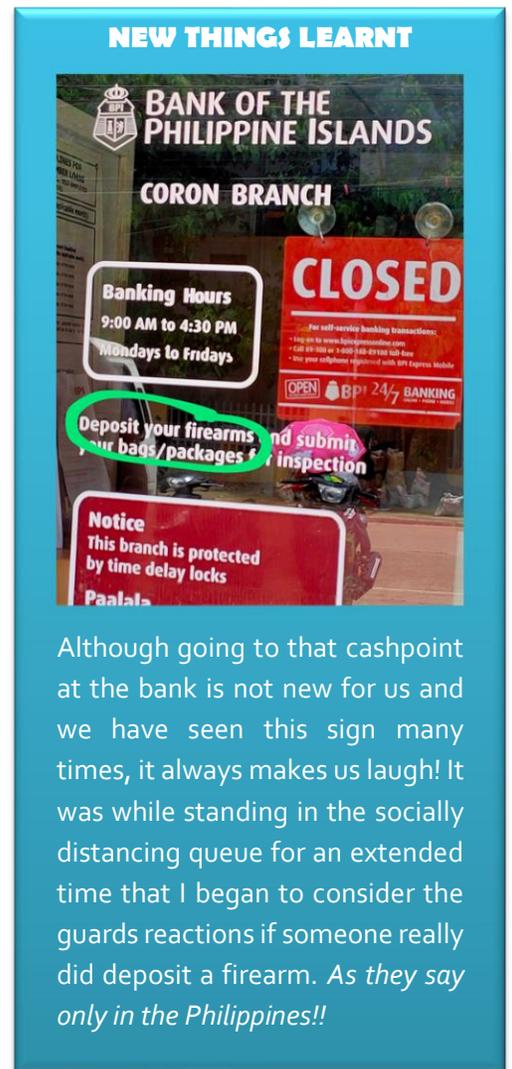
### Church Gatherings & Small Groups

We praise God that church has been allowed to start gathering again for the adults. We are all adhering to social distancing and minimum hygiene practices. It is great to be able to meet to worship and praise God together.

Small groups/house churches continue to be the vision for building Gods Kingdom here on Coron. We are enjoying facilitating our weekly small group and we praise God that we are seeing a growth in relationships and we can see the potential of future leaders in this group.

The youth small group is now being led by Miss Rozel with the support of Pastora Riza. Miss Rozel is excited to step into this new leadership role. She has good relationships with the youth and is well respected (and much closer to their age than we are!!). Please pray for her in this new role, we look forward to seeing what God will do through her as she serves in this ministry.

The plan is for Pastora Riza to re-start a small group with previous parents of the school and one with the younger adults once this is possible. The restrictions on the island have hindered this somewhat up to now.



Although going to that cashpoint at the bank is not new for us and we have seen this sign many times, it always makes us laugh! It was while standing in the socially distancing queue for an extended time that I began to consider the guards reactions if someone really did deposit a firearm. *As they say only in the Philippines!!*

**The work continues come rain or shine!****Praise & Prayer**

Thank you for your prayers.

- ❖ We thank God that we have been virus free for so long. However, due to Locally Stranded Individuals returning to Coron, there have been 5 people test positive for the virus. Please pray that the health authority continues to hand the situation well. We pray for continued protection over the island.
- ❖ Families are still struggling financially due to limited work, pray for God's provision for them and to protect them. As a Church we want to continue to help meet the needs of people where we can, please pray for the resources to do this.
- ❖ Please pray for the Church and the new vision and strategy for reaching more people and the opportunities to start children's clubs, small groups, and satellite churches to share the gospel and make disciples.
- ❖ Please pray for wisdom and guidance for all team members as we adjust to the changes now the school is closed.
- ❖ Please pray for the children's work to reach the children in their homes and compounds, for them to know God's love in their lives.
- ❖ Please continue to pray for health and provision for us to enable us to continue the work God has called us to do.
- ❖ Please pray for us as we miss family and friends due to furlough being cancelled and no clear idea when we will physically see everyone we love again.

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Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter, we are so thankful for all your support and could not be doing any of this work without you.

Many Blessings, Love from Andrea & James

*"All gifts for our ministry should be sent to Elim International Missions, De Walden Road, West Malvern, WR14 4DF. Cheques payable to Elim International Missions marked Andrea & James Reeve, Philippines on the reverse. On the rare occasion that money is given to projects and personnel that is either over or under subscribed, Elim Missions reserves the right to divert funds to works of a similar nature. To cover the cost of administrating missionaries and overseas organisations, Elim Missions withholds a small percentage on gifts given. Registered Charity 251549 (England & Wales) / SC037754 (Scotland)"*