



Dear friends, thank you for your ongoing faithful prayers during these pandemic days. We thank the Lord for health and safety and are grateful for being able to continually see opportunities for ministry in unusual places.

NEW (JOINT) INITIATIVE: DIASPORA MINISTRY IN MANILA

There are an estimated 1.35 million people of Chinese ethnicity living in the Philippines. The majority of those are people who moved here before the 1930s and who are now Filipino citizens. They are called *Tsinoy*s and are renowned to be industrious, business entrepreneurs. Some of the biggest churches in the Philippines are Filipino-Chinese churches, who are very generous supporters of mission and with whom OMF have a longstanding relationship.

The Bureau of Immigration issued 85,000 visas between 2016 and 2018 to a new wave of Chinese migrants, *Xin Qiao*. The majority of these new immigrants are *Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators*, (POGOs) who provide gambling and other services to people inside and outside of the Philippines. A significant tension has grown between these two communities: the Filipino Chinese and this new wave¹.

The Philippine Home Council of OMF and OMF International Philippines have agreed to work together on an outreach to this new Chinese diaspora. We plan to work with the existing Chinese churches to try to bridge the gap between the two Chinese cultures. God's Word is very clear on the responsibilities of His people to welcome the stranger and the gospel presented in Ephesians 2 shows how Christ's death tears down walls of hostility between people of different cultures.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES:

August in OMF, is the month of Annual Estimates. Everyone responsible for a project or program has to try to project their spending for next year. Every individual and family has to review their annual budget and consider how it can be trimmed or if it needs to be increased. In these days of pandemic these are not easy things to do. Please pray for wisdom for our finance team, Leoh, Shalie and Ila, working in the office in Manila, and for our Admin and Finance Committee who guide us in our policy and practical decisions. It is our

¹ <https://journals.openedition.org/remi/6147>

PHILIPPINE HOME COUNCIL

The Philippines Home Council was established in 1967 to enable Filipinos to be sent to other parts of E. Asia in mission. Today they have more than 20 missionaries serving in other East Asian Countries.

We, OMF-International Philippines share an office with the Philippines Home Council staff, and Grace Moron, their Executive Director and I (Irene), share responsibility for the Filipino workers who work cross culturally within the Philippines.

We are registered separately with the Securities and Exchange Commission with separate Boards of Trustees, separate finance systems and have cultivated quite different organizational cultures.

One of the commitments Grace and I made publicly at the beginning of this year, is to walk, by faith, towards creating a single entity, or missions' hub, in the Philippines, where sending, receiving and diaspora would all be done by a single OMF organization.

The drivers behind this move are multiple, but primarily it is due to the changing face of 21st century mission where mission is from everywhere to everywhere. This means the distinctions of 'home' and 'field' are becoming more blurred and less useful. This, together with growing diaspora populations in every nation, forces us to rethink how we do ministry.

desire to be good stewards of all God has entrusted to us and to emulate Him in living generously, especially to remember the poor.

KOINONIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (KTS)

From August 12-14, we had our annual KTS retreat. This was to celebrate the end of the academic year, 2020-21, and to spend time together reflecting on our mission as a seminary. As always, these are great times together. As well as serious moments of prayer and contemplation, there was lots of laughter, lots of good food and way too much karaoke.

I (Wilson) finished teaching my summer class on Church Planting in the final week of July. After a week of vacation that Irene and I enjoyed from August 1-8, life back at KTS has been all about getting ready for the new academic year, 2021-22. A large part of that time was spent interviewing more applicants, something we have been doing intermittently over the months of June and July. We have accepted 21 new applicants who now need to enroll in their classes and get ready for studies. This is always a chaotic period. The newly accepted applicants need to find the funds to pay their enrollment fees, submit the necessary documents, choose their courses for the new semester and finally, learn the procedures and technology that is essential for learning at KTS. Classes will begin on Tuesday August 24.

Pray for our students and lecturers. Our students are mostly from Davao and other parts of Mindanao. We do have one student from Antique in the Visayan Islands, two who live in Vietnam and another who lives in Chiang Mai in north Thailand. Our lecturers are mostly resident in Davao but one will teach from Manila, one from the city of Bacolod on the island of Negros, and one from the UK. Another visiting lecturer from the UK will teach three classes of one course. It is marvelous how the pandemic has allowed us to widen our net of teachers and connect with the wider body of Christ to find willing teachers.

We still have some work to do on the documents we sent back to the office of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in Davao City. They have returned the documents to us again, advising some more amendments. Though it is frustrating, the Davao office people reminded us that the final decision on our proposed amendments will be made in Manila. Those in the Davao office know what the decision makers in Manila will be looking for and so are simply trying to help us get through the Manila stage without disappointment. So, we can be grateful for their helpful advice and ask you to pray with us that we will get our papers in order this time and be done with it all soon.

Greetings to you all and God's blessing.

Wilson & Irene

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