



Philippines Update - October 15, 2009

Dear Friends and Partners:

By now you may be tired of hearing about floods in the Philippines. After my last update Typhoon Parma had moved out of the Philippines and we thought its destruction was over. However, it remained off the North West coast of the country and then returned. It brought rain to the northern area of Luzon for over a week. The ground became saturated and many mudslides wiped out homes and people in the mountains.

We oversee two churches that are in the Province of Pangasinan, a low lying farming area of Luzon. On Thursday night, October 8, we received a text from one of the pastors asking for prayer. The people's homes were flooding so they gathered in the church because it was a little higher up. But, now water was coming in the church and they were scared and had no place else to go. Praise God, because they only got about two feet of water in the church.

The flooding in Pangasinan happened because the water at two dams reached critical levels so the dams had to open flood gates to avoid having the dams break. One of the dams is very large, the second biggest dam in Asia. They released large volumes of water with little or no warning to the people below the dams. Walls of water came crashing down the rivers surprising many people and doing much damage.

We are thanking the Lord that there was no major damage to the churches we oversee and there were no deaths or injuries to people in the congregations. However, many people were affected. In fact sixty percent of the province of Pangasinan was under water at one time. There are cities that are still underwater and it is difficult to get them.

On Monday, October 12, we traveled to Pangasinan to bring some relief supplies to the church congregation that experienced some flooding. A few times we had to go through water that was about a foot deep on the highway.



We saw a lot of destruction that was caused by the strong currents of water. Sometimes the foundations of houses and buildings were undermined by the fast moving water causing the buildings to suffer severe damage.



The people at the church were so happy to receive the things we brought them. The packages showed the people that they are not forgotten and that their brothers and sisters in Christ care, even from far away places like the USA. They were packages of love that helped bring encouragement to the people. I spoke a short encouraging message and Suzzhette translated it and added her thoughts also.



Above a woman is receiving a care bag. Below kids in line for the treats we brought them.



We are thanking the Lord that there were no injuries or loss of life in the congregations we oversee in Pangasinan. Thank You for your prayers.



Above some of the church congregation standing in front of the church in San Marcelino - Balungao, Pangasinan. We distributed care packages to the people who experienced flooding there.

The death toll from the flooding and mudslides caused by Parma is at 375 and more are being added daily as we learn more. The flood in Manila killed 337. The destruction in Pangasinan is more widespread and greater than in Manila because of the strong river currents that flowed through the cities. One of the bigger cities we went through experienced a lot of damage. Businesses were closed as they tried to dry out their equipment and wet furniture. Banks, convenience stores, all kinds of shops, and even a large shopping mall were closed for repairs. Many people were cleaning out mud that had flowed into their buildings.





People digging out from the mud.



Above a rice crop that was destroyed by the flood just before it could be harvested. Many crops were destroyed by the flooding. Pangasinan is a bread basket farming area of the Philippines. The flood affects the livelihoods of the farmers and the food supply in the Philippines. Below a corn crop that was destroyed also.



There are places and even whole cities that are still flooded in Pangasinan at the time I am writing this newsletter.



The other church we oversee in Pangasinan is in San Aurelio of Balungao, Pangasinan. Pastor Jess is our pastor there he is also the head of the Balungao Pastors Association. The church in San Aurelio and the congregation did not experience any flooding because they are at a higher elevation. However, many people surrounding their location did experience flooding. Also the city near them did suffer a lot of destruction.



Some of the people who have lost homes have created make shift shelters. These are some of the people we are bringing needed survival supplies to through Pastor Jess and his pastors association.

We were not able to contact Pastor Jess before we traveled to Pangasinan on Monday because the electricity had been off since Thursday and his cell phone battery was dead. There are estimates that it may take a month to restore electricity to the Province of Pangasinan.

After we visited the church in San Marcelino we went to San Aurelio to see Pastor Jess and their situation. We learned that Pastor Jess was not there. He and the pastors from their association had gone to a nearby city to bring food to people who had lost everything in the flooding. A member of the congregation went with us to show us where they were ministering. My heart was really touched to see that the poor pastors in the association had made such an effort to share their food with their neighbors in need.

Most of the people in this area are poor and make their living from farming. They survive from harvest to harvest. The people in the congregations have little so the churches and pastors receive little also. However, these pastors who have very little gathered up food and prepared it to give meals to the people in need. They had rented a Jeepney to give them transportation and to use for distributing the food.

Pastor Jess was surprised and happy to see us. We told him that we will come back on Thursday and bring bulk supplies of rice and other things they need. We can trust Pastor Jess and their pastors association to get the food to those in the most need. However, the weather has brought more rain so we decided to delay traveling back to Pangasinan in case the water on the roads is deeper now. We will see if we can get the supplies to them tomorrow, Friday, October 16. They are telling us that they have not seen any government help coming into these areas which were so affected by the opening of the dams. Pangasinan is in need of much help. By working together with the people there we can be more effective and help more people.

In Manila there are still thousands of people in shelters and the conditions are not very good.

What is worse is that people are getting sick from being exposed to the contaminated flood waters. There are still areas of Metro Manila that are flooded. One sickness people are dealing with is a bacterial disease called leptospirosis it has been diagnosed in over 700 people. Forty people have died so far from it. Some hospitals are over capacity with patients in the hallways and wherever they can put them. If leptospirosis is not treated early it can affect several body organs and be very bad.

As I am writing this I see by way of satellite pictures on the internet that another tropical storm is headed toward the Philippines. This one really looks like it is forming into a typhoon. As it travels over the warm ocean it can store up a lot of water and power as it approaches the Philippines. If it keeps on course it could hit the Philippines about Sunday or Monday of next week. For the people that are already suffering from the floods more rain brings more misery. Please keep the Filipino people in your prayers.

We will try to get some supplies to Pangasinan on Friday; including Rice, canned fish, candles, and plastic plates and utensils for the people who lost everything in their homes.

If you want to help us bring more food and supplies to the people in need you can send a donation to Seek God Ministries. PayPal is a safe way to give online and you can use a credit card, bank card, or check. The funds will be available for us to use right away. Go to the web site at www.SeekGod.org and click on the **Make A Donation** button. It will take you to our secure PayPal connection.

You can also send donations to:

In the USA	In The Philippines
Seek God Ministries P O Box 100 Otis Orchards, WA 99027 USA	Seek God Ministries PO Box 140 Subic Bay Free Port Zone Philippines 2222

We love you. Thank you again you for being our friend and partner.
Seek God Ministries