

Missouri City volunteers seek to “be the face of Jesus” in Philippines

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MANILA, Philippines—[First Philippine Baptist Church](#) in Missouri City personally delivered a message from their hearts to people living here in their homeland: There is hope—for now and eternity.

Rose Nacionales shares the gospel during the free medical clinic.

More than 40 members of the congregation—about one-third of the church—spent a week sharing the hope of Christ through home construction projects in the Manila area, as well as participating in a pastors' conference, free medical clinic and children's feeding program in Biga, located in the province of Cavite.

The team of primarily first-generation immigrants to the United States and their children saw the trip as an opportunity to share the gospel in a country where they have roots and a common culture, Pastor Ernest Dagohoy said.

"We want to give back, first of all, to thank the Lord for what he has done to our church and to give back to the Lord for what he has done to us personally," Dagohoy said. "The best place for us to do that is our home country, the Philippines. That explains the theme that we have for this mission trip—heart to home. It's coming from our hearts to our home country, the Philippines. We just want to encourage our fellow Filipinos and most especially to share the gospel with them through what we are doing."



Mission team membersâ€”including Rose Nacionales (left)â€”pass a bucket of cement during the iHome construction project near Manila.



A mission team member prays with a child.

The team spent three days working on home construction projects for the poor through [iHome](#), formerly Greater Manila Habitat for Humanity, hand-mixing cement, moving building supplies, building walls and painting.

During another busy day in Cavite, volunteers also treated more than 200 patients during a medical clinic, addressing issues from malnutrition to

sore feet to more serious problems that required referring people to Filipino surgeons.

That same day, volunteers also fed more than 100 impoverished children, many of whom struggle to maintain a well-rounded diet that includes plenty of protein. For many, lack of regular protein leads to nutrition deficiencies, especially anemia.

More than 30 of the region's pastors attended the pastors' conference, which featured the first time the one-on-one discipleship curriculum [Operation Multiplication](#) was presented in the Philippines.



More than 200 people line up to be seen in the free medical clinic. Tiffany and Jojo Garbanzus register patients.

The outreaches were designed to have a long-lasting impact on the people the volunteers served, moving them toward housing, helping resolve medical needs and providing some nourishment, said Fe Jularbal, who coordinated the logistics of the trip.

The ministries also were intended for a more significant purpose—to share the gospel, Jularbal continued. The construction projects, clinic and children's feeding provided avenues through which church members could start relationships with Filipinos and eventually share the gospel. The pastors' conference was meant to encourage pastors and give them

additional tools they can use to share the gospel.

"This is in response to how the Lord has loved and blessed us, for what he has done and his endless blessings and love," Jularbal said. "The only we can response is give back our love and devotion to him. Our true worship to him is to do his work."



Jaja Tan registers a woman and her baby for a free medical clinic.

The team saw more than 100 people embrace the hope of Christ during the trip, including van drivers, people living in the homes the team was constructing, mothers and clinic patients.

"They feel the spirit of the Lord," said church member Virginia Ontoy. "They usually share their tears. They become a child of God."

The trip is part of First Philippine Baptist Church's participation in Hope 1:8, a Texas Baptist initiative encouraging Christians to live out the mission imperative of Acts 1:8 to share the hope of Christ locally and around the globe.

The [Baptist General Convention of Texas](#) helped support the church's mission trip financially through Intercultural Strategic Partners, an interethnic council that encourages mission work with indigenous groups around the globe.

"We are supposed to be an ambassador of Christ," Ontoy said. "The Bible says we are to be ambassadors of Christ. We have to do it in action, not in words."



Cecile Dagohoy visits with a woman who came to the free clinic with a hurt foot.

Dagohoy thanked Texas Baptists for the investment in the work of spreading the gospel. Together, Texas Baptists are carrying the hope of Christ around the globe, Dagohoy noted.

"We would like to thank Texas Baptists for helping us out," he said. "What we are doing here is not just First Philippine Baptist Church representing Jesus Christ in the Philippines. This is Texas Baptists, the efforts of Texas Baptists reaching out to the Philippines."

The need for the gospel is great in the Philippines, Dagohoy said, as it is in the Houston area, making it crucial for Christians to share the hope of Christ everywhere they go.

"We just want to be the face of Jesus Christ where ever we go," he said, "whether it be in our own Jerusalem, which would be Houston, or here in

the Philippines, which is perhaps the uttermost parts of the world for us at this time."