

Eric and Sandra Read

Link Letter no. 37 | October 2021

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The call in action

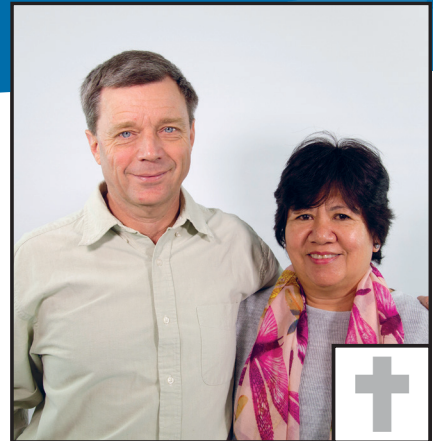
Dear friends,

As planned, we opened our cafe in mid-May – for one day! That afternoon, they unexpectedly announced a lockdown for the three barangays in our valley, starting the next day. Eventually in July we were able to re-open, and again, on the day we opened, they announced a lockdown starting the next day – this time in Cagayan, but as that is where our customers mostly come from it was useless to stay open, so we closed again. All very frustrating. We're still closed now as leisure visits are still not allowed.

We have the Delta variant here too and despite the government's best efforts, daily cases are slowly creeping up, although still only just over half the UK level, but with very low vaccination coverage. Sandra has completed her vaccinations and Eric has had his first dose – both of us the Chinese Sinovac-CoronaVac – hopefully better than nothing! Very sadly our good friend here in Kinawe, Pastor Boy, who has been a great help to us over the years, died a couple of weeks ago from COVID after 10 days in intensive care.

We are thankful that we have been able to continue with the Bible study group uninterrupted. We also started a weekly youth group a few weeks ago, which is a mixture of fun – including some Zumba dancing, games and snacks – and discussing issues which are of concern to them and a short reflection. Unlike before with the younger children, we've both found we enjoy doing this and look forward to our weekly gatherings. The young people are very open and eager to do things and to talk, even about their problems and difficulties. We just had a session on how COVID invades the body, which they found very interesting and helpful in terms of the whys of the protective measures (and that they are not just ordinances of authority). We hope it will also help the adults make an informed decision on vaccination. There is poor uptake by the rural people here for vaccination because of fears, including that vaccines can turn you into a zombie in the future! Please pray, as the cases are going up and all the hospitals and clinics are now full in Cagayan. The Delta variant is well established here. Pray that our zone will not be affected. If it is, we will have to suspend the Bible study and youth groups.

As we continue to make the farm a picture of creation care, we get to see pleasant surprises: new species of birds, including small green parrots, many of them now nesting around the farm, as well as colourful dragonflies and butterflies and other insects. Unfortunately, we also get more caterpillars eating leaves and most neighbourhood chickens come to feast on our abundance of insects and worms and – much to Eric's annoyance – to scatter all the mulching! An electric fence a few inches off the ground has reduced this



Name: Eric and Sandra Read

Location: The Philippines

Our call: To give renewed vision to churches as we train them to better love and serve their communities so they can see transformation in all areas of life.

Our role: Recruiting and training a small team to equip churches in holistic mission, alongside running a farm to fund this ministry and demonstrate natural farming models.



Continued over the page

Sketch of The Good Samaritan by the youth for the Bible study

problem. We even had two colonies of wild honeybees. Sandra has been bottling citronella oil and virgin coconut oil and pickling fruits from our produce in the hope that when we open the cafe we can also sell these and show people how to make them.

It is very easy to get discouraged and lost in our seemingly day-to-day activities that may not lead to any “successful ministry”. As we shared our frustrations with our good friend Pastor Nady, he said something that helps us to face each day with a purpose:

“To do **anything** that is good for other people, or **actions** that will help animals and plants and the land – all these are a pleasing aroma unto the Lord.” This is what counts. This has liberated us to face each day with a purpose, free to be a “minister” for the Lord for whatever and whoever and wherever and however! Eventually he will make things fall in the right places. What matters is that at the end he will see what we do and declare, “It is good”. Do please pray that the Lord will continue to show us the “mission for the day” and for us to accomplish it with energy and joy.

Having not been able to come on leave this year, we were planning to come next year. But having also not seen Atiyah for almost two years, we have decided we will come on leave this winter – not the ideal time, but it will make a change. We sold our house in Devon last year and bought one in Shropshire. It’s currently having some repairs done which should be finished by November. Our plan is to come in November (10 days’ government quarantine, we’re still on the red list – unless the rules change) and stay until early spring. We will be in touch shortly regarding visiting our churches. Please pray for these plans as nothing is definite these days and we see they are now expecting things to get worse again this winter!

We do thank you for your continued support and prayers and we look forward to hopefully seeing many of you soon.

With every blessing

Eric & Sandra



Photos from top to bottom: Lush syntropic interplanting of bananas, papaya, guava and cassava (we’re having lots of rain); Atiyah worked for the summer and bought a scooter!; experimental wood chip mulch on corn; the same crops two weeks later

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You can give to Eric and Sandra at: churchmissionsociety.org/read

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