

Eric and Sandra Read

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The call in action

Dear friends,

As many of you are aware, we are in England at the moment on home leave. We feel more settled now and more relaxed after several weeks of frenzied preparations to leave the farm and the activities, then arriving back here dazed with changes from climate to way of life. After 15 years of doing this we realise we are never going to be “pros” at it. We find re-entry still just as shocking as it was the first time.

Winter is the worst time to come back – as we dig into our stuff looking for warm clothing and find Peter’s coat does not fit him anymore, the moths have made holes in Eric’s jumpers and Sandra’s old-fashioned, slightly flared trousers are embarrassing! An urgent trip to the charity shop is a frustration as we just cannot choose. A trip to the supermarket takes ages as we just wander from aisle to aisle. I’m so envious watching people looking so got-together and efficient. Everyone seems to know what to buy and here we are feeling awkward and lost just trying to buy baked beans and flour. They look so purposeful and know where to go – and there we are needing to concentrate to drive on the left, arguing with Google maps. After a few weeks feeling like Martians, just as we start to get the hang of it – it’s usually time to get ready to go back to the field! So it’s nice that we have five months here for this home leave, enough time to get adjusted and see the carpets of snowdrops and daffodils just coming now.

We sold our house in Devon last year and bought one in Shropshire, which needed major renovations, all without leaving The Philippines, including getting the renovations done. Thankfully we were given a very good recommendation for the surveyor, who also managed to get us a very good builder. Even so, it was not quite finished when we got here. So our first few weeks were also spent collecting our stuff from storage and bringing it up here – to fill our shed here for us to sort it. It’s quite exciting finding things we had forgotten all about, and other things prompting the question, “Why on earth did we keep that?”

After not seeing Atiyyah for almost three years, we’re glad to find her well settled as a university student, enjoying being in the uni football girls’ team, and having jobs to pay off a moped she bought! Peter this time is able to stay the whole five months we are here as he does online studies, which he prefers. He’s getting some good “working world” experience working in a lounge restaurant – waking up early sometimes and working long hours, coping with awkward people and taking responsibilities. We are happy with how well he seems to be coping with it. Unfortunately they both got COVID-19 shortly before Christmas, which rather curtailed our Christmas



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.



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All together for Atiyyah’s birthday shortly after we cleared quarantine.

celebrations – along with a new cooker which stopped working on 23 December! We enjoyed our turkey for New Year instead. Miraculously neither of us got COVID-19. Maybe Sinovac is not a bad vaccine after all.

Before we left Kinawe the Bible study and youth group were all scheduled with activities to continue, but to our alarm they both fizzled out! But praise God, after the Christmas holidays both groups restarted again. Additionally, a young mum from the Bible study group and Romel (one of our workers) have restarted the children's group. Please pray for these groups to continue to mature and for them to be committed to put into practice their faith.

We have more activities we would like to start, including a young couples' group for our workers and neighbours. Please pray as we look into getting someone young and dynamic to work alongside us, especially in our community related activities.

Although we are not working directly with any churches at the moment please pray that the Lord will open a way, starting with our church, for us to work with and influence them towards more holistic ministry.

From the beginning we have had a small support and accountability group advising and supporting us. It is now becoming more important for us to start formalising this and to increase its size. At the moment we only really have two people – Pastor Nady and Pastor Cleto – we can turn to.

As we look towards the future, we are planning on making the farm a place where people will be inspired and challenged in creation care. This is where the cafe, which we plan to restart again on our return, will be useful in getting people to come where we can share our experiences with them in natural and syntropic farming. Hopefully within the next two years the syntropic planting Eric started last year will then be working well and we will be able to promote it to other farmers and the Department of Agriculture. The cafe will also help to make our ministry more financially stable and will enable us to increase the income from the farm by being able to sell fruit and vegetables. And we will continue to take up any opportunity open for us to bless and influence our community for his kingdom and to work with churches.

We feel encouraged and refreshed by our visits to our supportive churches and look forward to visiting the rest in the coming weeks.

With love and blessings,

Eric and Sandra



Photos from top to bottom: Our new house when things weren't going according to plan!; The movers having a tea break; The first meeting of the new children's group.

GOING FURTHER WITH CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY

Are you pondering a call to cross-cultural mission? We'd love to connect and help you discern what God might be saying. Find out more about how we can help you to step into God's mission at churchmissionsociety.org/explore

If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org or call 01865 787400

You can give to Eric and Sandra at:
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