



# Eric and Sandra Read

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Contact details:  
esread@smallburn.co.uk



**Location:** Philippines



**What we do:** Demonstrating natural farming models alongside equipping churches in holistic mission for real community impact.

Dear friends,

Before we get further into our letter, as we look towards our visit to the UK this summer, **we want to thank you wholeheartedly** for supporting us – your prayers and gifts are incredibly important in helping us to serve here. With a heavy heart, we need to share that at the moment, due to increased living costs both for us and our supporters and despite taking a voluntary cut in our monthly allowance, **there is still a significant shortfall in our funding**, which puts our work at risk. And so, we come to you for further help. If you are not currently giving, would you be able to start a regular gift? And if you are giving, would you be able to consider increasing your gift please? **If everyone reading this letter gave an extra £10 per month, that would make a huge difference.** If you can help us close our funding gap, please go to [churchmissionsociety.org/read](https://churchmissionsociety.org/read), call 01865 787489 or complete the enclosed form if you have received this letter through the post. (For our supporting churches, if you are able to give a further gift please contact [churchrelations@churchmissionsociety.org](mailto:churchrelations@churchmissionsociety.org).) We understand this might not be possible – **please know that we greatly value your support**, and thank you for letting us share our challenge with you.



*Dress rehearsal for Christmas play*

As we have been praying and reflecting on our plans for school class visits, we realised there might be an even more effective way to work towards our vision for church transformation. Youth and children normally make up a significant proportion of the churches, who generally have active youth and children's groups. So certainly initially, we will focus on church youth and children's groups. Working through churches rather than schools will also make it much easier to have ongoing input into the same people, rather than working through school classes who move on every year. There are also two orphanages we know, one run by nuns and the other by a missionary couple, so we will include them too. So we have delayed the work with schools until a later stage of the programme and are instead focusing first on working with Sunday school children, and hopefully church youth can be drawn in as well for youth outreach activities.

And as if God was giving us a thumbs-up, a door opened up for this...

There was a change of leadership in our church here with the new interim pastor (Pastor Jun) having a broader, outward-looking vision. He is working in consultation with the incoming pastor (Pastor Collins) who has the same outlook. Having been discouraged before by the previous pastor's lack of interest in the

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**With Jesus  
With each other  
To the edges**



ministry on the farm, we were delighted and excited when Pastor Jun asked us if we would like the church to help us! It has now been approved by the church leadership team. With the two pastors' new outlook, various groups are undergoing training. They will be ready to start in April and we have asked particularly for young people to help with our youth group – this will give them a change from a pair of 60+-year-olds! As a bridging activity we took our youth group from here to the youth concert put on by our church young people. It was a first for our youth and they enjoyed it. Our church is also holding an overnight children's camp in May to which they have invited our children. We will have to

reassure the parents (most are from Roman Catholic churches) that it's not about "religion" but about promoting Christian values and having fun!

As for the Barakah Farm ministry we plan to involve other churches too, especially from our community here. Hopefully even the Roman Catholic church. **Please pray with us about this** as churches here tend to be exclusive and to prefer to work in isolation. It will help that after 10 years here they know we are not starting another church! Pray for their openness to **working together** to reach out and minister to the youth and children. We tried before unsuccessfully, we have to try again. God will do the rest! He knows the perfect timing.

As the children's group memory verse this week from Proverbs 3:6 says, "In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths" (MEV). We need to share this with them next Thursday... how this verse encouraged us this week! We start our Bible study with a time of sharing praise and thanksgiving for the past week. It's wonderful to see everyone doing it, from the youngest (seven) to the oldest (64 – Sandra!).

Last Christmas Sandra led the children and youth in putting on a nativity play for the local community. The theme was Where is Jesus?!. The story is based around baby Jesus getting lost in the mayhem of the play – similarly to how preparations for Christmas can steal our focus from the reason for Christmas, the birth of our Saviour Jesus. They were all enthusiastic about acting, even making their own costumes. The play went off very well and was enjoyed by the community. Then we had games, even for the mums, and food and bags of treats!

Atiyyah is doing her finals now, so we are looking forward to going to her graduation in July. **Please pray** she will be do well in her finals and also for her knee, she is still awaiting her next consultation. We were very pleased to see Peter baptised on 23 March. Praise God. It was a full immersion in the sea – the water's warm enough here!

Thank you again for your support and prayers and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Eric and Sandra



**Photos from top to bottom:** The children's tea party; an implement made by Eric for raking the grass to the tree lines for mulching; Peter's baptism



## Can you help?

**Right now** Eric and Sandra are facing a shortfall in funding, which puts their work at risk. Will you support them today? Go to [churchmissionsociety.org/read](https://churchmissionsociety.org/read), call 01865 787489 or complete the enclosed form. Thank you!



Please note that opinions expressed in link letters are those of mission partners, not necessarily of Church Mission Society.

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