

Clemente Newsletter

February 2022

Report: Thank You For Praying

Thank you for your prayers. Last month, I joined the ME22 (Multiply Event 22) at Stockton, California. Members of the Network of Undeniable Blessing (NUB) group, another name for the churches of the Sierra Pacific Conference, gathered for a whole day of training and encouragement. I met a few of the pastors who are working among peoples from the Pacific Island nations. We met at lunch time and Supt. Mark Adams encouraged us to continue meeting in the days ahead. And so, in the coming weeks, we will meet virtually and pray together for God's work in Australia, Fiji, Tonga, and the other countries of the Pacific region.

Also, I am grateful for your prayers for my family. We are doing very well. Last month, Carmen successfully directed a sophomore play at Asbury University. Here is an excerpt of a mother of three boys who all came to watch the musical play. "My 15-yr. old liked how they added more songs... and we enjoyed the crab-chasing scenes. It was hilarious because Sebastian was human sized and the fake knife was great." As you can tell by now, the musical was Walt Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. Do you recall the song *Under The Sea*? That was my favorite song from the movie.

Review: An "Underground Place" Story

This is the story of a missions worker living in a restricted Asian country, an "underground place." Pastora Helen Cabayao (aka Ms. Holly) is from the Philippines and works as an English teacher in this confidential location. She offers her services as an English tutor to university students, and, when there is more time, she also teaches English to nearby kindergarten schools and language learning centers. In the eyes of the immigration officials, she is an English teacher. To her friends in the Philippines, however, she is a cross cultural worker, a missionary sent by the Free Methodists to this communist country, with the goal of sharing the Christian gospel to the people of this Asian nation. And this is what Helen is doing.

At present, Helen leads two local fellowships in two locations. She discipled the members of these fellowships through one-on-one teaching and online meetings. God is helping her. There are now seven young adult members in one group and three mothers in the second group. The members of these fellowship groups are sharing Jesus to their friends and family members. God is faithful, and our Lord will continue to lead his people despite various restrictions. God is answering the prayers for this "underground place" ministry.

(For more details of this review, please visit David's Blog.)

Requests: Let Us Get Connected

(1.) Pray for an uplifting connection. Pray for a Free Methodist group located in Perth, Australia. Members of this group are from central Africa. Most have migrated to Australia as refugees. This Congolese group comes from South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. Most of them are from the Mbembe tribal culture. The group's local church leader is Pastor Byacelela Bibe Lusema. He left the Congo in 1998, and moved from one refugee camp to another, from Tanzania to Malawi, and now to Australia. All those times at these refugee camps, Lusema continued as a Free Methodist pastor.

The group started in 2012, and in 2020, it was incorporated and legally registered as a religious body. Its church board have five members, including Pastor Lusema. The 50 or so members meet at a local school and rent a space there every Sunday for their worship time. During our initial contact with the group, the contact person writes: "Our request is: We would like to get connect[ed] to you our elder and leaders also, to get recognized; which will get us more inspired and [en]courage[d] in knowing that we are being noticed by our leader." Pray for my (David's) trip to Australia to get us connected with our brothers and sisters in the city of Perth.

(2.) Pray for the NUB connections in California. Our Assistant Supt. for Fijian Ministries, Rev. Sefanaia Tataka, shares that there are six new Free Methodist congregations in the country of Fiji. Currently, there are seven more who are thinking of joining our FM networks of local communities. Pray for my (David's) trip to Fiji sometime this year so that we can strengthen our connections and affirm our mutual love for God.

(3.) Please continue to pray for the country of Tonga. Last month, a volcano erupted and spewed ashes on this tiny island nation. An ensuing tsunami devastated its coastal villages. It will take months before the people can recover from this calamity. Pray for the on-going relief work. Our Living Water FMC from California is leading the way collecting much-needed water and other non-perishable goods for delivery to this Pacific Island nation of Tonga. Pray for the people, especially the ones who have lost love ones. (Please visit my Facebook Page "Connecting in Asia" for more details of current FMWM work in the region of Oceania and the Pacific.)

(4.) Pray for God's care for his work among our Filipina missionaries. Pastora Helen Cabayao reports last month that she received the approval of her resident visa. Praise God. She will be able to stay in the country for the next two years. Pray for God's provision for this year. Most of her missionary funds come from her income as an English teacher/tutor. If you feel led to financially help Helen, please do not hesitate to contact me (David).

(5.) Pray for Pastora Emma Agarao, our Filipina missionary in Australia. Next month, she will move to Sydney to establish residence there and begin the work of planting new churches in this metropolis. Pray for God's wisdom and opportunities for sharing the gospel.

(6.) FMWM-Asia is organizing the Greater Filipino Network or GREFIN, to help our work in Asia. (What is GREFIN? You can scroll down to the Recap section below for its description.) Pray for God's leadership in this endeavor. The goal is to inspire many Filipinos to be passionate about sharing the gospel of Jesus across many Asian cultures.

Reflections: "Are You Moving With God?"

When we see a ship, we think of the ocean. When we view a paddle and a canoe, we cannot help but think of the many adventures we will be facing. We look forward to traversing rivers and going to new places. Adventures galore!

In the same breath, when we see God in his holy temple, we also think of the oceans of people scattered in the world. We cannot help but think of global cultures, of people who need to hear the gospel. We long to share God's love and holiness to everyone out there. This is why when we hear our Lord ask the question: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" then, we respond with Isaiah by saying "Here am I!" (Isaiah 6:8). We move because God is out there, just as much as he is here with us.

Are you moving with God, just as a ship is moving with the wind and the ocean? Is your faith stuck, not moving with the river? (Ezekiel 47:9) Do you long to move with God?

You might have noticed that I did not use the word "going." Going is for those who will cross cultures and jump from one area to another. Moving is for everyone who is willing to hear God's challenge and respond in obedience. When Jesus said to his disciples: "Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching people," he is also saying this to everyone who wants to follow him (Luke 5:10. GNB). Movement is an integral part of our Christian faith. When we walk with Jesus in a life of obedience, this means we take a journey with him, similar to sailing the vast uncharted parts of the ocean. One thing for sure is that our Lord is sailing with us.

Seeing our God move in the world means coming to a state of readiness to move with him. So, the next time you open your Bible and read of God's movement, pray this short prayer: "Help me Lord to move with you." And then take a step of faith and be with the people who need to receive the river of life, those who need to experience the ocean of God's love.

Recap: Greater Filipino Network (GREFIN)

GREFIN is a group of Christians who (1) have a vision of sharing God's love to Filipinos scattered around the world, (2) share a common task of connecting Filipinos and their friends for Jesus in a global scale, and (3) have the aim of participating in healthy collaborations and engaging partnerships in missions work.

We invite you to join GREFIN, and help us in this vision of sharing God's love, in the task of connecting Filipinos globally, and with the aim of participating in missions work. If you are interested, please send me a note saying you want to be a GREFIN member. (You can send an email to: dwclemente@gmail.com)

Research: A Canoe Ride

Did you know that the land area of the nation of Fiji is a little larger than the land area of the US State of Connecticut? Fiji is an archipelagic country in the Pacific Islands. The country is comprised of more than 300 islands, and three quarters of its one million people live on the island of Viti Levu, in the three major cities of Suva, Nadi, and Lautoka.

How long do you think it would take to travel by canoe from one end of the country to the other?

Reconnection: Jacob's Small Town American Life

Jacob is participating in the school musical, Wizard of Oz, here at Macomb High this Spring 2022. He is a member of the Lollipop Guild and the General of the witch's army. Do you remember one famous line? "Toto, I've got a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore."

*** **

David and Sarah Clemente
90 North Yorktown Road, Macomb IL 61455

dsclemente@yahoo.com

*** **