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IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT FED E-NEWS

We are changing the way we distribute the FED e-News. Soon it will go out only via Yahoo Groups. The old distribution method worked well in the beginning when there were few subscribers and the editor was 20 years younger! Now, with thousands of subscribers, the old system is both time-consuming and burdensome for me (nearing age 93) to send out the newsletter each week.

You already received one invitation to sign up to the FED e-News Yahoo group. We will send out one more round of invitations to join the Yahoo group. Please accept the invitation if you wish to continue to receive this newsletter. Alternately you or any interested party can join by sending an email to the following address: <fed-subscribe@yahooogroups.com>. If you are already receiving the newsletter via Yahoo groups, you need do nothing further. After the next round of invitations have been sent, the FED e-News will go out only to addresses that subscribed to the Yahoo Group.

I. Work for the Deaf in Mindanao

SULADS Newsletter by Fred L. Webb, February 5-8

Thursday, February 5, the four of us, Dr. Larry Evans, Elder John Blake, Elder Jeff Jordan and myself, flew from Manila to Cagayan de Oro on the Island of Mindanao. We were met at the Cagayan airport by Alex Panes, SULADS Director; Daryl Famisaran, Director of SULADS Comprehensive School for the Deaf; and Dr. Llanto, Missions Director for South Philippine Union Conference. When we arrived at the SPUC compound, we were met by the President, Elder Leonardo Asoy and Dr. Hermogenes Villanueva who is the liaison for the deaf for SSD.

After a very delicious lunch, we assembled in the office of the president where we discussed the projects in which Gospel Outreach is involved in SPUC territory. That includes Northeastern Mindanao Mission, Southern Mindanao Mission, SULADS, and the SULADS school for the deaf. We dealt with some issues of responsibility and reporting that have been problems in the past and made recommendations for proper reporting in the future. The president had other appointments for the weekend and needed to leave so the meeting was kept brief but thorough.

Friday morning, February 6, after breakfast, we all loaded into a van and traveled the 3 hours to the school for the deaf. The last kilometer is a hike across some fields and two bamboo bridges. Upon reaching the school, Under the direction of Daryl and Sarah Famisaran and their small staff, the students performed a welcome ceremony in sign language while the hearing staff sang their welcome. A program followed showing some of the accomplishments of the deaf students in playing the guitar and singing in their own way. While their sounds are unintelligible to us, they put their whole heart into it and we appreciated it for the meaning they put into it.

One of the needs of the school is for more dormitory space. Last year they had seven students. This year they have 23 students. That is stretching their capacity for accommodations. Currently, the boys are sleeping in the storage building and the staff and girls are sleeping in the dormitory. With that in mind, they have had plans drawn up for an additional. This would be a two story building with the sleeping quarters on a second floor over a cafeteria.

After the program, the group including the students and the visitors moved to a place on the hillside opposite the existing dormitory where we were to break ground for the new dormitory. After a song signed by the deaf students, Dr. Villanueva gave a short talk and prayed a dedicatory prayer.

Then we were each issued some sort of digging tool. There were two shovels that had been used in mixing concrete, a crowbar made of 1 inch rebar, and two hoes used for hoeing the school gardens. We happily dug a little soil as a symbol of what would soon take place on this site. The cost of this building will be about $20,000. It is badly needed.
Another pressing need of the school is for electricity. They have located a source of water that would turn a hydro-electric plant which would produce up to 10 Kw of power. This would be sufficient to operate not only lights but computers and video projectors for teaching as well as assist in the construction of the building. This hydro-electric plan would cost around $8,000. The school is very thankful for the funds that have been donated by A Better World in Canada for the development of the campus. The SULADS is now searching for funds to meet these developmental needs.

After the groundbreaking, we were ushered to the dormitory where there is a temporary kitchen. They spread before us a banquet of Filipino foods. I thoroughly enjoyed this spread as I have become fond of Filipino foods.

Some of us walked up the hill to inspect the water source. The source is clean and is potable drinking water. They have a large tank to hold water that is distributed to the various areas of the campus.

Gathering once again in the school building, Dr. Evans held a simple ceremony of pinning a pin with the official logo of the Adventist Deaf Ministries International on each staff and student. As time was slipping away, we returned to the van and made our way back to SPUC to spend the night. The students from the school for the deaf were brought to Cagayan to the SPUC compound and were accommodated in the Literature Ministries Seminary.

Sabbath morning, the deaf from the school as well as the deaf that are worshipping in Cagayan de Oro with GO worker, Sunny Suan, assembled in the meeting hall at the LMS building for Sabbath Services. Elder John Blake presented a report of the work for the deaf in India, Kenya, and Ghana. This was translated into sign language by Sarah Famisaran.

Meanwhile, the congregation of hearing assembled in the SPUC Garden Church for Sabbath School and church. The students from the school for the deaf presented a special music for the congregation as they signed to music played from a CD. It was very impressive as the girls signed the female voices and the boys signed the male voices. After the music, the students returned to the LMS building where Elder Jeff Jordan preached them a sermon in sign language. Dr. Larry Evans spoke for the large congregation in the Garden church.

The reason this is called the Garden Church is it was designed with open sides within a large circle. Between the edges of the church itself and the outside walls there is a plethora of decorative plants. The open air maintains a cool atmosphere within the church.

In the afternoon, we assembled at the outdoor baptistery which is in the shape of a cross. Twelve of the students from the school signified their desire to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and were baptized by Elder Jeff Jordan. If you recall, there are 23 students of which 4 were baptized previously. At this baptism more than half of the current student body was baptized. Now the majority of the students are baptized Seventh-day Adventists. Comments were made that this little, primitive school for the deaf has become a real-life center of influence for saving the souls of these deaf individuals.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the work of several volunteers who are not receiving a regular stipend but only providing for their basic needs. Two young couples are working with Daryl and Sarah at the school. One of the wives is a graduate of Special Education and is certified in sign language. The work of these volunteers is essential for the care of the students needs, both inside and outside the classroom. Efforts should be made to provide a regular stipend for these volunteers.

In the evening, Larry Evans called a meeting of the visiting team of Alex Panes, Hermogenese Villanueva, Jeff Jordan, John Blake and Fred Webb to discuss our impressions. We came up with five positive statements about the school:

- These students are learning to communicate through sign language and seem to have learned well.
- The staff has a strong dedication to see that these unfortunate ones are well cared for and loved.
- Although there are currently only grades 1 and 2 serving students from 8 years old to 47 years old, the academic program seems to be quite strong.
- The staff believe that within one more year, some of these students will be prepared to pass the placement test which would qualify them for high school.
- The large proportion of the students appear to be very brilliant and learn quickly. There are some who seem to have some impaired mental capacity but they are all learning to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

The campus itself, though primitive, appears well cared for and neat in appearance. Flowers are growing as well as food crops on the land.

We did find a few things that caused us some concern.

Daryl and Sarah Famisaran are working hard and untiringly without much of a break from the stress. We feel they need to take a few days off once in a while. They will be spending their long school break in Manila studying to improve their use of sign language.
The number of students is increasing but the funding is not. SULADS lack the funds to provide adequately for all the needs of the school.

The campus is badly in need of electricity to provide more adequate educational opportunities. More space is needed for the students accommodations. Alex Panes and Fred Webb will be checking to see what could be found that would provide a steel structure like the One-Day Church that could be modified to construct a dormitory.

We made a few recommendations which we thought would enhance the long-term stable growth of the school. The number of student should be limited. Careful records need to be kept to determine just what the cost of operations are per student. This must include all expenses for food, staff remuneration, educational supplies, transportation, etc. Once this is determined sponsors should be found for each student so that there will be adequate funding for the school.

While there has been some talk of opening the doors for blind students also, we recommended that they limit their scope at this time for the deaf only. When that is firmly established and solid financially, perhaps at that time, they might expand to working for the blind also.

Gospel Outreach also sponsors Sunny Suan, a hearing impaired man who has been a lifetime Adventist to lead out in working for the deaf in the Cagayan de Oro area. Since Sunny has some hearing capability, he is fitted with a hearing aid. There are some questions in our minds regarding the matching of this hearing aid with Sunny's needs. This should be addressed by a hearing professional.

Currently, the deaf are meeting in the Cagayan de Oro Central Church. There seems to be some disagreement between the pastor and Sunny regarding where the deaf should meet to worship. The pastor wants them to meet with the main church with the services being translated into sign language while Sunny wants the deaf to meet separately. We recommend that the hearing would benefit more from meeting separately but in order to keep the needs of the deaf before the church and for recognition of the deaf work, they should meet with the main church periodically as agreed upon by both parties. Sunny needs to have some sort of reporting system. John Blake has a form that is used in other places which he will provide that would assist Sunny in making a monthly report to his local pastor as well as to Alex Panes, the SULADS Director.

This was a delightful weekend and I believe a very valuable one for all of us involved. We pray that the work for the deaf will be well funded here in Mindanao and that even more may be accommodated as funds are available. This work is definitely fulfilling a portion of the great Gospel commission which in part states that the good news must go to every language. We think that includes sign language. May God continue to bless these efforts.

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II. The Paul Chos to Hold Evangelism Meetings in China
Paul Cho <paulcho99@yahoo.com.hk> April 1
from April 4 Church Bulletin for Chino Valley, Calif. Chinese SDA Church
Pastor and Mrs. Cho will be away from April 21 to May 5, 2015, to conduct an evangelistic series and Marriage and Family Seminar in Hangzhou, China. Please pray for their ministry.

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III. Death of Alice S. Schimke
from Adventist Review, March 19:
Alice S. Schimke, b. March 27, 1922, Ritzville, Wash; d. July 24, 2014, Port Charlotte, Fla. She served as a missionary to China and India. She is survived by two sons, Dallas and Clyde; one daughter, Sharon Walsh; four grandchildren; and four great-grand children.

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IV. How Adventism Reached the Dayaks of Sarawak
from Global Mission's Frontline magazine
by Laurie Falvo
"Our church's passion for reaching the people of Sarawak began sometime between 1888 and 1903 with a visit by missionary Abram La Rue. Over the years, other Adventist missionaries, evangelists, and lay people followed in his footsteps. It was slow, arduous work, beset by many challenges.

"After the disruption of World War II, missionaries returned to Sarawak and reestablished their work among the Dayak tribes.

"One of those missionaries was Norma Youngberg who spent years working among the headhunters Sarawak and wrote several books about her amazing experiences.
"Another was Dick Hall, who brought the first plane to Sarawak in the early 1960s. Wearing boots and a cowboy hat, Dick quickly learned to perform simple dental procedures as well as teach the people about Jesus. He created airstrips in the jungle with the help of villagers who wanted him to visit regularly. 'Every place that we made an airstrip,' says Hall, 'we raised a church. Then we would walk a short distance from that church to other villages and raise churches there as well.' "

"In 2008 one of our staff traveled to Sarawak and met Banyang Jamu, a longhouse chief and former Global Mission pioneer. Banyang had visited the other longhouse chiefs with a local pastor and shared the Advent message with them. Several of the chiefs joined the church and their longhouse members have been baptized as well.

"Most recently, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has sent Global Mission pioneers to live and work among the Dayak people. God has blessed their work and their ministry has been very successful. It's common to have more than 50 percent of a longhouse's inhabitants decide to join the church after a year's time. A single Global Mission pioneer can often reach out to two or three longhouses in a year.

"'We have done our best to assign Global Mission pioneers to the longhouses' says Lawrence Banyie, president of the Sarawak Mission. 'We have been able to build a church for the longhouse members who have had the ministry of a pioneer. We need more Global Mission pioneers. Then the work would really grow!'"

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V. Two Adventists Detained in Bangladesh

Adventist Review, March 24:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church said Tuesday that two Adventists were detained in Bangladesh on unclear charges. They have been released from custody ahead of a court hearing, church spokesman Garrett Caldwell said.

The Adventist Church is seeking to clarify the circumstances surrounding the case.

"While the Seventh-day Adventist Church places a high value on religious freedom and encourages respect for all religious traditions, we realize that misunderstandings may occur in areas of the world where we are a religious minority," Caldwell said. "It is our hope that the situation can be resolved as we work with local authorities to clarify the matter." He asked Adventists worldwide to pray about the situation.

Bangladesh, which bordered on three sides by India and Myanmar to its southeast, has the world's fourth-largest Muslim population after Indonesia, Pakistan, and India. An estimated 86 percent of the population of 157 million is Muslim, followed by 12 percent Hindu and 1 percent Buddhist.

Christians comprise about 0.4 percent of the population. . . ~~~~~~~~~~~~ To remove your name from the mailing list of this newsletter, simply reply to this e-mail and put "REMOVE" in the Subject line.