

Sinag Lahi



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ASIAN CENTER FOR MISSIONS

Living with the Lumads

As part of their missionary training, Batch 25 trainees of Asian Center for Missions in Makati, left their everyday comforts to live in a Lumad village in Mindanao. Their journey forever shaped their calling as Christ's ambassadors to cultures and nations.

After months of our regular evening classes at the Asian Center for Missions in Makati, our most awaited local exposure trip to Mindanao came through.

We never knew this trip will be as exciting as it has been. It was a combination of thrills, action, humor and love. Everybody was blessed and saw the goodness and glory of the Lord. Let us see why we said so...

Trip of a Lifetime

From Davao City, we rode a big truck, and then transferred to a heavy-duty jeepney-type vehicle that brought us up to a village of lumad people who belong to a Manobo subgroup*.

We passed through rough roads and breathtaking cliffs with overwhelming views, but afterwards, we experienced body aches and fatigue from the long travel. Upon arrival at the village, we were introduced to the *datu* (chieftain) and leaders of the lumad community.

The following day, the villagers welcomed us with handshakes, warm greetings and smiles. We were surprised to receive flowers from the children! As a

thanksgiving, we offered the flowers to God by taking pictures of them with the Bible.

We were then introduced to our host families. They accommodated us for five days in their homes. In return, we brought them food and other ingredients to be shared during meals. Our first night with them was a cold, almost sleepless, night. Their houses are made of wood and have no fixed windows, so cold air easily passes through.

Missionaries-in-Training

During our stay in the village, some of us met with the men, women, youth and children in different groups for Bible studies. The rest interviewed the datu and the elders for our cultural study.

Every night, we had our study of their language. The datu personally

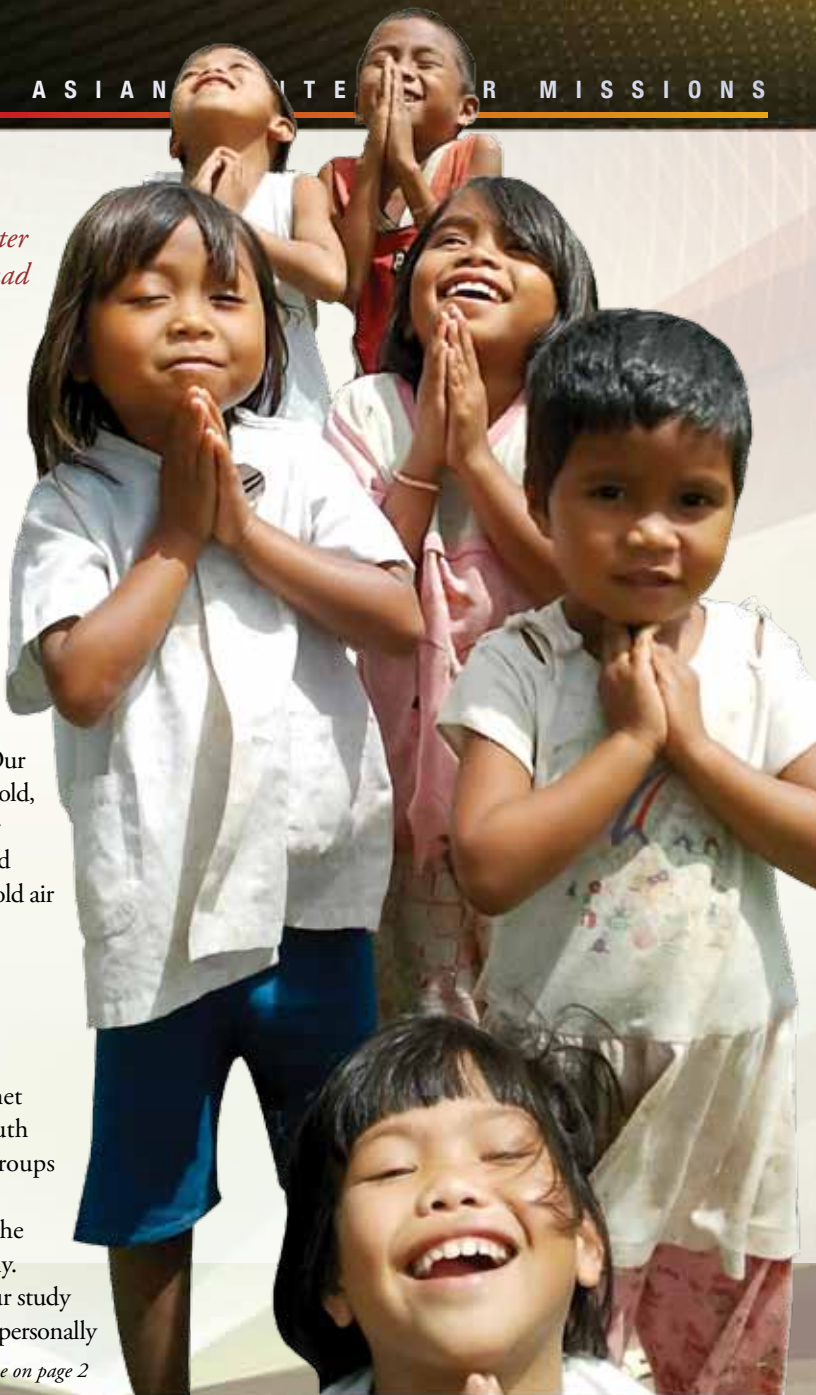
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The Lumad People of Mindanao

Lumad is a collective identity for Mindanao's indigenous people who remained largely uninfluenced by Islam and Christianity. The Lumad Development Center lists 18 lumad ethnolinguistic groups, including the Manobo, T'boli, Mandaya and B'laan, to name a few.

The Manobo, one of the largest lumad groups, has various subgroups under them, including the community visited by ACM Makati Batch 25.

*For security purposes, the name of the Manobo subgroup is withheld, as well as details of places and people.



taught us the right terms and pronunciations. Their language is unique and far different from ours.



One of the highlights of our trip is the harvest of souls at a different *sitio* (village). We were supposed to go swimming in a river, when suddenly the datu of the sitio invited us, missionary visitors from Manila, and opened the door for us to share the Gospel to families.

Because the harvest is ripe, the villagers were so responsive to the Good News. Almost everyone committed their lives to Jesus Christ! What a joy we experienced as we knew that thousands of angels rejoiced with us.

But greater joy was felt by the local pastor who was assigned to shepherd that sitio. For all the persecutions and hardships he experienced, all these were replaced by joy and fulfillment when the people opened their lives to the one true God. Indeed, nothing is too hard for the Lord.

We just need to wait for His perfect time, and we rejoiced for being part of that special occasion.

Though tired from the two-hour walk from the sitio, still we rejoiced and gathered strength for that night's language study. We never regretted the idea that were not able to enjoy swimming that day. What missionary hearts we have!

A Night to Remember

On our last night in the village, we held a community program complete with worship, songs, dances and special messages. It was so amazing to see the lumad villagers worship God! Their performances were well prepared, judging by the indigenous clothes worn by the



elders. Everybody excitedly watched the program. There were no dull moments.

When it was time for the datu to speak, he greeted all of us in English. The people were surprised and cheered for their leader. Then he sang a song in their language.

We also prepared an ethnic dance and our "finale skit," which served as an entry point for us to share the Gospel. That evening was filled with testimonies, blessings, encouragement and assurance of God's equal love to all His people.

Sad But Hopeful Goodbye

When it was time to say goodbye to our host families and the rest of the village, we cannot hide our loneliness. Only God can tell when we will have a chance to be with them again.

The children helped us with our baggage all the way to the top of the mountain, where the truck was waiting for us. We were a bit wet from the rain when we reached the top. We felt tears of both sadness and joy when we said our thanks to the children.

The training we had among the lumads through ACM was more than what we expected. The experience left a mark in our hearts that will never be forgotten.

The name of the Lord be continuously praised for what He has done, and for all people that He will continue to touch through the indigenous people of the Philippines. All glory belongs to Yahweh alone!

Read more about Batch 25's experiences in the field on ACM's website. Visit www.acmnet.org.

Field Notes



• **Clothing:** For their ethnic garments, the men wear their *tangko* (handkerchief), *balaran* (vest), *onlon* (belt) and *binukkad* (short pants). The women accessorize with *ponggowang* (leg bracelets), *oritis* (earrings) and *bolio* (necklace).

- **Food:** Their main diet includes root crops like sweet potato, cassava and *gabi*. For meals, they eat boiled green bananas, *batud* (fried baby beetle), *linotlot* (coconut and chicken cooked in bamboo), or wild pig during special occasions.
- **Culture:** The villagers must cultivate and preserve their indigenous music and dance for the next generation to learn. The village has a *kulintang*, native drums and

gongs, but they are seldom used. They also have ethnic dances depicting various themes (*itulon*) like courtship, thanksgiving and battle. Sadly, the younger generation doesn't know these dances by heart. They also have artworks called *battok* using leaves and grass dew as paint.

Pine Trees for a Greener Future

On our fifth day in the village, we got up early and went to the local nursery to get pine trees. We carried our young pine trees about a half kilometer up from the village. Some of us had a hard time carrying them to the mountain



top because they were quite heavy.

The datu instructed us where and how to plant our pine trees. Using the length of a hoe, he

measured the distance of one tree from another. We then dug holes in the ground for us to put our seedlings. Lastly, we put tree guards around the newly planted pine trees.

We are glad the village, especially their datu, is involved in reforestation. The effect of this green activity will benefit future generations and will serve as their legacy. It is one way of showing love to God by preserving His creation.

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Middle East

A Padre Among Muslims



They call him *padre*, but Ernesto (not his real name) is not a priest but simply a missionary of Christ. Yet in the place where he fulfills his calling, a humble Filipino offering remarkable prayers is something not even Muslims will pass up.

“Lord, do not put me to shame. Show these people that you are the true God!” was his fervent prayer every time he ministers to locals. And indeed, he has witnessed the possessed set free, the cripple walk miraculously, and the sick instantly healed.

These breakthroughs led Ernesto to

fully embrace God’s special task for him. Though working underground, the ACM graduate has seen the amazing results of praying for locals and establishing friendships with Muslims.

But when his local guide was abducted by terrorists, Ernesto had to come back to the Philippines for his safety.

“I was unsure if I could return,” he said. “But what I saw in there are people who are really thirsty for the Word of God. They need to be shared with the Gospel.”

God made a way for Ernesto when a mobilizer, seeing how Filipinos are effective in cross-cultural missions, opened an opportunity for him to return to the Middle East. Even the locals were missing Ernesto. They even signed a petition for their *padre* to come back to them.

“My perspective has now changed,” said Ernesto. “God removed all my ‘baggage,’ and now I understand why He sent me to the Muslims. I could really feel I’m a servant of God.”

Vietnam

Courage and a Song

When Rico (not his real name) flew to Vietnam for his ACM exposure trip, he was met with both good and bad news: The people are ready to hear the Gospel, but the government strictly wouldn’t allow it.

Local Christians face various restraints. There should not be a gathering of more than 10 believers. They are afraid to sing in worship since neighbors can report them to authorities. In the provinces, persecution is more severe.

Despite these risks, Rico, a worship and youth pastor, remained steadfast. The miraculous healings and spiritual revival he witnessed in underground churches affirmed his calling in Vietnam.

“The Lord has given me courage and greater faith. If I die here, it’s okay as long as I’m doing what the Lord wants me to do,” he said. “God reminded me that I’ve been crucified with Christ. If I am called by the Lord, I have nothing to fear.” When Rico was invited by a teacher to her class, he was surprised when the students requested him to sing.



“They heard Filipinos are great singers. So I sang ‘I Love Your Lord,’ but first I explained to them why I love the Lord so much.”

With just one song, a window of opportunity was opened for the professor and the students to know who Jesus is, and the amazing gift He has for every Vietnamese.

“The Lord really worked in their hearts, because the professor and the students were amazed to learn that through Jesus, it is possible to have eternal life,” said Rico. He is glad the seed of the Good News was surely planted in the teacher’s heart. She is now open to know more about Christ.

Trainee Story

Escaping Death



Rodelo was on his way to fetch his wife and children when a speeding motorcycle drove past him. The rider then drew a gun and aimed at the young pastor. Seven gunshots shattered that peaceful August day.

With bullets flying towards him, Rodelo ran for his life even when wounded. Two shots grazed his right ear and arm. He was shouting, “I’m a pastor! I was shot! Please help me!”

A parked tricycle immediately brought him to the hospital. On the way, he uttered an unusual prayer: “Lord, please save that man, and may he come to know You.”

At the hospital, the doctors described Rodelo’s escape from his harrowing ordeal as nothing less of a miracle.

“Even though my hand was fractured and my eyesight was slightly blurred, I survived and I’m alive, and that is a blessing from the Lord,” Rodelo said. “This is a testimony how good and great He is!”

He didn’t press charges against the gunman, who was later arrested. The reason behind the man’s act of rage remains uncertain.

“People ask me why I forgave the man who shot me. It is not my own heart who forgave, but it’s the heart of God. I then told the Lord that if I can’t forgive this person, He can’t give what I desire—to reach the nations.”

Rodelo belongs to the first batch of graduates of ACM’s mobile training in Tagum City. His batchmates, as well as ACM Davao staff, offered their prayers, resources and time for his quick recovery.

“My ACM trainers and classmates visited me in the hospital, and they gave me strength. Their love, concern and prayers for me during that time were heartfelt. They are more than family to me. I told them, *Mag-mimisyon pa talaga ako!*”

Global Anihan

VIETNAM

In spite of threats to Christians and missionaries, Nelson* had opportunities to visit the nation's provinces to minister to the locals. One couple surrendered their lives to Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Nelson also praises the Lord for one local who underwent water baptism.



Pray for continuous discipleship for these new Vietnamese Christians.

CAMBODIA

Nonoy and Karen report amazing accomplishments in Cambodia. Together with a Filipino medical team, they joined medical outreaches in poor villages. One of their English class students was baptized in the Mekong river. Nonoy also helped in planting a church in Kampong Cham.



Pray for blessings and protection upon Karen's pregnancy.

Roger and Gina are praising God for their four local friends who committed their lives to Christ. One of them helps the couple in their village ministry, conducting computer tutorials and sharing the Gospel to Khmers.

Pray for Roger and Gina's friends to grow in their walk with Jesus.

NEPAL

Alex* has seen God's faithfulness in the life of his disciple, Ady, a former street kid who surrendered his life to Christ. This disciple is now a program coordinator of their center for street children. Ady works among the country's impoverished children. Some of them already attend church every week.



Pray for more partners to help Ady in his ministry in Nepal.

CHINA

Lily* and her team ministered to people with leprosy in a village they visited. Here they saw the poor living conditions of the people. They then imparted livelihood projects for the lepers' children, and shared the Good News at the same time.



Pray for protection for Lily and her team as they work in a restricted nation.

Violet* is thankful for the opportunity to minister through English and discipleship classes. She teaches local church leaders, workers, pastors and missionaries. She also

praises God for the college student who committed her life to Jesus!

Pray for Violet's students to fulfill God's calling despite risk of persecution.

INDONESIA

Jose* now has 14 volunteers who attended training in first aid and emergency response. These volunteers have the burden to reach the locals for Christ. Jose also shared the Good Samaritan story and the love of Jesus to nursing students who attended the training.



Pray for boldness in sharing the Gospel and Christ's love to Indonesians.

THAILAND

Jeph and Apple have a lot to thank for. God provided them with funds for the registration of their Hope House Foundation, as well as godly people for the committees. The couple also received new bunk beds and mattresses for their new youth hostel in Chiang Mai.



Pray for Hope House Foundation to transform the lives of many young Thais.

**Real names withheld for security purposes.*

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