

# A VISIT TO OLANGO CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTRE IN CEBU (3 TO 9 FEB. 2023)

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**W**orld missions is one of the imperatives of the New Testament besides exaltation, evangelism and edification. The gospel must first be proclaimed among all nations (Mk. 13:10). The agency for the proclamation is every local assembly, accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit. We read that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. We are assured that He is building His church and that eventually, He will present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spots or wrinkles or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. All this is according to the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God. (Eph. 5:25; 3:10–11). The church is called out and called unto people for a specific purpose, to conduct their affairs on principles of God's Word and be uniquely related to God (Acts 7:38). The fundamental idea of an assembly is that of a local body organised on principles for purposes of proclamation, prayer, partnership, praise and practical fellowship.

One of the underlying principles and practical implications for a local assembly is its function and relationship as a living organism with a mission. We thank the Lord for sustaining the assembly in missions through the ministry of the Missions Group since it started at Bethesda Hall (Bras Brasah) in the 1980s. For 40 years, the Missions Group has maintained its missionary

focus through practical and prayerful fellowship. Over the years, it has conducted many short-term overseas missions trips to Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The assembly looks to the Lord of missions to be ready to launch through prayers, practical fellowship, and by people prepared and called by Him to serve in the missions field and maintain a corporate responsibility to missions.

We praise the Lord for the ministry of the Missions Group. It is privileged to be involved in the Lord's work in the Philippines since 1996, when the Lord called Brother Lee Won Jae to serve as a missionary to Cebu. The Lord was pleased to start two local assemblies in Cebu City and Camotes Island. Subsequently, Brother Lee retired and returned to Korea. The Lord has called two brothers—Moon In Oo to Cebu City and Huang Soo Young to Bohol Island—to serve. The Lord further planted another assembly in Liloan in 2010 (it now has 40 in fellowship, with a weekly attendance of 70 (including children)) overseen by brother Moon, and one each in Bohol and Dumaguete overseen by Brother Huang. Over the years, the Missions Group has maintained close contact with them and conducted short-term missions trips and MDEC. In addition, over the last 20 years, with the Lord's provision, the assembly had occasionally extended practical fellowship with them.

Besides visiting Myanmar annually to conduct Bible seminars from 2005 until 2019 (stopped due to the COVID-19 pandemic), the Lord also opened the door for me to visit Cebu to minister God's Word at the Bible camps annually from 2016 to 2018. In February 2023, a team of 4 members (Tan Chee Hwee & Amy and Wong Tuck Keong & Elizabeth) responded to the invitation to attend the dedication ceremony of Olango Christian Mission Center in Olango Island, Philippines. It is a trophy of God's grace, guidance and giving that the vision given to brother Moon in 2016 to build a retreat centre with a gospel hall has been met. By faith, the Lord provided the funds to purchase the land and start construction in 2018, and the building was completed in 2023. It is a testimony to the Lord as there was no public solicitation of funds, and the saints trusted the Lord for His provision in His time. It is indeed a miracle of grace that the Lord provided the funds to finish the project in 5 years, and the help through many challenges and difficulties amidst typhoons that damaged the roofs, shortage of materials, and other workforce and transport issues (from city to the island) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Dedication Ceremony Olango Christian Mission Center**

The Olango Christian Mission Center is well furnished with a hall as big as BAMK's main hall, a creche and mezzanine floor, and a main entrance foyer. From its humble beginnings with regular Bible study in 2016, the centre now houses the Mainit Assembly with 22 saints in the fellowship. Weekly, there are 60 (including children) attending the meetings. Pray that the Lord will raise elders, deacons and active members to witness to the people in Olango Island and depend on Him to operate independently in their worship, witness and work. The centre has a three-storey building with two dormitories with toilet facilities on each floor (totalling four for 28 people) and three guest rooms (for 10 people), an office, a multipurpose

hall, a library, a kitchen and an outdoor basketball court cum carpark. This centre will undoubtedly bear an outstanding testimony for the Lord as a place of worship, Christian meetings and Bible camps.

On Saturday, 4 Feb. 2023, over 400 attended the dedication ceremony, with 70 saints from different assemblies in South Korea and four from Singapore. The participants were overwhelmed by the devotion and dedication of the South Korean saints who came not only to rejoice in the Lord but also to put their hands to serve and prepare lunch and dinner for the 400 participants. The one-day dedication service was turned into a 3-day mini-conference with two messages from Lee Won Jae and me. Many song items were presented by various saints from South Korea and the local believers from the three assemblies (Camotes, Liloan and Parkna-An). It was like a gathering of saints from different tribes and races, a glimpse of what heaven will be like.

On Sunday, 5 Feb. 2023, we were privileged to break bread among the saints in Korean, English and Cebuano. Two messages were given by two South Korean elders, with Chee Hwee sharing the Word and providing a report in the evening. In the afternoon, I was honoured to conduct the baptism with brother Moon to baptise three brethren at the



*Chee Hwee gave the message and report, translated into Korean by Moon's daughter, Hyo Jin.*

beach of Olango Island. The evening was a time of singspiration, sermons and song items by the local and South Korean saints.

On Monday, 6 Feb. 2023, most of the local saints returned to Cebu city. The local saints from Olango, South Korean and Singaporean saints visited Island Gilutungan, where the South Korean youths conducted an evangelistic outreach to children (attended by more than 80 children). In the evening, we met to hear missions reports and updates by Lee Okyong, Lee WanSung and me.

On Tuesday, 7 Feb. 2023, the South Korean and Singapore saints left Olango Island. They stayed one night in Cebu city for rest and recreation and ended with a special evening meeting with the saints at the Liloan assembly, with different brothers sharing in the Word and songs. Most South Koreans left in the evening to take their flight back to South Korea, with a few staying behind to attend the dedication ceremony of Dumaguete. The Singapore brethren left on 8 Feb. 2023 after a lunch fellowship with some of the local workers and their spouses (Jeg, Joel, Recarido, Cheong Hansik, Moon In Oo and Lee Won Jae).

## THIS CENTRE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BEAR AN OUTSTANDING TESTIMONY FOR THE LORD AS A PLACE OF WORSHIP, CHRISTIAN MEETINGS AND BIBLE CAMPS.

Come August 2023, the Missions Group will organise a missions trip to Indonesia—partnering with the Citraraya assembly to conduct evangelistic programmes and organise a gospel camp at Kalimantan. In November 2023, the Missions Group will organise a MDEC in Olango Island as part of the follow-up work the South Korean MDEC carried out in January 2023, ministering to more than 500.



70 saints from different assemblies in Korea attended the dedication ceremony.



*More than 400 attended the Dedication Ceremony of Olango Christian Mission Centre.*



*Baptism service at the beach of Olango Island.*

### **Missions today**

The importance of missions flowing from the inner life of the assembly is born out of the life of Christ, the example of the apostles and the experiences of the early church. Missions are expressed in the fullness of biblical idealism. It is the all-consuming purpose of God in the life, words and work of Christ. It is the all-absorbing passion of the apostles of Christ and the all-pervading concern and mission of the Holy Spirit, as it is so fully demonstrated in the book of Acts, where the Holy Spirit was able to express Himself freely, and His operation was unhindered. The importance

of missions is written in large letters across the pages of the scriptures. Today, many assemblies that make missions primary in their programme witness the Lord's blessings. Remarkable growth has been experienced, debts have been liquidated, and spiritual benefits have come down unprecedentedly. God is no man's debtor. The assembly that makes God's business her business will soon discover that God is in her midst to make her concerns His concerns. Indeed, they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word in Mark chapter 16 verse 20. Such may be our experience today. But we must groan, give and go forth.