



Olson Family Christmas Newsletter

*Serving the Lord to Reach
Unreached Language Groups in
the Philippines and Southeast
Asia with Ethnos 360*

Issue #38, December 2020

**"Behold, the virgin shall
conceive and bear
a son, and they
shall call his
name Immanuel"
(which means,
God with us).
Matthew 1:23**

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**For information on financial
support, please see the
bottom of the next page.**

*For more information on the
typhoon, I recommend a
Philippine news channel here:*
<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/>



**After 2 huge typhoons in a row, Manila
and Luzon saw tremendous flooding.**



**This lady was bringing out her child in a
styrofoam ice box.**



**Helicopter view of the city of Tuguegarao
where our flight base is located. The
entire area is underwater.**

Dear friends and family,

Wow, what a year this has been! When I took the position of security consultant for our mission a little less than 2 years ago, most of the crises that we were dealing with were entirely localized. There were terrorist incidents here, natural disasters there, etc. But in the overall scheme of the whole world, there were weaknesses in the structure under the surface that were not yet recognized. They say that before an avalanche hits, the underlying structure of the snow is already very weak, and it is the most visible thing, the surface, that is the last to give way. That is, no doubt, what was in store for the entire world back in February of this year. The virus was unleashed, and the avalanche gave way.

The incredible devastation of the pandemic and great loss of life worldwide should remind us to be ever more mindful of the need to bring the Gospel of Christ to those who do not know Him. More than 2000 years after His earthly ministry, there are still people groups around the world, in the Philippines, all across the Middle East, even in the USA, and many other places where Christ is not yet named. Great forces are arrayed against proclaiming His name, but that will not stop God from using His people to get His message out there. So let us continue to pray and labor to that end.

The pandemic caused incredible damage to the Philippine economy, stopping remittances (which account for almost 20 percent of the Philippine economy) and of course tremendous loss of life. In addition to all that, the country has been particularly hit hard by typhoons this year. Of the 29 tropical cyclones that formed in the Western Pacific in 2020, 18 of them have hit the Philippines causing an aggregate total of \$2.7 billion dollars worth of damage and 448 deaths. Thankfully the loss of life from typhoons is not nearly what it has been in previous years, due to the Philippine government's proactive work on evacuating people from danger zones during the onset of a storm. As a point of comparison, in 2013, the year that Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines, the total damages for the year amounted to \$23.8 billion dollars and 6,756 deaths. (source – Wikipedia summary tables)

Nevertheless, the latest typhoon (Ulysses) to hit the Philippines (in mid-November) caused a very significant amount of damage, and so the number above of \$2.7 billion is likely to go up quite a bit as the damage is fully assessed. Ulysses came just on the heels of Typhoon Rolly, which was actually the strongest typhoon ever in terms of wind speed when it hit the country. A great many structures were weakened by wind damage from Rolly, and the ground became saturated from rain. The result was that when Ulysses hit, it brought record damage and flooding to many areas.

In particular, the flooding has hit one area where one of our mission's most successful church plants is established. The Bugkalot people in Northern Luzon were the last ritualistic headhunters when our missionaries moved in with them in the early 1950s to bring them the message of God's love and grace through Christ. You may recall I have written about them before. Today, this previously violent tribal group has progressed significantly, to the point that many of their members have achieved higher education to become doctors, lawyers, engineers, and other professions. Their agricultural system, which is the strength of their community, has continue to thrive, especially now that they have had many years in which farmers no longer have to fear the likelihood of getting their heads chopped off by rival village raiders while out in the fields. They even send out and sponsor their own missionaries now, bringing the message of grace to other areas of the Philippines and beyond.

This latest typhoon that blew through, though, has caused considerable damage and flooding in their area. Many crops are destroyed, houses and infrastructure damaged significantly, and they are trying to rebuild. Though they are a very resilient people, bouncing back from this one will take some time

and effort. So please remember the Bugkalot people in your prayers.

In the meantime, we are looking at 2021 as a year that hopefully many of our people will be able to return overseas. My work with the international security team now has me connected with our operations worldwide, not just in the Philippines. As we look ahead and countries begin to open up again, we would appreciate your prayers. Things will not really be “normal” as they were before the pandemic, but we can still get operations going again.

Let us not lose hope! God is in control during these difficult times. I think of one of our missionary families living in the jungle in Mindanao that has now been in the village for 9 months straight without a break. The effect of the pandemic on some areas of the mission has to push people into living as many missionaries did back in the 19th century – extended stays for months (maybe years?) on end, making do with the food supplies they can get in the local area, and managing in the same way as the people they are serving. One day in eternity, we will see the incredible wisdom of God in these events.

On a personal note, here is an update on our family. At the beginning of March, when it looked like things were beginning to ramp up with the virus, we started looking for places to live in North Texas. We wanted to be closer to where Abby was in school, closer to our grand-kids, and I also enrolled in a master’s program at Dallas International University, which is affiliated with SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics, aka Wycliffe Bible Translators). We are still part of Ethnos360, but I am looking at finishing some accredited graduate work with SIL while we are stateside. This will only serve to expand what we are able to do in the mission in the future.

As the pandemic was breaking out, we had appointments to look at a couple of rent houses, but the realtors all canceled on us because of the virus. Then through an on-line search we found a place in Midlothian for a reasonable amount of rent, just about 20 minutes from my school, and near enough for Abby that we would be close by when she is able to return to school. We signed the lease and moved up here, arriving on the very day that the entire country was shutting down, March 20th. It was just in time. They had closed UT Arlington that day and were pressuring the students to all leave, and things got a little tense at the school as we moved her out of her dorm room.

Since then our work has continued. Isaac finished law school, passed the bar, and is on his way to start working as a lawyer in the Air Force. We have enjoyed being able to spend time with him, Bethany, and the kids. Soon they will be set up at his first duty station. It is an incredible joy to see the next generation taking on the responsibilities of life and living out a life of faith, even in these difficult times.

We hope and pray you all will have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Rescue workers bringing families out of flooded areas. Here a baby is being unloaded off a rescue truck.



This lady was explaining how they were out of clean water and she needed to give her child something to drink.



Many government offices were flooded out in the Metro Manila area.



Here evacuees in Quirino setup makeshift shelters while waiting for relief goods to be delivered.



Some people had to be rescued by boat, and in some cases the power and telephone lines got in the way of the boats reaching the affected houses.

Whether stateside or overseas, this ministry cannot continue without your help. Would you consider making an end of the year donation to support our ministry in the Philippines? We would be honored to have your support.



One of our Filipino missionaries sorting through relief goods to send to the Bugkalot believers in Quirino province.



Isaac being sworn in as an official licensed Texas attorney. Next step - the U.S. Air Force!



We have really enjoyed being able to spend time with and be close to our grandchildren for the past year!

To help support our ministry, you can make a tax deductible contribution to Ethnos 360. There are several ways:

1. On-line:

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-or-

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2. Call the home office to set up ACH deposits at: 866-547-2460

3. By mail – send checks to:

Ethnos 360
312 W. First St.
Sanford, FL 32771-1231

Simply designate that the funds are “for the ministry of George & Ginny Olson.”

4. Follow these links:

www.ethnos360.org or
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As you all know, our ministry depends on donations from faithful supporters like you all! Please consider joining our support team!