

Deaf Ministries International

Issue 48 | October 2023



*Taking the Gospel
to the Deaf*

Ligao celebrates 40 years of faithfulness

DMI's Fishermen of Christ Learning Centre in Ligao, Philippines in late September commemorated 40 years of excellence in raising young Deaf children through Christian education. Under the theme "4 Decades of Faithfulness", three days were set apart, dutifully prepared and overseen by Bing and Anabelle, for all the students and staff to enjoy. The celebrations, boisterous at times, started with a police escort motorcade through the city, and included artistic performances from the students, art contests, sporting contests, games and fellowship times. All these were undertaken with great enthusiasm by the students and staff.



They were joined in their celebrations by Dr Doug Clutton, a Canadian audiologist living in the Philippines and long-time DMI supporter; Heo In Yeong, a DMI International Board member from South Korea; and from Australia, International Operations Coordinator Andrew Miller, Finance Coordinator Susi Tjhai and Commu-

nications Coordinator Amy Jack. These dignitaries served as guest speakers, contest judges, companions, friends and general wind-bags. All DMI pastors from around the Philippines met to join the celebrations and to convene a meeting of IDEAP (Immanuel Deaf Evangelists Association, Philippines) at the same time. So, it was



quite the party.

Part of our role in joining the celebrations was to observe the facilities and functions at the school. In this, it was a delight to see how well the organisation (for it is more than a school) now known as Bi-col Deaf Action, fulfils the mission goals of DMI. DMI's goals are to take the gospel, education and employment to the Deaf all around the world. Here in Ligao, it's happening. At the church on campus, in the classroom, with the gathering of pastors, and also noted with joy in the number of graduated students who return for Sunday

*Give praise to the Lord, proclaim His name;
make known among the nations what
He has done. Psalm 105:1*

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Ligao Continued....

by the Deaf. The 60 students at the school who excel in their studies - and those few (but much loved) with developmental disabilities - testify to the educational excellence of the classrooms here. The farm operating right beside and within the school grounds provides vocational training for students, employment for graduates and an income for the organisation. Truly, Bicol Deaf Action is a shining light in DMI's operations and should be proud to so joyfully celebrate 40 years of faithfulness.

But the real treasure here is the students and the joy they exhibit. We kept getting dragged into meetings (which were wonderfully productive) but all we really wanted to do was spend time with the students. Their joy and energy were infectious, and it was a treat

to just watch them play volleyball, cheer on the basketball teams, dance, draw, dress up and reposition the sign-mangling fingers of well-meaning foreigners who were probably communicating something unholy. Ever-smiling, the students are clearly loved here and they, too, are becoming conduits of a higher love, and there is no greater education than that.

The celebrations were both impressive and a joy. Bing, Anabelle and all the staff are to be praised for organising such excellent anniversary celebrations. We presented certificates and bookmarks for all staff and pastors from DMI which Amy had prepared and we were truly sad when the day came for us to leave.



Drying rice



Piggery



Basketball



Volleyball



Anniversary artwork



Bing & Anabelle



Andrew, Amy & Susi



Past students



Lots of fun!



Immanuel Deaf Evangelists Association



Immanuel Church of the Deaf, Ligao



Some of the teachers at FCLC

Special Concerns

Two related concerns became apparent during our visit. The first is the low rate of the teachers' salaries. We're glad that the teachers at Bicol Deaf Action are so loyal but we are not making life easy for them by paying them so much less than local government school rates. It's true that almost all of our teachers around the world are earning less than the local equivalent, but in Ligao the discrepancy is particularly harsh. We are looking to establish an 'educational fund' to support teachers at Ligao and are asking supporters to prayerfully consider if they would like to contribute to this (in addition to any current giving - we don't want to take from other areas). A small gift on our side will make a significant difference on theirs.

A similar situation has come to our attention where Sarah Jane, a graduate of the school and currently a teacher's assistant and dorm parent, is working to pay off a student loan given to her by the school. Under the current arrangement, Sarah Jane's student loan is \$3165 (AUS). Her monthly salary is \$110. From this, \$14 is deducted each month. On top of having such a small salary (which is not the issue for a teaching assistant), she will not finish paying her loan until 2038! This is not only problematic for Sarah Jane but for other students at the school who will be unlikely to receive a similar loan until Sarah Jane has paid her's back. The establishment of an educational fund can help ease this for Sarah Jane and for those graduates who follow in her footsteps.

IDEAP (Immanuel Deaf Evangelists Association, Philippines)

It was wonderful to see IDEAP (Immanuel Deaf Evangelists Association, Philippines) re-convene at the 40th anniversary of the Ligao school. This was a gathering that Neville had originally encouraged before COVID delayed its progress. It was the first time in over 6 years for the pastors to gather in this capacity.

IDEAP officially stands under PICD (Philippines Immanuel Church of the Deaf) led by Ps Albert Mercado, as PICD is already a registered organisation. The purpose of IDEAP is to coordinate the Deaf Filipino pastors into a more coordinated unit to share materials, strate-

gies and other resources to better serve the Deaf of the Philippines. Immediate fruit from this assembly was to see Ps Glenn better supported to grow the churches in Davao following the closure of the Davao school. There was some jolly good fellowship amongst the group who were almost inseparable throughout the week and seemed to increasingly enjoy each other's company.

This group will also work together to ensure the success of the next DMI International Conference in 2026.

Myanmar - The Nightmare Continues

While the world is hooked on the tragedy in Ukraine and turns its eyes now to Gaza, Myanmar has been forgotten. Yet it continues to go from bad to worse. Our director Pa-lian and school teacher Saw Monday communicate with us directly from within the fallen kingdom. Pa-Lian reports of recent flooding on top of the escalating economic hardships and military fighting.

Last month, he wrote, "Last Monday, most of Kalay [where our



school is] was flooded following heavy rain all day and all night. Our principal's house was among those flooded." He continues, "Our country is getting harder and harder. Prices continue to skyrocket. Just before the school opened while I was in Kalay I bought 20 bags

of rice and 5 tins of oil at 82,000 mmk for a bag of rice and 120,000 mmk for a tin of oil. But now it costs 150,000 mmk for a bag of rice and 150,000 mmk for a tin of oil! In Kalay, battles rage between the army and the People's Defense Force every night even in the town. The curfew is still in place. The country is shut down from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am every night. Life gets harder and harder. The daily life struggles of our Deaf church family are painfully difficult. Last Sunday, a Korean couple donated to our church rice, oil and noodles and everyone was so happy." Then, in his characteristic way, Pa-Lian concludes, "We all are doing fine."

Following this correspondence, we sent \$1,000 in food support to Myanmar which was gratefully received and faithfully distributed amongst the church members. Please continue to pray for our Deaf churches and the Deaf school in Myanmar. Pray for the Christians in Myanmar. Pray for the country of Myanmar.



China

If it is from God, you will not be able to stop these people. Acts 5:39

Our pastors and evangelists continue to do an amazing job taking the gospel to the Deaf and encouraging one another despite being under increasing surveillance and enduring harsh economic challenges. Mr A is our chief correspondent, and he writes about developments in each of our fields. (For security reasons, people and places are identified by initials only.)

Earlier this year, Mr A's church held an event in a local park. Out in the open, they worshipped (in sign), prayed and had a sermon. One lady was baptised into the Lord then a time of fellowship was enjoyed between all members. The Holy Spirit cannot be sanctioned, blocked or stopped!

On Disabled Aid Day in May, Ps S of Tr Church gave each member of the church financial support which was gratefully received. Every brother and sister in the church was moved and praised God.

In June, the Te Church for the Deaf was able to celebrate its 17th anniversary. Due to the pandemic, the church's anniversary hadn't been celebrated for two years so members were full of thanks and joy for God's care and protection. The church prayed for continued peace and protection over the churches across China.



Church in the park

In D, the coffee shop, which had been started as an IGA and as a gathering place for Deaf Christians to meet for prayer and fellowship, relocated back to the local church at the request of one of the pastors. He would like the Deaf to worship with the hearing congregation however there are some concerns about this. The coffee shop was used as a place to teach and translate the Word to the Deaf in ways that the local churches can't or don't. Brother C has come to D to discuss the future of the translation work and the coffee shop.



New coffee shop location

Some of our believers from J were travelling together recently. They met a young couple who believed in Jesus but had become disenchanted with their lives. The believers from J witnessed to them and encouraged them in their faith, giving them a Bible. When the couple saw how the believers shared their meals and lives together, they were deeply moved and joined the church that day. They left, we are told, thanking the Lord and renewed in their faith.

In K, the church is encountering great difficulties and obstacles.

In Y, the Word is preached every Sunday where Mr A reports a revival is happening. After services on some Sundays, biscuits, fruit and eggs are distributed to church members and these are shared with great thanks over fellowship.

They are asking for prayer that God may guide their next steps. Pray for all the Deaf churches in China.



A treat of biscuits, fruit and eggs

New clothing factory for Egypt



Earlier this year, Matthijs visited Egypt and was both encouraged by the faith of the Deaf Christians there, and appalled at the level of poverty they were enduring. He commended Ps Hany for the excellent work he is doing there. The Deaf community are largely forgotten by the Egyptian government. The village of Aziya has 70,000 inhabitants, 95% of them Christians. Their living conditions are squalid. There is a lot of intermarrying, hence the high rate of deafness. Unemployment amongst Christians is high. Unemployment amongst the Christian Deaf is the norm.

But a church in the United States is sponsoring the building of a clothing factory in this little town. The factory, to be run entirely by the Deaf working with DMI, will mainly produce underwear - which everyone needs. It will employ 25 Deaf people and provide for 25 Deaf families in the process. It will produce garments that the Deaf community need and through their entrepreneurialism will raise the dignity of the Deaf in the area. We are hopeful that this IGA will see the long-term benefits that many in this community need. Reports to come but let's hope and pray that this project will be a great success.



Rwanda - Pastors on bike

Motorbikes provided to Rwanda (and other fields) this year have proven to be invaluable tools in our evangelistic outreach, helping our evangelists to reach services and fields they would otherwise never have reached.

Following our last report, DMI supporters have been very encouraging in their ongoing support. Additional funding was sent to Rwanda (and other fields) to purchase another motorbike and this was designated to Evangelist Florentine who is serving our ICDR-Musanza branch (Immanuel Church of the Deaf Rwanda - Musanze). Florentine is assisted by Masengesho who appeared in blog #47 and requested support for a motorbike for their ministry.

47. Masengesho – Signs and Wonders – Testimonies of the Deaf (deafministriesinternational.com)

Florentine is currently the primary preacher at ICDR-Musanze and has a strong passion for evangelism. She frequently visits the Deaf in their homes to share the Gospel with them. Parents of Deaf children like to call her to their homes to advise their Deaf children and she readily accepts these calls. So this motorcycle will help facilitate her travel to these homes.

Evangelist Florentine expressed immense joy and gratitude upon

receiving the bike. She asked that God would bless DMI abundantly in return for its kindness and support. Curiously, Florentine didn't know that she would be receiving a bike. It was a surprise for her. And when she received it, she told Director Patrick that she had dreamt of receiving a motorcycle just the night before!



Africa Bible School

DMI's approach to global missions amongst the Deaf is truly revolutionary. Training the Deaf to take the gospel to the Deaf is a surprisingly unique and unsurprisingly effective approach to Deaf outreach. Our African Bible School, based in Uganda, has for over 20 years produced graduates who have gone on to plant churches in other countries and lead hundreds of Deaf to Christ. It's been amazing.

Yet a new season has come for our Bible School in Africa. We need to redevelop and expand the school yet it has become clear that it is much more cost effective to build our new Bible school in Rwanda. Rwanda is a more developed country economically, and our board and leadership there are exceptional, mature in vision and works, with our Director Patrick and Chairman Omar trained pastors and theologians. The school in Uganda will continue to train local pastors and evangelists and by 2025 will have transitioned into a fully self-subsidised operation.

The new facility in Rwanda will at any one time train dozens of Deaf youth and adults in Christian ministry. In the years ahead, hundreds of Deaf pastors and evangelists will graduate, initially with certificates but in time with diplomas and even degrees, to plant churches and take the gospel of Jesus all over Africa. It's a truly exciting prospect.

We need funding for this. It will cost us US\$260,000 (AUS\$380,000) to build the school and a further US\$30,000 to furnish and set it up. For this we are seeking grants but also asking our supporters for generous support to see this project realised. We are encouraging supporters to donate 'rooms' which can be named in honour of a friend or family member. The pricing for the rooms is as follows.

Classrooms 1 ~ 6 - \$10,000 each
Computer lab - \$10,000
Library - \$15,000
Prayer Hall - \$15,000
Dining room - \$20,000
Dormitory 1 - \$20,000
Dormitory 2 - \$20,000
Guest house 1 - \$50,000
Guest house 2 - \$50,000

Plans for the school have been fully drafted. Please contact Andrew for details on the facility at andrew.miller@deafmin.org
To donate, follow the information below.



8th GRADUATION CEREMONY
27th August 2022

AFRICAN BIBLE SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

To donate towards this project:

Credit card payments directly through our office or bank transfer donations are preferred for donations above \$500. Follow donation details on the back of the newsletter for bank transfers and use *bibleschool* as the reference

Donations under \$500 can be donated through www.deafmin.org/donate



News from Supporting Countries

Okaeri! - Andrew connects with Japan churches

Andrew visited Japan in September to reconnect with supporting churches, to make new connections with interested churches and to support the still young Japan board in the wake of Alayne's passing and Jack and Keiko Marshall's retirement.

Minoh International Church and Osaka International Church continue to faithfully support DMI, both corporately and through individual donations and sponsorships. Their response to our updates in the fields is always warmly received. New partnerships have been formed with the Mustard Seed Church and some house churches in



OIC Japan

Nagoya and we look forward to developing these friendships. The Japan Board continues to seek and train new members as it faithfully serves DMI under Karen Ellrick's capable interim leadership.



Nagoya house church, Japan



Mustard Seed church, Japan

Manga Bibles

We're thrilled to announce an exciting association with New Life Ministries, the publishers of the Manga Bible. Manga (Japanese-style comic) Bibles are a brilliant visual presentation of the Scripture (with English text) which have been instrumental in bringing the gospel to life for children, the pre/semi-illiterate - and now for the Deaf who are greatly aided by a visual representation of God's Word. (Literate adults also really enjoy them!)

Here's what they look like:



The cost for 200 sets + shipping is US\$3320 (AUS\$5200).

Please help us fund this and be a part of this exciting new Bible ministry to the Deaf.

You can find out more about them here:
<https://www.nextmanga.com/>

Samples were presented at the International Conference last month and our field directors went nuts, ordering hundreds of sets for each field - way more than we could (or should) afford. A more modest order of 200 sets in total (there are 6 books to a single Bible set) is currently being prepared. These can be shipped (at very minimal cost thanks to New Life Ministries and their commitment to the Ministry of the Word) to Nairobi where our field leaders will be gathering for a FatherHeart conference in January and can take them back to their respective fields for distribution. We believe these Manga Bibles will have a huge impact in our Deaf church communities.



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Christmas Gift Catalogue Out Now!

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Fundraisers

August and September kept the DMI staff extra busy preparing and hosting fundraising events in Melbourne and Sydney.

On August 26th, a trivia night and silent auction was held at Monash Church of Christ, Melbourne, who were very generous in their support of the event. The night was a success and lots of fun with around 70 people battling over trivia questions, participating in short games between segments and bidding wars over silent auction items that were kindly donated from local businesses and supporters.



We took the opportunity to thank Rod Chapman for his service to Deaf Ministries International. He has been the Chairman of the DMI and DA Australian Boards, Regional Minister for Pastoral Care as well and a member of the DMI International Board. He has been instrumental in helping DMI achieve its vision, along with Neville Muir, to see Deaf lives saved and transformed.



On September 2nd, a second trivia night was held, this time at St Marks Anglican Church in Sydney. This was another successful event with about 80 people attending, all in a battle to win a Lindt chocolate hamper!

We would like to thank all of those who attended and gave generously at the Melbourne or Sydney events which together raised just over \$8000. The proceeds will go towards supporting our new self-sustainability projects.



Berwick Church of Christ STM Fundraiser



A short-term mission team from Berwick Church of Christ is eagerly preparing to visit the Fisherman of Christ Learning Center, in Ligao, Philippines in January 2024. The team will be helping with maintenance tasks, as

well as spending time building relationships with staff and students. On October 7th, a Cultural Dinner and Dance Night Fundraiser was held in an effort to raise funds to support the costs of the team going. The night was a great success with 160 people attending and \$5000 raised.

It was a wonderful night of entertainment, great food, friends and fundraising with special performances by Atharv, a Deaf student



who signed 'What a Wonderful World' with his Support Worker, and Melanie Robertson, who previously worked at the school in Ligao. Chris Henniquin and Geoff Brook also shared about their experiences of being a part of teams that have previously visited the school.

Many thanks to Berwick Church of Christ for their ongoing generous support of DMI and we look forward to them visiting the Deaf school in the Philippines in January!

Thank You



Thank you, Susan!

It is with sadness and gratefulness that we announce that Susan Shanahan has retired from the Australian Board of DMI and DA. Susan was a close friend of Neville's and was a member of the Board for decades. A respected member of the Deaf community in Australia, her contribution to DMI through the Board, events, Deaf camps and mission trips will be sorely missed. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you, Susan, for your many years of faithful service and friendship!

New Australian Board Members

The Australian Board of DMI and DA welcomes three new members.



Grace Broadbent is a teacher of the Deaf and qualified interpreter, supporting clients on the NDIS through her business, LIST Services. She has been involved with DMI for many years having met Neville while still learning Auslan as a teenager and has made two trips to Davao with DMI and interpreted at the international conference in Korea.



Young-Joo Byun is a Korean Deaf lady living in Sydney. She has served as DMI's representative to the Korean community in Sydney for many years. A renowned performer, Young-Joo links our Board to the Sydney Deaf community.



Peter Miller is a Sydney-based hearing man who has decades of experience in Christian leadership and small business. A long-term supporter of DMI, he brings a wealth of knowledge and wisdom to the Board. He is the brother of Andrew.

Praise and Prayer

Prayer is such an important part of this ministry, and we'd like to ask you to partner with us in praying for the work that DMI is involved in. We may not be able to do much by our strength, but with God, nothing is impossible!!

Philippines

Give thanks for the ongoing work and vision of the pastors in the Philippines. Pray for Ps Glenn as he moves home and works to strengthen our two churches in Davao.

The sick

Give thanks for those who have recovered from sickness and continue to pray for those in our fields who are struggling with illness. Pray for comfort and a swift recovery.

China

Give thanks that the government church has allowed our church to stay in their own premises. This is a great blessing yet also requires extra funding. Pray for church growth, protection and funding.

Egypt

Give thanks for the gift to start a new clothing factory in Egypt. Pray that as preparations unfold, the factory would be up and running without complications.

Weekly prayer points can be found on our website or sign up to be a prayer partner and receive them directly to your email.

<https://deafmin.org/prayer/>



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