



# Eric and Sandra Read

Link Letter no. 41 | October 2023

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**Location:** Philippines



**What we do:** Demonstrating natural farming models alongside equipping churches in holistic mission for real community impact.

Dear friends,

What are your dreams? So began Pastor Nady as the guest speaker for our overnight youth camp. He then went on to describe a boy he knew when he was young who had a dream to fly in an aeroplane. The dream drove him to persevere in school even when all his friends were dropping out (he was talking about himself but didn't let on). He eventually achieved his dream. But one thing he believes helped him was finding a relationship with Jesus Christ and God's promise in Jeremiah 29:11 "... for I know the plans I have for you... to give you hope and a future..."

Last week we asked the youth (including the children who attend) about their dream. "I want to be a... teacher, doctor, seaman, vet..." Some of the children answered "artista" – when we asked them what sort of artista, "love story". They've been watching too many soap operas! As they are all still at school, they all know it means they need to study hard – particularly as going up a grade each year is not automatic here, you have to pass the year. One of the girls is frequently absent, so is 11 years old but only grade two. She has said she is going to work hard at school this year, so we've told her we'll hold her to it.

Our two workers on the farm also have their dreams: Romel wants to work in environmental care and Rodel wants to be a welder. It is on us to help them meet their dreams. We told them a few weeks ago that we will start to be more purposeful in training them in the syntropic farming, with classroom sessions weekly. Rodel attended the welding course Dodo did here during Covid and Eric told him he would give him refresher training. We haven't started either yet, which puts the onus on us. Next week! Well, that was 2 weeks ago..

## Schools Programme

We have been considering starting a programme of school visits to give experience and interactive lessons to the children about nature and creation care, but have been putting it off until we have someone to help us run it. However, a few times recently we have read or heard that faith means trusting God when everything isn't as we want it, so we have decided we need to make a start. We are planning to run some pilots in the first quarter of next year with our local elementary schools.



*With our barangay captain (RHS) and officials – they used our centre to conduct a family training seminar.*

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**With Jesus  
With each other  
To the edges**



We want the children to appreciate nature – walking through tree-enclosed areas pointing out ferns and orchids, using magnifying glasses to look at the bark of trees and veins of leaves. And observing and counting all the different trees and plants in the syntropic area: bees among flowers and butterflies on bushes, lifting dead logs and mulch to see critters (as long as there are no snakes or scorpions!), tadpoles in ponds. Through their observations we hope to bring up reflective discussions about how everything they observe has been made by God with a purpose, tracing how they are all interconnected in a symbiotic relationship, and how God entrusted to us to be the stewards of the whole creation.

We are excited about this. Although schools do teach about the environment, most children don't get anything in that direction at home, so will take birds eggs from nests or drop litter without thinking it is wrong. We hope they will understand the importance of the natural environment, and their curiosity will provoke plenty of "why?". We pray this will wake up in them an appreciation for the wonders in God's creation and man's central role in it and instill in them a lifelong understanding of caring for creation as part of their day to day life.

In due course we would like churches to bring their Sunday school class and have outdoor worship time. We would like for children to realise that as believers in God the Creator, to care for everything in our environment is a part of their faith.

There are some things we need to prepare now and others we would like to but don't have the time or funds to do so at the moment. **Please pray** we will be able to get ready everything we need to. We have a recently retired teacher friend who is advising us.

If the schools pilot is a success, then to take it further and expand it, we will need someone to help us, **please pray** for a young dynamic volunteer with a strong faith and convictions on creation care, and good with children to help us run this programme!

We have had to replace a lot of the guava trees in the last year, which has hit our income. We have replaced them with a mix of guava, jackfruit, bananas and papayas to diversify income and provide more resilience. We are able to water during droughts as we have good water source from spring – without that we probably would not have risked doing so much planting this year. **Please pray** these trees will start to become productive next year and be able to fund our other work. We are also looking at possible diversifications.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers and many blessings to you all.

Eric and Sandra



*Photos from top to bottom: We took the youth and children to the new pool a quarter of a mile along the road; Pastor Nady brought a lantern to launch as a symbol of them launching their dreams; Eric welding some tractor bits.*



## Going further with Church Mission Society

Could God be calling you to follow him to the edges with CMS? We'd love to connect and help you discern what God might be saying. Find out more about how we can help you to step into God's mission at [churchmissionsociety.org/explore](http://churchmissionsociety.org/explore)

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