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# THE VALIANTE FAMILY

Equipping and Training National Pastors in the Philippines

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337 W. Woodland Avenue, Penndel, PA 19047 • valiantes.com • tim.valiante@gmail.com • (570) 380-4548  
Field Address: Haven of Grace, Paglaum Road, Brgy. Patic, Pulupandan, Negros Occidental, PH 6102

May 19, 2022

Dear Supporters and Friends,

HAVEN OF GRACE SEMINARY IS TRAINING MORE MEN RIGHT NOW THAN EVER BEFORE! In spite of all the difficulties and setbacks brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, we finished our spring semester with more students enrolled in our seminary than ever before. I am amazed at how the Lord continues to expand the reach of the seminary and increase the scope of our ministry in ways I would have never expected. Thanks to online technology, live, interactive classes are now offered in three locations across the island of Negros: Pulupandan (the location of the seminary campus), Bacolod (a city of 600,000+ people which is a 45-minute drive north of the campus), and Hinoba-an (a 3-hour drive on the far southern tip of the island). [See the map below for the locations.]

In addition to directing Haven of Grace Seminary [Philippines], this fall I will also be helping our Missions Agency, Pacific Rim Missions International [PRMI], launch Haven of Hope Seminary in Northeast India [Dimapur, Nagaland]. This will be the third seminary started by PRMI since 2019. I am looking forward to teaching men in this strategic location in India. We will have the opportunity to train students, not just from India, but also from other hard-to-reach neighboring countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, and other Southeast Asian countries.



With the expansion of our ministry, not just in the Philippines, but now in Northeast India, you may be wondering: “What does this mean for the Valiante Family?” First let me say that we remain committed to training national pastors in the Philippines (and beyond) for gospel ministry. This is the ministry God has called us to, and we are dedicated to completing this task.



However, how we will carry out this ministry will look different from what we first anticipated. Through consultation with Mark Kittrell, president of Pacific Rim Missions, and Tobe Witmer, pastor of our sending church (Lighthouse Baptist) we have decided that our family, moving forward, will remain Stateside, while I continue to teach online courses each semester. I will supplement my online teaching with regular visits to the

Philippines (and eventually India and other locations we open), to teach 2-week block courses to the students. My hope is to take two such trips each year. [At the end of this update, please take a moment to read Mark Kittrell’s and Tobe Witmer’s letters.]

I want to take a moment to explain our thought process on this decision. [For a video update, please visit: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SoFdjhab61c4ABvsOLyS42n3-6RURXO/view?usp=sharing>]

When we arrived back in the States in late 2020, we were still reeling from the excessive lockdowns of the Philippines—not to mention the 6 sets of tickets we booked and saw cancelled in our attempts to return to the United States. Over the course of that first year back, I taught two pre-recorded courses for our students. Then at the start of the 2021-2022 academic year, with the encouragement and support of PRMI, I began teaching live, interactive classes in two locations (Pulupandan and Bacolod). To be honest, before I began, I was not sure how well the online class format would work. I was concerned about the technology side of things, cultural barriers, language barriers, etc. However, having now taught a full year in this model, the results have far exceeded my expectations. In fact, everything went so well that after the first semester, we added a third location for the spring semester. I am pleased to report that despite my fears, the technology has worked perfectly, and the students are engaged and learning. They are tracking along very well—really without missing a beat. Each class I have been able to answer insightful questions which tells me that the students are grasping the concepts of the study.



The following points enumerate the main reasons for maintaining our current format for ministry:

1. We have found success in teaching our courses online. As Mark Kittrell talked with the PRMI Board (most of whom are in higher education), they noted that higher education was trending toward online studies even before the pandemic. COVID has simply accelerated this trend. With the ease of access of

high-speed internet (in the Philippines and beyond), and the advances in technology for online education (especially during the COVID pandemic), we are positioned to train men for gospel ministry from anywhere in the world—whether the country is in a lockdown, a civil war, or restricted access.

2. We have already developed Filipino national leadership which will allow us to effectively operate with “boots on the ground.” A year ago, we brought on an Assistant Director for Haven of Grace Seminary, Lowell Arbolario [pictured here with his wife and children]. Both Mark and I are amazed at how God worked everything out to bring him in. He is without a doubt the right man to help us guide and direct the seminary over the coming years. As we train him over the next decade-plus, we will eventually (Lord willing) hand the reigns of the seminary over to him. He has proven himself to be a faithful and qualified assistant.



3. We are unexpectedly seeing the seminary expand regionally and internationally. As mentioned earlier, in the first few semesters of the seminary's existence, we hosted courses in two locations (Pulupandan and Bacolod). This past semester we expanded to three locations, with the third being three hours south of the seminary (on the far southern tip of the island). Even if I were in the Philippines, I would not be able to get to this location each week and would likely have to teach them remotely. Additionally, this past year, we had Burmese students taking our online course. It amazes me that I am able to reach into Myanmar (a place in the middle of a civil war) and help train Burmese pastors for gospel ministry as well! In addition to these locations, we have other groups of pastors who are asking that we would begin offering courses in their areas. So, in the coming years, we expect to possibly expand to Dumaguete (6 hours away from the seminary on the far southeastern tip of our island), in Cebu (on the next island over to our east), as well as to places like Northeast India [Haven of Hope Seminary launching fall 2022]. So, the reach of the seminary has already outgrown our abilities to be physically present in each of these locations.

We are grateful and excited about the ministry of training national pastors in the Philippines and beyond. Even over the course of the past two years, which have felt so uncertain at times, God has clearly directed our steps, and has not only allowed our ministry to survive, but to thrive and expand. We certainly could not do this without your prayer and support. Your partnership in the gospel means so much to our family. We pray God's richest blessings upon you!

Serving Christ,  
The Valiantes  
*2 Corinthians 5:14-15*

*If you have not already, please visit our website ([valiantes.com](http://valiantes.com)) for regular updates. You can also subscribe to our website to receive updates directly to your email inbox. Also, if you would like to **support our family financially**, visit our website and click on the “Support” or “Donate” tab on the menu.*

[Please take a moment to read a letter from Mark Kittrell—President of Pacific Rim Missions International—and from Tobe Witmer—Pastor of Lighthouse Baptist Church, Newark, DE).



Pacific Rim Missions International

May 10, 2022

Dear PRMI Partners and Friends,

Covid-19 was a world-wide reset. School, church, work, and even daily errands took on a “new normal.” Missions was no exception. PRMI was forced into adapting like every other ministry. With our seminaries shut down; the Valiante family returning home; and international travel suspended, we (the PRMI Board) decided to reevaluate our training of nationals and come up with our own “new normal.” In spite of the challenges, God has prevailed and in His sovereign wisdom our “reset” has actually turned out to be more successful and productive in terms of training nationals than what we had in place before.

So, I would like to provide you with a synopsis of our new 3-pronged approach to training.

**1) LIVE, INTERACTIVE, ONLINE CLASSES:** Since international travel is still erratic and varies from country to country (Asian countries being particularly more difficult), we have been providentially “forced” into online training. God has richly blessed this venture. Our training locations have expanded from 2 to 3 and our student body has grown from 40+ to 70+. With the proper technology and Filipino nationals to help us facilitate the classes, Dr. Tim has been able to teach in multiple locations from US soil. This has been so well-received that we would like to continue this format. Just to be clear, the Valiante family will remain in the US as Dr. Tim teaches his online courses. An online presence affords us with greater flexibility in terms of teachers and classes, as well as, expanded opportunities in terms of locations and countries. Dr. Tim will be developing our online presence while continuing to teach—not only in the Philippines but in other countries as well.

**2) IN-PERSON MODULES:** Pre-COVID, we had several 2-week modules per year. Once countries are fully open and international travel has returned to normal, we intend to supplement the online teaching with 2-3 in-person modules each year. Dr. Tim, myself, and others will participate. This face-to-face interaction with our students will continue to build trust in the teacher/student relationship and provide opportunities for personal discipleship and accountability. It will also expand the number of courses we can offer throughout the year. Furthermore, we want our online presence to be complemented with the personal “touch” of face-to-face teaching.

**3) DEVELOPING NATIONAL LEADERSHIP:** We have had ongoing discipleship/mentoring sessions with our national partners and pastors. As a result, our “ground presence” is stronger and our national partners are growing and taking on more leadership (which is the goal). I believe that our growth is a direct result of this partnership as we lean more and more on their leadership. In all 3 locations of our seminaries (Philippines, India, Myanmar), our national partners are taking “ownership” of the ministry and we are excited about this.

As God grows and develops PRMI, we are eternally grateful for those of you who continue to partner with us in prayer, finances, vision, and burden. Our ultimate goal is the glory of God and the proclamation of His great name in all the earth. May God continue to bless all of this and all of you for His glory.

Blessings,  
J. Mark Kittrell  
PRMI



# Lighthouse

BAPTIST CHURCH

Tobe Witmer: Senior Pastor  
Josh Canedy: Associate Pastor  
Matt Stewart: Church Administrator

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May 12, 2022

Dear Supporters of the Valiante Family,

It has been our joy to be the sending church for the Valiante family these last few years. The gifts and callings of God are clearly on their lives. It has been evident that the Lord is doing a new thing in their lives and in the education of the ministerial students under their leadership.

The restrictions of COVID have expedited the use of technology to accomplish the teaching of God's Word in even a more effective way through Dr. Tim's ministry. The Message of the Gospel never changes, but the Methods often do. I have seen Dr. Tim adapt and give serious diligence to the preparation and teaching of his students from Stateside in this last year. I pray that you will be joyful in the Lord's change and continue to support the Valiantes in all ways.

Pastor Tobe Witmer  
Lighthouse Baptist Church

