

# Leaving SPIRITUAL POVERTY

**DID YOU KNOW** there are over 7,100 islands in the Philippines? They cover 115,000 square miles. Some are unoccupied, while others are densely populated. Metro Manila, the capital, which is made up of 16 municipalities, has a total population of more than 13 million. According to the 2018 census, a quarter of the Philippines' 105 million people live in poverty. That's more than 26 million people!

Thirty-eight miles from Manila is the small village of Francisco, which has a population of only 3,500. A girl named Maria lives there with her five siblings. Her parents

struggle to put food on the table.

Sensing a lack of approval by her parents, Maria long felt insecure and unloved. There was a great void in her

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life. How could she, as a resident of a poverty-stricken neighborhood, fit into the larger society? She lived not only in material poverty, but also in spiritual poverty.

But one day, a neighbor invited this shy girl to a children's Bible club, where she heard the Gospel for the first time. As she listened, a sense of Jesus' love for her began to fill her heart. A miracle happened: this young girl became a new creature and wanted to grow in her knowledge of Christ.



Maria's family with Pastor Mike.

The Bible club is led by ACTION workers Mike and Tracy Burr, who teach lessons from the Bible to neighborhood children, both young and old. And Maria's mother, Nancy, has now begun attending an adult Bible study. Like her daughter, she wants to move out of her spiritual poverty.

The Burrs are praying for more workers to join them in ministering to the community of Francisco. If you would like more information, please send an email message to [info@actionintl.org](mailto:info@actionintl.org).

*Note: The names of the young girl and her mother have been changed to protect their privacy.*

# PARA SERVIR

**WHEN I WAS LIVING** in Colombia, I saw on a billboard the smiling face of a congressional candidate, with the slogan *Para Servir* (“to serve”).

I sometimes challenge my Bible students with the question, “Why did Jesus come to this earth?” I receive a multitude of answers, but hardly anyone answers correctly until I show them Matthew 20:28, where Jesus stated his life goal: “not to be served, but to serve.” I then ask the students: Are you following Jesus by serving others?

The word “serve” appears 209 times in the Bible. When you hear the word “deacon,” what comes into your mind? A person in a white gown lighting a church candle? An usher passing the offering plate? A person distributing food to the needy? Yes, these are all ways that people can use their deaconal gift for the church.

The word “deacon” is derived from the Greek word *diakonia*. In Acts 6:1, it is usually translated as “serving” or “rendering service.” The same word appears in Romans 12:7, where it is sometimes translated as “ministry” or “ministering.” And the word translated

as “helps” in 1 Corinthians 12:28 has the related meaning of providing relief or assisting those who are in need.

People with the gift of serving are needed on the mission field. Larry Fields, a church growth expert, writes: “If you are a server, you have the Spirit-given capacity and desire to serve God by rendering practical help in both physical and spiritual matters. You are the person who meets the practical needs of fellow Christians and the church.”

ACTION has a place for you in the world of missions. We need plumbers, accountants, farmers, mechanics, computer techs, librarians, art teachers, coaches, electricians, etc. The list of needs is endless. There is no unemployment in God’s kingdom. Are you ready *para servir*?

For more information, please send an email message to [info@actionintl.org](mailto:info@actionintl.org).

*Source: Dr. Larry Fields, ChurchGrowth.org.*

*After ministering for many years in Colombia, Phil and Mariela Legal now minister to needy people on the U.S./ Mexico border*



## Find out more!

Contact us through any of the following:



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