

Praying for Relief in the Philippines – Glen & Marvella Thompson

Many in Bohol learned that life can change in an instant. Last October the Central Philippines was struck by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake and followed on a few short weeks later by Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda). Lives were changed. For many, life on this earth ended, and for many others, life as they had known it came to a halt. Buildings began to shake. Some felt or heard a deep rumbling before tragedy struck. The buildings shook violently for 45 seconds, but that 45 seconds seemed an eternity, especially since Bohol isn't immune to small earthquakes. However, in the past they have been 2 - 5 seconds, so 45 seconds seemed to go on and on and on. The shaking caused walls to crack and crumble, ceilings to collapse, often trapping people underneath. People who were able ran, outdoors, up the hill, away from buildings and, if possible to higher ground for fear that the devastating earthquake would be followed by a tsunami. Many were crying out "*bwah, bwah, bwah*" to ward off evil spirits. Many carried the statues of their favorite saints or the Santo Nino or 'Mama Mary", believing these to be the source of their salvation. Children were crying. Dogs were howling. Cows were making strange noises. No one knew what would happen next and fear was palpable. Roads were badly damaged and bridges destroyed, causing more havoc as a people began to struggle to rebound. Only one week later, tropical storm Wilma washed over the island. People living under tarps and some in tents faced the onslaught of wind and rain because their homes were destroyed or weren't safe to enter. As if this weren't enough, two weeks later, Super Typhoon Yolanda was headed toward the Visayas (Central Philippines). Before striking land, Yolanda veered away from Bohol. Because of the destruction from Yolanda, the focus of help to the Philippines was shifted from Bohol to other islands in the Philippines. The people on Bohol feel forgotten, helpless and hopeless.

The home of Milo and his wife, an elderly couple in Bentig sitio, was completely destroyed. They sell firewood as their only means of support. When the earthquake struck, both fell down completely. After the earth stopped quaking for a few minutes, they were surprised that they were still alive. As they try to rebuild their lives, they gathered together all kinds of wood, *amakan*, galvanized roofing, whatever they could find, to rebuild some kind of structure. Soon BGR will be building them one of the government recommended model houses so they can be sheltered from the next storm.

The current home of Nilo Quiliario and his wife.



A sample of a model house that will be built for Nilo and his wife

