

‘Explosion’ by Pastor Chrissy Hailes-Perillio

Incredible work performed by the Triple B Team. Val along with Evelyn (pictured) provided intensive burns medical support to Jeffrey (also pictured). Tragically, Jeffrey’s brother Henry passed away from his severe injuries.

Article titled ‘Explosion’ by Pastor Chrissy Hailes-Perillio below ...

Explosion

On the afternoon of February 14th there was an explosion in one of the men's cells in Pampanga Provincial Jail (San Fernando).

Though there are only bunks for around 30 inmates, there are usually around 80 inmates per cell and a bathroom area with a couple of showers and toilets.

Between the showers and toilets is a small area where the inmates in cell 12 would do their cooking, one of the stoves was leaking gas which resulted in a fire and the explosion of two gas tanks.

By the grace of God, the accident took place around 4pm. Had it been after lock up at 5pm there would have been a lot more casualties with 80 men trapped in an inferno, but as it was 8 men were severely burned.

It was only during the regular outreach activity at the jail two days later that I learned of the accident and went to the hospital immediately to visit the injured. I was ill prepared for what I would see. Their wounds were not fully covered and they were widely exposed to infection in the hospital. One of the inmates (the most severe of the external burns) had no one to assist him in the hospital. He lay motionless with body fluid dripping from his wounds to the floor, his head had literally been on fire. The sad thing is that he had only been incarcerated that very day for stealing a chicken and was coming from the bathroom when the explosion took place. All their injuries were very severe, some of them with burns covering their arms, legs and faces. I visited and prayed with each of the victims and promised to do what I could to help.

The only financial help they received towards treatment was what the remaining inmates had collected. They had no government assistance at all.

When God first called me to the Philippines I asked Him what I could possibly do here, knowing I was not a qualified doctor, nurse or teacher, to which He responded, “Can you love the people?” That came to my mind when I saw these men. I offered to help but all I could do was love them. But praise God for Val (our friend who is a missionary burns specialist nurse who helped us with Tiffany and Elisa) because if anyone could help these men, Val could. Treatment for burns in the Philippines is terrible at best. Amputation is the cheaper solution, so often burns victims lose limbs or end up with severe contracture resulting in deformity. With her knowledge and experience, Val works hard to prevent these two things from happening.

This however would be a massive undertaking for Val, whose primary focus is on helping children, not inmates. It would also be a financial undertaking that neither she nor I could afford, costing around £500 each change of dressings. It is also a two hour drive just to reach the men and their dressings would need to be changed at least every 4 days. So I couldn’t blame her if she could not take on this case. But, by the grace of God and the compassion that He has placed in Val’s heart, she agreed to treat the men.

Her friends Evelyn (Filipina nurse) and John (Irish nurse) offered to help too, and we were even blessed that the only supplier of the much needed honey tulle dressings for the whole of the Philippines was not only willing to deliver all the dressings to the jail (and give us a month to raise the funds to pay for them), but she put on scrubs, got right in and assisted in each of the treatments. God is good.

Sadly on our second visit, it was very clear that Henry had severe inhalation burns. He had been closest to the leaking tank, had breathed in the gas and consequently suffered severe burns to his lungs. He died 9 days after the accident.

Val and her team have done a marvellous job. Each visit they would work straight for many hours. Val, not even stopping to re-hydrate would just asked me to lift the water to her lips. I watched as she did debridement, cut off an old rotten scalp and clean a man’s foot that was covered in maggots, endure the vile odours of rotten flesh without a flinch. Such amazing dedication. She would shout at the men when they would want to stay in their beds and give up. In matron like fashion she would get them on their feet and get them moving their limbs to prevent contracture. Now, three of the men are already pushing through their pain walking without assistance. God is good.

Please continue to pray for their complete recovery (as some of them still have a long way to go) and for their salvation too, that this terrible ordeal can be turned around for good, even eternal good!!

Any financial help towards their dressings will be gratefully received too. Or if you would like to give to help Val in her work of saving lives, we will gladly see that it reaches her

-Chrissy

