

Risen Savior Missions®

Glorifying GOD by Helping Starving Children!



Surrounded by the Dead

by Terry Derosier

with help from Jerry Krosnowski

I met Mercedes Sunico in Manila on my mission trip last February. She goes by the nickname of Nena, and she is a very generous Philippine business woman who owns a small textile factory that produces shopping bags. She works very hard to employ the poor, and she also manages a bunch of feeding sites for RSM on two different islands.

Jerry Krosnowski, Nena, and I drove for more than an hour through busy congestion to go into North Manila. We had heard that homeless children were trying to survive in a cemetery there, the same cemetery where Nena's father-in-law is buried.

This cemetery in the heart of North Manila is huge. In America when we think of a cemetery, it is a bunch of headstones or markers on the ground and occasional mausoleums. This cemetery was filled with small, one-story mausoleums for the wealthy. Some are ornate, open-air mausoleums with above-ground crypts, and some have a simple overhanging roof with just a plain back wall decorated with names of the dead on plaques. I was floored and surprised to hear that amongst the 200,000 people buried here, it is also a resting place for some 10,000 living homeless people, too.

When we arrive we see kids walking between the city of mausoleums. We turn the corner and stop in front of Nena's relative's mausoleum. We are immediately surrounded with kids. One, about six years old, is shrieking and holding his hand out begging. Later I learn that he cannot speak. We turn another corner. There are kids everywhere. Then I start seeing the incredible — people living inside of these little houses intended for the dead. Kids sleeping on top of concrete crypts and tombs covered with a simple mat as a bed. I am stunned. I take pictures trying to imagine what it must be like to live here, every day for years and FORGOTTEN because of extreme poverty.



This is a face of poverty in the Philippines that is rarely seen or even talked about. Poor families and orphaned children turn thousands of concrete crypts into makeshift living quarters. They enclose them with canvass tarps to shelter themselves from the wind and rainy weather. They are living their daily lives surrounded by the dead.

I walk further into the cemetery, and there is a woman that has lived here for over 30 years. She says her children were born here. Again I am stunned trying to figure out what

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MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM RISEN SAVIOR MISSIONS!**

is going on. She is not all there in the head, because her brain was damaged as a teenager from starvation. We have a difficult time communicating with her, but sometimes she says a few words in English. She has two daughters that were born in this cemetery, along with all five of her grandchildren, too.

Her youngest daughter is the woman on the left in this picture. She is the only one with a job, working as a bartender/waitress now in Manila. When she was younger, she applied for a job through an agency as a nanny for a rich family in Japan and was accepted, except it all turned out to be a horrific ploy. As soon as she arrived in Japan, she was captured and held prisoner against her will for almost five years by the yakuza (Japanese Mafia). Yakuza trick girls from impoverished villages into coming to Japan, where they are promised respectable jobs with good wages. Instead, they are forced into becoming prostitutes and strippers. This young woman was sold into slavery and prostitution until she finally escaped and earned enough money to get back to her family in the Philippines.

The poor are always so abused and taken advantage of. She has never been married but faithfully tries to support her mother and older sister, along with 5 nieces and nephews on about 350 pesos (\$7.45) a day. She supports all eight of her family members. We ask ourselves silently, how can this be? How can this work? And why is there is always a smile on their faces even when living in abject, extreme poverty?



More bars, more people trapped behind the bars of a poverty lifestyle that I never knew existed. We leave the cemetery dumfounded. Jerry asks Nena to start a feeding program there, but we don't have enough donations yet from people who support RSM to take on another project of this size, another 3,000 children. I don't know what to think, because it would take another \$6,000 to launch a new feeding program for them. Will Americans back home respond to their plight?

Here we are again leaving another world I didn't know even existed. Every time I see a new face of poverty I think, "Wow, well you can't top that." And then here we are in another mission scene that is unbelievable and shocks you.



Surrounded by the Dead

**by Terry Derosier
with help from Jerry Krosnowski
(continued)**

We move on to other mausoleums. There is a woman that is cooking. I ask her how long she has lived there, and she says 47 years and that she was born here. She looks much older. I ask her how many children she has. She says 21, including all her grandchildren. She is getting dinner ready for the day, first by sautéing some simple vegetables in the pot. It smelled good. Then she added water and started cutting up the rest of the ingredients on top of a tomb. She said she and her husband are caretakers for one rich family's mausoleum, earning 100 pesos (\$2.12) a month. They clean this one mausoleum and scrub the crypts that they are allowed to be living in and on.



"I walk out feeling a little dizzy, trying to process what I am seeing." ~ Terry Derosier

Stuck in Traffic

by Terry Derosier

are three cars back from the traffic light. I'm sitting in the front passenger seat and trying to get some shots out the driver's window. I ask him to lower the window and pull up a little. The kids see the window go down, and we are mobbed with more starving, desperate kids running towards us.

They are all reaching into the car and saying, "Money please, sir. Give me money, sir. Give me money, sir." I wonder if the driver is in danger, because they are quite aggressive, but they don't reach into the vehicle any further than what you see. I click the camera over and start shooting video. Everyone in the car is anxious and worried that something may happen. After about a minute of this, Jerry says, "Roll up the window. ROLL UP THE WINDOW!"



The window goes up with their hands still holding onto the glass. They pull their hands out at the last second. The light changes, and we move forward. We leave another scene that has fried my brain. Jerry is upset and emotionally on overload. We are all upset. Not upset at the kids, but upset that they are driven to this extreme. Nena says that once they get into this habit of begging, they will drop out of school and just beg because they are constantly so hungry. Most of these kids are orphans.

The cycle of poverty continues. We drive on. I don't speak. I'm feeling overwhelmed...trying to process. I don't hold my emotions in, though. I sense that I hear the Lord say, "Write a song." I say, "Okay, give me the words." I type it out on my phone notepad.

Jesus Save Me

(The first two verses are from my own perspective, and the later 3 verses are from the poor person's perspective.)

Feeling' numb today.
Too many Wasted along the way.
The beggars and the lost
Selling at what cost?

Living in the shadows.
Imprisoned long ago.
Creeping through the night.
Caged inside this life.

I'm hungry and alone.
I carry all I own.
Praying for relief.
Release me from my grief.

Trying to relate
To their lives and to their fate.
Don't know how to work it out.
What is life about?

I smile though I hurt.
Barefoot on this dirt.
No one to give me worth.
My misery on this earth.

Jesus, Je-sus, Je—sus save me.

Jesus, Je-sus, Je—sus save me.

Jesus, Je-sus, Je—sus save me.

Jesus, Je-sus, Je—sus save me.

Jesus, Je-sus, Je—sus save me.

Jesus, Je-sus, Je—sus save me.

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They need you!

suffering a lot more by watching us adults that could help solve their problem, but do so little or nothing at all?

We need to get up and take action. We need to be His human hands and feet in this world to help reach out to these poor, innocent, starving children with a hand up out of this hellish misery. **Jesus said, "Whatsoever you do for the least of these children, that you do unto me."** Yes, it truly is our wonderful chance to do something good and loving for God, when we are helping these ignored and forgotten children. Society may classify these desperately poor children as throw-aways and as expendable. There may be a multitude of excuses for ignoring them, like being too busy right now or thinking that there are just too many of them to help. Yet, they all could be saved, just one child at a time, and it wouldn't take extraordinary efforts. Jesus calls all of us His brothers and sisters. Are these children not our brothers and sisters, too?

Forget not, that except for the grace of God, we could also be this poor and hungry! With loving prayer and action, we could really help them out of this horrific, life-threatening situation. **Every \$10 donation given to RSM is an easy solution to feeding one of these poor, little children for an entire year!** Please reach out and give them a Merry Christmas this year! Together we can do this for them!

Send your tax-deductible gift to:
Risen Savior Missions
812 Springhill Drive
Burnsville, MN 55306

Donations via credit card may be made on our website:
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100% of your donation feeds starving children!