

Showing love in Tanza

“The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” -Galatians 5:6

In the mountainous country outside of Manila, Philippines is a very poor village called Tanza (TAHN-zah). Located just 2 miles from a massive garbage dump, Tanza is home to over 10,000 relocated squatters. In 1997 the Philippine government began moving illegal settlers out of the city and into this area where they could own a small piece of land. Today the residents of Tanza continue to live like poor squatters, and the population is booming. Some of the residents are fortunate enough to live in cement houses; many live in small shacks made of scrap tin and tarps. Overcrowding, insufficient plumbing, and a tainted water supply make Tanza a dirty and diseased place, unlike anything we know in America. Upon visiting Tanza, one is greeted by the overwhelming sense of great need and poverty.



First Love International Ministries has been reaching out to the people of Tanza since 2007. On a small piece of property we have planted an evangelical Christian church with the desire to be a light in an otherwise dark place. Through the local church First Love is caring for the poor in a number of ways. We believe that the best way we can represent Jesus Christ is by serving these poor people and helping with their physical and material needs. In all of our various outreaches we make it our top priority to point men, women and children to Jesus, the Savior of the world.

1. Feeding Programs- One way in which we reach out to the community is through our feeding programs. Each week we serve lunch to more than 600 children. This is a very simple, meaningful and rewarding way to touch lives. When a person is hungry, nothing else matters. Our feedings not only benefit the kids, but are also a blessing to the families who have little or no money coming in.

2. Medical Ministry- In a depressed area like Tanza, disease and sickness are always problems. Based upon our available resources we assist the sick with medical checkups and the purchase of medicine. The health needs at Tanza are so great that we are currently developing a medical clinic that will operate regularly on our church property.



3. Fatherless and widows- The Bible calls us to plead the case of the fatherless and the widow, so these people are very important to First Love. Each week we buy groceries for several widowed or abandoned families. In addition, we help with needs like school tuition, medicine, and we have built a few homes for women who have no one to care for them.

4. Pregnancy Education- In a place like Tanza birth complications are very common. Occasionally we see little white caskets in front of homes; a troubling reality. Most birth defects and infant deaths are completely preventable, yet so many women never get a single prenatal check-up! We conduct periodic classes to help expecting women to have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies.

5. Disciple-Making- All of our ministries at Tanza are centered around the church. Even in poor places like Tanza, the greatest need of all people is the need to find forgiveness of sin and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Through our various outreaches we maintain a strong evangelical focus. We also conduct small group Bible studies in order to obey Jesus' command to make disciples.



At First Love we have a commonly used expression: *"We can't help everybody, but we can help somebody."* In Tanza, the needs are endless, and we are just a small group of people seeking to follow God's leading as we serve Him in the Philippines. We rely on the Lord's provision to continue ministering to His people, and we are always seeking partners who will pray for us, donate to the ministry, and even visit us to join in the work. Thank you for expressing an interest in this very needy corner of the world. Please remember to pray for the souls in Tanza! God bless you.

Gratefully,

Dave Clinton

First Love Philippines