

Hello my friends. I want to thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I want to share a PUNLA Back Story. Back Story about our College Program.

**Let me start with a prayer.**

Now, Our entire ministry has been a miracle of God. We started our ministry thinking we would be doing things to give back to God. We learned quite quickly you cannot do anything for God or give Him anything He needs. He already owns everything and does not need you to accomplish His tasks. But, we offered to participate with God, use the things He has given us to steward, like money, talents, time and energy for His purposes. This is the abundant life He promises. A full life, a wonderful life of service to others in the name of King Jesus.

So once our attitude was adjusted, we began to feel and hear God guiding us. In March of 2016 after four grueling days of all day Medical Missions and Evening seminars in the extreme heat and humidity of the Philippines, we were total exhausted and very frustrated. In many ways broken by our experiences, but that is the perfect place for God to weave a miracle. Out of our complete exhaustion, frustration and brokenness. Then an idea, let's invite the four pastors we had been working with to our home for a "listens learned" session to plan our future activities. We had only just met three of them and we all thought we would be doing more medical missions. Oh, and by the way, just a matter-of-factly, we said, bring any other pastors you know who might be interested in working with us. And, Oh yeah, do you have any college students?

What college students. Where did that come from. Did we actually just ask about College students. I don't think we had any idea what we were asking, it can only be from God thing. We felt the urge from God and said yes, not know what He had in store for us.

A little "back story", several years earlier during medical school Annie my wife's older sister had received a sponsorship from a group of American doctors. This story is a miracle story. Without this aid she would not have finished medical school. In fact this was answered prayer, and God had spoken to Annie telling her some how aid would come to her so she could finish school. Now there is a lot more to this story but this was the "seed" for our College program.

So, on only a day notice, we had 13 pastors and 25 students come meet with us. I remember my absolute shock to see the numbers. Some had travels more than 6 hours to meet with us. God was speaking to all of us clearly, I'm asking you to do more than you think you can do, trust Me. Over the course of the evening we talk with and learned more about the students and their needs, troubles, fears. For me personally it was emotional, but my wife and her sisters understood. This was were they where just a few years earlier. So, what was God asking us to do?

We anticipated finding sponsors for students. We thought surely we could find Americans willing to help these kids. What a shock when it became clear few would be

willing to help these kids. Now don't get me wrong we have had several people sponsor kids and its been a great blessing. But we had far more kids than we had sponsors.

So, this was the birth of our College Sponsorship Program, which we as PUNLA decided to fund primarily with our own personal money. Since that humble beginning in March of 2016, we have provided nearly 600 semester scholarship for over 300 students. We've had more than 34 students graduate from our program. Our yearly budget has grown to more than \$50K/yr for at least 150 students per year.

I get the real blessings though. I get to communicate with the students. Mostly because this helps them learn to communicate with a white guy to practice their English. But for me, I get to share their lives and grow my family in Christ.

I get a lot of precious messages from my kids in the Philippines and I'm so thankful to the pastors who mentor each of them. I get messages like this one from one of my kids who had been quarantined in their home due to COVID, no food, no leaving their home for anything for 3 weeks. She said,

"After what happened, I can say that God is really our strength our light and everything. He's our everything in this world, He love us all. And I am so blessed and thankful that you're (Punla Ministry) one of the reason why I become more God centered and I got to know Him more. The Punla Sponsorship program is not just about the program who support and give financial assistance but also this program is one of the way to fill out hearts and soul with the learnings and God's word. Thank you so much! You are really a blessing to us. We love you! And We'll always pray for your safety."

Just one example of the students I'm honored to call one of my kids.

This is why God calls us to service. To serve others, for His glory. To hopefully help guide someone to Jesus. The only source of Hope, Peace and Assurance. Peace that surpasses all understanding.

I promise you if God can use someone like me, He can use anyone. My life is abundant. My life is full and exciting because of Christ.

Our hope is to share ourselves so that you our partners and friends can know us better. And for you we don't know yet, we hope to encourage you to hear God's urging and do something.

Now I'm still just a broken sinner. I make lots of mistakes. I'm still a work in progress. I know I need to grow and that growth will continue until the day die. So let us grow together.

## **Let's Pray**

Thanks for joining me today for a PUNLA Back Story @ the Coffee Table. Hope to see you next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless. [Punla Christian Ministries - YouTube](#) [www.PUNLACoffeeTable.org](http://www.PUNLACoffeeTable.org) [www.PUNLA.org](http://www.PUNLA.org)