

Newsletter 10 - Hjo de Keijzer

Manilla, January 2007

Christmas

We do know Christmas trees here, but much more important is the parol. Made of a bamboo frame and kite of Japanese paper, with a Christmas effigy in the middle and when possible a lamp inside. Christmas is very different than in the Netherlands. At 12 o'clock at night everybody gets up (or you can stay up of course). We sing, pray, wish each other a blessed Christmas and unwrap presents. Dan we eat a meal with fruit, cheese, ham and a variety of sweets and go to bed. For a Dutch Christian a special combination of presents and evangelisation and acknowledging that Christmas is about the Christmas child Jesus. In the pas month I "had" to attend a lot of Christmas parties. In churches, work, friends. Everywhere the same hodgepodge, quite tiresome, but also special to be allowed to experience it here. Thanks for all of your cards, e-mails en packages! Also wholeheartedly, all my Christmas wishes and Gods blessing in the coming year! Hopefully we can see each other while I hope to be in the Netherlands!

Mileny, Reming, Seniang

Three super typhoons, which have occupied us the last months. One of the recently started new parishes in a poor quarter on Mindoro. Here has to be started again. Only a small tip of the iceberg. Still people are without electricity, houses are buried under a layer of mud en people recently had to leave the evacuation centres because it rained too hard and it wasn't safe there anymore!!! In Bicol people still live in tents. Schools are closed until the end of the school year in April, and the government speaks about entire areas which will be closed for inhabitation. Entire villages will maybe be moved. Until that time nobody dares to rebuild, if they even have the money.

Language study

Before I go on leave I will have my last exam en afterwards I will have another exam in which we will be scaled from 0 to 5 (tourist to mothers language). This happens on fluidity of speech, grammatical correctness, width of vocabulary etc. The daily and theological vocabulary of us missionaries is also being looked at, whether both are good enough. A brilliant theologian, who cannot make a conversation with a crying child in the street... or somebody who can tremendously talk to the people on the street, but cannot tell about Jesus... both are not a good missionary.

Bukang Liwayway -dawn

Leadership training: "We want leadership training" said the men and women of Welfareville, the place where I may work now. My question was what kind of, what do you have to learn? Step by step we came to a more specific program for my time with them until the end of the month. Together we have thought about how, what and why you sing in church services. What the goals are we want to achieve and how we shall do that. How you can maintain order whilst giving a bible study in a small smelling alley with a group of playing children and tv's at full strength. What are good questions to ask

during a bible study, how do you think of them? But also who all the profits were in the Bible, what they did, why they are important. A busy and intensive time thus, but also very fruitful. A lot has been learned on both sides and though not all the work has been done, it has been a productive time and hopefully in a not too distant future I will have a more permanent successor.

The last months we have been busy making kind of a policy. What are the goals in our service we like to achieve? We have finished that, pray with us for a good planning that they can work with this and that it doesn't become bookcase filling.

(Ab)normally :)

What is this? A luxurious house? A rich family, a villa? GuesSED wrong; it is a gravestone! The poor are being buried in an apartment, the rich in a villa. Also in death, there is a cutting difference between poor and rich. The villas are inclusive kitchens, toilets etc. sometimes someone lives there permanently to take care of the house!

The poor sometimes have a niche with their entire family in what is called an apartment tomb. Just think, people have to shove in the deceased themselves also in the third floor. Luckily afterwards the front side is being bricked up and while the cement is still wet the name is inscribed. The bones of deceased relatives are put in plastic bags and set by the coffin in the niche to spare further costs.

Of course this only applies until someone considers that that plant will look nice in his backyard, or simply until it gets dark... Road stay dangerous here...



Food

In stead of asking the person you meet on the road how it is going, -or making a remark about the weather-, you greet a fellow Filipino with KUMAIN KA NA BA? -Did you already eat? Regardless of the time. Many foreigners find Philippine food rather tasteless -Ever found a Philippine restaurant in the Netherlands? But there is much good food here! A very hot dish - BICOL EXPRESS (gaby leaves, coconut milk and a lot of peppers; the dish is called after a train). Furthermore you can make a variety of fish species in ADOBO. A certain way of spicing, which lets it stay good for ten days outside the refrigerator! Very beloved at parties -dig a hole, light a fire and hang an entire pig on a bamboo stick, cook until it's crispy. The amount of cholesterol in such a meal is, I think, enough for an entire year! We call it LECHON.

Furthermore we eat DINUGUAN, a kind of soup made of boiled pig's blood and PINAPAITAN a bitter soup of genital and digestion organs of a goat.

Furthermore everything is sweet; bread, banana ketchup - rather nice! Sweet spaghetti, sweet hamburgers etc.

Or what do you think of TSAMPORADO with TUYO (rice cooked in chocolate with dried and salted fish) for breakfast?

Who said Philippine food was boring?????

Ladies retreat

The first in the history of OMF Philippines. With 22 ladies a weekend in our mission house in Calapan. We were challenged by the speaker to think about 3 secret (suffering, satisfaction and peace) and what that meant in our lives and in our relation with each other and with God. Furthermore we shared our lives stories, ate nicely swam and sung. It was good to get some sound spiritual food in a easier language (English). Also is was very good to get to know each other better, as women.

Leave!

No longer next year, but in a few months! The fourth of Aprill hope to arrive in the Netherlands for 2,5 months, to tell about my work here, to rest and to enjoy family and friends.

Future...

February, Moving to Mindora and live among a mountain tribe for a month.

The area of the Tadyawan, where I hope to stay in Dyangdan before I come to the Netherlands. This is the birthplace of the leader of the Mangyan churches.

March. Final exam of the official language study

March: Timothy IV; last block about the leader and the organisation (Biblical background, leadership styles and influence, learning organisations and organisation development)

April-June the Netherlands!

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