

Newsletter 11 - Iljo de Keijzer

Manilla, March 2007

It's almost time to leave for the Netherlands. Busy packing, saying goodbye and of course finding presents for the people in the Netherlands.

Monday January 22...

We are driving with a full-packed OMF-bus to the south of the island Luzon to get on the boat towards the island Mindoro. We are leaving at 4 AM to be out of town at 7, because our car is not allowed to drive during the rush hour and because January still is the typhoon season for Mindore and the later we arrive the coarser the sea will be. When we arrive at the harbour we have to get out of the car and they ask us what we are up to. I already know what I have to say: "I am a missionary who is moving and everything is this car is mine and not new." Otherwise you have to pay taxes again. But for moving you have to have a barangay statement, which proves you are really moving. I don't have one of those. The man at the entrance is very helpful to tell us that we should not use the word moving near his college further on, because then we will have to turn around. In the meantime he looks hopefully whether we have some money on us. Our driver gives him some money for this information. Yes, that's the way it works here, where's the line between being grateful for help and corruption? So we go on, carefully avoiding the word moving. We pay for the use of the harbour and, very funny, for the use of the reception hall, which you are not even allowed to use when you come with your own vehicle. Another checkpoint and we are allowed to drive onto the boat. Here we pay for the car and for us as persons. My stuff will be stored in our mission house in Mindoro until I return from leave. Oh yeh, when we arrived the pansit was waiting for us. We must be hungry after such a long journey!

Language study

The language exam is behind me!!! According the teacher I got a 2+++ . A very good result for two years in a foreign country, but also a stimulus to keep learning to improve fitting in. I mostly have to learn to adjust my level of speaking to the people I am speaking with. Thus, when I am speaking higher educated people, I have to speak "higher" tagalog. Also I have to learn to give summaries in "high" tagalog. My pronunciation was very good and when I am teaching I have the right level. All in all relatively positive, but of course we continue to pursuit level 3.

(Ab)normally :)



Travelling on the roof of a jeepney through the paddy fields, on top of the rice and other groceries. You have to watch out for the protruding branches, otherwise you will get them in your face. Travelling in the country really is different from travelling in the city of Manila. After the leadership training I went to the mountains with a group of participants to say goodbye to everyone before my leave. The jeepney would leave at two, so we were there around that time. But the driver said that someone else was coming too, so we waited a good two hours. In the meantime one after the other went back to the market, because the fish was cheap and thus there was considerable amount stocked. When we finally left, we stopped at four different rice dealers to load several bags of rice on top of the roof. In another shop we fetched some roof tiles and at the gas station we filled barrels with patrol, to use for oil lamps and generators. Village after village we went, stopping along the way to unload the rice on several places. As soon as we went of the "main" road we climbed on top of the roof together with the Bible school students to catch some fresh air - the fish might be cheap, but also smelly. Oh yes, because of a big rock we also had a flat tire. The spare wheel was of course beneath the bags of rice, but after a not to long time we were going again. After more than one and a half hours later we had travelled the 25 kilometres to the Bible school and we just had to climb up the mountain, where we where enthusiastically greeted, of course because we brought the cheap fish. A few hours later we had a feast for 20 cent per kilo! A real experience...

Food

You still want to eat after my last newsletter? Someone wrote that she was very curious what I would eat in the mountains, having seen what my "normal" menu was. Well here is the answer. We ate snails, ferns, fermented fish in leafs, leafs and more leafs. I did not know how may kinds of leafs of trees and plans were edible and healthy too. Also we ate boiled bananas, cassava and something which looks like sugar beets. Most of the time we eat it as soup, that's easy to make and you don't need butter or oil and it gives moisture for the rice straightaway. Because the food is so low in fat, the pizza on the day after my return did not taste very well.

Living in the mountains

Nothing is so variable as the weather we say in the Netherlands. The weather is not so changeable here, but planning is! In the end I ended up with a different tribe than planned. I visited the Iraya tribe in the north of Mindoro, in the village Malmis.



My house in Malmis...

We had to wade through the river 5 times, for me at breast height, for the average mangyan to the neck!



One time we were lucky and crossed the river with a boat...

Cooking on charcoal and bathing in the river, with your clothes on of course. We also did the laundry in the river. I really don't know how clean my clothes became of that, but at least they smelled nice again. I think I still need some practice. Iraya people are very shy, so they found it hard to talk to me, but a few brave ones did come by to talk to "that white one". In those conversations I could learn a lot of their culture.

A funny story about how shy the Iraya are. They saw my fire, but were worried because the flames were so small (I was afraid my house would catch fire, because we cook beneath the house). So they thought my rice would not get done. However it took two full days - 3 times rice a day - before two women were brave enough to ask how the cooking went and whether my rice would do. I tried to comfort them, but they kept looking suspiciously...

The Philippine culture is sometimes called a low information culture. This means that you will only hear the next important step. No excess information thus. The elder of the church had asked me to speak in the service Sunday. He did not tell me what time the service started, but since I live next to the church and you would be eating breakfast before 6 o'clock, I did not worry about that. I was making coffee on my charcoal fire when he came by and talked about cooking. Still no indication about when the service would start. From me he walks to the church and starts ringing the bells. So I think that

must be the signal that the church is about to start, and yes one after the other the people walk inside the church. We are going to start...



Children with little or no clothes, but reading everything they could!

But not only children, but also teenagers and even grandfathers and -mothers came quietly to my porch to read. Because I always had some Tagalog books laying around with pictures from the Bible of health.

Mangyan Bible School

Here I also could stay for a week. Eating with the students, sitting in the rear of the classroom and answering all questions they had. Not only about the Bible, but also questions like: "do not all rivers end in the sea? Why than, does the sea never runs over?" or "the earth is round, right? So when we have the sun, it is dark on other places?".

Not easy to explain in a foreign language, but very funny to do. Most students only have got primary education and most only two classes or there about.



One of the classes on the MBS

It is wonderful to see the eagerness to learn and it is a good basis for friendships. Luckily this first deeper acquaintance was a good one and I still hope to continue with all the preparations and to help teaching here on this school and adjusting the curriculum to the demands of this time!

Future...

Just a few day and I will get on a plane to the Netherlands, after a short stop in Singapore. I hope to see many of you, but obviously the time is short. After a good Philippine habit the door will always be open when I'm home! A part of the time I will spend with my parents and a part in Wageningen. See you!!!

Iljo de Keijzer**Until June 20th:****Hedel**

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Important data:

April 4th 2007: Arrival Schiphol

April 11th 2007: Women association Krimpen aan den IJssel
Contact person: 0180-510470.

April 12th 2007: Missionary evening Wageningen
Contact person: 0317-428414.

April 13th 2007: Missionary evening Hedel
Contact person: 073-5994795.

April 14th 2007: Open youth work Kerkwijk
Contact person: 0418-642364.

April 25th 2007: missionary evening Rijswijk NB
Contact person: 0183-442458

May 12th 2007 from 14.00 to 17.00 hour:

Information afternoon and meeting for family, friends and acquaintances in the Dienstgebouw in Wageningen

For enrolment and information: Eric Boer of the TFC Iljo de Keijzer
Tel: 0317-428414.

**At the end of the leave of Iljo there will be held a church service to say goodbye to her.
This service will be held on:**

Sunday June 17th at 18:30 in the Grote Kerk in Wageningen

You are more than welcome to join this service.

If you want more information about presentations that Iljo de Keijzer gives, you can contact: GZB in Driebergen, telephone: 0343-512444.

