

Sariaya, July 2008

Pogi

Pogi means 'hansom' for boys/ men. This is also the name of my new 'guard dog'. Early in the morning, before six o' clock, I can hear the neighbour's children call out his name by the gate in front of my house. A little bit of companionship, a good alternative for throwing away food and a watchdog. He does fine on all aspects. He joins me when I am working, eats everything and already has prevented one attempt at burglary. One night his barking woke me up and when I walked outside on to the balcony to punish him, I saw four men in black hanging over the gate near the window. When I started yelling loudly, they eventually left. Thanks Pogi!

The Philippines in the News

The first hurricanes are clouding over our country again. The first one left us a few moments without power and made me incredibly wet while I was riding my motorbike, but did not cause much permanent damage. The third hurricane left my entire bedroom in dust and us whiteout water or just two buckets a day. This was also the hurricane which sunk the large ferry. Even now, not all the bodies have been secured.

Recently the situation concerning the communists has been turbulent. A few of them were shot dead in our village and temporarily there was a significant increase of police and military personnel in the village. At this time the situation seems to be more stable again.

In the south, Malaysia has retreated their international monitors because of the government.

For Your Information

Not to advertise Nokia mobile phones, but to give you an idea of the size of bugs over here ;). These animals have hard wings and

can fly. Understandable you will feel this, when they crash into your face at full speed!



Progress Building the Church

The construction of the church continues; tiles, window frames, ceilings, a front door... Thank God for all the help in building this church. Last May we officially opened the church and dedicated it to the service to God. A pensioned missionary and I had the honours of cutting through the ribbon.



Church opening. Cutting the ribbon.

Sunday school Training

Unfortunately two out of three participants have already pulled out in Sariaya and because of a disagreement concerning the gathering point in Candelaria Sunday school has not started there yet. But Nela, the only participant left is very enthusiastic and already helping with the teaching. Because of circumstances, I was forced to

give Sunday school classes three times in a row this month. This way, I was able to show her step by step how to prepare and execute classes. It is very likely that we will have another trainee for the younger age group, joining us soon. The trainee is Chen, a board student living in a neighbouring village. She converted to the faith through our student work. Now, whenever she comes home at weekends, she often visits our congregation and is interested in helping us. She studies to become an English teacher at secondary school. Her budget is about 0.80 Euro cents a day; even in the Philippines this doesn't allow you to buy very much. When she finally found a job on the side, her boss suddenly decided he didn't need any help any more. Nevertheless, it is nice to see how in her young life as a Christian she trusts in God and sees God's work in her life and giving her everything she really needs. In the mean time, we have started a personal bible study group with her mother and grandmother which take place at home. Last week, her mother visited church for the very first time. It is Chen's wish that her mother and the rest of her family will convert to the Christian faith.

Singing Guidance

The effect of our time spent together in training is already noticeable. Songs are chosen much more well considered, are in keeping with the preaching and are more focused on God. It is wonderful to see this effect on the work and to notice how it builds our congregation even more. Last week we had another meeting with the whole team. People are really enthusiastic about the difference the training has made during the service. Now, there is much more continuity between the different parts of the service and there is a visible effect on the people. At this time, they want to train also others in leading the singing or other parts of the service. This way, other

people will get more involved with the service and will experience the wonderful feeling of being used by God and in building the congregation.

Birthday

In a few days I will celebrate my birthday here in the Philippines again already. The mail delivery man already knows of my birthday. For weeks, birthday mail has been delivered to me. For every card that has been delivered I have to sign my signature. This way the delivery man can prove to his boss he has actually delivered the mail! Nevertheless, my stairwell is nicely getting covered with cards. This year my birthday is very significant. As it happens, this year, I'm 'disappearing from the calendar'. The calendar only goes to 31, so if anyone gets older than 31 he or she 'disappears from the calendar'. Fortunately, I still fit on the thermometer and if I don't fit on the thermometer anymore, there is still hope for the bingo-card witch goes to 75! Consequently, there are four phases in life of a Filipino: calendar, thermometer, bingo card and above. Although, there are not many people here in the Philippines witch reach this age group :-).

Mum and Dad Visiting Again



Posing with a proud karabaw!

Long live spring break! It was very nice having mum and dad here for a while and it proved to be quite different out in the provinces; only two hours a day water, showering by splashing a saucepan filled with water over you, flushing the toilet with that same saucepan, etc... The fence outside has been made, spiced gingerbread is in the freezer and mum celebrated her birthday here in Filipino style. We even climbed an active volcano.

More Dutch Visitors...

Willem van Dis, general manager of OMF Nederland came to visit and was even asked to speak at the student centre while he was visiting. Wonderful to be able to talk Dutch again and show him my work and colleagues.

ACTS Mobile Bible School

Last May was the first time for me to teach at the mobile bible school. To cover the bible books Ezra, Nehemia and Esther in one day was quite an new challenge. This way, I was able to directly implement on the preparation, the things we had learnt in the 'training for trainers'. After speaking a few hours Tagalog, I grew afraid of starting to make too many mistakes speaking the language, but fortunately this turned out to be not so bad. Also, the students helped me with the pronunciation of more complicated names like 'Haring Nobokodonosor' (King Nebukadnezar). Two students have not yet turned in their assignments, but all the others have passed this course satisfactory. Let's move on to the next time!

Christening

Last April we had our second christening. In the Philippines adults are being baptised rather than babies. Six people gave testimony of the changes in their lives after they got to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour. A very special happening.



First christening in our new church.

Last week six other people from our sister congregation in Candelaria were christened in our church. This was the first time since the work has started in Candelaria. One woman couldn't make it to the christening because her husband had collided with a motorbike with two people on it. Over here in the Philippines you are responsible for hospital costs and repairing the bike. This was quite a shock for the family, just a week after they had dedicated their son to God and just a few days prior the christening of the husband. Not even a week later, his brother got run over by someone else. Please continue to pray for our safety in traffic?

Equipping Ministry Council

The preparations for the conference for everyone involved with education in the ABCCOP churches, next year in May, are going full ahead. Our biggest problem at this moment is to find a suitable location. The location we wanted to book was already booked full and we need quite a sizeable location. Past weeks, I have been looking at locations which are large enough and fit our limited budget. We seem to have found something and hope to book this location definitely next month.



Agenda

August 30th : 1 day sermon preparation Seminar, together with other congregations in Sariaya and surroundings. For everyone involved with preaching, bible studies and Sunday school.

October: Erica, one of my co-workers hopes to be delivering her baby this month. I will be taking over her responsibilities, among them a children's club, ages from three years old up to secondary school, far away from any decent asphalt paving.

October 21st-24th: missionary conference by ABCCOP (form of cooperating congregations well- versed in the Scriptures) in the north part of the country. I hope to be visiting this conference.

December 28th-30th: youth camp for all the youth of our province. This is their first camp, so many new things to explore.

Kind regards to you all!

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