

Manilla, June 2009

Wedding



One experience richer...

One of my co-workers in Quezon was getting married. A wedding over here, is a little bit different from one in The Netherlands, with far more symbolic. Here, we have the 'ninongs' and 'ninangs', people who act as a sort of second parents. People to whom you can turn to for advise or money in the future. Furthermore, we have the 'abays'; your peers, good friends. They help you organising and managing the wedding and all wear the same outfits. They also help during the ceremony. Except the ring and Bible, they also have a box containing some small change, in order to wish that the couple never go without money. There is also a veil- and cord ceremony. Hereby, the veil is placed on the head of woman and the shoulder of the man; yes, the man is the head of the family ☺. The cord is placed on both the heads in the shape of an 8, as a symbol that from now on they have become one. Besides all this, there is also a candle ceremony.

At the end of the day the bouquet was given to one of the singles by some kind of musical chairs. Another unique experience. Of course, it is nice when the single missionary wins the bouquet, so as wedding organizer you take matters in your own hands and give clues as to when the music should be turned on and off. Yes, we are in the Philippines. And then, when you win: act surprised and happy ☺.

Christian Education in ABCCOP

For the first time in history: a conference held for everyone involved with education within the congregation: reverends, bible study leaders and Sunday school teachers. The preparations took a lot of work, especially

getting out all of the invitations. How does one get all the Sunday school teachers and reverends together on a conference? Within the congregations education is viewed at with disdain (this concerns only the Sunday schools). But also the Sunday sermon is a form of education and so are all the bible studies. Also, a lot of children, of whom the parents do not go to church, come to Sunday school. So, a good opportunity to reach them with the gospel. Eventually, still a 100 participants came to the conference. A lot of women, but also reverends were present. There was a busy schedule full of workshops, plenary sessions, small group discussions, etc. Our theme: "Keep Gods Word Alive!" was well chosen. Usually over here, Sunday school is given during the service and is some times diminished to watching a movie, so that the children will not disturb the service. Just when it is so important to reach the children with the gospel also, on THEIR level.



Group photo after everyone received their certificate.

"Leading through Serving"- training

A whole month, that sounded like a long time. At this training we learned how a church should be a real church. Not standing by itself with people who go in and out. But a church that takes its place in the community, is a blessing for, and has a good influence on the community. How do you expect to reach people with the gospel, if we all ignore the beggar, in front of the church every Sunday, and do not even know his name? It was very special to experience a real change with the participants of the training. Firstly, they had to get to know themselves better and try to look at the world and the church through the eyes of God. Secondly, they had to search for Gods

meaning with their lives through drawings, group assignments, drama, etc. Every time, getting a little bit further.



Through childhood stories discovering talents with each other and labelling them.

Several participants were able to come to terms with their pasts. Most of them are keeping in touch with each other and several of them have really started with what they understood as being their mission in life. A real encouragement! This training is from the United States of America, but we were free to adjust it to the language and culture over here. A lot of work, but we see the changes in people. A turning back to the way how Jesus interacted with people and his followers. Hopefully, this will also be reason for other people to ask questions about the God of those Christians, because they notice how we interact with each other and the people in the community.

EE- follow up (16 weeks evangelization exercise)

11 of the 12 students graduate next week. Unfortunately, I will not be able to be present, since I have to teach at the other side of the country and the Philippines are just a little bit larger than The Netherlands. They all are enthusiastic about having learned a good way to explain their religion to family and classmates. The next group, adults this time, are already anxiously waiting to start with the course.

ACTS Mobile Bible School

Last Saturday the first Bible school lesson in Welfareville was held. This is the place where I started working several years ago. 20 enthusiastic students were sitting on mini children's chairs at mini tables. The

blackboard was hanging on children's height as well ☺. The reason for this is, that we come together in a kindergarten. The ceiling is so low that I can touch it. Just around the corner, 9 little cages are piled up, with in each cage a rooster for the cockfighting. And only 10 meters away is the basketball court, where of course on Saturday the local youth makes quite some noise.



A real challenge for your voice when you have to teach 8 hours in a row. But the eagerness with which the knowledge is being soaked up, makes a soar throat the next day, a small sacrifice ☺.

Ifugao

12 students from the mountains graduated last month. Special gowns were rented, it all went very officially. This is understandable when you consider that for most it is the first time they graduate with a diploma. Most never even finished primary school. Almost all of them have executive functions within the churches in the mountain tribes up in the North.



Upcoming Leave of Absence

Of course, it is now time to look forward to my stay in The Netherlands. I will be staying with my parents in Hedel and partially in their caravan in Leersum (close to Wageningen). I hope to be able to meet as many as people as possible. During presentations, after church services and of course personally. I do not know what my mobile number will be, yet, but please feel free to call my parents in order to make an appointment. E-mail remains the same...

Agenda

27th June: teaching in Baguio
3rd July: teaching in Enrile
4th July: Tuguegarao
5th July: speaking in Enrile
10th -12th July: mini conference with women of the OMF
19th July: teaching in Welfareville, etc, etc
26th August: arrival in The Netherlands
30th August: GZB missionary day

Scheduled presentations:

14th October Vriezenveen
15th October Wageningen
18th October Rijswijk NB
22nd October Oudewater and Stolwijk
24th October Hedel

My kind regards to all of you!

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Leave 26th Augustus- 4th November

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