

Sariaya, december 2008

The end of the year is coming soon. About time for a last newsletter this year. Thanks for all the emails, cards, books, newspaper articles, etc.! Thanks for supporting me over 2008 in any shape or form.

Missionary Conference in Baguio



Team of missionaries and ministers of our province

Up in the high north of the Philippines, where coniferous trees grow and in winter one must wear a sweater, we had our missionary conference which is held every three years. About 170 pastors from all over the country stood still by the last assignment Jesus gave His disciples. Besides that, all missionaries had a chance to give a presentation of their work. Which meant a lot of work for me, since I was one of the few who knew how to handle PowerPoint ☺.

Moving

Moving; again? Yes, the time has come for moving back to Manila. I have been asked to help giving training at the "head office" of the association of churches, with whom we work together. The TEE, a part time Bible school in Lucena for which I am responsible also has about 15 sister schools across the country. Also, 7 new areas have let us know to want to found a school. For the minister who is now responsible, this is

too big a job. He has asked me to help him with teaching and planning a better national administration, which has become more complicated since there will be more schools.

One of the first things I hope to be doing is starting up a school in Welfareville; the slums where I started out. Even then I had the desire to start a school there, but it wasn't yet the right time. When people heard I was going to work with the ABCCOP, there was enough confidence to start a two-weekly meeting to equip all leaders. Although not in the country, the situation is comparable. There is little money, either to go study at a fulltime Bible school or for travelling. Also, often primary or secondary school are not successfully completed, which is a condition for following a study. At "our" school, those people are allowed to study, only by completion they receive just a certificate and not a diploma. Nevertheless, by then they will have learned a lot. Very encouraging to hear that the work is still continuing over there!

It is a great opportunity to train more people in becoming a minister or youth worker in the remote areas. My work will still predominantly be in the provinces, but I'll be working from Manila, which is located very centrally. My experience, gathered here in Sariaya, will be priceless when I start teaching in those remote areas. For example, now I know from experience all the things that happen to a minister in the country. Things you have to experience in order to believe and understand them.

When I arrived in Sariaya last year September, the small starting congregation was completely depending on two missionary priests; down to washing up the tea cups! Now there are people who help giving Sunday school, people who lead the

singing, people who announce certain parts of the service, lead Bible studies, take responsibility, welcome guests, etc, etc. In the beginning I found it quite hard to adjust to this situation, since everything seemed to be so passive and processes went slow, it gave little hope for change. Now, in retrospect, a lot has happened in a short amount of time. Also, my colleague from Taiwan is back from his leave. Time for me, to take upon me a new task in the believe that God will continue His work here in Sariaya.

God has already provided me with a beautiful home, with housemate! A Dutch OMF-er (Ester Visser from Urk) and we are in contact with a Filipina. The house is light and airy and is ideally situated. Close to bus terminals, in order to travel to the different provinces, and in walking distance from the office. Pictures will come next year ☺ . Please pray with me for a good adjustment to life in the city?

Back to School

Together with a church member; Ethel, on the left in the picture, to a training to be able to give a certain evangelisation training. It is called Evangelization Explosion. It is a very clear way of sharing the Gospel, which helps a lot of people putting their faith in God, in the context of the Philippines. It was hard work. We had to learn a complete schedule by heart, including Bible phrases. There was a oral



Always time for a smile in the picture...

exam to see whether you could use the schedule in a natural way and there was a written exam. Of course all in Tagalog.

It was a week of very little sleep. But we passed the exams and already used this way of training several times. In January, Ethel will give this training in the congregation over here. Five people, namely young people, have already submitted. I have promised to come back to teach on one out of 13 Sundays.

Special Occasions

Public acknowledgement of trained members. One member will be a Sunday school teacher in the upper grades and three others of a 13- week during evangelization training. By celebrating them after the service and letting them give their testimony of Gods work in their lives since they received their training, now others have become enthusiastic about showing some effort in the church.



We have also taken our first steps in organizing a church council. A treasurer, assistant treasurer and money counter have been appointed. Gods work continues!

Sunday School Training

After public acknowledgement and handing over the diploma of “Sunday school teacher” to Nela, five more young people have become excited about teaching



Meldi; she had the courage to teach the kids a song the second time she observed!

kids during the service. We are give them some sort of crash course to give them a certificate, before I leave. Nela, the first one to pass the course is already giving Sunday school regularly and keeps getting better at it. We are very pleased with these new young people. Although they have become Christians very shortly, they already really want to contribute to the church. After observing a few times and taking up small tasks, I asked their opinion: “they are very busy,” “when I pray, they start making fun,” “they never hold still...”.

When I then asked whether they would still want to be a teacher, they simultaneously responded: Yes! The kids were still nice and also have to be taught the Gospel in a way that they can understand!

Delivery

My co-worker Eric delivered a healthy baby-boy. James Timothy, TJ is his name. He grows like cabbage. It gave me the opportunity to get more experience in working with children. A very different kind of challenge. I did enjoy it, it is possible to be very creative with them and a small treat makes their day. But I also did discover that my talents lie more with young people and adults ☺.



James Timothy (TJ) with his proud ninang (godmother)

Equipping Ministry Council

The preparations for the conference for everyone involved with education in ABCCOP churches, next year in May are going full ahead. Thanks to God for finding a good location. In Tagaytay; a beautiful place with a volcano with a lake in the core and within the lake another active volcano with again a volcano lake. In this region, it is also a little bit cooler, which is nice during high summer. The place where we’re going wasn’t always pretty, but has improved incredibly. The people there are very flexible and we even got a discount because we were Christians. The first promotions for the conference have already been sent out the door. Hopefully, this conference will help the Christian education in the congregations ahead!

ACTS Mobile Bible School

December: a very busy month with writing progress reports of every student, a financial report and planning for next year. Next year not one, but almost 20 schools under our wings ☺.

With the Picture...

On the first row

- ACTS, mobile Bible school in Lucena
- First baptising in our congregation
- Children's club in remote Barangay

Second row

- We rented a djip with the entire church to have a Easter service at sunrise, five o'clock in the morning at the beach.
- Cutting a ribbon during the dedication of the church to Gods service – the man in the picture will be my new boss.
- Jared and me on the bike

Third row

- The blessing of those who succeeded their training in the congregation.
- Conference of ministers from all over the country.
- A very instable foot plank back onto the boat which had to take us back to the mainland.
- Our church.

Agenda

December, 7th and 9th: despedida's. Philippine goodbye party's with lots of emotions ☺

December 13th: I am allowed to speak at the Christmas celebration for the children.

We hope that all the children of the different clubs in the remote areas will gather in the church for a great party with a message.

December 23rd: I am allowed to speak to the young people.

December 28th-30th: first youth camp of our province. We expect a 100 young people, of which 30 will stay at my house. Considering we have one toilet and 1,5 hours of water per day... a real challenge!

January 5th: moving to Manila

My very best wishes to all of you!

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You just see a small selection from a very eventful year. Thanks for all your compassion. God bless!