

Manila, March 2009

Christmas for the Children



Always room for one more...

With about 50 children and 3 adults in a jeep! Last Christmas, we rounded up all the children in the remote areas with a jeep of a friendly minister, and took them to our church. There, over 60 children were gathered with some of their mothers to listen to the real Christmas story... Thanks for all your prayers concerning the Christmas activities.

Saying Goodbye...

Not the most fun, but definitely a part of the life of a missionary. Two fare-well parties were organized on my behalf.



Official transfer from the congregation to the head office of ABCOOP churches.

The first party was organized in the congregation, the second with all the co-workers throughout the province.

Also a certificate was handed to me as a token of their appreciation for my work there. Another piece of Philippine culture. Over the last four years, I have received more certificates than in the 28 years before! There were a lot of speeches..., children, youngsters and women sang a song and the Sunday school children had made me a colouring picture. At that time, I realized how much I have built up over this period.



Children explain their colouring picture to me.

Youth Camp

28th – 30th December was our first youth camp in this province. There were 96 youngsters, of whom the most had not been Christian for more than a year. Their testimonies, held on the last evening, were very touching. This took a few hours, but I will give you two: “Without you coming to our province, my life would have been so different. There were so many problems in our home. The problems haven’t gone, but now I know God, I can handle those problems. Each day I can ask Him to go with me and He provides me every day with all that I need” and “I always came to church with my mother, but my heart was involved in entirely different things. I

rather went out with my friends or played internet games, but now I realise how important God is in our lives and I want my friends to know about Him. So that they also have eternal life and not go to waste.”

From an organizational point of view everything went well. Although our church was not accommodated to receive so many visitors and we did not have a spectacular kitchen, everything was all right. Some people, even two non-Christian neighbours offered housing for the girls or to use their bathroom. The boys slept in the church. Well, uhm, slept... The first day everyone was still a little bit shy and they all clung to their “church members”. But after some time, more and more interaction occurred and new friendships were formed. Good speakers and also teambuilding activities helped to realize that. Even though camp was finished after cleaning up after breakfast, around one o’clock p.m. large groups still were hanging around. They didn’t feel like saying goodbye just yet...



Spiderweb; get your whole team through the web, without touching the rope...

EE-continuation

The Evangelization Exercise in Sariaya has started. Twelve youngsters have joined this training. They are still very enthusiastic

and really want to be equipped to share the Good News with their family and school members. Most of them are the only Christian in their families. At the last Sunday of the month, I hope to teach them how to lead people to giving their lives in the Hands of the Living God.

ACTS Mobile Bible School

A week after moving to Manilla, we already travelled to Boac, Marinduque. A small island beneath Luzon. It took five hours by bus and three hours by boat. The boat only sails two times a day....so we tried not to miss it. The boat at twelve o clock was for unknown reasons taken out of service. Some people were already waiting for over ten hours to take the boat! Reverend Wilson and I gave a three-day-course to about 30 active members of a congregation. This congregation hasn’t had a minister for six months, but is very actively evangelizing. This was also the first training, in which my new boss, rev. Wilson sat at the back of the classroom listening to me. That was exciting. But despite our style in teaching is very different, we could appreciate each other and the training was very well received by the members of the congregation.

For me, this was a time of becoming more and more aware of the fact that not only teaching is significant. Also the breaks and the stay at the guest family are important. Although one is tired of teaching, it is at those times during breaks, students come to me with their personal questions. And then, when you go to your guest family after a tiring day, they want to enjoy the company of a foreigner, teacher and a lot of talking or a local sightseeing tour takes place.

It is very special to be able to join the lives of people for a few days and helping them along the way. Many local treats were

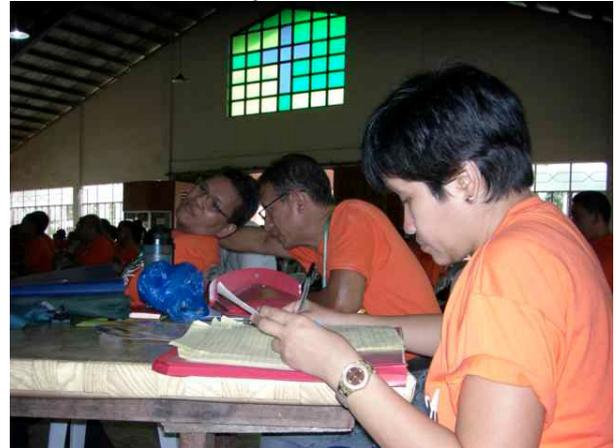
offered to us and at the end of the visit we received a T- shirt of the island.



An area were old ways and progress compete with each other...

Last month a introduction tour was planned. We went to different schools up in the north. For me this was to learn the way and to be officially introduced to the local leaders; something which is very important in the Philippines. Exceptionally, we went by car so we could visit multiple centres in one trip. The first day, we drove for twelve hours. The second day eight hours, the third day we visited several projects in the surroundings of the church, which took a lot of driving around. The last two day we also drove about eight hours. You might understand, we were quite fed up with all that driving at the end. But is was nice to visit all the leaders and the schools and to get an idea of their work. For them, it was very encouraging to be visited by us. When we are travelling, we sometimes thinks, why are we doing this? But when we receive such positive reactions after a training, the travelling becomes all worthwhile.

National Assembly



Orange was the theme colour at the conference, so I felt right at home.

Every year a special T-shirt is made. This year there was already chosen for the colour orange, even before me joining the office. But a lot of people who know me, asked if I had anything to do with that. When I told them that at the day that we celebrate the birthday of our queen, 'koninginnedag' or during football matches half of the Dutch people wears this colour, they were stunned...

For the true 'computer wizz' amongst you. At www.youtube.com under "36th ABCCOP national assembly" you will find a clip with pictures of ministers and workers, taken during the national assembly. For me, this was the first time, to be part of the organization. So, when everyone had already left for bed, I had to go to meetings and during the day I had to do "damage control". Nevertheless, it was a good conference, many ministers left encouraged.

Short Term Evangelization

Dina from Germany, who had worked with me for over a month, is on her way back home again. She has received a clear impression of the work of a missionary and hopes to come back to Asia as a

missionary, after her study is finished. Will you pray with me for her to have patience to complete her study and for Gods continuing guidance in His plans for her near and far future.



Agenda

27th March; I'm asked to be some sort of bridesmaid at my friends wedding. A crash course concerning this part of Philippine culture might be necessary :-o

29th March; Evangelisation Exercise in Sariaya

5th - 28th April; two training courses about missionary work and evangelization to youth leaders of Bukang Liwayway

25th April; dedication of TJ in Sariaya where I have to perform as 'godmother'

30th April - 3rd May; OMF conference

12th - 16th May; first Christian Education conference which rev. Wilson and I are allowed to organize in cooperation with others.

17th - 19th May; to Ifugao (northern mountain tribes) for the presentation of the diplomas to ACTS students and to join the annual conference for the mountain people up in the high north.

26th August; Arrival in the Netherlands! ☺
On leave until the 4th of November.

Kind regards to you all!
Iljo

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