



Manilla, December 2009

A warm welcome back

Landing in Manilla with 35 degrees, driving through traffic which has no apparent rules, beggars who walk through the queued-up cars trying to receive some Peso's. A country in September but already in the Christmas mood. I am back "home".

Looking back upon Holland

It was good to be back "home" for a while. Yes, what is home actually? ☺ Meeting up with family, church and friends. Lovely to meet so many of you and be able to catch up and admire all the new born baby's! And adding to that the typical Dutch 'stamppot' [mashed food] and autumn colors, with of course the not very typical high temperatures, were just perfect for me. Although traveling over 5000 km within 10 weeks with presentations and all it can't be called an vacation, but just the short break of the Philippines and the work there was good. Just letting the tension of living in this explosive country slide of off you for a moment...

Ondoy, Pepeng and others...

Packing thousands of emergency packages to give the victims. Endless reports to be made to assure the benefactors that the money is being well spent. At risk of your own life trying to distribute the food. It happened to many of us. When people get that desperate, they won't wait till their name is called. They just storm at the bus with relief. In advance the leaders of an area select the people who are in greatest need of help and these people receive a receipt. But in the midst of the chaos most often these are not the people who get the food. The leaders will arrange to get the first ration of food for themselves. Disasters don't always bring up the best in a person. A part the lagoon is still covered in water which reaches to second floor. There is an enormous lake, with no exit. That lake is flooded and the water can only disappear by evaporation. Some live on the second floor and do everything by boat, others still live in the evacuation centers

and some are already looking for a new place to build a home.

The second part of the emergency relief is aimed at helping the people and communities to get over this all. Furniture, clothing, books, musical instruments, floors, roofing... and some need an all new house, because their house has been washed away, or the foundation has been struck by the water.



People live on the second floor and use bamboo boats as mode of transport.

We are overwhelmed by the amount of help which has come in and overwhelmed by the task to distribute it fairly, to the people that NEED it. Even from the poorest parts of the Philippines money has come in to help victims. Amazing to see and show such real charity! A golden opportunity for the churches to show, with their hands, what a Christian is and for what he stands.



Man searches through washed up goods.

Some people got "richer" through the storm.

The people in the slums bordering the Marikina River, lost allot, had a great amount of water in their houses, but were also people who found the plastic closets, the gas stoves and –cylinders and “enriched” their homes with these items. Of course the luxury only lasts as long as there is gas in the cylinder, because the most of these people will never be able to afford a refill.



Litter everywhere.

Due to the enormously high water level we still find garbage bags at 3 meters up in the trees, and some areas are certainly not yet litter “free”. For a great distance only half of the streets are useable here. You can understand what impact this has on the health of citizens. Because of bacteria in polluted water more have died than through the floods themselves.

**ACTS Mobile Bible school
Welfareville/Quezon city**

Our school there is full with 25 students in a small nursery room. Despite the fact that they have to pay a substantial –relatively- amount for the lessons, they have faithfully come. Only if a husband or daughter was in the hospital they wouldn’t come. But even then they would give their homework along with someone else and ask for the notes of the new lesson. Really encouraging seeing them study like this.



Students in Welfareville on children’s chairs.

Two remarks I wouldn’t want to withhold from you. I heard two ladies tell each other: “studying is so much fun isn’t it, if you understand”. An important reminder to keep teaching in their local language and on their level! The second remark comes from a vicar, who is busy with his masters in theology. He wanted to join the lessons on our school: “because there you can study the Bible in Philippine”. Through a sponsor this man has been able to follow theological classes, but he wanted to join at this lower level so that he could study in Philippine. Very encouraging, these last weeks before the temporary leave. Also an encouragement to return and ensure that as many communities can benefit from this training.

Tuguegarao/ Enrile

The journey up did not go smooth at all! I should have had a bus trip 10-12 hours, which I wasn’t looking forward to. It became 16 hours en arrived past midnight! All men were worried and I kept receiving text messages asking were about I was. We were in middle of the mountains, pitch dark and waiting at several roadblocks, so I also couldn’t really answer them. Eventually we arrived and had a good training. There were quiet allot of students and everybody participated well, despite some of them having real discomfort because of the heat. It was 35 degrees and the few fans weren’t really enough. Luckily I got my “own” fan being the teacher! It is good being back here and continuing the work.



Northern provinces of the Philippines.

Next year we hope to have 21 schools, in the most remote areas. And more are ready to be started, but there are just not enough teachers. Keep praying!

Elections May, 2010



Ako ang Simula; I am the beginning

This is the slogan for the elections. It begins with the citizens who register themselves instead of “selling” their vote for a free t-shirt or Christmas gift.

You might have seen this on the news. Close to the town of Saniag supporters and family members of a politician, who was running against the seated governor, gathered.

They were received by group of about a 100 armed men, who killed them and dumped them in mass graves, even burying their cars with them. Until now only 57 bodies have been found. The military has taken control of the area, and have even declared a state of emergency. For out

standers this seems to be a “safe” measure. But in a country which lived in a dictatorship for years, under that same state of emergency (same word, means that the government can’t be held accountable for its actions), this brings fear and frustration about what other strange leaps this president can come up with to stay in power for longer... This won’t be the last massacre before the elections. Hopefully people will realize that killing your opponent is not a part of democracy. Meanwhile there are already 98 candidates running for president! So whoever wins, he will only have a small majority behind him and maybe not even the experience to run an entire country...

Agenda

- 6 December: Evangelism - training Quezon
- 8 December: Meeting with all managers of the different Bible schools
- 12 December: Farewell of our field leader and Christmas celebration missionaries
- 16 December: Christmas celebration with the missionaries from ABCCOP
- 17 December: Christmas celebration at office of ABCCOP
- 19 December: Wedding of a worker in Quezon
- 22 December: Jigsaw Christmas celebration
- 27 December: Ninang at the dedication of the son of a former colleague
- 28 December-4 January: free in Calapan

Surely several things will be added to this but for now this is what is planned. After Christmas, in the New Year, the administration which is in 4 boxes now will have to be sorted out. Besides that we have to find teachers 21 schools!! It is good that from many places interest is shown in good training, but...you can understand that is quit a job to find enough qualified teachers.

In memory of

Emily Dela Roca Giron
March 1961 - November 2009

Past weekend the Lord unexpectedly took one of our very loyal workers under the most poor of



Calapan, Mindoro. She brought many to Christ and organized lively hood programs under the poorest to at least give them a small income. She shall be missed as a colleague, but let us especially pray for her husband and three children (18- 26 Years) who will have to continue without their wife and mother. Apol had to start work in Manilla 2 days after the funeral.

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Christmas and New Year



The Parol; the sign of Christmas in the Philippines

From this place I would like to wish you all a blessed Christmas and the best for 2010!

Greetings to you all!
Iljo de Keijzer

COLOFON

The GZB and the OMF work together to make the mission of Iljo de Keijzer possible.
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