



**August 31, 2009**

Dear Praying Friends,

After a rich time in Minnesota with friends, family and a couple supporting churches, I arrived in Manila August 8. Mary Ann arrived the 22nd so we've both been back in the ministry saddle since then. The following are a few ministry updates and requests for prayer.

### **1. August 18-21 Street Children Camp**

We had 50 rough and tumble 15-18 year old street boys and girls who *\*really\** enjoyed camp. It was a joy for me to watch them learn about Christ, enjoy fresh cooler air and lots of space to play, greenery, unmolested sleep, plenty of water for showers and washing clothes, and of course, lots of nutritious food. We figure at each meal we consumed about 30 kilos of rice so I think the kids have hollow legs! Forty one kids indicated they turned from sin and trusted the Savior. They are now being followed up by their recruiting churches and organizations.

*\*By the way, our July 21-24 camp had 53 street kids with 49 indicating trusting Christ so they are being followed up as well. The average cost for each camp was \$2300 USD. You know, I've realized I don't have the youthful energy I used to have but the fire still burns deep in my gut for these kids. Their stories are heartbreaking but my-oh-my, do they respond to the genuine care of their counselors and the love of God. Pray for the churches, agencies and campers.*

### **2. ALS Update**

August 14 we had a reunion and celebration for all of the out-of-school youth, street kids and adults who are now studying basic literacy through the Department of Education's "Alternative Learning System" (ALS). Eighty plus people are currently studying and 18 recent graduates were recognized for their huge accomplishment. All of the tutors are church workers from within our network who have been trained by the Department of Education who are giving their time and talent as volunteers. The current students are now working hard preparing for their ALS exam in October. Those that pass high school level get a diploma and can go on for further education if they choose. Even if they fail the exam, they can retake it in the future, however, it is huge that they are even taking it knowing their situation on the streets or in the slums.

### **3. Fish & Bread Update**

Within the next few days, we will have 13 nutritional feeding sites in operation, 10 of which will be using food from Feed My Starving Children. At each site mothers are directly involved in food preparation, serving the food and cleanup as well as learning the basics in hygiene and health care for their families. You may recall Mary Ann helped develop a set of medical and hygiene training booklets and these are being used at these feeding sites. Each site is under the supervision of a partner church in coordination with local health officials. Bible studies are also included so along with learning nutrition and health, they are learning about Jesus. Our recent trip to Minnesota generated lots of interest in helping to send more Feed My Starving Children food to us in Manila. I recently received word that 3 senior's Sunday School classes at Grace Church Eden Prairie have packed and shipped 10 boxes with more on the way next month. The price of my ticket was well worth ramping up this ministry.

### **4. Zambales Relief**

Earlier this month northern Zambales Province was pummeled by typhoon Morakot, the same one that has caused much death and damage in Taiwan. A few weeks ago I received a call from a pastor requesting relief aid for the many families that were totally washed out by the typhoon. Last Thursday we were able to send two truck loads of relief for 300 families selected by pastors in the disaster zone. We were delayed in our response due to our camp schedule but praise the Lord after receiving a couple large gifts, we were able to respond to their request.

### **5. Petra Conference**

August 27-29 our church, Greenhills Christian Fellowship, hosted this conference with about 700 pastors and church workers in attendance from throughout the Philippines. The theme was "Purpose and Passion for Ministry: the 21st Century Disciple According to the Pastoral Epistles." There were several plenary sessions and workshops throughout the 3 days. The 29th I led a workshop called "Ministry to the Poor" and to my great surprise roughly 100 attended. We had a robust and energetic discussion as I taught followed by a lively Q&A session. Following the workshop several approached me with further questions and clarifications. One conference leader mentioned to me twice that this topic needs to be a plenary session because we live and serve with the poor surrounding us each and every day. Another conference leader told me likes my teaching "straight from the shoulder" so we'll see in the coming days, months and years the fruit of our time together.

\* One of the couples that approached me after the workshop was Pastor Ogie and his wife Ginna who lost all of their earthly possessions and 3 of their 4 kids in a terrible house fire last April. They are a very poor family ministering in a squatter community and since their tragedy, ACTION has been raising funds to help them get housing and rebuild their lives. With tears streaming down their faces they thanked me and ACTION for our help. I was speechless because words simply would be meaningless as I faced their grief but saw their steady trust in the Lord.

\* Another man who approached me after the meeting said he is a former inmate at New Bilibid, the Philippine's National Penitentiary. Before he went to NB, he was continually in and out of city jails because of his life of crime. He showed me the tatoos on his arm to prove his former gang involvement. It was while he was at New Bilibid he came to faith in Christ and today is a pastor. The reason he told me

his story is because during the course of my teaching I mentioned the need to minister to prisoners, which ACTION does. What a joy to meet this happy brother in Christ!

## **6. Mary Ann & Micah's trip to WA and Amos' job search**

A few days after I left for Manila, Mary Ann and Micah left St. Paul and drove to Seattle, WA in Micah's car. Thank you for praying because they had a trouble-free drive and delightful fellowship with each other and friends they met along the way. Micah is now living in Lynnwood and volunteering in the ACTION office in Mountlake Terrace. In preparation for her to join ACTION, she will be going through orientation in September. October 7 she will come out to join us for a few months in Manila to learn and participate in our field operations as she waits on the Lord for her ministry assignment. If she is approved to become an ACTION missionary after orientation, she will be trusting the Lord for her personal support as all ACTION missionaries do, including her parents. For your information, throughout her deployment she sent regular email prayer letters so she has a prayer letter list of roughly 100 names so **let us know if you would like to be added to Micah's prayer letter list.** She would also appreciate prayer for guidance in her relationship with Daniel Scott who is the assistant to Nelson Reed, ACTION's International Director. Danny is also coming to Manila in October to learn more about our ministries, particularly Working Hands, our Discipleship Vocational Training Ministry.

After almost 6 years, Amos earned his PhD in Computational Chemistry from Caltech in Pasadena, CA. Within a month he was able to get a job in a field related to his degree close to his church and Caltech. So he will be staying in Pasadena and starting his job September 1. It was a delight to have Amos with us in Minnesota. Pray for him please.

## **7. STM meetings**

A couple days before Mary Ann returned to Manila, she participated in a two day meeting with other ACTION Personnel Coordinators to discuss ACTION's desire to improve our Short Term Ministry programs. Micah took minutes during the meetings and there is much to follow up in the coming days. They grappled with ACTION's new vision statement which was adopted last March at our International Council Meeting:

***Action International Ministries is strongly committed to using short term ministry as a vital catalyst to mobilize local churches (both on the field and in the sending country) to fulfill the Great Commission.***

Recently we had a guest pastor from Kansas City here to teach at a conference for pastors as well as do other ministry with our team. I took him to visit one of our feeding sites where we had to cross a river in a small boat to get there and it was quite an experience. He summarized the experience by saying, "God taught me so much that is nearly impossible to learn apart from being there. Though I know the concept of short term missions needs some serious re-thinking so it does not end up wasting lots of money and time, I hope we do not do away with the idea because, for example, you cannot smell the San Juan River and truly grasp the preciousness of children and people in a squatter village by reading a book." You can read about Pastor Steve's visit and see his powerful photos on his blog:

<http://christcommunicator.com/2009/08/15/today-at-squatter-village/>

Pray for Mary Ann and others as they work to improve our short term missions ministry.

**Closing:**

Whether we are career missionaries, pastors, short termers and/or senders, we all have a place in obeying God's mandate to reach all peoples with the Gospel. In and through all of this is the ministry of prayer and God is moved by the intercession of His people. Recently I finished studying 1, 2 and 3 John but I want to draw our attention to 1 John 3:22-23 which says, "And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." (NASB)

Friends, answered prayer is conditioned upon our trust in God and His faithfulness to His promises as well as our unbroken fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. How are we doing in our walk with Christ and love for His people? Faith and love walk hand in hand.

Sincerely in Christ,

**Jeff**

Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you;  
Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts." --Is 26:8 NIV

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