



Dear Praying Friends,

Greetings from Minnesota where Mary Ann and I arrived last Friday. Our trip was smooth but we were fidgety due to both of us having colds. We are now feeling better. To those of you who are praying for us, we really appreciate it and are grateful. Here are ministry updates for your encouragement and continued informed prayer.

1. Minnesota and Brazil Trip

We are here preparing for an open house reception for Danny and Micah Scott this Saturday at First Baptist Church in Anoka. We look forward to their arrival Friday afternoon as well as Danny's parents Chris and Janet and brother Bryan in the evening. Micah and Danny leave from here Tuesday afternoon for Brazil. They will help facilitate ACTION's International Council meetings March 8-13. Mary Ann and I leave Thursday for Brazil where I will represent the Philippines and serve as the Council's Secretary, Mary Ann will take the minutes and present a working paper on ACTION's strategy in the role of short term missionaries in the spread of the Gospel in ACTION's 27 fields of service. We thank God for the few gifts that have come in to help defray Mary Ann's cost of \$2700 but if you feel the Lord leading you to help us toward her expenses we would appreciate you sending a gift to the ACTION office nearest you. Pray for our IC meetings because we have many critical agenda items to deal with and we need God's wisdom, physical stamina as many are traveling from various parts of the world, as well as harmony as we tackle critical issues.

2. Speaking engagements in Minnesota

Last Sunday I spoke 4 times at First Baptist Church of Anoka. Although I was still jet-lagged, the enthusiasm and warm reception of the people energized me throughout the day. God is certainly ramping up this church for home and world missions and we are glad to be a part of it. This Sunday the 28th I will be speaking in a joint-Sunday school class at Oak Haven Church in Ham Lake, MN at 9:45. This will be our first time at this church so we are grateful for the opportunity. Our agenda is very simple but profound at the same time, to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and encourage His people wherever we are in the Biblical mandate of either going, sending and/or letting others go in spreading the Gospel and compassionate care worldwide. Perhaps you would like to join us for Sunday school.

3. The Lord of the harvest answering prayers

Mary Ann serves as our field's Human Resource Coordinator, meaning she works with our home offices in the USA, Canada and UK in handling inquiries and applicants of those interested in joining the Philippine team. Since our return to Manila January 11 she has been handling applications for 10 appointees who are on their way to the field and 5 applicants who are in the screening process. As you can imagine, this is **very** important and detailed work. We are thrilled that the Lord of the harvest is answering our prayers for more workers because what He said long ago in Matthew 9:37 is still true "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few." NASB.

*As a note to the lack of long-term workers, our team is very limited in accepting short term workers which will be an aspect of Mary Ann's paper that she presents at the IC. This reality continues to be a dilemma because we value skilled short termers to come out and assist, but we need veterans to facilitate their time and work.

4. This week's camp

I received word from the team that our evangelistic camp for street children is going well with 53 rough and tumble kids in attendance. They requested special prayer for those that are addicted to glue and paint thinner. Pray that many will turn from sin to the Savior, be connected to their recruiting church and for those who need special intervention will receive it from ministries who are on standby ready to help. This year we have 6 camps scheduled which we have listed in previous letters each costing \$2,400.

At the end of this camp our camp budget will be broke and we're trusting the Lord for the funds for the remaining 5 camps. As the Lord leads, you may want to invest in sending a street child to camp which costs \$30 per child.

*Note: several campers are from families who live under a bridge who survive by recycling garbage and were totally washed out by the great flood of Manila in September. Last week we located two groups of families, one group living in a gymnasium and the other living under a bridge, who have received very little assistance since the flood and are not able to return to their former location. As a form of follow up to camp, next week we are planning to have a major relief operation for the families of these campers and their neighbors in partnership with Pastor Ed Pornia who pastors Valley View Mission Church. Pastor Ed and his wife Jane whom we've written about previously, have planted this church among tomb dwellers (I'm not joking!). Pastor Ed and Jane found these two groups of families through their outreach ministry to street children and out-of-school youth. They are unique servants of the Lord and precious friends.

** Last week Pastor Ed took our 3 Bethany College of Missions interns to these locations. So he is also serving as a friend and mentor to future missionaries. Pray for the interns Elle, Dave and Micah as they are serving at camp this week and I'm sure learning a lot.

5. Two tent city feedings, possibly three

One of the last things I did before leaving Manila was sign off on an agreement with 2 churches in launching 6 month supplemental feedings for malnourished children in two tent cities holding families who were washed out by the floods. We're planning to start these feedings in the next few days and they will be done in cooperation with local health and social workers along with having Bible studies for the families. Lord willing each church is hoping to plant a daughter church as well. Several people in both locations told us they want Bible study so the door is wide open for ministry. We're also looking into the possibility of having a feeding for the families I mentioned living in a gymnasium where the conditions are extremely hot and unhealthy. This feeding would be in partnership with Pastor Ed and Jane. Each feeding will cost approximately \$4100 and we praise God we have these funds in hand.

* Note: People often ask me how we get so much done and my answer is we have very good full time staff and missionaries who know what they are doing and why they do it. Along with them we have built an army of volunteers from churches and other ministries who are of like mind and heart and willing to serve among the poor and needy with ACTION. We are building a grass-roots movement of God's people who serve one another and others for the sake of the Gospel.

6. Jomar's second surgery

Jomar, the 18 year old burn victim, had her 2nd surgery February 15 and from all indications is doing well. Mary Ann and I continue to be blessed by her because she is a gutsy young woman who is growing in the Lord and is serving others despite her physical limitations. For example on January 31 I attended the opening worship service at Calvary Hills, the squatter community along the polluted river where Jomar lives with her mother. This little church was planted by the Camp Aguinaldo Evangelical Church and Jomar is a key worker by helping with our feeding program and teaching Sunday school alongside Wendy Laureta. Continue to pray for Jomar please.

7. Calvary Hill's Opening Service

As I mentioned, January 31 was the opening service at Calvary Hills and it was a *huge* joy for me to see Pastor Lino Dela Pena serving as their leader, Wendy Laureta teaching the children and many mothers, children and some fathers worshipping the Lord. After the service Feed My Starving Children food was served to many kids which was cooked in a huge kettle. I think after the feeding there was not a grain of rice left. It was gone. As a reminder Lino, Wendy and Jomar came to know Christ at ACTION camps and we pray for more campers like them because they are inspiring examples to others.

*Note: Wendy Laureta graduates from Philippine Missionary Institute March 26 with a degree in Christian Ed after five years of study, after which she hopes to get into teaching. What a godly young woman she is!

8. Second Mile updates

The work we do through feedings, street outreach, relief, camping and Christmas parties are what we consider the "first mile" while the Vocational Discipleship training ACTION does is going the "second mile". About 2 hours south of Manila ACTION has a compound called 2nd Mile which houses several ministries for impoverished youth and former street kids. The following are significant events there.

- Mustard Seed Discipleship Vocational training for girls graduated their 4th class of five December 12 and are now recruiting for their next class which opens April 5. Barb Burchert who leads this work and her team are now recruiting up to ten girls for the next class. Sharon Germaine teaches high speed sewing.
- Working Hands will be graduating their 18th class February 27. Working Hands led by Daryl Germaine will be graduating 31 boys which is their largest class ever. Daryl teaches auto mechanics, Gary Root carpentry and Chito Belmonte computer repair.
- After graduation, each graduate goes on to receive on-the-job training for 6 months which is also sponsored by ACTION. By the time the training is complete, each young person is equipped with marketable vocational skill as well as the ability to lead Bible studies and serve in their church.
- Honest Hands, our life-skills development program for former street boys led by Carl Loewen, will be graduating nine March 25 which is their 7th class. Those who desire and pass the entrance exam may enter into an aspect of Working Hands.

*Note: Each program is 10 months in length, the students live on campus Monday to Friday, have a half day in the shop and half day in Bible class, then on the weekends serve in their home churches. Each missionary mentioned and their ministry, as with all ACTION missionaries and ministries, trust the Lord for funds. To learn more about 2nd Mile and all ACTION Philippine ministries go to our website at <http://www.actionphilippines.org>.

9. Street Impact Team office needs to move

A few days before we left Manila I was informed that the Street Impact Team needs to move from our office where we have based for many years. This news came in the midst of our very busy schedule and was unexpected. We need to be out by March 31 so we are now praying and looking for suitable and affordable office space. Please pray. Our consolation is the Lord knows this and will provide in due time. Next week when the team is back from camp they will start looking and will keep me informed.

Closing

Part of my message last Sunday at First Baptist was about "the otherness of the Gospel" meaning the Gospel is not only about me and mine, but all the peoples of the earth. The Gospel and the Kingdom of God are much better than good and much greater than wonderful. We need to be compelled by the love of Christ to spread the Good News to those near and far because it is far superior to self interest. Two questions Saul (who became Paul) asked the Lord Jesus when he was converted on the Damascus Road were: 1. "Who art Thou, Lord?"; 2. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:5-6 KJV). We also need to ask those questions so that when we see Jesus for who He is, we will gladly say "Yes, Lord! we will be and do as you direct."

One of our favorite authors is Randy Alcorn and he is a great friend of ACTION. He posted this on his facebook while we were writing this letter: "Don't let your yes depend on whether you think you'll like what God's direction may be. Say 'yes' to God first, then ask, 'What do you want me to do?' 'I desire to do your will, O my God' (Psalm 40:8)."

Thanks Randy for your strong affirmation of what I'm trying to say. You say it much better. These are *exciting* days to be alive and serving the Lord!

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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