



May 7, 2010

Hey hey,

Yes, I do know it has been a while since I last sent an update. I was holding off hoping I would be able to announce the commencement of a tent-making endeavor but it has not yet started and there are some hurdles that if we do not clear could kill the effort. We are close but still no cigar. The endeavor is a Christian school and Lord willing I will be able to explain more the next time around.

Recently I attended a parent support seminar for parents with children who have autism at the prompting of my wife and the local clinic where we take Timi Louise for her speech and occupational therapy. Wow! you talk about sticking out like a sore thumb, there I was. I felt completely out of place. For starters I was the only foreigner there and to compound my isolation I was only one of two fathers. I kid you not, during 50% of all testimonies the person sharing was choked up and in tears before they finished their first sentence. This is not my arena. But, believe it or not, I did get a lot out from being there. Plenty of wisdom from parents who have been there. A few examples would be how we as parents must look for the signs of love that the child is communicating to us. As autism is in part a communications disorder and the autistic person may never communicate love in a traditional manner they will communicate in their own manner. Timi Louise, who is now almost three, still does not acknowledge Gloria and I as her parents. She does not call Gloria "mommy" or me "daddy." This is very difficult for Gloria. Timi Louise never says "I love you" and at times does not acknowledge that we are there. Gloria is acknowledged far less than I am but then again Gloria is at work most of the time whereas I am usually somewhere near Timi Louise. Yet Timi Louise does communicate to both Gloria and I that she both knows who we are and that she loves us. Take for instance if a stranger were to come around Timi Louise she will then cling to either Gloria and I and this is what we can see as a positive. Timi will initiate our "family head rub" at times and this too can be seen as a positive. The seminar also made clear that we as parents need to work past our denial and depression and realize that for the child all is well and normal. Both Gloria and I have been dealing with these negative feelings and we do know that it is time to press on.

One of the difficulties is as Timi Louise's case is mild it is making it difficult to accept. So often Timi Louise seems like a normal child who happens to be an introvert. This normalcy keeps us wondering if she is truly autistic though we both know that she is. Again it is Gloria who struggles with this far more so than I. Here in the Philippines any condition that causes a person to be deemed abnormal truly puts a stigma on the person. It is common for a person who has been stigmatized to live their life in one room of a house for instances. This tendency to treat the handicapped unequally truly produces fear and anxiety in Gloria when she thinks of Timi's future. Maybe with me I think of America as a place to fall back to and I know that it can be different there for Timi Louise but for Gloria not being raised in America her thinking has been conditioned by life here in the Philippines. We need to trust the Lord and have faith that the best will take place and that Timi Louise is in the Lord's hands.

Ministry wise I have been working on my book of evangelistic gospel proclamation. As you may recall last July when I came back here to care for Timi Louise I went to a part-time position with ACTION Philippines. What this means is that I receive a part-time salary and the rest of my monthly support rolls over into work funds that I can use for ministry. In return I maintain the ministries website and I wrote some comic books but could not find an illustrator so now I am working on my book. I actually started it over a year ago but put it on hold due to feelings of inadequacy. But I have been doing research in my area of weakness and feel a little more confident and have thus resumed the writing. I gave myself a June deadline but then expanded the book and now I am at 50% completion therefore I realize that I must move my deadline. Lord willing and with honest efforts I am now looking at September. The good news is that because my work funds account is growing I will have the funds to publish the book and it will be distributed to pastors and evangelists here in the Philippines for free through ACTION's BookShare ministry. I am excited about this. Plus if the Christian school takes off that will be icing on the cake.

I will leave it at this and allow you to get back to your time. Thanks for listening and God bless.

Jim Craig
Until He Comes

www.jim.messenjah.ws

If you would like to give you can make checks payable to Action International Ministries, P. O. Box 398 Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043-0398 or 3015 A 21st Street NE, Calgary, Alberta T2E 7T1, Canada. Note that your check is for support of the Craig's.