

November 8, 2009

My youngest son is trying to jump off a „rock“ on the floor backwards into his room to prepare for going to bed – and seems way too excited to be going to sleep anytime soon. Oh – yikes – he is now climbing up the bunk bed to try to visit his brother. Problem is that it is almost completely dark in the room which seems like a recipe for disaster. Life is never dull with four boys in the house, and bedtime is always a whirl of activity with devotions, prayers, talking, glasses of milk, inspections of the fish tank, joking around, reading books, brushing teeth etc.

Some of you have emailed me to ask about how the ALS test turned out a few weeks back (October 25). It ended up being quite an OK day. The testing venue was much more organized this year, and although the students lined up to take the test created quite a traffic jam outside the school, the class rooms and testing areas were kept quieter and more organized for the students. Lino and I did not have too much to do after making sure the Honest Hands guys were in the right classrooms and equipped with the proper pencils, erasers, and sharpeners. I got quite a bit of reading done, and met some interesting people from various organizations that work with kids who have dropped out of school. When the long day was finally over, I asked our guys how they thought they had done. Their response was, “Oh, we did well, fine, great etc”. So they were positive about the experience and were treated fairly by the supervising teachers this time. Thanks for your prayers for them. Now we need to wait about four months to find out if they have passed (or not).

Honest Hands completed our first semester which focused on foundational truth (God as our Father, Who is Jesus / Life of Christ, Who is the Holy Spirit) and lots of basic overviews on how the Bible fits together. I love teaching young men who really know next to nothing about the Bible, and are eager to learn. To celebrate completing our first semester we took the students to the Mall of Asia in Manila (enormous) and spent the morning in a science discovery center complete with a pretty cool planetarium. I think they enjoyed themselves and then we had a bit of a feast at Chow King, a local fast food chain that specializes in Filipino chow for lack of a better word.

You can pray for one of our students who is struggling at this time. He does not want to continue serving in the church that sent him, and has had lots of conflicts with the pastor and his wife. They have tried to be gracious in hosting him, but his actions don’t demonstrate that he wants to serve anyone or help the church. He wants to go back to Manila and connect up with a previous church again, but I am not sure if that will work out. My heart goes out to a guy like this who has grown up with a wide variety of people, and has so little foundational stability in terms of making good decisions. He has a hard time recognizing people who are trying to help him with a bit of „tough love“.

This next week we will move into our Heroes of the Bible semester, and the staff is preparing to teach on characters like Joseph, Daniel, the disciples and so on. Pray that the students would be willing to focus on the Bible, and continue to grow in their faith as they grow in knowledge and maturity. We have been encouraging our students to read the Bible, and almost all of them are now sporting some Canadian hats as a prize for finishing the Gospels. One young man has already completed reading the entire New Testament and he received a nice new Bible with a cover. It is great to see them getting into the Word of God. Pray for the Honest Hands staff as we work towards helping them understand and apply what they are reading.

I have had the opportunity to preach a few times recently, and that has been a good way to connect with the churches. I preached at the Glendale Christian Church on October 11th, and was encouraged to see a number of former Honest Hands students in the congregation. Pastor Buddy is a graduate from Working Hands (here at Second Mile) back in the 1980's and he is now doing street children work in his area as well as work skills training. It is great to see ministry multiplying. Earlier today I shared the story of the paralytic being lowered through the roof (Mark 2:1-12) at the 1st anniversary of Balubad Christian Fellowship Church near Second Mile. Melchor is the pastor of this young but growing church, and our coworkers Gary and Melita Root are also involved. The church has recently moved to a new location that gives them some more space to grow and worship together. Pray that our campus would be a light pointing people to Jesus in our neighborhood of Balubad 2.

Please pray as well for Lisa and the boys as they continue with homeschooling. There is lots of energy in the classroom, and it is often a challenge to keep some of the boys focused and positive. Lisa is often quite tired by the end of a day of teaching, but usually says she enjoys having the chance to teach her kids. The boys have been talking to me lots lately about the Vikings and how they „discovered“ Canada and then how their east coast colony fell apart due to infighting and other problems. Fascinating stuff!

Life isn't all about „ministry“ and our family has had some good times together recently – we spent a weekend in October at a Christian camp, and the boys loved the super fast waterslide down to the pool. We also just went kayaking in nearby Lake Taal this past Saturday. Not everyone gets to kayak in a volcanic lake full of fish ponds and outrigger boats, so we had fun crashing through some waves and figuring out how to maneuver our boat around some obstacles. This built up lots of appetite for a picnic lunch that was tempered a bit by the wide assortment of mangy dogs wandering around.

Well, I should probably head off to bed as I have an early trip to Manila on Monday morning for some meetings at the ACTION office. Our field is finishing off our annual budgets and proposals for 2010, and it is exciting to hear what people are hoping to do next year.

Thanks again for your prayer support,

Carl (& Lisa)