

**September 13, 2009**

It is a quiet (for now anyways) Saturday afternoon at our house, and a good time to get this August email update sent out before I need to think about writing about September!

### Honest Hands

Our ministry is facing some challenges these days as four students have dropped out for a variety of reasons. One young man left after one day as he didn't like the program, and we replaced him with another former street boy who seemed open to being disciplined. However he left after two weeks as he felt the 'pull' of the street and his street friends. Over the past few weeks two more students have left who seemed to be doing well – good attitudes, interested in learning etc. Both of them come from very poor families and cited the need to find work to help their families as the reason they quit. So now we have seven remaining students in the discipleship program. Pray for the Honest Hands staff as we need to decide whether we will accept any other 'replacement' students at this point in the program, as well as look a little deeper to see if there are any underlying reasons why so many have quit in the first month. I am hoping to visit the various sending churches over the next months to share about the discipleship program and encourage the church members to accept our students at a deeper level as fellow Christians and not just 'street kids' or 'wild youth'.



On a more positive note I am quite happy to see Renz (graduate of Batch 6) helping out as a junior staff trainee. He was in the wood tech program but couldn't handle the challenges of the course, and needed to stop. Renz was doing well spiritually and has leadership potential, so we invited him to come back to Honest Hands as a junior staff. He is a cheerful and energetic young man who is good at helping motivate the students to accomplish various tasks inside and outside the home.

We were able to help six of our students complete initial requirements to register for the upcoming Alternative Learning System test in October. This is the high school equivalency test which occurs only one time each year, and targets school drop outs over 15 years of age. Our students study in a tutorial class each morning as they prepare for the test. In previous years the test has occurred in February, so we had more time to help them prepare compared to this batch. Pray that the final acceptance slips will be released soon so we can confirm who will be allowed to write the test on October 25. Although the ALS program is a good one, there is a LOT of red tape and quite a complex system of governance and decision making.

I finished teaching some sessions on God as our Father, and enjoyed sharing the Word with the students. We had quite a bit of lively discussion, and although I am struggling a bit to get my Tagalog back up to speed, it is starting to flow a bit better by now. Teaching is one of my most favorite things about ministry – administration and leadership issues need to be addressed, but I am not really fulfilled by crunching numbers in the same way as sharing the Living Word of God! (In the picture above, Carl is celebrating his birthday with two other August birthday celebrants – an HH student named August and Lino, the live in houseparent)

Melchor is currently teaching the Life of Christ, and Lino has done some sessions on the Holy Spirit. We are working on building a solid understanding of who God is before pushing on to other topics in the weeks to come. It is both very challenging and also rewarding to teach young men who are new Christians with very little understanding or knowledge about the Bible, character of God, work of Christ etc. Pray for Honest Hands staff as we teach and disciple with the knowledge that we are being helped by the Holy Spirit.

## Family

Lisa reports that so far homeschooling is going well. They are into their third week now and the boys are working hard and doing good. She is enjoying learning along with them and it has been fun to teach again. It is busier having 3 students – lots of questions and teaching to do with each different level. They are doing classes from 8:30 – 3:00 pm so her day seems rather long. Pray for energy for the teacher, focus for the students, and lots of great learning experiences inside and outside the classroom.



It was great having Bonita and Jason and their three kids (Emma, Obadiah, and Lynnea) visit during the month of August (they are pictured at left). Heidi also came for a few weeks, so the three Giesbrecht sisters were together again in the Philippines! We drove up to Bagabag together, and enjoyed spending time where they grew up at the northern center of SIL. It is always good to have family around!

Our boys are all healthy and adjusting well to being back in the Philippines. They have all sorts of friends to run around with – so our home life is not so private or quiet as it was in Canada on the farm.

One prayer request is that we need to make a decision regarding which church we will get involved with over the next few years. For the last seven years we have been attending a small church in the nearby town and have enjoyed our time with lots of good solid teaching and friendships. However, the services are all in Tagalog, and our boys really don't understand much. Lisa and I understand enough of the deeper spiritual terms in

Tagalog to understand the sermons, but our boys are not catching much at all. There are some English services offered in churches closer to Manila, but they are typically 'mega-churches' that are a bit outside what we are used to coming from small town churches.

We are going to do a hard copy letter in the next few weeks, so pray that this will happen quickly and smoothly. There are quite a few people who do not receive our email updates and we need to stay in touch with them. Also, pray for Carl as he is going to be back on the Action Philippine Council (APC) again and will have a few added responsibilities with monthly meetings as well as budget and proposal meetings in October in Manila.



**Lisa, Bonita and Heidi on the classic bridge at Bagabag.**



**Isaiah celebrating his 10<sup>th</sup> birthday with his brothers and cousins (the first time to celebrate with cousins)! Fun.**

Thanks for your prayers and support – we couldn't do it without your partnership!

**Carl, Lisa, Isaiah, Jacob, Samuel, and Malachi**

*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 Loewens.*