

# Table in the Wilderness

February 2009

Thanks for your prayers over the past month. The month of February was a busy one for all of us.

The boys have been busy with doing lots of reading over the past weeks, as they are trying to read enough minutes in order to receive a gift certificate from their teachers for pizza. Isaiah mentioned that he enjoyed starting badminton recently, as that was a sport that he has done before at Second Mile. Jacob and Samuel are doing really well with their weekly skating sessions at the Rosenort rink. Malachi is running faster than ever, and when I spend time taking care of him I understand why Lisa is tired by the end of the day. He is a very busy little boy, and loves his older brothers. We taught him a little Tagalog phrase "Diyos ay buhay" (God is alive) and he was very proud of himself as he shouted it out. Keep praying for our boys – that they will follow the King each and every day of their lives.

I am still very busy / swamped at seminary. My classes are excellent, and the books challenging, so I find it hard to read fast and write even faster. I just finished a few good books on leadership and especially enjoyed *Great Leader Great Teacher* by Gary Bredfeldt. This next week I am writing a draft of a challenging paper on John Calvin's *Institutes*, and just finished another on the meaning of *Gospel* in Romans. I have also been enjoying a missions course that has me thinking about more effective ways to disciple and teach at Honest Hands. It is great being in a course of study that allows me to adjust and adapt my assignments to real life situations and mission issues in the Philippines. Pray that I would have good focus and energy over the next week as I also tackle Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* and do some writing related to that.

Tomorrow I start teaching a Sunday school class on the Gospel of Mark at Pleasant Valley EMC (our home church) with the help of Bert Kornelson. I am looking forward to this study, and appreciate your prayers for the class and the material we will cover.

Pray for Lisa as she starts to prepare for home schooling later this year when we return to the Philippines. We are going to the Manitoba home schooling conference in Winnipeg in March, and hope to get some good material, advice and encouragement during that time.

We have had lots of good opportunities to share about Honest Hands and missions over the past month. I did a Junior youth session at Pleasant Valley, and had a good time with all the youth crowded into a 'squatter shack' as I did my lesson. I shared about our ministry at Steinbach Bible College, and at Providence in the first week of February, as that is missions week for the local Bible colleges. Lisa and I helped with a Marketplace evening at Providence and built a little sari-sari (convenience store) out of an old puppet theatre from my parents. AS the students came around, we offered them Coke in a bag, and lots of other Filipino snacks. We also attended Missions Fest in Winnipeg and had a good chance to chat with Wayne Whitbourne (our Canadian director), and Scott Gillespie who helps with short term teams and recruitment. Then we also were at another local EMC church last Sunday and shared in the main service. I am hoping to mobilize more people to pray for us as the challenges of discipling former street boys are immense, but not impossible for we serve a powerful and caring God.

It was great going back to Red Rock and attending a Family camp in mid February. Our boys loved the super fast tube slide that sent their tubes rocketing out on to the lake. Cross country skiing was great, with perfect weather (-10C) and no wind. Isaiah and Jacob did well, and we covered quite a few kilometers going up and down and around the beauty of the Canadian Shield in winter. Lisa and I spent our first winter as newlyweds at Red Rock – Lisa in the kitchen, and I helped with maintenance – so it is always good to go back, although it was odd to put on our skis in what used to be our bedroom and office in our first little house. It was converted into a craft / bike / ski shack.

## Honest Hands updates

Thanks for all of your prayers over the past few years. We finally have a social worker at Second Mile. His name is Mark, and he is a young man with experience and a heart for God. Pray for him as he adjusts to life and ministry at Second Mile and helps us bring our paperwork up to speed for the Filipino government.

The Working Hands Wood Technology class is slated to graduate on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Pray for these 9 young men (and Gary Root, who is the leader of the Wood Tech program) as they finish their final requirements and start to look for work. Working Hands has an “On the Job Training program” (OJT) that helps them connect with employers and offers an allowance for six months. So the employers get someone for ‘free’ and the young guys get the crucial six months of actual experience. 8 of the 9 students are former Honest Hands students so it is quite exciting to see how God has led them from rough and rugged street punks to strong young men following God, ready to go out and get some honest work and help support their families, instead of sliding back to crime and drugs.

Pray that each of them finds a decent job with a fair employer who will consider keeping them on after the OJT program is over – and paying them a decent wage at that time. This is really a critical time, as they need to practice their wood tech skills and overcome some of their patterns of starting something and then dropping it if it is too difficult.

I have often wondered where I would be today if my dad had been anything like the fathers these guys have. Instead of a Godly, honest, hardworking example, many of the young men we work with have dads who are addicted to drugs and alcohol, sleep around, wander in and out of their lives without warning, and spend any extra money on gambling or fancy cell phones that soon disappear, rather than providing food, clothing and shelter for their wife and kids. Other dads are abusive, and damage their kids in profound ways – physically, sexually, emotionally. I thank God for my dad - Danny Loewen.

Continue to pray for Melchor as he completes his year at Philippine Missionary Institute, and helps with church plants, street kids, and leads his own family.

Pray that we will be able to find a good houseparent for Honest Hands in the next few months – we need a Godly, mature, single young man (25ish) who is willing to be a house dad to a rowdy bunch of former street boys Monday to Friday.

### **Upcoming schedule**

March 7—Working Hands Wood Tech Graduation at Second Mile

March 8 – Roseisle EMC Church

March 22 – St. Vital EMC Church

March 27-28 – homeschooling conference in Winnipeg

April 18 – Carl graduates from Providence Seminary

May / June – discipleship camps at Honest Hands

June – kids finish school

July 9 – return to the Philippines

August – target start date for Honest Hands Batch #7

Thanks again for your prayers and support of our ministry,

**Carl & Lisa**