

Bringing Hope to the Philippines

May 2010: This newsletter is a little bit longer than normal as it seems like there is a lot that I want to say this time.

RECENT AND RANDOM NEWS:

April has come to an end. We have had a great past few weeks. It has been a really fulfilling time for both of us. Liz has been enjoying being mom and is doing an amazing job being a missionary super-mom. The joy and sparkle in Judah's eyes are evidence of an amazing mom (I was just told I wrote that in the last newsletter... well, I guess I am a proud husband). She has been able to build some neat friendships with other missionary moms who are involved with one of the local missionary schools. I am glad that she has been able to get to know them.

We had a really good time celebrating Liz's birthday on April 15th and we treated the staff to lunch. Although we were there to celebrate Liz's big day, Judah somehow stole the show. It was good to share a meal together. The smile on Joram's face below says it all. We are both so proud of and honored to be a part of the team at HFTN. Watching them continue to rise up and grow over the past few months is an awesome thing to watch.

I had the opportunity to preach again at HOJ and spoke on "The Power of Forgiveness." It was a challenging sermon to prepare. My eyes were opened to the fact that I am free to forgive others because the justice for any pain that they have caused me has been paid for on the cross! The answer to "Where is the justice?" is "There! At the cross." Wow! That is something to think about.

Feeding Programs:

It's a real joy for me to have the privilege to be a part of what is now 3 feeding programs. We still run our regular five day a week feeding in Agado (70-90 kids every day). Our Saturday feeding in Rosemary feeds about 50 kids and our new Saturday feeding in Madapo serves up to 80 kids. That's pretty awesome in my opinion. We are impacting a lot of lives with something tangible and some of the "least of these" are being shown love and mercy. Last Saturday I sat in one of the classes at Madapo and the Pastor there explained the gospel to the children in her class. I pray that these seeds would be planted firmly and continue to grow. It's not an understatement to say that these kids will have an uphill battle in life. They lack much of what we take for granted. But God is a big God.

Kuya Frederico:

I have written about Kuya Frederico before. He is one of our Tabitha: Food for Life employees. Recently, we had some visitors who left behind some money for him and his family. We were able to use that money to help him get fresh water at his house. We are also planning on getting a washroom with septic tank installed in his home. This is a huge deal for this family. One of his sons has been struggling with asthma so we hope that having access to clean water and a proper washroom will help with cleanliness and other issues that can exasperate asthma.

Baby Jane:

I just want to say how much I appreciate all the notes I have gotten from people saying that they are praying for Jane and her family.

As you know, the medical outlook for Jane is not good, but we continue to entrust her life to God. The last two times I have seen Jane, at church and when I visited a couple days ago, she honestly seemed better than before. Her skin was not as yellow and she seemed to be more aware and interactive; smiling and looking me in the eyes. She is obviously still in a lot of discomfort and appears very weak, but she is a trooper and her mom has put total trust in God. I sense God's redemptive processes at work, but it is more than difficult to see such a little one suffer.

When I visited a few days ago her mom asked me to pray before I left. I hesitated because I really wasn't sure what to pray for, but I prayed with all the faith and trust in God I could muster. Other than prayer there is little more than I can offer... but prayer is all that she needs now. I ask you to continue to pray for a miracle! You can see a picture of Jane and Judah on the bottom of next page.

Date Night:

Two of our good friends came over last week to watch Judah for the evening while mom and dad got to go out for a long overdue date night. Well, we were hoping to find a French restaurant that some of our friends told us about but it was closed and we ended up finding a very nice little Mexican restaurant. Not bad considering that Mexican food is not really popular here. It was really, really good for us to have the time alone.



Joram and Judah... the chicken dancers!



VBS. April 20-24th, 2010



Sharing on forgiveness.



Baby dedication.

Leadership:

Since coming back to the Philippines after getting married in June of 2008, it has been wonderful to watch Hope for the Nations flourish under the Filipino leadership of Jenny Montenegro and Dan Montenegro. Jenny Montenegro has been serving as the Executive Director and Dan as the Chairman of the board. They have brought a new level of organization and structure that has made HFTN more effective and more efficient.

I would ask that you join with me in prayer for our leaders here as the coming months will mean big things for HFTN. There are plans in the making to partner with Asian Outreach International as well as continue to expand the feeding program into new areas and partner with other large organizations in the country to assist us in our goals.

A CHANGE FOR THE WICKES:

Coming Home:

As many of you may have heard, we will be coming back to North America at the end of June of this year... in just two months! Originally, we were planning on coming home for a short home assignment in October of this year and then return to the Philippines. However, it seems that God has a different plan for our future. As we have shared with many of you, we have had a sense that there was a change on the horizon for us. We were in prayer for several months and talked through a lot of options for the future, and yet nothing really seemed to "feel right." On top of this, we both came down with Dengue. Even after fully recovery, we still felt a sense of being worn out and we realized that we were in need of a visit home ahead of our October schedule.

During all this, I had been taking courses at a seminary here on counseling. Not only did I feel like they made me a more effective minister, but I found that it started me on a process of inner growth and healing that left me wanting more. I began to see that counseling is a career path I would like to follow. I was also able to meet and become good friends with a missionary who serves as a counselor here to Filipino Christian workers and other missionaries. I started to see the potential to make a difference by being a resource to local Christian workers, helping them be more effective, more whole and more able to pour their lives into others through the ministry of counseling. So, in light of this, the plan is as follows...

We will return to Canada in June of this year to visit family and friends and to visit our supporting churches. I will then begin working on my Masters in Counseling, which will take about 2 years and then, Lord willing, we will return to the Philippines or wherever God would lead us and focus on counseling as a ministry. We feel very strongly that God would call us back to the mission field and we see no reason that God wouldn't call us back to Davao. During this 2-year period, Liz will also be pursuing more training. We are most likely going to be pursuing our education at Briercrest Seminary in Caronport, Saskatchewan. The cost of living is relatively low and it also puts us close to at least one set of Judah's grandparents. More importantly, we have heard nothing but good things about their counseling program.

On top of this, we will also be pursuing that as a couple we come under the leadership of Elim Fellowship. Liz has been serving under them her whole time in the Philippines and we think it best that we are both with the same organization. Further to that, we will maintain our missionary status with them and be on "educational leave." Upon returning to the Philippines we plan on working with a couple of counseling centers that are in the process of being put together as I write this. Those centers will cater to local Christian workers and would really be the first of their kind here in Davao.

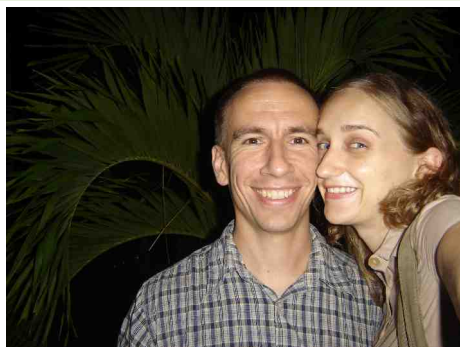
What about Hope for the Nations?

Well, we have been in talks with the leadership of HFTN over the past few months and we believe that things are well under way to compensate and prepare for our departure. The ministry is set to continue to minister and bring hope to the families of Davao after we leave. We are fully confident in the staff and leadership that is in place. Please continue to pray for and support them. Even though we are no longer there, the ministry will continue and the children still need our love and support. HFTN Philippines will always be a part of our hearts and we will support them as much as we are able to in the months ahead.

I hope that this does not come as a shock to any of you and we welcome your thoughts and input or questions about our future and our plans. The next couple of months will be very busy as we hand over ministry responsibilities and prepare for making Canada our home for the next two years. Perhaps more than ever, we need your support and your prayers.

Thank you so much.

Dave, Liz and Judah



Finally, a date night!



Baby Jane and Judah and moms!



Angelo is growing up.



"Will you baby-sit me?"

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