

SEPTEMBER 2011

“I hope to come and speak to you face to face, that our joy may be full.” ~ II John 12

MISSIONS CONFERENCE 2011...



We had a wonderful time at the missions conference at Calvary Chapel Bible Fellowship! We arrived a week early (*to help recover from jet lag - the Philippines is 15 hours ahead of California*) and had the blessing of being able to teach one of the Wednesday night services for Pastor Clark. It also gave the opportunity to take a trip down to Mexico to visit our dear friends at the orphanage Colina De Luz.

The conference itself was so refreshing. From the intimate times of worship to the in depth studies of the Word all of it was a great encouragement to us.

I even got to spar with a couple of the pastors. I learned I am not young as I thought I was (*I pulled a rib and could hardly move for a couple of weeks*) but it was fun! The highlight of the conference was to be able catch up with so many good friends, as well as meet some wonderful new ones. There were many days when we had more than one breakfast, lunch, and dinner just to fit everyone in. Thanks to everyone for making the trip such a HUGE blessing!

FAMILY TIME...

We were blessed with the opportunity to head back to New York after the missions conference to spend a month with my family. We bounced back and forth between my parents house and both of my older sisters and their families. It is always a joy to see how tall my nephews have gotten (*the oldest looks me eye to eye now at 6'3"* and loves to debate if he is not just a little taller than I am) and how beautiful my niece has become.

We got to take a road trip to South Carolina with my Dad and Mom to visit my grandmother. We drove down through Ohio and stopped at the Creation Museum just outside of Cincinnati. Along the way we also stopped by to see some good friends who are church planting in Glasgow, Kentucky (*Jen was excited to be in home of KFC - a popular fast food restaurant here in the Philippines*). When we arrived in Greensboro we had a great time with my two Aunts and several of my cousins. It was an extra special trip because we are not sure how many more times my parents will be able to make it down to see my grandma (*my Dad's mom*). We made several pit stops on the way back to my parents home in Rochester. We stopped briefly in Washington D.C. to



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see the white house and Washington memorial. Then Jen and I took a day trip into New York city, and after a whirlwind 6 hour tour there, we had a great dinner at another cousins home in New Jersey. On our last day of the road trip the tantalizing aroma of chocolate in the air compelled us to make one final stop in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Nine days and 2,700 miles later we arrived back home.

We spent the last few days there catching up with old friends. The kind of friends where time and distance mean nothing. Where even though you have not seen them for two years, you pick up as if you just saw each other yesterday. We also made some new friends. We had the blessing of being asked to share at my parents church. We had a wonderful picnic afterwards in spite of the hurricane that blew through New York the same day.

We finished up our time in New York with a full Thanksgiving feast with almost the whole family. The last week we were in New York my Mom fell and had to be taken to the hospital. After several days of testing they found a mass in her stomach. The doctors confirmed that she has an aggressive form of cancer. It is a baseball sized mass that has wrapped around her intestine and kidney. Fortunately it is not a type of cancer that metastasizes so it has not spread. They will begin outpatient radiation this week to try and shrink the mass. Then in about a month they will do surgery to try and remove it. It is hard to be so far when those we love are going through such trying times. Please be in prayer for the whole family as they prayerfully step out to face this new challenge.

WHILE WE WERE GONE...

We had five of the men from the church helping to cover all the teaching while we were in the States. They all did a GREAT job! The Lord also blessed us with a couple of men from Bible Fellowship who helped out. One of them was Doug McRae...

This past summer I was again blessed to travel to the city Himamaylan in the Philippines and fill in for David Hinchey for a few weeks. He left Calvary Chapel Bible Fellowship in March of 2008 to plant a church in Himamaylan. I previously sat in for David during the summer of 2009 so I was really looking forward to visiting with all the people I had met on my first trip.

My flight left LAX late Thursday night and I didn't arrive in town until about 2pm Saturday, July 30th. I was picked up by Bembem, Dandan, and Roger from CCBF who is over serving with David for six months. The next day, Sunday, we started the Bible studies. I had been studying the book of Daniel and decided to go through the first six chapters during my time in the Philippines.

Daniel offers great encouragement for those of us who desire to worship Jesus but live in a fallen world. From being blessed by God for not defiling himself by eating Nebuchadnezzar's rich food; to God revealing the dream about a statue and its meaning; to not worshipping the golden image and surviving the blazing furnace; to a dream about a falling kingdom; to a message delivered by handwriting on the wall declaring that Belshazzar's reign would end quickly because of his blasphemous lifestyle, and to Daniel being saved from the lions by God because he refused to pray to Darius the king. The six chapters are relevant to today and will be an encouragement to all who read and study them.



The first Sunday we studied Daniel chapter one. The next two Sundays were for chapters three and six. During the week we travelled to three small villages for Bible studies. During week one we studied chapter two and the second week we studied chapter four and five. During the sixteen days I was in the Philippines we were able to spend a great deal of time in the book of Daniel.

The three small villages we visited were named Calasa, Lagtapon, and Lumangog. I had visited the first two on my previous trip. Lumangog was quite an experience. It is at the end of a mile or so walk along a mud filled road. The people were amazingly friendly. There was another local Bible study that did not want David coming to the village. Apparently those things can get very territorial. David had explained that the Bible study would be held as long as the villagers wanted him to come.



Of course the study continues. Twenty-five or so people attend from a village of a few hundred. It is so remote that we had to carry gasoline for a generator so that we could hold the Bible study under one small, dim light bulb. The amazing thing about the village is the people. You see, they own almost nothing. Houses are constructed of bamboo and food is grown locally. Even though a market is only a few miles away most have no way to get there and little money to spend.

The villagers seemed to really enjoy the studies. They listened intently and were able to follow along in the few Bibles that they had. I remember one lady, who apparently is related to the person holding the other local Bible study, with her gray hair and glasses studying hard and looking no different than any one at church back home. I'm always amazed on my travels how people are basically the same it's just that circumstances are so different. From what I understand, the average man working in the sugar cane fields makes maybe \$20 in a good week. And, they also don't have work year around. The richness they have is in their families and the joy they seem to have among themselves. I watched a group of five young girls play a jumping game with one stick. Whenever they messed up they would laugh and giggle like they were having the greatest time anyone could ever have. Simply amazing. Sometimes I think having too much takes away joy.



In addition to the Bible studies Roger and I attended the Sunday night men's fellowship in Lagtapon. They are going through the book of first Timothy. We each had an opportunity to lead one of the studies. It was fantastic to see these men again after two years of being away. One of the most eye opening experiences of my entire trip was seeing how much they have matured spiritually. In the Philippines, going to church is women's work so to speak. Two years ago none of the men took a leadership role. This time around they were asking questions, discussing what passages mean, and looking up Bible passages. I pray that the study can continue to grow. If more men become the spiritual family leaders they were meant to be, I think the entire community would be blessed.

The last big adventure has having the opportunity to show the Jesus Film six times at the local public high school and at two public elementary schools. Can you imagine, being allowed to show a movie with the good news of Jesus at a public school? They actually encourage it. Many teachers and principals were thankful that we came.

It can get a little frustrating with the kids. The Philippine culture is so steeped in religion, that there is very hard ground to work with. They don't see Jesus as anything special but more as a once per week religious commitment. And of course their family lives are way different than anything that was learned at church. The culture has a huge problem with drinking, drugs, abuse, infidelity and the such. I always have to remember that seeds are being planted and the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts the world of sin. That is one reason it is such a blessing to see David over there for the long haul along with his wife Jen. I think people will see Jesus through their lives and their commitment to them.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- The Bible Studies - for the Word to change lives
- New Bible studies taught by Filipino teachers
- The people in the Bukid (*mountain*) - to be open to Jesus!
- Strength for those families who are standing up for Jesus!
- The radio - favor with the 'franchise' - and the NTC
- Roger - the Lord would bless as he finished up his time here
- Our marriage - grow closer to Jesus & each other
- Please pray for God's will for us concerning children...
- My Mom - as she goes through radiation treatment for cancer
- Flexibility and humility - we would be full of Jesus



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