

DECEMBER 2013

"It is more blessed to give than to receive.." - Acts 20:35



MORE BLESSED TO GIVE...

Last month Super Typhoon Yolanda (*Haiyan*) devastated the eastern Islands of the Philippines. We were able to make an initial trip out to the City of Ormoc only 3 days after the storm blew through. We went to a small community called San Jose where one of the men from our church came from. Words failed to express the utter destruction we saw when we arrived. But in the midst of the devastation - there was an amazing glimmer of hope. People were open and hungry to hear about the love of Jesus Christ.

When people heard about the plight of the victims many gave to help out in the relief effort. We were blessed to be a small part of bringing that helping hand. Pastor Bem led a team of 9 from the church to go over and help. We prayed for them on Sunday morning - after we just happened to be teaching from **Acts 20:35**. Then they loaded up a flat

bed truck with over 5000lbs of rice / almost 3000 cans of sardines / almost 4000 packs of noodles / and 100lbs of dried fish and set out on the 24 hour trip (6 hours by boat) to Ormoc City.

No sooner had they gotten out of the truck than the whole community of 50 families were there eagerly awaiting the relief. In the two weeks since the storm each family had only received a total of about 4lbs of rice - hardly enough for a single day. With so many hungry people there was a very real potential for a riot. Pastor Bem wisely chose to first share the Gospel message. The results were remarkable. Rather than rush the truck - the people very patiently and gratefully waited in line to get their food. They kept thanking the team - many with tears - for their 'Christmas Gift' from the Lord!

The next morning the team went around the community looking for houses that still did not have any roof. They brought tarps with them and covered the homes that were still exposed to the rain. A couple of the guys even jumped out into the rice fields and helped the people to replant their crops! That afternoon the team went to the city of Tacloban. One of the families from the church had a daughter who was living there when the storm hit. They went to get her and her young family to bring them back to Himamaylan. Then on the last day Pastor Bem organized a Vacation Bible School for the kids. It was not part of the original plan - but when he saw all the kids his heart went out to them! In all about 70 kids came out in the sweltering heat (*there are no trees left for shade*) to hear about the Love of Jesus!

The people from San Jose are excited to hear more about Jesus. They have asked us to come back and do more outreaches / they have asked for Bibles / they want to know more about Jesus! The plan is to make several more trip back over the next few months. The food that was given should be enough to last for at least a month. We will take a 3rd trip in January to bring additional food - as well as Bibles. Please be praying for the people there - and for the possibility of starting a church so they can continue to hear about Jesus - and learn about the Love of God from His Word!

A closing thought - as the team was coming back they were greeted by a fire works display in the port of Cebu. It was not for them of course - but it got Pastor Bem thinking. God has put us here to serve and be a blessing to others. But there will come a day when we will come home to heaven - and the celebration God will give us there is far more spectacular than any fireworks display ever seen here!





STORY OF JESUS...

It all started a little over two years ago when we came back from the missions conference in California with a couple copies of the 'Action Bible' that Pastor Matt from CCBF had given to us. The kids in the church were AMAZED by it - and could not put it down! We took a picture of them (*on the left*) and sent it to David C. Cook publishers (*the printers of the Action Bible*) as a way of saying thank you. The publisher recently told us the Lord used that photo to wake them up to what God wanted to do through the Action Bible to reach kids globally. It inspired them to expand the Story of Jesus outreach (*a 16 page tract taken from the Action Bible*) around the world to nearly 39 million kids in 49 languages in 71 nations!

As a small part of that we started to translate those 16 pages from the Action Bible covering the life of Jesus from His birth to resurrection into Ilonggo (*the local dialect here*). It took well over a year of planning - but in the end we were able to print 25,000 copies in China and ship them to Manila.



They arrived on October 7th - but Almost immediately we ran into problems. Customs in Manila is infamous for its corruption. With a wide range of excuses we kept hitting a brick wall in our efforts to get the SOJ released. After almost a month we were finally told it would cost us almost \$1000 in fees if we wanted them out of customs. Our efforts were then further complicated by the arrival of typhoon Yolanda (*Haiyan*). After several weeks of running relief trips to Ormoc City - we heard again from customs and the price had jumped to \$3000!

I went to the governor of our Island / our local congressman / even to the local TV station - none of them were able to help. I wrote the head of Customs in Manila - only to find out the day after that he resigned because of corruption charges! It looked really bleak. In a last ditch effort to try and break the SOJ free Jen and I booked tickets to Manila - really having no idea what we would do. I was ready to stand on the doorstep of the customs building with a protest sign!



'might' be able to help - it did not sound overly promising - but when I sent her a text she immediately called me back. She told me 'I am your Esther! For such a time as this God has placed me here to help you.' She put me in touch with a Christian broker in Manila who she knew was honest. When we showed up at our hotel - not knowing where the broker's office was - it turned out it was right out our front door (*God is good*). They stepped us through the process to get the SOJ ready to be released from customs (*and anything*). When office the next surprised to find head of customs! - SOJ was free! months of vainly heads against Filipino bureaucracy - God knocked it down in a single blow.

"It inspired them to expand the Story of Jesus outreach around the world to nearly 39 million kids in 49 languages in 71 nations!"

they did not charge us we went to the customs day and were VERY out our contact is the With a wave of her hand Amazing!!! After two beating our the brick wall of



Over the next few months we will be going into school all over Negros Island handing out 25,000 these incredible Gospel tracts to students - sharing with them the amazing gift of salvation offered through Jesus Christ! Please be praying for these kids. That they will be open to the Gospel message - that they will receive Jesus as their Lord and savior!

PRAYER REQUESTS...

- Raising up pastors - transition the church
- All those effected by Typhoon Yolanda
- Story of Jesus outreach - 25,000 copies!
- The radio - Franchise / new repeater
- Marriage - closer to Jesus / each other
- Flexibility and humility - be full of Jesus!





TYPHOON RELIEF - ORMOC CITY LETYE

"When you helped one of the least of these my brothers, you were doing it to me!" - Matthew 25:40



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(Contact us if you would like to be added to our email update list)