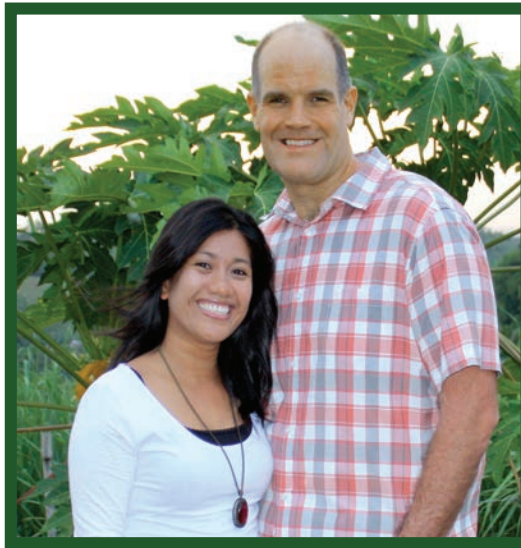


FINAL NEWSLETTER

"When they had appointed elders in the church... they commended them to the Lord." - Acts 14:23



MARCH 13, 2014...

April 1st, 2008 I arrived in the Philippines full of excitement and grand ideas. The desire was clear - to by the Grace of God see a church established in the city of Himamaylan. But just as clear were the daunting challenges that stood in the way. I was in a foreign land - with a very different culture - a different language - and to be honest I had no idea what I was doing! The one thing I had going for me was - God uses the foolish - so at least I was qualified.

After about 6 months of language training, preparation, and a wedding - we were ready to begin. Although we knew God had called us to Himamaylan - we did not know exactly where. So when we were asked if we would be willing to teach a small group of believers up in the mountains - we were thrilled. We

held our first Sunday church service on November 9th, 2008 in a Barn. That is not a figure of speech - it was literally a chicken barn complete with bamboo and nipa roofing. Over time the chickens disappeared - we ate them all - but that barn ended up being our church home for the next 4 years. We would also eventually end up teaching 10 Studies a week in the various communities all over the mountain. Simply teaching the Bible - translated into Ilonggo - to hungry sinners longing to learn about the hope of Jesus Christ!

After about five years we came to a place where everything was rather well established - including a new church bulding right still desired to see a national supported by local resources. - but we had been making it came to the local leadership than willing to attend Bible long discipleship/leadership time for them to step up - the became shy and backed away.

*"While we are still here
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next to our house. We church, led by local leaders, It sounded simple enough very little head way when part. The guys were more studies - and even year classes. Yet when it came

We were more than wiling to spend the next 10 / 20 / or even 30 years here teaching the word and ministering to the people if it meant that is what it took for them to mature and eventually step up to take the church as their own. Yet what we saw was that 10 years down the road chances were the men were going to have pretty much the same hesitations. The church might be bigger - the saints more grounded in the Word - but still with the same fundamental reservations on taking the reigns.

With that in mind we noted the example of Jesus in the Gospels. We found it interesting that Jesus ministered to and taught His disciples for only 3 years. Why 3 years? Jesus could have been with them for 20 or 30 years. When His time here came to a end He even told the disciples exactly what was going to happen (*go to Jerusalem, betrayed, crucified, and the 3 day resurrected*). Yet His disciples refused to listen - 'no Lord'. They did not want the responsibility - they did not want Jesus to leave. Jesus listened to them, loved them, taught them - but their refusal did not change His plans. If He had waited for them to be ready - He might never have left. Yet He had to go - whether they wanted him to or not, whether they thought they were ready or not, before they would be able to step up and become all God intended for them to be. I have always found it interesting that Jesus told His disciples the Holy Spirit could not come unless He left - **John 16:7**. Why did Jesus have to leave before the Spirit could come? I have to think practically it is because while He was there the disciples would not have cried out to and looked for the Holy Spirit to empower them - there was no need. While we are still here there is no need for the men we are discipling to step out - cry out to God. We have to get out of the way so they can become all that God intended for them to be.

HIMAMAYLAN



That is why a year ago we announced to the Elders that our time had come. Although Jen and I did not know what was next for us - for their sakes we needed to go. I had already taught them more than I knew - it was time for them to take the church. Over the past year we have worked closely with the leaders. By His Grace it looks like they are ready. Pastor Bem is teaching the book of Romans on Sunday as he continues to take the congregation through the New Testament. Pastor Amado / Atong / and Edwin will be teaching II Samuel in the various Mid-week home Bible studies as they work their way through the Old Testament. A local church taught by local pastors!

Which means this is our last newsletter. Almost six years and 67 newsletters later - it is time for us to

move on. God is so good. The church who sent us out - Calvary Chapel Bible Fellowship - had asked for us to come back on staff. So we will be returning on March 13, 2014. Heading back to the home church - **Acts 14:28** - till the Lord chooses to send us out again!

TYPHOON RELIEF...

Pastor Bem led the 3rd relief trip to Ormoc City a few weeks ago. A team of 15 was sent out from the church to deliver another round of supplies to the storm ravaged Island. They ran into a snag when their truck carrying all the supplies got bumped off the ferry to Leyte because of overbooking. They ended up catching a MUCH slower barge that brought them to Leyte Island almost 12 hours later than planned. When they pulled into Sitio Pikas - the community we have adopted - there was a VERY excited crowd waiting. They had made several signs to welcome the weary travelers. The people had been there all day - the kids had not even gone to school! Pastor Bem and the team got right to work and set up a 6300kw generator they brought with them to power the community (*they do not expect to be back on the local power grid for at least another year*). They set up a projector, large white screen, and a portable sound system and played a movie for the kids. Everyone LOVED it!

The next day the team got busy handing household was given 50 pounds of rice also handed out Bibles to everyone (*in* done passing out the supplies they began house. They installed lights and electrical Finally they handed out GI roofing sheets task of installing and repairing the roofs on

"Sometime in the next year one of the families from the church will move over and begin a church plant..."

out all the supplies they brought. Every and enough food to last for about a month. They *Cebuano - the local dialect*). When they were installing wiring from the generator to every outlets so each house could have power at night. to every family - then began the overwhelming the damaged houses.

In the evening Pastor Bem and the team held a Vacation Bible School for the kids. He taught them about the 5 colors of Salvation. After the teaching Bem had some games for the kids to play. The funny part was all the parents were watching. After a few minutes the parents decided they wanted to join in! As part of the lesson the kids made bracelets that included all 5 colors. The parents wanted to take part in that as well. So in the end it was not a VBS for kids - it ended up being for the WHOLE community!!

When the team went to come home on Friday - they ran into another snag. There was ANOTHER typhoon. It made it too dangerous for them to travel back on the ferry so they were forced to go back to Sitio Pikas and wait till the storm had blown by. When they arrived the kids again rushed out to greet them. They told Pastor Bem the typhoon might be their fault. They had such a GREAT time they had prayed God would keep the team there for another few days! On Sunday they were finally able to catch the ferry - and with a smile on their face and joy in their hearts - they returned to Himamaylan.

The plan is to return again to Ormoc City in May with another team. This time Pastor Bem will bring the youth from the church to do ministry. They may even begin building a church. The hope is that sometime in the next year or so one of the families from Simbahan sa Bukid will permanently move over and begin a church plant. The people there are already asking for it - they are hungry to hear more about Jesus!



STORY OF JESUS...

We have been working for over two years to translate and bring the Story of Jesus tract from David C. Cook's Action Bible into the Philippines. When Pastor Bem and I first started praying about using the SOJ to reach out to the kids in the schools here we were only thinking 2,000 or so copies. But when we got into the process and found out the minimum number that could be created was 25,000 we were overwhelmed – unsure if and how we would ever be able to handle that many copies. But that is the funny thing about stepping out in faith – it is not about what we can do – but what God wants to do through us! It has been an amazing journey to see how the Lord has brought us this far! We have seen amazing results as we have handed out these remarkable Gospel tracts in public schools here. In most classrooms ALL of the students raise their hands to receive Jesus!



About a week ago we were contacted to see if we would prayerful consider if God would want us to step out and be the conduit to bring 25 million copies of SOJ into the Philippines. Just thinking about the logistics behind that many copies boggles the mind. It works out to be something like 37,000 boxes – almost 50 containers filled with Gospel tracts. Where would we store them / how would we deliver them / who would we deliver them too / not to mention the work of translating the SOJ into a dozen or so main languages that are represented here in the Philippines. I would hardly even know where to begin. In my small mind I cannot imagine that a little church like ours would ever be able to do something on this massive of a scale.

As pastor Bem and I talked about it we were left with one overwhelming question. How could we pass up the chance to step out and share the Gospel with 25 million students! We shared the opportunity with the church the following Sunday. The response was amazing - everyone was thrilled at the possibility. Please be in prayer as we continue to seek the Lord - if it is His will - to step out to reach almost EVERY student in the Philippines!

UPCOMING EVENTS...

We just had our annual church Valentines Dinner this past Friday. Then on March 2nd we will have our annual church baptism and

church picnic. This will also double as a going away party for Jen and I. We will be back though - on April 21st. We will be a part of a short term missions team from Bible Fellowship coming over to help with Summer camp. We will be excited to see how the church is doing after the first couple of months on its own. Please keep them all in your prayers!



PRAYER REQUESTS...

- Pastor Bem and the leadership of the church
- All those effected by Typhoon Yolanda
- Story of Jesus outreach - 25,000,000 copies!
- The radio - Franchise / new repeater
- Jen and I as we come back to the States
- Flexibility and humility - be full of Jesus!

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



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

