

December 2008

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." ~ Acts 2:42

MALIPAYON NGA PASKUA (MERRY CHRISTMAS)

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." - Isaiah 9:6

Merry Christmas and a happy new year to you all! I must admit that I have been "*dreaming*" a lot about how nice it would be to have a white Christmas... It goes without saying that it will be a green Christmas here for us in Himamaylan. I don't think there has ever been snow here. Most days the temperature hovers around 80 making it a little hard to imagine that it really is Christmas time. None the less we are enjoying the season and Jen and I are excited to celebrate our first Christmas together next week!



CHRISTMAS CAROLING (SIMHAHAN SA BUKID)



The Holiday traditions here in the Philippines are not the same as in the States. Christmas is not as big as New Year's eve (*they celebrate the New Year with a lot of fire works*). One of the traditions that is rather common though is Christmas caroling. The twist is that you pay the carolers. The best we can figure it is a tradition that dates back well over a 100 years to when the Protestant church first began to evangelize the Philippines. We decided that as a church we should "re-introduce" the tradition of caroling, but this time for free.

The whole church went out after Sunday service last week (*and will again this week*) into the local community to go caroling. It was funny to watch as people tried to avoid us at first (*they thought we would ask for money*). After a few houses they began to show up as they realized that instead of asking for money we were handing out candy :-). It was a blessing to be able to share the hope of Jesus with all the neighbors in the Bukid (mountain).



SAN MIGUEL ISLAND

Gen and I had the opportunity to travel to San Miguel Island (in the Bicol region of the Philippines - near to the Mayon Volcano) in the beginning of December. It is a very remote place. To get there we had to take a two



hour car ride to the airport, fly to Manila, then to Bicol, a motorcycle ride to a van terminal, a 1 hour van ride to Tabaco (*the closest city*), a bicycle ride to the boat dock, then finally an hour boat ride to the Island... whew! A good friend and missionary, Dave Mathews, has been ministering on the island there for over 12 years. It was a wonderful chance to see a church plant well down the road from where we are in Himamaylan. They have three churches there now all taught and led by nationals.



Dave Matthews asked us to teach on Israel. The first time I went alone with him on a typical San Miguel rainy day. We did not wear any shoes as I was told they would only get lost in the quagmire of mud that made up our path. It was a great time sharing about both biblical, modern, and prophetic Israel. On the way home we

missed the last ferry to our Island and had to hop a ride with a local fisherman. The "boat", I use that term loosely, was about 6 feet long and 2 feet wide. With three full grown men inside it sat about 1 inch above the water. I was not too worried till Dave asked me if I could swim :- (More than once he used the phrase "*this is how it starts*" as our boat captain stop paddling so he could bail out the water that was quickly filling our little craft... but we made it without incident. The next day we shared with at a combined meeting of all three churches. They loved hearing about Israel and seeing (*we had slides*) all the places they had only read about in their Bible before.



TAPOS NA AMON BALAY (THE HOUSE IS DONE... ALMOST)

We are almost done. It has been about 2 months of living in a construction zone, but the house is just about finished. We are putting the final touches in and would love to have you come visit :-) If you ever happen to be in Himamaylan - make sure to look us up!

PRAYER REQUESTS

- For the Sunday service in the Mountains & the other Bible Studies - and for those who come to hear the Word!
- Dave's language lessons - I can really feel the language barrier - it is so important for me to learn.
- For the completion of the construction projects at "Amon Balay"
- For our marriage - our time in the Word together as we keep Jesus at the center!
- For humility (all about Jesus) and flexibility (blessed are the flexible)



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