Calvary Bible Fellowship

APRIL 2023 - CHURCH NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS SHOE BOXES

When we first tell people we are giving out Christmas Shoe Boxes in the month of March it always raises questions. The biggest question being why are we talking about Christmas when the holiday was over three months ago! I love getting asked that question because it allows us to talk about an outreach that amazingly displays the love of Jesus to some the most underprivileged children in the Philippines.

Beginning in August every year we partner with several other churches and schools on the Island to gather the names of around 1000 children who likely will have no gifts come Christmas time.

Their names and pictures are then given to around half a dozen churches that we know in both the US and Japan. At the end of November - people from those churches will chose a child and put together a shoe box full of gifts specifically for them. They then bring the boxes back to their churches to mail them off to the Philippines. The gifts are sent in the month of December - it just so happens that it takes the better part of three months for the gifts to arrive [e.g. Christmas in March].

We never know the exact date when we will give out the boxes from year to year. We wait for the shippers to send us notice that the 35+ balikbayan boxes that are needed to send them all have finally arrived at the warehouse in Bacolod. Once they are on the Island the word quickly spreads in the community that the long awaited Christmas gifts have arrived!

We had around thirty people come down this year from Bacolod to help with the distribution. They were scheduled to arrive in Himamaylan around 9am for the first of three locations where we would be handing out the presents.

Story continued on page 2 …

WHAT DOES JOY LOOK LIKE

I am sure there are many definitions that we could give. For me one of the greatest examples of JOY is to watch the wonder that fills the face of a child when they open up a gift from a stranger half a world away - knowing it represents the love of God for them.

No matter where we are today - never forget what God has given to us - the gift of His Son Jesus. When we remember that we likewise will have true JOY that fills our heart!

Story continued from page 1 …

As a sign of how excited the kids where for the day they all showed up at 8am! The principal told us that they had been asking him for months when the boxes would arrive. We cannot overstate just how powerful an impact these simple gifts have on the lives of these children!

As part of distributing the boxes we make sure to tell the kids about the greatest gift of all. We had a number of kids come up and volunteer to answer a few questions for rewards. The catch was if they could not answer a question they would lose all of their prizes. The first two questions were easy [what is 1+1] - but the final question was impossible to answer [what is the Hebrew word for Grace]. One of the guys from the church played the role of Jesus and came and answered the question for the volunteers - but because he got the answer right - he also got all their rewards. The catch was he chose to give the kids back everything they had lost - because that is what Grace does. Jesus did what we could not - He got all the answers right - yet rather than keep His reward He gave back to us what we had lost [heaven].

We then asked if any of the kids would like to receive from Jesus the GIFT of salvation that He offers. Many raised their hands and then Pastor Bem led them in a prayer to receive Jesus!

In each location we then finished by distributing the shoe boxes. What followed was absolutely amazing as we watched the kids with great anticipation open up the gifts. As they looked into the boxes - there was a contagious smile that quickly spread from one child to another. Our heartfelt thanks to all the families who spent the time putting together these gifts - and the volunteers who took the time to come and distribute them. A blessed day indeed!

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Good Friday - **Friday @11am** - at the Food Terminal across from Ayala mall. Come out as we have a time of worship and communion. There will be a special message on the crucifixion of Jesus. Bring a dish to share for lunch [or order lunch at the food stalls].

Resurrection Sunday - **Sunday at @4pm** - We will be having our Resurrection Service at Prayer Mountain [Bago]. Bring a dish to share as we gather to remember the hope of our salvation - the resurrection of our Lord! Transportation will be provided for anyone who would like a ride [departing at 1pm]. Sign up for the transportation will be posted on the messenger page.

Pottery Painting - **Sunday at @5pm** - As part of Resurrection Sunday we will have a pottery painting class. A poll will be posted on the Calorie Fellowship page for all who are interested.

Friday Bible Study - **Fridays @6pm** - Make sure not to miss the Friday weekly Men's - Women's - and Youth Bible Study. It is a great opportunity for the families to come and be blessed. We start at 5:30pm. Bring a dish to share [we are Calorie Fellowship after all]. Then at 6pm we break up into groups for Bible Study!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- Sunday 8:30am - First Service [and online] - Book of Revelation
- Sunday 10am - Second service - Book of Revelation
- Tuesday 5pm - Book of Psalms @ Elisha Center
- Wednesday 6:30pm - Book of Psalms @ Upper Room
- First Wednesday 6pm - Worship & Communion
- Friday Study 5:30pm - Men's - Women's - Youth Bible Study
- Last Friday 6pm - Fellowship Night

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