

8-4-2011

To all who encouraged us through prayer and support during our time in the Philippines: Thanks and may our Father bless you so much for being a part of the means which He used to send us to the PI. I wanted to briefly write you all and tell you what we did and what we saw the Father doing to us and through us there.

We arrived in Manila about 10:30 in the morning on July 27th. We were exhausted and found our way to the SEND ministry guest house where we stayed for the first three days in the Philippines. We got to meet many Filipino/a missionaries who were preparing to be sent to different parts of the country as well as some who were working overseas and others who were on short term mission trips and focusing on reaching college students. We went the next couple of days to be with the folks from Precious Jewels ministry - which is a specialized ministry serving Aids' victims from the Smoky Mountain trash dump nightmare in Manila. Two of our children came from the orphanage several years ago. It is always a blessing to be around them. They are truly the strongest people I have ever met. So many of their children in the orphanage die, and yet these faithful servants love them and teach them and all the time knowing that the time may be short with them. We visited the infectious disease children's ward and other centers of their ministry.

One day while we were talking to them I heard terrible news that just shook me to my soul. The last time I had gone to the PI I took all four of my Philippine children. Precious Jewels threw a welcoming party for us and it was great. At the beginning of the party I got to meet a young boy named JR. He had Aids and had been damaged severely in some ways. He couldn't talk and could walk around a bit but not easily. He was around ten years old, but by American standards he looked quite small and frail. When the worship songs started I felt someone grab my hand. I looked down and JR was holding my hand and kind of warbling along with the music trying to sing. It really touched my heart to see this young hurting child who wanted to worship. Well, here we are four years later and we were asking about all the kids and how they were doing when our dear friend Joke told us that JR had died two years ago. She pointed out to us that he had tried to tell them he wanted to be a teacher and that even shortly before he died he was still saying that. One amazing thing that happened in this terrible event was that his only living relative was his grandmother. She had no use for him throughout his entire life and would rarely visit him. When she was told that he was dying she basically was indifferent to the whole situation. But when she did come to see him and saw the people around him who were so moved by his young life and his hope of being a teacher - she was so moved that she spent the last day of his life with him holding his hands. She said that it seemed to her that JR had indeed become a teacher.

Sometimes I am frustrated by my inability to understand the brokenness of this world. I want to wave my magic Christian wand and make all the hurt go away. But I cannot because there is no magic Christian wand. There is however the Gospel of Jesus Christ which has called Precious Jewels to minister to those whom the Philippines government has not even wanted to acknowledge their existence. Again I do a lot of things but I know that I am not strong enough to do what they do. Please

pray for Precious Jewels Ministry and consider supporting their ministry. You can find out much more about them at [www.preciousjewels.org/](http://www.preciousjewels.org/)

We spent a little bit of time with the Agape girls at the Rainbow Ranch orphanage. Three of the girls still live there from four years ago (Carmina, Dani, and Honey) and we also met with three other girls who were still in the area. If you remember our newsletter from that summer (2007 - available on the Haven website) you will remember that these girls came from truly horrible homes and had been removed by the State and put into the Christian orphanage at Rainbow. We spent time with the girls, a little bit of time with the babies and infants (many of whom are eligible for adoption - hint hint! :) ) and took them and the staff out to eat. That ministry is an amazing place of haven and safety for many needful people. Please consider supporting them. You can discover more out about them at <http://rainbowvm.org/contact>

On the weekend we went down to Dumaguete City, which is on one of the southernmost islands. We went over to the Calvary Chapel Training Center where I would be teaching for the next two weeks. We got to meet several of the students that night. The next day we went to Calvary Chapel Dumaguete and really enjoyed the message and worship that we shared with them. The church had probably doubled since I was there four years ago. I would speak to different groups there three different times in the next two weeks.

On Monday I started teaching Apologetics to the second year students. Please understand that apologetics can be very tough for english speaking students and all of my students were at a minimum english as a second or even third language. The subject matter was difficult as we covered arguments for the existence of God like the Cosmological and Teleological arguments. One of my students response later that week as to how the classes were going was to say "Pastor Bill is making my nose bleed". I think I am going to take that as a compliment... We also covered evolution/creation issues, the problem of evil (see JR above if you don't understand that one) and then spent a week covering various religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Iglesia Ni Cristo, Mormons, JW's etc. Filipino's are extremely reluctant to speak up or ask questions in class (a cultural issue) but what ended up happening is that almost every night for the next two weeks the students would come to our little apartment to ask questions and try and understand the issues we were raising in class. I really tried to emphasize how apologetics is a tool in evangelism. I think most of them were excited to use what they were learning when they went out for their regular witnessing outreaches. The class went on for two weeks and it was my blessing and privilege to be with them. So many of them were so dirt poor and had sacrificed much to be in the school. We were humbled not only by the opportunity to be there, but to see the joy in those students who have so little.

Some examples of this - my best student in the class is named Restan. I think he would have gotten an A in my class here in the states. Restan did/could not speak very loud and I could rarely hear him when he spoke up. One day I asked him what was wrong as I saw him holding his jaw. He said that his mouth and teeth were really hurting him. So of course, foolish American that I am, I said "Why don't you just go to the dentist?" Honestly I don't know where my brain is sometimes. Anyway he told me

that he couldn't afford it. So Terri and Rita and I told him to go and that we would pay for the visit. His visit was 200 pesos, which is almost a days wages over there, or just under \$5 dollars in the US! He had a severe gum disease and needed one extraction and two root canals! He was just sitting there quietly with all that pain. So we paid for some of the bill and are committed to paying off the rest in the next few months. Another girl in class had a very nasty tooth decay going on in her two front upper teeth. She would rarely smile with her mouth open. So we started the same process with her and hope to have her bill paid off soon as well. The students have a outside basketball court but no basketballs. So we went to the store and bought a couple of balls and some other stuff. The school responded by having a basketball tournament between the faculty (not me!) and the students. They were sliding all over the place as most of them did not have tennis shoes but wore the same sandals they always wore. Yet they were having a blast.

We made a commitment to all of you to be the Anti Benny Hinn - we would not take a penny out of that country. And I believe we did just that. We have some obligations to some of the students which will take a little time, but we want you to know that your giving did so much. Every night we would take faculty or staff or students out to eat. What we Americans consider normal and virtually take for granted, is a huge event for them. One night we took about thirty people to McDonalds - fifteen students, twelve or so youth from Scandi (more on them later) and three of the Agape girls from Rainbow ranch that we had spent so much time with four years ago. It was a huge treat for all of them, and I think it cost me about \$60 dollars or so to stuff their faces. One day we held a pizza party for the entire school - Pizza is a rare treat for them - and we fed the entire student body, staff and faculty. Again we all had a great time and their thankfulness, for what most American kids see as terribly mundane, was so refreshing.

Terri and Rita spent a lot of time at Scandi (short for Scandinavian Mission House) which is a small community outside of town for the poorest of the poor. Several years ago the town moved their garbage dump people (like Smoky Mountain in Manila) over to the abandoned mission, where they would at least have some walls and some roofs. I had spoken there last time at their church and did so again and noticed that the church now had some doors. So no dogs running through the message this time! Rita and Terri spent time there feeding the community children several days as well as having a Bible study fellowship with 15 of the ladies. Terri and Rita had gone out to buy food baskets for the women and they had filled up exactly 15 baskets. Terri said that the joy that these women shared with them as well as the depth of their faith was very encouraging. Terri and Rita also got to spend a lot of time with some of the interns and students at the school, many of whom came from terribly abusive homes and situations.

Please pray for the school and the students, many of whom are hoping to become pastors and missionaries - especially to Thailand. Also if you open to this, consider supporting the school as they are expanding their mission. They hope to become a fully accredited four year Bible college in the next few years and are planning on starting a K-12 school there as well. You can find out more about them at [www.cctcphil.org/Home](http://www.cctcphil.org/Home)

I also should tell you of a couple of commitments I made as well. The Lord has put on my heart for several years now to teach pastors in third world countries. I must say however that even though the third world designation is true economically, it is not

true spiritually. It is very exciting to see how the Lord is growing His church in so many places around the world. So even though I am perpetually frustrated at the nonsense and heresy all over the American church, I know that our Father has His Kingdom going forth in India, China, Africa, the Philippines and so on. I felt called to help that in any way I can, so I have committed to CCTC to come back every two years, and teach the entire student body apologetics and to extend the class to a full three weeks. This would enable me to cover lots more material. Well the school spent about one minute praying and deliberating over this and accepted my offer! So Lord willing we will be going back in 2013. Please pray for this and we will keep yall advised as to how this all develops.

We have also offered for Haven ministry to be a place for a one or two year internship for some of their students. It is very hard to get a visa to the US from the Philippines but Lord willing again we hope this can happen.

All of this is of course contingent upon our Father bringing the resources and opportunities together. We saw this happen with all of you this past spring and summer and we are so thankful that you saw the need and supported the mission. If you have any questions about the trip or anything else, please feel free to contact Terri and I or Rita and we would gladly share more of what happened.

God bless yall and thanks again

Bill and Terri Honsberger