

April 2017

In Step with the Reeds

"...encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10.25).



A few years ago, we were talking with a young pastor who was planting a new church. He was a little discouraged after having just gone to introduce himself and his vision to the pastor of a very large church nearby. Our friend was told, "I wish you the best, but honestly, our church casts a mighty large shadow in this valley."

That statement came to mind after our most recent trip to the Philippines. We met up with over 21 of our mission leaders from around the world, and over 40 families who serve directly in the Philippines. We also rubbed shoulders with local pastors and leaders from the islands we traveled to. These men and women are largely "unknown" to the world. They serve the marginalized, forgotten, and weakest in remote and obscure places. In themselves, they do not cast a "large shadow" in this world. Ahhh, but their message--the Cross of Jesus Christ--casts a large shadow in the Kingdom! And that, my friends, is an eternal shadow!!! God has called all of us to be enveloped in HIS shadow, and to make an invaluable difference in this world.....**one**

transformed heart at a time!



Our first week there, we joined the ACTION leaders at their annual International Council, and were amazed and inspired by the obvious love and respect they had for each other. These men coming from Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, Cambodia, Brazil, UK, Canada, Colombia, Philippines, USA, and India, are good leaders with strong convictions and entrepreneurial spirits. In the midst of much discussion and

different perspectives, there was such a sweet spirit of unity and love for each other! WE WERE BLESSED!! Mission business was carried out in the context of much prayer together and around the shared Word from 2 Corinthians 4.

Week two was given to connecting with the ACTION Team in the Philippines at their annual retreat! It is always so wonderful to spend this more relaxed time with the team and their families. We had significant opportunities to listen



to and encourage folks at meals, on walks, in the pool, at the coffee shop, etc. Some highlights

included meeting a new couple who just joined ACTION, and reconnecting with five others who had been a part of Orientation in Seattle last year! Again, there was an incredible sense of unity and love throughout!



Our last 1½ weeks was full of new sights and experiences as we travelled to two different islands to see two of our missionary's ministries. In between, we enjoyed a short but very sweet stopover in Manila to visit our niece and nephew, Jenny and Paul Tanchi, and their family.

Joining Catie Smith and her intern, Nicolette Benoit, we flew to Iloilo. Kyle Hanson, Short-Term Coordinator for ACTION, joined us too. When the horrific typhoon Yolanda hit the Philippines in 2013, over 6000 people died, and this island among many was devastated. ACTION missionaries made contact with local pastors and provided needed relief and provisions for the community. One of those pastors was Pastor Dindo and his wife. Alongside him and the church, Catie lives, loves, and serves in Estancia, and the Relocation Village of Jolog. One of their many contributions to the community is to serve a nutritious breakfast every day to over 75 children at Catie's house. We love Catie's and Collette's hearts and enthusiasm...their joy is contagious! They have truly moved into the neighborhood and are well loved!





The 2nd island we visited with Paul and Patty Ellis was the Palawan Island of Coron. This ministry started 3 years ago with Typhoon Yolanda relief. The Ellises channeled funds for rebuilding churches, homes and fishing boats for the people. In the last few years, the Ellises have been bringing *The Life Application Study Bibles* to pastors and leaders throughout the islands, and providing training on how to use them effectively. We joined them on this trip to Coron, and John participated in teaching a session to the 50 pastors/teachers there.

For many, these resources and training are the only Bible schooling they have, and they “soak up” every bit of training they can get!



Our last day on Coron was a “play” day! Hermie, a local pastor who supports his ministry and family by giving guided tours, took us out to sea to do some island hopping. **So cool!** We hiked into the incredibly beautiful Lake Barracuda, lunched at a secluded beach, and snorkeled at a sunken ship site!



One of Georgie’s favorite memories was wading out into the warm, clear, azure-colored waters. While gazing at the beauty around her, she heard Christian music wafting over the water. Looking to the boat where the music was coming from, she saw a young boatman singing along. She called out, “That’s Christian music! Are you a “Born Again?” He smiled and in broken English said, “Yes! And I only play Christian music!” What a blessing!

And what an example he was to us... this little, unknown boatman on the other side of the world, casting a HUGE shadow of the CROSS within his area of influence... tourists from around the world!

Thank you for making this trip possible with your gifts and prayers!!! Our hearts were refreshed and our faithwalk challenged as we sought to refresh others. And, it was you who enabled us to come alongside our national brothers and sisters around the world...heroes of the faith, indeed! Our admiration and respect is always deepened for our collaborators with ACTION, pouring their lives out to see the shadow of the Cross spread across the Philippines!!

So, what’s ahead? We are presently preparing to fly to the Seattle area for ACTION’S Spring Pre-Field Orientation, where 7 new missionaries will be welcomed into ACTION! Here is where our “member-care” ministry begins with them. We can’t wait! This summer we will take time for family reunions in WA and Canada. Currently, we are exploring several ministry options for the Fall. **Please pray with us for clarity, confirmation and provision for the open doors that God has already prepared for us.**

We just celebrated Easter, and because our Lord is resurrected from the dead, we can be certain that at the right time, He will, “come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God...” 1 Thessalonians 4:16 (NLT)! Meanwhile, may all of us, dear friends, continue to **“Abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” (Psalm 91:1)**

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