



The Ransom Note

THE RANSOM FAMILY NEWSLETTER

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"The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45

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Pastors, Elders, & Deacons in our Home

It was decided. The last day of class would not be held in the usual classroom at Greenhills Christian Fellowship (one of the key partners in our ministry who help make our TMAI classes possible). Instead, the members of this Old Testament Survey class voted to hold its last class meeting for 2008 at the Ransom home, and what a great privilege it turned out to be for our family. It was a treat for our children to meet these ministry leaders who are not the typical picture of classroom students. This particular class is made up of experienced pastors (one with more than 40 years), elders, deacons, and other ministry leaders who truly desire to better minister to God's people by further sharpening their biblical training.



It was November 24th, and the ending of the semester, combined with the fact that Christmas was just around the corner, gave cause for a nice celebration. We all enjoyed a great time of fellowship and shared a delicious pot luck meal together. Then, someone sat down in front of Kian's



drum set and another picked up a guitar, and soon we were singing Christmas Carols with loud voices, one song after another. When we couldn't think of anymore, we turned to our favorite hymns and praise



songs. With more than 30 people singing in the room, our voices rang out to our neighbors. Some from our group had gone out earlier to talk with the young husband and wife who live closest to our house. Juan and Wilma heard the gospel, and by God's grace, prayed with one of the elders. As the evening came to a close, we distributed bibles (much thanks to Grace Community Church in Sun



Valley, California) for the ministry leaders to take back and share with their respective congregations. Many boxes of bibles were carried out that night. What a joy to have been able to host such an occasion!

Baby Dedication & Santa Lucia Anniversary

It was a double celebration. Crossroads Fellowship, the EFC church we have been a part of during these first four years, had started holding Sunday Night Worship Services at an old theater in The



Santa Lucia Mall, and this particular Sunday marked the 3rd year anniversary of



these services. Our friends, Edwin and Charlyne Cruz, picked the occasion to dedicate their three children to the Lord. Sean and I were asked to be godparents to their oldest daughter, Maria Luisa. The other two girls are Winalyn and baby Elizabeth (who was born under the bridge 4 months ago). The night was very festive, with food served afterwards and some special num-



bers performed. It was fun to see some of the youth from our ministry at The Manalo Bridge do a dance presentation.



Our first House Guests

In the first week of October, we moved into our new home, where, Lord willing, we plan to stay for a long time. That same week, we hosted our first house guests. We learned the week before that Faith Academy, the school for missionary kids that our three school-aged children are attending, was planning a college faire for its high school students. They needed families to host some of the visiting college recruiters, so we signed right up. Britt Carlson from Michigan, and Susan from Phoenix were assigned to our home. It was fun to get to know them. This caused Sean and I to think about how little time we have left with Kian, our eldest. He is now in 10th grade, which means that in just two short years, he'll likely leave us here in the Philippines for college in the U.S. Yikes! Well . . . sigh. . . I suppose every parent has to face this moment, but we're sure dreading it!

Christmas Party for Santa Lucia Mall Worship Group

Shouts and laughter filled the air as the youth and children from Manalo Bridge and from Midtown Subdivision played group games during a Christmas Party held for them on December 20th. These two groups had something in common: they and their families had been regularly attending the Sunday Evening worship services of Crossroads Fellowship held in their town at The Santa Lucia Mall.

Who would have thought that many of our friends



from Manalo Bridge would become a regular part of this worship service? Although we had mentioned the evening services to them casually during our regular



bible studies at their place, the truth is that Sean and I never really expected any of them to consider attending. This is because the mall is not that close to

them: about 5 Kilometers away, which means they would have to take public transportation—and most of them really just do not have the means. So honestly, we never even tried to encourage anyone to go, and just planned to continue *bringing the bible studies to them* right where they were at... underneath the Manalo Bridge. Well, soon enough, some of them began asking more questions about the services and then just started going on their own to Santa Lucia on Sunday nights. They would take public transportation when they could afford it, but mostly they would leave a couple of hours earlier and just walk to the mall! They were really enjoying the formal services—with a full praise and worship band, a sermon in Tagalog, and even communion now and then. How regretful we were that we had just assumed they wouldn't go, and I remember feeling quite guilty for not having encouraged them.



But then I realized that this was actually much better. It was a great blessing to see them **choosing** to go, on their own, willingly making the long walk, or sacrificing the jeepney (bus) fare in order to be a part of corporate worship. Had we been encouraging them all along, we wouldn't really know for sure whether they were going because **they** wanted to . . . or because they knew **we** wanted them to.



The party was held at a basketball court near the mall. Someone donated pre-packaged meals for everyone; a message was given by our friend, Joshua Santiago (chairman of the Board of Elders at Crossroads); we gave out donated clothing; and every child received a gift. We even had household gifts such as sheets, blankets and towels for every family. These household items came from a beloved church in California, The Bridge Bible Fellowship. I happened to share with a small group there during our furlough last summer that we were hoping for donations of blankets, clothing, etc., when wouldn't you know it? This group just happened to have a storage room full of this kind of stuff and they had been praying about what to do



with it all! Isn't it awesome the wonderful ways in which our great God works all these things out?

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An American Thanksgiving

November 27th, 2008 was just a typical work day in Manila, and an ordinary school day for our children. You see, here in The Philippines, there is nothing particularly special about the fourth Thursday in November. For some reason, the country has not yet set aside any specific day for thanksgiving. Regardless, we decided to go ahead and prepare a traditional Thanksgiving meal, inviting five other missionary families to celebrate with us.



The Millers, The Merritts, The Olsens, The Sparks, and The Undheims all came over shortly after school got out—each bearing some tasty Thanksgiving delight. We had two turkeys, mashed potatoes, three kinds of casseroles, fresh salad, good old fashioned stuffing . . . even deviled eggs, not to mention the deserts: apple, pecan, and pumpkin pies! Just Yummy!

Please Pray. . .

- For the TMAI conference we are planning in Cebu in early January.
- For safety in travel for the team who will serve at this conference: Allan and Sandi Luciano, as well as Pastor Felix Ballon and his youth leader Michael Gausselin.
- For God to confirm his will to Allan and Sandi, who are praying about serving here with us long term.
- For our friends at Manalo Bridge. We are seeing fewer continue to attend the bible studies lead by Pastor Richard. Praise God though that those who are continuing to attend seem to really be growing, and are also now attending Sunday worship services at Santa Lucia Mall