



# The Ransom Note

THE RANSOM FAMILY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2008

## Philippines Shepherd's Conference 2008

*"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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On August 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, Jessica and I had the privilege of being a part of a conference held by the Petra foundation, a ministry of Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF), which partners with The Master's Academy in training ministers to reach the Philippines and abroad.

This conference – which was inspired by the Shepherd's Conference at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California – is intended to be an annual conference to equip ministers in local church ministries.

We were blessed to teach various topics to over 400 minister, including how to interpret the bible, preaching, ministering to government employees, discipleship, leading small groups, mentoring, biblical eldership, and missions. The conference was opened with a key note address by the senior pastor of GCF, Dr. Luis Pantoja. Our guest speaker, Dr. Doug Bookman, deepened our understanding of the life of Christ as he taught 4 plenary sessions on the passion week of Jesus. We were also joined by Steve Wheeler, Director of White fields. He taught on missions and expository preaching. I taught three break-out sessions to about 140 ministers on how to interpret the Bible. I used a workshop style and took commonly misinterpreted texts from the Bible as I modeled how to properly interpret a passage. Then the attendees were given the opportunity to break into small groups and practice doing the same. We are following up the conference by offering classes through TMAI and Petra in Bible Interpretation, Old Testament Survey, and New Testament Survey. The conference was well received and many excited ministers expressed their gratitude and eagerness for further training and conferences.



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## News from The Bridge -Sean

Our friends, Edwin and Charlyne Cruz, just had their third daughter, Elizabeth Cruz. Since she was born under the bridge without any kind of medical help or assessment, we took Elizabeth to the doctor for a check up. Edwin and Charlyne were grateful for this because they were concerned that their daughter vomited up what they described as a lot of “flem.” Since so many of the children and adults living under the bridge suffer from asthma, they worried that Elizabeth may have been born with some sort of illness that could give her



breathing problems. After the doctor checked her out, she told us that the baby was doing fine and that the “flem” was probably due to the fact that Elizabeth was born without the aid of a doctor or nurse. This means that a standard clearing of the nasal passages was not done. I’m grateful that Edwin asked me a question that he would not have asked a few years ago when I first met him. He asked what was necessary to do a baby dedication. A few years ago they may have asked about baptizing their baby so that she would be saved. Now they know that salvation is God’s gracious gift to those who trust in Jesus Christ alone.



## A New Family Pet -Sean

During our last furlough in the States, Jessica and I saw all of our kids admiring the dogs of many of our friends. We had been avoiding getting a dog in the past because our son, Christian, seemed to have his asthma aggravated when he came into contact with animals. But now, it seems that Christian has outgrown his asthma, so we finally broke down and bought a small, short haired dog. (Tyler also has asthma, but his hasn’t been affected by animals.)

Isabella was taking a bath with her the other day while I was standing nearby in front of the mirror getting ready. When I turned around, I found that Isabella had squeezed out some shampoo on the dog’s head and began washing her hair. In this picture you can almost hear the dog saying, “Help me! Help me! **HELP ME!**” The kids are all crazy about the dog and are doing a good job of helping take care of her.



I suppose that I should tell you the dog’s name, but before I do, I need to make a few qualifying statements. When we speak of a man’s man or a rugged man, we sometimes say that he is manly. Or perhaps you might be describing a very feminine girl as – you guessed it – girly. Well, pugs are known to be very sweet, friendly, and family oriented lap dogs. Hence our pug, who fits the textbook description of her breed so well, is appropriately named . . . Pugly. As our Grace likes to call her, she can also be referred to as Princess Pugly.

## A Visit from Laguna Hills, CA

A few days after we arrived back into Manila, a small team from Christ Community Church of Laguna Hills visited with us before heading to the island of Cebu. There they met with Filipino pastors to explore how they can best support them in their ministries. Senior Pastor



Don smith also spoke as guest teacher at the bible college, ETCP.

## *He gives and He takes away. . .*

In July, we were delighted to learn that we were expecting our sixth child. Then in the middle of September, we ended up having a miscarriage. Of course, we were very sad, but God is faithful and has given us much comfort, reminding us that He hasn't really taken away our little one, at least not in the permanent sense. He simply gave him or her a "fast pass" to heaven where we will soon meet, enjoying paradise together forever with our great and awesome God. After all, this life on earth is but a fleeting vapor. REAL life begins in heaven! -Jess

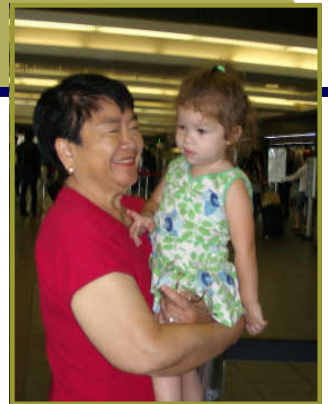
## Lessons Learned from our first Furlough -Sean

We all made it safe and sound back to the Philippines. I wanted to share some lessons that I learned during our furlough in the U.S (our approximately 7-month stay in which we reported to our supporters on our progress, did some recruiting, visited family and friends, and attempted to do some fund raising).

When we first returned to the United States, I expected that it would be easy to return back to the Philippines once our furlough was completed. In fact, I was eager to return. One reason was that our house

and most of our belongings were waiting for us in the Philippines. The school and friends that our kids had grown to love were there. Lots of great ministries, opportunities, and people were waiting for us. In spite of all these and several other good reasons to return, I could feel some anxiety building as the time to leave the U.S. drew nearer. This furlough has taught and reminded me that it wasn't easy to give up family, friends, church, and country the first time and now we have to do it again. In fact, we have to do this on rotation every few years. I now see more clearly that we leave behind many more things than I had realized at first. Many times while we were in the States I watched my kids playing with the kids of our family and friends. I remember feeling a sense of loss over the relationships that would have been if we never left the U.S., a loss of watching our family growing up with other families; camp outs, sports teams, church events, holidays, and some comforts. I appreciate more than ever having a solid church that consistently teaches the Word of God and ministers to God's people (though some exist in the Philippines, they are more the exception than the norm). I also appreciate the U.S. more for its courts and laws – even though one could go on and on about its short comings in these areas – the U.S. is still a great nation and I believe that justice is still more often found than not. I will miss the cleaner streets, cleaner air, lighter traffic, organization, and cultural comforts. Here's an illustration that might help how I feel. It's kind of like being home on leave from war and then returning to fight the good fight. After enjoying home, you know better than ever before what you are leaving behind and the gravity of the tasks that await you.

With all that said, I want to say that there are many positives in living in the Philippines. Also, I can honestly say that Jesus is worth it and that everything that might be temporarily lost in this life is nothing compared to gaining an unending joyous relationship with God and what He has waiting for us in heaven. I agree with what Paul wrote in Philippians 3:8 (ESV) where he said, "Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ." It is that knowledge and our joy in seeing the fame of Christ spread throughout the world that makes it easier to give things up again and again.



**Bella with her Grandma Gomez (Jessica's mom)**



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**Sean and Jessica Ransom**

Mailing address in The U.S.  
516 Marlboro Way  
Banning, CA 92220  
818-574-6151 (skype)  
011-63927-888-8890 Sean's cell  
RansomReport.com  
seanransom.blogspot.com

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CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE  
MAILED TO: **GMI**  
**13248 Roscoe Blvd**  
**Sun Valley, CA 91352**

Please make checks payable to GMI and write SEAN RANSOM in the memo line.

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## Classes Resume

In September, we resumed classes. Currently my partner Mark Macatangay (pictured on the right) and I are teaching how to interpret the Bible and Old Testament Survey part 2. Mark, a graduate from the Master's Seminary, is a full-time pastor on staff at Greenhills Christian Fellowship. He is praying about the possibility of working full time with me as we establish the Master's Academy

Philippines. We are really enjoying teaching the two classes who consist of mostly pastors as well as elders, church leaders, and teachers. We have been having great interaction and the students are sharing their appreciation as they learn how to properly interpret the Word and as they are understanding Scripture and theology better. One student shared how they are growing in their discernment as a result of learning to better recognize when a sermon is not really teaching what the author of Scripture was actually trying to say. One pastor who took our hermeneutics class last semester is now teaching his elders and church



leaders the same course at his church. We thank God for the privilege of teaching these dear people. Pray for us and them as we continue meeting for class and as we all serve the Lord.  
-by Sean



## Please Pray...

- For the ministers who just started classes at our training center.
- For those who are planning on joining our team in the next couple of years. Pray that God will continue to prepare them for this ministry and guide them as they raise their support.
- That God would continue to comfort Jessica.
- For our children as they reconnect with friends and readjust to school and life in the Philippines.
- For Sean and his ministry partner Mark as they continue to prepare curriculum.
- For the Lord's hand on future housing for our friends at Manalo Bridge