



Isabella Nancy Ransom came into our arms on Sunday afternoon, September 3rd. She is now nine weeks old, very alert, and loves to smile. Baby "Bella" has curly hair with natural blond streaks, and has a very sweet personality. We are blessed to have such a good-natured, beautiful newborn.. God is so amazingly good to us.



So Little for us, Yet So Much for him

By Sean, posted on
his blog on 8/21/06

Perhaps it was a dumb question on my part, but I asked her if she (Ate Virgie) was interested in having her son's face fixed. I've learned never to assume anything. I thought to myself, "It's possible that she could be against modern medicine or too afraid to have her son go under the knife". Excitement grew in her voice as we discussed the possibility, but I could also hear the concern in her questions. Would he feel pain or would the doctor make him sleep during the procedure? Would the doctor just numb his lip? Would they use needles or would he just have to breathe in the anesthesia? "It's too mahal (expensive)! How can we afford the medicine?" I told her, "Akong bahala sa gastos" (I will take care of the expenses) if she is interested. I'm kind of taking this by faith because I don't know exactly how much it will cost exactly. I did hear somewhere though that there is one group that comes to Manila about once a year and does the surgery for about \$300-\$400. That's no small amount for a missionary salary, but it is still relatively small. How could Jessica and I not do that? Relatively so little for us and yet so much for him. I haven't done the math, but I wouldn't be surprised if I found out that we spend that much on coffee each year. This surgery could be life changing for Angelo. It would spare him from years of ridicule and hurt, adverse hygiene and medical issues, open up better possibilities for work and most of all, be a life long testimony to the love of Christ.



Angelo was born four years ago with a cleft palate. His tita (aunt) told me how he never cried as a baby and still doesn't speak. Ate Virgie said that he makes some sounds and he clearly understands what is being said to him. She hopes that he will be able to talk after his mouth is fixed. Angelo's father seems to have had a nervous break down and is out of work and seems to have given up on life at the moment. Maybe God will use this surgery to give Angelo's dad some hope and remind him that He loves Him. I'm hoping that this surgery will have several other effects as well. First, Angelo has asthma. He is one of [many kids and adults living under the bridge](#) who have asthma. I'm guessing that the fumes from the exhausts of the thousands of cars passing over their bridge each day has a lot to do with it. (continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1) This is especially dangerous for Angelo because I don't think he can use a conventional inhaler for his asthma. He is not able to form a seal around an inhaler with his mouth due to the section of lip that is missing. I think this could potentially be life threatening for Angelo if an asthma attack makes it difficult for him to breathe. His family can't afford a trip to the hospital, but they do have access to an inhaler... an inhaler which I'm guessing would have little effect at this time because of his deformity.

Second, I hope that God helping Angelo through us will not only be a testimony to Angelo and his family, but to that whole community under the bridge. Several of them own and are reading bibles that I was privileged to give them. I was just talking with some of them today and they can see how God has not forgotten them. They see how He has sent me and other people over the years to help them as He cares for them. I have found a few possibilities of some local churches that might be able to help me minister to them. Their hearts have become more and more prepared for this. I get excited as I think about the possibilities. Join me in praying that we can help correct Angelo's deformity and get a local church involved with loving and teaching these precious people.

The above article about Angelo was written several months ago, but many things have transpired since. Here is what has happened in the last couple of months:

Our Experiences are no Accidents

1. Angelo's cleft palate has been healed. A few days after writing the above article, Sean took Angelo and his mom to Philippine General hospital for an evaluation. It was no accident that Sean was prompted to bring Angelo to the hospital that specific day. We didn't know it at the time, but there was a medical mission team at the hospital that particular week doing, of all things, cleft palate surgeries for free. And so by God's grace, before the week was over, the surgery on Angelo's cleft palate was performed, completely free of charge! Everyone in the community came out to greet Angelo when Sean brought him home, and so Sean was able to meet even more people from the bridge. *Here is Angelo's new photo at right.*
2. Angelo's dad now has a job and NEW LIFE! In our last newsletter (July 06) we wrote about a man named Mang Bert, who has been attending the weekly bible study in our home since February. It was no accident that we became friends with this fellow believer who has been a pedicab driver for 16 years. Through Mang Bert, we were able to help Angelo's dad Tony, get hired as a pedicab driver himself. Tony has been driving for the last month now, and has also been faithfully taking part in the Tagalog Bible Study that has started meeting weekly in his community. He is amongst those who prayed to receive Jesus Christ about 6 weeks ago, and seems to be really learning and growing in his new walk with Christ.
3. Another child with a cleft palate arrives. A week after Isabella was born, we were privileged to help a young couple who were expecting their own baby's arrival that week. We had them stay in our home with us so that we could readily drive them to the birthing clinic when the time came. It was no accident that we had experienced Angelo's cleft palate operation just a few weeks earlier. As it happens, to everyone's surprise this young couple's baby was also born with a cleft palate! Sean was able to comfort and encourage the young parents immediately because of our recent experience. He was even able to show them Angelo's "after the surgery" photos that were in his cell phone, right there at the clinic, minutes after their baby's arrival. When the baby is old enough to have surgery (at age 4 months), you can bet that we will be ready to help.
4. A young father now has more time to spend with his family. The father of the baby mentioned above is Roland, a security guard who was working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. Except for the week when their baby arrived, Roland hadn't had a day off in months. It was no accident again that our friend Mang Bert is in our lives. We were able to help Roland get a job as a pedicab driver too, so now he only works 8 hours a day, 6 days a week, and gets paid about the same as when he was a security guard.



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The Unintentional Intentional Church Plant

It all started last December around Christmas time. All I thought I was doing was reaching out to this man who seemed to be always sitting there, on the railing of a bridge that was part of our usual route home from church. I introduced myself and gave him a bible, and so began my friendship with Robert. I learned that not only did he live there at the bridge, but so did about 15 other families (all without electricity or running water). I never would have guessed that before the next Christmas would come, more than a dozen people from this community would be praying to receive Jesus Christ, that they would be regularly hearing the Word of God taught in their language each week, and that there would be a weekly Sunday School for their kids as well, all right there under the bridge.



My friend Robert



Now my focus in coming to The Philippines is to train national pastors and lay ministers to *intentionally* do church planting, which is a ministry I had planned to start in the future, after completing my formal language classes. However, the Holy Spirit drives me to share with all people at all times the good news that Jesus Christ wants to save those who are lost in sin, even those living under bridges. So shortly after I met Robert, I began visiting these families a few times every week. The only intentions I had at that time were to share the gospel, help with some physical needs, (like medicine and rice) and at the same time practice my Tagalog. In the process, I ended up caring for these people who I now call my friends.



Pastor Sonny (standing) is shown teaching the bible study in Tagalog

Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians impacts me like it never has before. "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. (1 Thes. 2:8)

Soon, I started thinking, "If I could get a Filipino pastor involved with this ministry, this group and the surrounding community could become a church." The Lord led me to Pastor Sonny who has been faithfully coming to the bridge each Sunday now to teach my friends the Word of God. We have since bought a guitar and some songbooks for Robert,



The kids being taught bible stories in a small space under the bridge

one of the first among the group to become a believer, and Robert now leads the worship each week. After the first Sunday bible study, I saw that about 20 children were wandering around with nothing to do, so the next week I brought in our friend Merriam. She now teaches the children bible stories in a small space under the bridge. The following week, Josette and Joshua from the church Jessica and I work with, also began to get involved. Then, another friend from our church, who is a dentist, offered to do a dental



Dra. Henson gives Novocaine to Ate Virgie, Angelo's mom

ministry for them. Doctora Henson came and must have pulled out more than 20 teeth that day. The whole community was blessed and I am beginning to see a lot of momentum there. It used to be that whenever we drove over the bridge, we would find Robert sitting all by himself on the railing. Nowadays, we often see him there with people around him, talking and laughing together with him. It is as though the weekly bible study has developed and strengthened relationships there, and it really seems like a lot of fellowship is going on. Please pray for God to keep blessing this ministry.



Our friend Ate Corlicks helps Dra. Henson with the dental clinic