

Netherlands, September, 2020

Unexpectedly a few months earlier than planned, in the Netherlands. The situation slowly but steadily got out of hand in the Philippines because of the Covid-19. Hospitals were full again and people died of other illnesses because they could no longer go to the hospital.

Because of my asthma, the full hospitals, one of the strictest Lock Downs in the world (was only allowed to leave the house for groceries), and a Home Assignment leave that was almost approaching anyway, it was decided (in consultation with all involved) that I would go to the Netherlands sooner, for an early and slightly longer leave. If the situation permits, I hope to be able to go back with renewed energy, to continue training ministers where necessary.

Because there is no public transport because of the COVID, the bicycle has also been discovered in the Philippines. This gives some scary situations, but also some funny pictures.



Adults also drove around with training wheels. Can you imagine that they also traveled on the 10 Lane roads with such bikes?

After I helped evacuating several colleagues, it was now time to evacuate myself. I can't believe it all yet, how big the differences are between the policies in the Philippines and the Netherlands. We were not allowed to take out the garbage without wearing a face mask.

People were arrested if they were seen on the street without a face mask, and anyone under 21 and over 59 is not allowed to leave the house at all. Public transport and taxi have come to a standstill again. A very limited group only is allowed to go to work. New passes are being made that allow a person per household to occasionally leave the house for groceries ... Although the Philippines is a large country, 5000 new covid "patients" per day are quite a lot. Air traffic is also almost stopped again. It is not easy to leave a country so suddenly, to leave the Filipinos behind, etc. But it is nice to have a break in the Netherlands now, where so much is still possible.

And then you come to the Netherlands... Only wear a face mask in public transport. You do have to be quarantined, but there is no control and you can also go home by train first: -0. Both the churches and the terraces are open, to a certain extent. On the one hand it feels very free, on the other hand I did not dare to go to church that first week, to be in a room with so many people, without a mask: -0.

Samar team

The day before my departure, I was still able to meet the Samar team, whose quarantine period had ended after their evacuation. The area where they live is part of Manila, but I had to go through an abandoned stone mine. Dirt road, uphill with deep pits and stones everywhere. It was a strange sensation that places like this exist in the multimillion-city of Manila. But a wonderful last trip with the motorcycle. It was good to look back on their year in Samar and the weird journey back with them. Their neighbor in the slum is a cook, who now doesn't have work due to covid ... that's why we had great restaurant quality food in the slums :-).



Samar team debrief

It's hard to let the young church run itself... but we try to stay in touch and encourage them through messenger for the time being. Please keep praying for them.

House

I hope to find a temporary place to live near Wageningen. If you know anything affordable ?? It is not clear how it all will work out exactly. In the coming months it will become clear how the situation in the Philippines and in the Netherlands will develop further.

Birthday

This extrovert spent her birthday in quarantine :-(. .. But mom, dad and brother came on a "garden visit" and online small parties along with hundreds of greetings via Facebook and WhatsApp made it a fun day. I even got to blow out an online candle at the last Langham meeting.



Zoom party after the Langham preaching meeting.

Trainings shifted to online or postponed until next year.

All major trainings have been canceled until the end of the year. Maybe we can do another training in Manila via zoom. In the other areas, the internet will be too bad for this.

For our Muslim team we have been working on a method for Bible study that works well in their context. (things like revenge killings, persecution, husband/wife relationships). Which takes into account the specific areas they have questions about regarding faith. I followed the training together with a colleague and now the rest of the colleagues still have to be trained. We also hope to be able to translate the material into Filipino.



As much work as possible went online ... with or without a curious dog.



The Langham Preaching material of levels 1 and 2 is now also ready in Filipino. One of the books we gave the participants is currently being translated into the language of the people of Samar. We now also have the rights to translate and print it locally.

The two books for Langham sermons are progressing slowly but surely ... Especially with the Spanish-speaking writers, some help is needed to make the good content sound good. So I had the doubtful honor to translate and fix a Spanish article into English with the help of google translate :-).

It will be quite a challenge to take Home Assignment in Corona time. Just like everything is different now. But I am confident that our creativity will continue to provide solutions for this.

Agenda:

Subject to corona :-).

But if there are possibilities, I like to come by electronically (all over the world), or in real life .. feel free to contact me.

Blessing!
Iljo

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