

“Yes, LORD!”

Jeff & Mary Ann Anderson, missionaries in Manila, Philippines with Action International Ministries

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What does the LORD require of you?

To act justly
To love mercy
To walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8 (NIV)

This family photo is from the late '80's.



25 Years in Manila, Philippines God's grace in ordinary instruments

By Jeff Anderson

December 5, 1985 Mary Ann, Amos, Micah Ann and I arrived in Manila as a rookie ACTION missionary family after leaving Minnesota during a snowstorm.

We hadn't been to Manila so it was reassuring to be met at the baggage carousel by Doug Nichols and Nelson Reed who helped us with our stuff as we worked our way through the late night airport crowd. We were told it was “cool” season in the Philippines, and it is this time of year, but as Minnesotans we misunderstood what “cool” meant so even in the air-conditioned terminal our bone-tired bodies were sweating profusely. Then the moment we stepped out of the terminal we were smothered by a thick humid

blanket of tropical air, overtaken by the distinctive smells of Manila and pressed by throngs of people wanting to “help” us with our luggage. Then Jim Dixon, who managed ACTION's guest house with his wife Marion, pulled up with his van, we loaded our bags while keeping a tight hold on the kids and took off for the guest house across the city. There is no way to describe the mix of thrill, fear, exhaustion and *knowing* we were in the right place at the right time about to embark on what our Lord wanted us to do which was confirmed over and over again by His people.

After staying in the guest house for a few weeks we moved to Lipa City, Batangas to start

Tagalog language study which was probably one of the most difficult challenges we've had during our missionary career. Monday-Friday we went to class with our New Tribes Mission classmates, JJ and Kathy Rasmussen, as we learned tongue twisting words, confusing sentence structure and tried to communicate with our neighbors in this pure Tagalog speaking area of Luzon. Upon completing language school, after a year and a half, we moved back to Manila and started ministry with Christian Growth Ministries' Lighthouse ministry located in Ermita which is a notorious red-light district where we ministered the Gospel and compassionate care to

street children, prostitutes and those taking advantage of them.

After serving in the Lighthouse ministry for about four years the ministry closed for several reasons but it was during this period our ability to speak Tagalog solidified, we bonded with Filipino culture and made many life-time friends some who are reliable ministry colleagues today. After the Lighthouse closed we stepped back, got before the Lord and evaluated what we learned through all the ups and downs while serving the needy in Ermita. It was also during this time I took a class at Asian Theological Seminary called Urban Mission which was very enriching and used by the Lord to deepen our calling to minister to street children and their families and develop our strategy of partnership with local churches and para-church ministries. Our foundational principles of ministry today were formed during this time which also launched ACTION's Street Impact Team ministry.

God's school of discipleship

Of course, over the past 25 years of missionary service, while being a student in God's school of discipleship from which we don't graduate until He calls us to be with Him, there's been many lessons learned but the primary one is *we're missionaries by God's calling and sustained by His dynamic grace as we joyfully obey Him by faith in His Word. This isn't a career choice but a divine calling for a life-time of full-time ministry which requires us to trust fully in God and work hard. We have no regrets nor do we look back wishing we'd done something else with our lives.* As ordinary instruments this verse continues to motivate us: *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."* 1 Corinthians 15:10 (NIV)

Come and join us but only if you're called

If the Heavenly Voice has called you to serve Him in missions among street children in the Philippines or elsewhere take courage and obey Him without delay. Jesus Christ, the Lord of the harvest, is fully able to provide all that's needed for you to fulfill



Dwelling places are often built under bridges. The garbage that fills the water of a river is referred to as "yagit". It is not an appropriate word for street kids but often is what they are called. The Tagalog-English Dictionary 1986 defines *yagit* as rubbish, such as is carried by the current of a stream or river and left on the banks.

His call. But you'll need to count the cost by trusting Him to provide your financial support through His people, learn a new language and culture and be prepared to have your mind bent and heart broken. However Mary Ann and I encourage you to step out from the crowd if you're called and don't be afraid because God is faithful to His Word. We know this by experience.

Street kids are not garbage!

While in language school we'd travel to Manila on public transportation to run errands and often I'd overhear people on a bus or jeepney use the word "yagit" when they saw kids selling stuff on a street corner, digging through garbage or sleeping on the sidewalk. After hearing this several times I asked Lourdes, one of our language teachers, what this meant. When she answered me she hung her head and said "Brother Jeff *yagit* is the garbage floating in the rivers and people use the word to describe street kids too." This event was burned into my soul and I determined that no matter how dirty or unruly a child on the streets is they are **not** garbage because they're created in the image of God and I'll challenge this common perception even among God's people. To this day I still do this because the world's 160 million street kids are

redeemable through the blood of Christ and many today are soldiers of the Cross.

Fish and Bread-holistic community development

Currently we have 14 Fish and Bread feeding sites providing nutritious food, medical care and Biblical instruction for 860 malnourished kids and their families living in extremely poor communities. Eleven sites are using the Department of Education's Alternative Learning System (ALS) which is their non-formal literacy program. In October 76 ALS students took the Acceleration and Equivalency exam and are waiting for the results. This is holistic community development under the guidance of partner churches and para-church ministries in coordination with local officials. In December another 7 sites will start while over the next several weeks some will conclude.

We are a huge interconnected team

Recently I estimated the cash value of in-kind donations our street children and disaster relief ministries received over the past little more than a year and it's nearly \$48,000. These donations include many boxes of Feed My Starving Children food, toys, locally produced food, milk,

medicines, Gallon of Care school supplies, blankets and canned goods. Even though our cash donations are down the Lord has made up for this through these useful in-kind donations.

However after I came up with the cash value of the donations I thought there are many tangibles that go into sending these items and putting them to their intended use which is to minister to the poor. It takes lots of mobilized and trained people at both ends to make this happen. The Sunday school teachers who mobilize their classes, givers who supply the money needed to buy the items, shipping materials, pay for the shipping, packers who supply the muscle, the shipping companies who get the boxes to us in good condition on time with a smile, the Street Impact Team who receives the items, mobilizes and trains our partner churches and ministries in using the items or distributes them at a disaster site, our partners who supply the dedicated manpower needed to work with the recipients along with lots of Christian compassion and the Gospel. Truly we are a interdependent and interconnected team for the glory of God Who is the master Orchestrator. All of this is bathed in prayer through which God produces transformed lives and communities.

New Ministry Position

Mary Ann and I enjoyed our trip to the US to visit our kids in September and October. We also spent significant time with Nelson Reed ACTION's International Director and Doug Nichols ACTION's Founder and International Director Emeritus when we roughed out the initial draft of my new ministry position called "Senior Consultant and Advocate for Children-in-Crisis." It is mainly a facilitating responsibility under the leadership of Nelson while our feet remain firmly planted on the streets of Manila doing hands-on ministry. Much of this I've been doing over the years but now that I'm no longer the Philippine's field director I'm freer to pursue this urgent task which people say fits me well. Along with this new job I continue to direct the Street Impact Team, our Disaster Relief and Development ministry and continue to serve as ACTION's Associate International Director.

We need prayer because this is a huge undertaking. To see the job description, ACTION's emphasis for more children-in-crisis workers and a new brochure we developed, visit our website at www.jeffmaryann.com

Update on our field leadership transition

Mike Gingerich has stepped into his new ministry as the Philippine's field director and is doing a fine job. We're very pleased with how this transition of leadership has gone which includes Carl Loewen replacing Mary Ann as our human resource coordinator primarily handling career applicants, candidates and appointees, Erin Johnson is handling short term applicants and missionaries and Pastor Rey Velasquez (CPA) is now our business office manager replacing Mike's wife Cindy. All this happened at the same time but by God's grace, lots of orientation and high caliber people everyone on the Philippines team and those in ACTION offices abroad are doing well with the transition.

Praise in glory

We had the joy of working with Praise Goh, a short term in February and March of 2009. She was a seminary student at Fuller in Pasadena, CA who came to Manila to do her internship. While here, she studied the lives of street children and ministries working with them.

Her research became part of her thesis paper and her project is also used by 180° Alliance who sponsored her trip. Praise was full of enthusiasm and loved by everyone she came in contact with. Mary Ann was her supervisor and I helped coordinate some of the ministry projects she was involved in. On October 25 we learned that she died suddenly in California and the cause of death has not yet been determined. We learned from her pastor and family that she spent her last day in the emergency room at a hospital and they were not able to save her. Praise desired to return to Manila when her school loans were paid off and continue her work among street kids. This will not happen but we are praying that others who have been touched by her life and passion will pick up the challenge and come to serve in her stead.

Christmas Parties

We praise the Lord that our \$16,000 budget has been met for this year's fast approaching evangelistic Christmas party ministry for street kids, poor families and prisoners. I greatly praise God for this and heartily thank all who've been praying and were able to give toward this very fruitful and joyful ministry. However, we'll keep praying, trusting, writing and working for more funds because the opportunities for proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed are plentiful!

We along with several participating pastors and workers decided our theme



Praise Goh (r) with Erin Johnson (l) and Esme Mamaril (center) If you would like to read her research paper, you can find it on our website at jeffmaryann.com

will be "Receive Christ and your Christmas will be Glorious" with the theme verses being Luke 2:9-10. Everyone is excited to share Christ and give compassionate care to their neighbors. We'll start the parties December 3 and they'll run through the 22nd but if we have extra funds we'll have parties in January. Each party consists of lots of good food, friendly people, singing, games, fun and a Gospel message with the purpose of leading each person to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ after which they're invited to attend worship services and Bible studies. If someone needs immediate crisis intervention our specialized para-church ministry partners are ready to help.

Six Month Furlough

December is anniversary month for us. The 5th is the day we arrived in Manila. The 21st is our wedding anniversary and this year we celebrate our 31st year together. We are busy preparing for our six month furlough beginning December 14. Our prayer is to raise additional support to fill in where support has dropped and raise \$20,000 for a vehicle to replace our 7-year old van. It has served us well but we want to sell it while it still has some financial value.

Here is our itinerary up to this point. We encourage you to look at our calendar online and help us fill in our open Sundays. We also want to share with our supporters, friends and families the great things God is doing in our midst and challenge others to join us.

We'll be staying in our apartment in Roseville, MN, and we're in need of a winter-worthy, reliable vehicle so please let us know if you have one you can spare or we can lease.

We hope to see as many of our part-



When Joseph (in photo with me) was 16 months old, he was severely malnourished and vomiting worms. He's the youngest of five kids living in a poor fishing community. Along with Esme (see her picture on page 3) who faithfully serves with Christian Challenge Church where Joseph lives, we fed and cared for him. Today he is a lively happy boy.

In recent weeks we have had four medical clinics for kids and their families involved in our current feeding programs.

ners as possible. Please give us a call at 651-472-9234 or email us (see below).

January

- 7-14 Spokane, WA visiting Danny & Micah (our daughter) Scott
- 9 Open for meetings, Spokane, WA
- 16 Fil-Am Christian Church, Coon Rapids, MN
- 23 Elim Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN
- 25-27 Seattle, WA
- 28-30 Vancouver Missionsfest

February

- 4-6 Manitoba Missionsfest, Winnipeg
- 13 Open for church meetings
- 20 Open for church meetings
- 27 Open for church meetings

March

- 6 Open for church meetings
- 12-19 International Council Meetings, Auburn, WA
- 20 Open for church meetings, Seattle/Portland, OR area
- 21-28 Tentative road trip from Portland, to Pasadena, CA with our son Amos
- 27 Tentative Pasadena
- April to June 12 our schedule is open.

Merry Christmas

We want to wish you a very Merry Christmas. From the bottom of our hearts we thank you for your prayers and your faithful partnership with us in 2010 and throughout the past 25 years.

Action International Ministries

To sign up for our monthly "Yes, Lord!" email updates contact us at: jeff@actionintl.org. Visit our website for calendar updates, photos, blog and more details: www.jeffmaryann.com Furlough phone number: 651-472-9234

Gifts are tax deductible and may be sent to an ACTION office near you or go online to: www.actioninternational.org/anderson

Giving may be designated for the following:

- Evangelistic Christmas Party Ministry (75035)
- Street Children Ministry (75031)
- Disaster Relief and Development (75501)
- Fish & Bread Feeding (75031)
- Anderson Vehicle Fund (40012G)
- Anderson Support (40012A)

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