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McGraths' Newsletter – February, 2011

Manila, Philippines

Mabuhay (Welcome) to the Philippines:

In writing to you this month, we would like to take you on a little personal journey with us, rather than any mission related news.

On Thursday February 17th, Sharon and I were just finishing supper and about to get up and leave for the airport, when we received a text message from my daughter, Nan, in London Ontario. She said she had information on the flight status of my father-in-law, Vic Thompson and his wife, Eleanor. When we called Nan, she said that Grandpa and Grandma Eleanor had missed their connection in Tokyo and were not going to make it to Manila tonight. They had had to sit on the tarmac in Toronto for two hours, awaiting mechanical repairs to their plane. That delay, of course, caused them to miss their connection in Tokyo. The Lord's timing of Nan's call was perfect! ☺

Her call began a two and one half hour "journey" trying to find out information about Dad and Eleanor. All we knew was that they were staying at the Garden Hotel near the airport in Tokyo. Yes, there were three Garden Hotels near the airport in Tokyo, and yes, none of them had any Thompsons staying with them!

The airlines were very good about their policy of not revealing any personal details about their passengers, as we began calling all of them involved. Japan Airlines, with whom they were to fly from Tokyo to Manila, said they did not have any Thompsons booked on any successive flights from Tokyo to Manila! Finally, a rep at the Air Canada hotline divulged that they were booked on a Delta flight the next day and would arrive Friday evening. Then we were able to go to bed, knowing that they had been cared for.

They did arrive the next evening at 10:20 PM in Manila. Even then we had a couple of moments of excitement. We were given special passes to go into the arrival area and wait. We found a spot that had a very nice breeze blowing through and so waited there. A policeman came along and noticed an unattended bag near us. Soon several more policemen joined him and they all were being very careful as they "examined" the bag from a distance. The next thing we knew we were being moved to another part of the arrivals area away from the package. We did not hear an explosion but we were very grateful for the diligence of the policemen.

Then as our guests arrived we were aware of quite a commotion amongst some young people near the arrivals area. When we asked, we were informed that Taylor Swift had flown the same time as their flight on Delta, as well. She had been in Asia doing other concerts. Taylor Swift is a young "kinda" country music star, who is a big hit here in Asia, and around the world it, seems.

We look back and realize that the stopover in Tokyo was a God-send for Dad and Eleanor. It provided them with a break in a long flight from Toronto to Manila that they would not have otherwise had. It also gave them a bit of a reprieve on dealing with jet-lag. And hey, it is not everybody that gets to overnight in Tokyo at someone else's expense. Thanks, Air Canada!

We are sure that Dad and Eleanor will have lots to tell you when and if you see them. So for now we will simply add a few pictures with some comments. There are more pictures on our Facebook page for those who are interested.



The lady in the red blouse is my colleague, Edna. We work together to assist new people coming into the Philippines. →

This is at the Taal Vista resort at Tagaytay, about 2 hours south and west of Manila proper. It is the home of the Taal volcano, which showed signs of erupting back a month or two ago, but it didn't amount to much. The little patch of land out in the water, to the left in the picture is Taal itself.]

← This is our mode of transportation while visiting the part of Manila called "Old Manila". It is also called Intramuros. The others in the picture are friends who are much younger and took the walking tour!



← We visited famous Corregidor Island, a site for many military battles during World War II. It was a relaxing trip, as we decided to stay overnight and come home the next day. We enjoyed the relaxing evening and morning before returning, to Manila.



We hope to get in two more sites before they return to Canada next Tuesday – a visit to the American Cemetery and also a dinner cruise in the Manila Bay.

Once again we are grateful for your partnership with us in Bible Translation. Dad is a Gideon and he and Eleanor gave away several portions of Scripture while here. We were also able to secure a copy of the New Testament in his heart language, for our guide on Corregidor Island. "Scriptures for Transformed Lives" our goal - our core value!! Praise God He is at working accomplishing both tasks! You are a vital part of that process!! With grateful hearts, **Eric & Sharon McGrath**

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