

## The Whitchurch Mission Trip, Helping Ratio Christi in the Philippine Islands, Report Plus !

My wife Kim and I have friended many international students for decades plus we lived in Zambia, Africa for three years for ministry with students. BUT I had never been to Asia! So when my colleague Ramon gave the invitation to Ratio Christi staff directors to prayerfully consider assisting with the March 2016 Apologetics Training and Conference in Manila Philippines, we prayed and God made a way! What a thrill to see (from the air) Siberia where Christians were once sent by the Communists under the Soviets and know that I've prayed for this place, and to land in Japan where we've prayerfully supported missionaries from Purdue, then proceed by night flight down the well lit up China coast where no doubt many of our international student friends are currently working and had formerly grown up and attended secondary school. To see the lights on the shore of Vietnam where my oldest cousin served our country. Then to land in Manila where my favorite uncle had fought tyranny during WW2 in the Pacific.

The team from the USA was fun, hospitable, Christ-honoring, and encouraging... We enjoyed some exploring of Manila and I rode on a public, motorized tricycle and of course saw the many unique Jeepney drivers, as well as a couple huge malls and markets. For my first time in Asia it was almost impossible not to be in the 'fascination stage' hopefully only "tourist-lite" and not obnoxious.

Training students in Christian apologetics and sharing our love for Jesus was exhilarating. My presentations were on loving God with all of our minds and how-to respond to various questions. I did an exegetical overview of 2nd Peter with an eye for apologetic issues including the authorship of the book, character vs. relativism (ch1), dealing with false teachers (ch2), and even how 'last things' are very important (ch3) in a Christian world and life view. I also taught and led interactive breakout sessions on the value of a cumulative case versus fideism or circular reasoning for the inerrancy of Scripture. And another on Moses as compiler and author of most of the Torah (1<sup>st</sup> five books of the Bible) refuting the still-too-popular JEDP hypothesis and anti-Moses biases.

Students from the conference host church, the University of the Philippines, and the University of St. Thomas, as well as some teachers from area schools were all quite receptive with good questions and practical applications. They joyfully received any extra copies of my notes which they wanted to pass along to friends. And they were eager to learn and quick to share web url resources.

Another highlight for me was watching the interaction of university students with both the apologists from the USA as well as the three apologists, John, Job, and Al Vin, who live in the Philippines. Those guys had excellent interactions and were in and out of English and local vernacular and getting a lot of energetic responses and synergy. It reminded me of ministry in Zambia where the biggest impact is always going to come from and be sustained by students, faculty, and other nationals who are part of the culture. They are evangelicals who are contagious to the glory of God who are excited not just to proclaim but to demonstrate the significance of the truth-claims of Christ and His gospel.

We stayed in the Summer Institute of Linguistics HQ and saw lots of evidences of God's work in Bible translation from the time of my birth in the mid-1950s to this very day. Thrilling. We also met a delightful older couple there with 'Open Doors', the Brother Andrew founded ministry. They were Dutch, in their 80s, and had known Corrie ten Boom personally! Both were quite sharp and both on there way to Vietnam to encourage Believers there. Wow!

I was able to share a couple of my 'illusions that illustrate' during the sessions when I was the emcee. This encouraged a new college student friend (Cornell) in the Philippines who is internationally known as a Yo-Yo expert. He had already ventured to integrate sharing the good news of Jesus and illustrations of Christian apologetics through His expertise in amazing Yo-Yo routines and he appreciated our synergy about such together. PLUS, I did not know that the Yo-Yo originates in the Philippines!

After the conference I traveled with my pastor and another church leader friend named Willy to visit a Harvest Chapel church-plant-dream in the Isabela Province at Burgos where Willy was born. We had an opportunities to meet and pray with the school principal, the mayor, sing and preach in two different churches as well as sing worship songs and share the gospel with students in the public school gym and also in a public square. We freely distribute hundreds of tracts throughout the community and saw multiple people in most of these opportunities publicly come to a living trust in Jesus during the week. Some from contexts we would consider challenging including one who was a Jehovah Witness, another LDS, and another who was gay. You had to be there! We impromptu attended a distant relative of Willy's funeral, visited guards at a jail in Roxas, prayed for several diverse and very sick family members related to our key team member, Willy. For part of the week we were joined by three youthful, Calvary Chapel pastors from various places in the Philippines who shared a heart-concern for Burgos.

We were also able to meet with two eye doctors and their spouses, a dentist, and a midwife in their clinics. They wanted more information about Christian apologetics. In God's providence I happened to have two of the 'Eye Exam Looking' Ratio Christi T-shirts with me that say 'No More Blind Faith' (see photo). They gratefully received these as gifts for their offices. One of the eye doctors named Christina said, "These will be great conversation starters!" I also had some colorful 'vision based' interest hooks for sharing Christ. They loved them. Each of them had mid-day Sunday Bible studies in their respective clinics and are often asked apologetics oriented questions about God's existence, which God, why pain and suffering, can we trust Scripture, are miracles possible, etc. Between Manila and Burgos I was able to give away over a dozen copies of my booklet on Scripture Memory called 'Heart Treasures'. Perhaps a unique part of my experience and also a highlight for me was seeing God's hand at work regardless of my relative cultural ineptness just by us being willing.

I'm sure I was far more blessed than a blessing. I'm grateful for those who have gone before and made such opportunities possible. As our apologetics conference theme song shouts, "God is on the move, on the move, Hallelujah!" True! Big thanks to all who prayed and gave a little extra to help us be a blessing overseas in Asia! Have you seen some of the Christian apologetics oriented movies that are out recently like "Risen" or the one we've partnered with, "God is Not Dead2"? See them and take a friend. ☺



Yours praising God alongside of you!

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<http://tinyurl.com/rcapolomanila> Pictures of Apologetics Ratio Christi Manila context.  
<http://tinyurl.com/hrcrburgos> Pictures of Burgos evangelism, worship, apolo, churchplant.  
<http://tinyurl.com/symp16pix> Pictures from early February SymposiaChristi 2016.

Above links work if you are on Facebook and we are Facebook friends. It is free. Enjoy Lots of pix!