



Milestone Moments

Christmas as you know fell on a Sunday. So Geff prepared a Christmas message, which spoke on our great salvation through Jesus' incarnation. The message was well received and the party afterwards was really fun.

The boys shared a song and then helped with the games. It was a wonderful time for us. It was a very proud moment for Christine and I to see our sons participating and ministering to the people. We both thought to ourselves, "thank you God for allowing us to see the day when our kids stand side by side with the people of Bolo in praise and worship to the Lord". It seems so many times it would have been easy to give up and go home.



Reach Out

The boys and I hiked to a village three hours away and we had a small Christmas service for them. The hike back is pretty grueling straight up for two hours. It is an amazing feeling to hike to the mountains and reach a tiny village of 5 houses knowing that it is an area that few have ever seen. It is also thrilling to be able to share Christ with those people and show his love through our actions.



Hard Loss

December was a challenging month for us in many ways. One of the elders in the tribe passed away. He was close to us and would visit often in our early days. Later, he became weak and suffered from bad arthritis. Last month he became very weak and nearly passed away. However, he managed to survive. Then a week later he became weak again and did not survive. We had just come back into the tribe after getting supplies. I went down to the house to see his still body. I knelt down beside his bed and kissed him on the forehead. Tears began streaming down my eyes as I wept for him. Everyone in the room began to cry as well. Then I just gave some last words that I wish I had said to him before he passed away. Christine also visited later in the day and had the same experience as me.

Patiyan was a proud I-Wak and he would often come to visit us personally but not to our teaching. So this was very hard for us. His grandchildren come and his great grandson comes to the teaching, however he himself only came a couple times. His daughter is a believer and was his primary caretaker. Our only hope, is that she was sharing what she learned with him before he passed away.



Patiyan

Patiyan remembered the war and encounters with both the Japanese and the Americans. In other words , he was old !! When I-Waks die they are buried underneath their house. The dead are believed to be amongst the living so the family is obligated to care for the dead through sacrifice offerings. The funeral was quiet and somber with no singing or dancing. Just a pig was sacrificed and eaten as is customary. Some words would have been spoken from the family and prayers from the witchdoctor, but that is all. We gave pictures to the family to remember him by and they placed them near his coffin after he died. Looking at him holding Gracie in this picture is precious to us. We miss him very much.



Where there is no doctor....

Once again we were faced with a life threatening medical situation. One of the tribal ladies came down to our house and said her husband had a machete wound and was bleeding profusely . We went up to see a pool of blood and her husband going into shock. Christine quickly grabbed his leg and pressed as hard as she could on the wound. We took turns pushing on it, and 2 hours later the bleeding finally stopped completely. I was glad Christine was there because I wouldn't have known what to do. I hate to think what would have happened if she hadn't been there.

Neighbour and Healer

We feel the weight of being in an area far from medical help when we deal with things like this but especially when our family is in need of medical care. Jacob on Christmas eve dislocated his big toe in a go-cart accident. When I reached him I was totally disturbed by the sight of it so we decided not to try and relocate it ourselves and take him to the nearest town for help. On our way down, our neighbor was working in the field and I told her what had happened, and she came immediately to our van. She then grabbed his toe, pulled it and bent it down. She said “there, now he can go play volleyball”. She proceeded to move it up and down vigorously. It was quite the amusing sight. Jacob was very brave. She had actually put it back into place. Jacob was able to move it and said it felt a lot better. Amazing !! A week later, in Manila, we got it checked out and the doctor confirmed that it was back in place properly.

Divine Healing

On Christmas day Christine developed a fever which lasted for 5 days. Even after taking tylenol her fever remained at 39C. She had the chills and then the sweats all night. She became dehydrated and we were needing to make a decision to take her out by road or call an emergency flight. The pilot had already gone to Manila for conference and so we were left with the 9hr drive to Manila. I hated thinking of taking Christine out by road in her condition but it was the only way. Nathan gave a wonderful prayer of healing for his mom. Then we packed and pushed our way out the door and headed to Manila. Amazingly, Christine endured the ride and was even in good spirits. Her fever was even gone by the time we got to Manila. She rested a couple days at the Guesthouse, and then during our annual mission conference she developed a strange rash which the other missionaries confirmed was a Dengue rash. We were shocked and amazed because most people who suffer Dengue Fever need to be hospitalized for a week. Later, the Lord reminded me of Nathan's prayer and God's love.



New Life

Well, not only is there death here in Bolo there is lots of life. There have been a whole slew of babies being born lately. A new generation of I-Wak babies. The baby Christine is holding in the picture belongs to the “Kapitan” or “Captain” of our district. She is their 11th baby!

PLEASE PRAY!

Our Kids. Our children are growing and so are their needs. Pray that we have wisdom in their growing transitions.

The I-Wak. Pray that their will be men and women who would desire to be leaders and grow their new faith.

Responsibility. As we are here longer we are being asked to take on more responsibility with leadership. They have asked Geff to be on Regional Committee. As well he is also being trained for Tribal language consulting. Pray that we have wisdom in these responsibilities.

Safety. Pray that we will not take safety for granted but always be prayerful in our travel here in the Philippines.

Thank you for your love and support! God Bless!
Harada family

