



February 1, 2013

Barkmans at Menno Youth Camp

We were invited to speak at this year's Integrated Mennonite Youth Camp so on Boxing Day we packed up the boys and all our gear and headed north for a 7-hour drive. We stayed at an Elementary School for 4 days, along with 250 youth. The school had no running water and the cooks made meals for everyone without a kitchen! But we were well fed and well taken care of and as a family, we really enjoyed getting to know some of the youth and the leaders.

We spent two hours each morning with about seventy of the youth leaders. Darnell shared about the Biblical narrative and had everyone draw six stages of the story. Christina had a history lesson with the youth about Early Anabaptists and had different groups act out the story of Dirk Willems,



who saved his capturer from drowning in icy water, and write a song or poem about what it means to be Mennonite. These were interactive, memorable times. Our good friend/mentor/language tutor, Bryan Paler, also attended the event and shared stories with the youth about how to put our faith into action. He had the youth discuss the issues facing their communities and brainstorm ways they can help their neighbours.



Relief Efforts in Mindanao

Christina's parents came for a wonderful three-week visit and while they were here, Darnell and his father-in-law (Gerd Bartel) visited fellow Mennonite Church Canada workers, Dann and Joji Pantoja in Davao. Gerd helped found Peacebuilders Community and is a close friend of Dann's and we were mentored under Dann and Joji during our internship in 2008/2009.

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. - 1 Cor. 3:11

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Following the devastation of Typhoon Pablo in early December, Peacebuilders Community has been distributing relief to some of the millions of starving people. Gerd and Darnell participated in the fifth wave of relief, delivering food to about two thousand families, many of whom walked for 6 hours to get this relief, as their communities were not accessible by vehicle. The day after this massive relief operation, Davao experienced terrible flooding and what was planned to be a day of rest ended up being another busy day of needs assessment and food distribution.



Peace Church

As a church community, we are learning together about the radical love that Jesus lived and taught through studying the Gospel of Matthew. We're seeing how "upside down" and political Jesus' message was and are reflecting on how we can live like him in our own cultural and political reality. We study the bible together Wednesday nights and gather every other weekend for a meal, family fun and discussion. We're excited about

the new friends who are gathering with us and we have enjoyed mixing our neighbourhood friends with our church community, especially on Saturday evenings. We're also very thankful that Christina's parents could join us for several gatherings. They shared their story, their insights and prayed for us as a community. We appreciate their wisdom and support and are so thankful for the special time they could have with our community.

Family

After being away from home for 7 months, having parents visit in a very special occasion. Seeing them get to know the boys in a whole new way was a joy. And next week, its Darnell's parents turn to visit!!! This is the season of visitors and we're very thankful for it. It's just always hard to say goodbye!



With love to all of you,
Christina, Darnell, Cody and Makai