

MY MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE

By: Xenia Babera

"I considered my Evangelism Explosion Clinic last September 14-19, 2009 as one of my mountain top experiences with God, as I knew Christ He worked in me and through me during the whole week. I felt fullness of joy and the clarity of His calling in our devotional time every morning before the start of the lectures of the day. I was encouraged by testimonies of our lecturers and motivated by our lessons to fulfill God's Great Commission of becoming a witness, a messenger of His Good News. In fact, if there was an award for the most emotional participant, I would have surely bagged it too.

I also received fullness of provisions materially, emotionally and spiritually. Our host church was very hospitable and supportive of the evangelism ministry. My prayer partners surprised me with abundant gifts everyday.

I won't forget my on-the-job training in the town's park where I shared the Gospel to four college students using the survey questionnaire as spring board. We were grouped into teams of three composed of one trainer and two clinicians. My two companions unanimously suggested I'll do the presentation first while my co-clinician pastor was still unprepared. It was my first time to present the Gospel in a big group of prospects; not to mention these students were "pasaways", curious but lacked focus and easily lost their attention on the topic. Nevertheless, with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, I was able to hold their interest, present the whole outline accordingly, and in the end led these four students in a prayer of commitment to Christ. In EE clinic, only one OJT where a clinician needs to present the whole outline by himself is required. But while my co-clinician was doing his turn to another prospect, God gave me a divine appointee. She was a plain housewife who went there with her one year old daughter. She was new in the community and asked me where she can find a 7-eleven store. Through God's guidance, this woman heard the Good News and received the gift of eternal life. I shared the Gospel not because the EE training required me to do so nor to add figures in the statistics, but because I was constrained by my love for Christ. Witnessing, indeed, is a way of life I choose to live not just at specific time but the rest of my life."

"FOR CHRIST'S LOVE COMPELS US, BECAUSE WE ARE CONVINCED THAT ONE DIED FOR ALL, AND THEREFORE ALL DIED. AND HE DIED FOR ALL, THAT THOSE WHO LIVE SHOULD NO LONGER LIVE FOR THEMSELVES BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED FOR THEM AND WAS RAISED AGAIN."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15



Milestones

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The Christmas Season is definitely one of the happiest days of the year for us Filipinos.

Even Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are always looking forward to go back home and celebrate this joyous season with family and friends.

For us at ECC who were not able to go back home, it did not stop us to celebrate Christmas in a unique and personal way. We had Christmas caroling at Evangel Hospital last December 20th and at China Coast Elderly Home last December 26th. The December 25th celebration was an evangelistic outreach for our first time visitors and a joyous fun time with the Jang and Ma families.

To God be the glory for 2009!!!

Nephtalie L.



Milestones

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Ate Fe's Corner

CNN 2009 HERO OF THE YEAR

Efren Penaflorida who comes from Cavite City is the CNN 2009 Hero of the Year who won over nine other "CNN Heroes". When he was announced the CNN 2009 hero of the year I felt so proud to be a Filipino and was so encouraged by his humility when he received his award. He refused to take credit for the recognition but gave credit to his mentor and personal hero "Bonn Manalaysay", the poor kids they are teaching and the dedicated volunteers behind the "Dynamic Teen Company (DTC)" which he started in 1997. DTC used "Kariton Classrooms" or mobile pushcarts filled with books, pens, tables and chairs to teach basic reading, writing and personal hygiene to slum children in Cavite

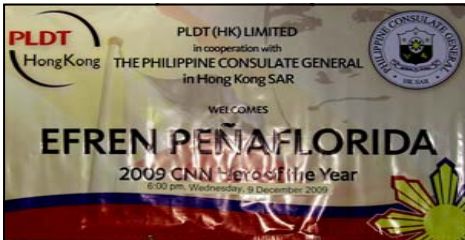
Bonn Manalaysay, the hero behind Efren, helped financed his education from high school to college and earned for himself two degrees (Computer Technology and Secondary Education). The four principles behind Bonn's mentorship which was shared by Efren last December 9th at the Philippine Consulate here in Hong Kong before us are:

- 1) One is never too poor to think of ways to help others.
- 2) One is never too young to give back to society.
- 3) One is never too strong to do things on his own.
- 4) One is never too ordinary to be a hero.

His inspirational message to us takes the form of a challenge wherein he said that "Each person has a hidden hero within;

you just have to look inside you and search it in your heart, and be the hero to the next one in need... Serve, serve well, serve others above yourself and be happy to serve. As I always tell my co-volunteers... you are the change that you dream as I am the change that I dream and collectively we are the change that this world needs to be."

As we look forward with great expectation of what the Lord will be doing in 2010, may we be inspired and challenged by Efren Penaflorida's words "...unleash the hero within you".



"LESSONS ON LIFE"

Author: Unknown

There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly. So he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away.

The first son went in the winter; the second in the spring; the third in summer; and the youngest son in the fall.

When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what they had seen.

The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent and twisted.

The second son said no it was covered with green buds and full of promise.

The third son disagreed; he said, it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had seen.

The last son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruits full of life and fulfillment.

The man then explained to his sons that they were all right, because they had each seen but only one season in the tree's life. He told them that you cannot judge a tree, or a person, by only one season, and that the essence of who they are and the pleasure, joy and love that some from that life can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are up. If you give up when it's winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer and the fulfillment of your fall.

Moral Lesson: Don't let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest. Don't judge life by one difficult season. Persevere through the difficult patches and better times are sure to come.



BECAUSE OF HIM...

By: Neda Gudaren

I was there in the middle of darkness.
Sitting alone in an endless silence.
With a heart full of bitterness and hatred
Knowing that I was betrayed.

My tears flowing down my face;
My heart longing for a safe place;
Where my tired body could rest.
Where and when can I find that to dwell?

In my loneliness and agony,
I suddenly felt cold wind embrace me.
And a feeling of comfort was there,
Suddenly all my fears disappear.

I heard a soft voice whispering
"I heard your heart's longing.
I am here my daughter.
Come, lean on me,
I'll give you peace forever."

Bitterness became sweetness.
Hatred turned into forgiveness.
Finally, a longing heart found a safe place
Through the sweet voice in the middle of
silence.



ON JOURNEY

By: Cathy Gonzalez

As Christ took the journey to the cross
As Christ chose to suffer for a cause
As Christ humbly took the tormenting
bruise
As Christ lovingly forgives us with grace.

This for us is a gift to claim..
This for us is a peace to possess.
This for us is a hope to proclaim.
This for us is a joy to profess.

For in meekness there is exaltation;
For in grace there is justification;
For in love there is salvation;
For in faith there is sanctification.

And in suffering there is purification.
And in hope there is revelation.
And in vision there is passion.
And in mission there is satisfaction.

Every man has a journey to take.
Every step taken is a courage to face.
Every crossroad is a choice to anticipate.
Every lesson learned is his glory to make.



"MY UNFORGETTABLE DAYS WITH ECC"

By: Jean Buctayon

"To the ECC family, my heartfelt thanks and praise to God for the comforting love I felt during those months I was with you. I was really touched by the concern you've shown me. Though I am away from there, the love of Christ is still seen in you, because of the love gift you sent through Sis. Fe and Bro. Ray. May God who blessed Abraham (Gen. 12:2-3) will do the same with all of you and who will protect and watch you wherever you go. (Ps. 121:2-8) The help you sent contributed much to my family and ministry God has entrusted to us.

As a pastor's wife, mother, helper and teacher in another church, it is a great pleasure to serve our God...I prayed that God will show me how to help my husband's ministry and family financially. So when there was an opportunity, I came to Hong Kong as a maid in 2000. It was my prayer that God will lead me to a church where I can still serve Him even in little things... and it was a great blessing that I was part of the ushers at ECC Kowloon. My second time in Hong Kong in 2008 was also a blessing as I listened and participated in some activities and discussions during prayer and cell group meetings. I was encouraged during Sunday services and fellowships in the afternoon.

I praise God for although I am not in Hong Kong anymore, we still have communications in prayers and text messages. Your continuous support to us in our ministry, family and to me personally in my health has inspired me despite my situation because "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21). As long as I have life and strength, I'll serve Him (Romans 12:2; Luke 10:27).

Lastly, I just want to say thanks again for the prayers and financial support. You're depositing a treasure that will never be stolen by thieves (Matthew 6:20-21). So let's be faithful to God for the gifts He has given us (1 Corinthians 12:25-27). God be with us all."



We were therefore buried with him through baptism...

JENELYN ABREGANA

I knew God since I was young as I grew up in a Catholic family; going to church every Sunday and listening to the priest talk about God...In October 11, 1994 my family experienced a great depression as my father died and I was only fourteen then. My father was our only breadwinner and I had to work hard for my secondary education. At the age of nineteen I worked in a tuna company and became so proud because I made it through my own effort. From there I learned to smoke and drink alcohol and developed relationships with the same sex. Since I can support my family and myself, I suddenly forgot about God and had a motto "You work and you get what you want." In 2002 I came to Hong Kong and went to church every Sunday but nothing changed with my life. Not until my employer terminated me and I prayed to God for help to find a new employer. I stayed at Oasis and met Fe who gave me some spiritual reading materials and brought me to ECC. The Filipino ministry prayed for me and God opened my mind with His words and I received Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior in July 2008 through Flora and Jocelyn. I knew then that I was in the dark and I thank God for providing light for my soul through the "Experiencing God" and "Breaking Through to Spiritual Maturity" lessons with the ECC Filipino ministry.

ARLENE MORLA

I have always feared God even as a child because I grew up in a Catholic family... As I grew up, it seems that sinning for me is just a natural thing as I see it committed all around me thus I sinned without fearing God to the point of having a relationship with the same sex. It took a while for me to have these relationships as it made me happy until finally when I was twenty eight years old I decided to live the normal life. I got married and had a son with a cerebral palsy. This led me to turn to God as I did not know how to help my son. I tried to do good deeds and pray to no avail but my prayers seemed unanswered. I even asked God "Is this the punishment for my sins?" He then made me understand that "His ways are not your ways and my thoughts are not your thoughts"...But God seems always to be there for me as there were helping hands who brought me before God. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior last July 2008 through Flora and Jocelyn of the ECC Filipino ministry. Indeed God is good as He has always been so patient with me to provide care and comfort in times of troubles and trials.



GRACITA B. CAYLAN

Since I was young I knew that there is God – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit but I don't really know how great He is. I learned that I need to repent of my sins through a priest and as the priest forgives me of my sins then it is God who forgives me...Joining the "Experiencing God" lessons through the ECC Filipino Ministry allowed me to learn so much, first, God made me realized that He allowed me to be here in Hong Kong for a purpose. Secondly, during trials, I am not alone, but there were other footsteps on my side guiding and directing me to the right path of life, Jesus Christ's but the only thing was I didn't recognize Him. Thirdly, I learned that God already forgave all my sins through Jesus Christ on the cross,

so I should forgive others too so as to be able to move on...When God found me, I felt a warm glow in my life as I gradually lost my old self and as I am now a new creation in Christ when I received Him as my Lord and Savior on September 15, 2008 through Flora and Norlyn. Thank you for the ECC Filipino Ministry who helped me renew my faith in God.

EVANGELINE P. TABTAB

I was raised as a good Catholic believer; grew up as a loving and kind-hearted person to all the members of my family and to those in need of my help...I believed that I got married at the right time as I am madly in love with my husband. We were blessed with two gorgeous sons and a lovely daughter...I became a battered wife but was still totally in love with him despite everything he had done. I prayed and deeply begged God to change my husband but for many long years he even turned worst, engaged in more vices, became hot tempered, told more lies and left our kids on their own at home for another woman which totally affected us while I worked here in Hong Kong...Every night I get drunk as it helped me go to sleep and forget for a while the pain?" My vices went on for a year but my family never stopped encouraging me to let go of my husband and leave everything to God...I then realized I started to enjoy everything especially the Bible studies...I deeply asked God for forgiveness, trusted Him and accepted Him as my Lord and Savior last July 2009. I learned to place every burden I have inside me to Him and found a new beginning as I was born again – a beginning of a new and fresh life...To God be the glory as I go for a total change and transformation.