



# CHRISTIANS' HAVEN

A Ministry to *Street Children* and  
*Orphans* of the Philippine Islands

## God's "Jubilee" for Street Kids

By Lynn R. Ragsdale, President



The Year of Jubilee was proclaimed on the fiftieth year after seven cycles of seven years. This fiftieth year was a time when specific instructions about property and slavery outlined in the Jewish law took effect (Lev. 25:8-55).

The word "jubilee" comes from a Hebrew word meaning "ram's horn," or "trumpet." The jubilee year was launched with a blast from a ram's horn on the Day of Atonement signifying a call to celebration, liberation, and the beginning of a year for "doing justice" and "loving mercy."

God apparently established the Year of Jubilee to prevent the Israelites from oppressing and cheating one another (Lev. 25:17). This law prevented a permanent system of classes from developing. It gave everyone the opportunity to start over economically and socially.

The jubilee year reminds us of God's concern for human liberty. God wants people to be free. Calling into question any social practice that leads to permanent bondage and loss of economic opportunity, it also stands as a witness to God's desire for justice on earth.

So, you might ask, why the study from Leviticus? It is not exactly the most interesting or most easily understood book of the Bible and should not be read when sleepy. That may be a fair assessment but not completely. Leviticus, like much of the Old Testament, enlightens us to the nature of God. We see the very heart and nature of our loving Creator. Thus, applying what we have learned about the nature of God to our present world we might understand the Old Testament in a brand new light.

In the Philippines there is an unwritten class system that is well known by all. They rank people from A to E. The "A" people are those who are most wealthy or involved in the highest levels of government. Then the "E" people are those with nothing and who quite possibly live on the streets or in the slums. As our kids sadly tell us - "We know where we belong."

Nothing is more untrue in God's economy! God values everyone He has ever created - without exception and without rank. It is the ministry of Christians' Haven to return the character of God to our place and extend that to the poorest of poor children. We are proclaiming the "Jubilee" of the Lord to our kids. "Show your fear of God by not taking advantage of each other. I, the Lord am your God." (Lev. 25:17)

A final application from Leviticus is brought to light in 25:23. "And remember, the land must never be sold on a permanent basis because it really belongs to me. You are only foreigners and tenants living with me." WOW! Let your spiritual mind go crazy with this one. I imagine that you need no help in applying God's principles of complete ownership.

Thank you for partnering with us in this disciple-making ministry as we seek everyday to value those that God values—precious children who are owned by Him.

Then



Now



# Conversations at the College House

by Ruel Billones, Campus Director



One day, during lunch time at the College House, Celito an 18 year old CH student taking Marine Engineering asked a question that led our discussion on Jose Rizal, our Philippine national hero. His question was, “What place in the Philippines still speaks Spanish?” And I said, “Zamboanga.” Then our conversation went on to Rizal, who lived in Dapitan, near Dipolog, Zamboanga. It was his last exile where he wrote *Mi Ultimo Adios* (My Last Farewell), a poem dedicated to the Filipino youth that helped in the revolution against Spain. Rizal was then transported to Bagumbayan, now called Luneta Park, where he was executed. This happened during Christmas time. Our national hero gave his life for our country at Christmas time. I wonder what kind of audience witnessed his execution? Did they have to attend Misa de Gallo after watching him die? Did the priest who coordinated with the guardia civiles (official guards) officiate the mass on that morning? Did Rizal have his last communion before getting killed? How did his family celebrate their *noche buena* (Christmas Eve family dinner) and welcome of the New Year after such death in the family?

From that conversation with Celito over lunch, I further asked our young men and ladies in the College House: “Give me the words you associate with Christmas.” They started to utter different words. Many of them spoke in unison. I heard them say, “family, fun, food.” The three fs.

Then I asked them, “How do we, as Christians’ Haven family, deal with the fact that many if not most of us do not know what it means to have a real biological family to celebrate Christmas with? How do we deal with the fact that as we are having the excitement and fun of deciding what to do with our cash gifts from our sponsors, and the abundance of food provided for us, while we were rushing out for shopping, there was Joel, our former CH kid, who gave us a surprise visit, rushing into our house, sick with fever, with teary eyes, and without saying, approached Sherwin, begging for food?” Silence was their response.

If I look close enough at the movement of my soul in many Christmases, I cannot let go of one memory I had with my father one night. As a young boy, I longed to have all family members gather together for Christmas. The siren of a local factory whistled to signal the dawning of Christmas Eve; but there was hardly any movement in the house. Mother was inside the mosquito net. She did not want to get up. I said, “But Ma, Christmas has come. It’s time for Noche Buena. It is time to eat.” She did not want to wake up. In her coarse voice she motioned that I could just stand up and open the plate of pancit (rice noodles) she bought from the market earlier. In hindsight now, maybe the reason she refused to get out of the mosquito net was because she did not want to deal with the fact that my father was not home on Christmas Eve. He arrived an hour later. This time he was drunk. I did not want to hear the conversations that took place between the two of them. I felt it did not belong to the occasion. I do not remember the words, but I only remember the feelings. That was my irony of Christmas in my family.



On a personal level, what is one memory that comes to your mind when you remember family at Christmas time? What feelings do these bring to you? Joy or pain? Or both. You see, my father is a changed man. I just sent him a card the other day. And in that card I wrote, “Pa, this will be the first Christmas that I will not be able to receive your hug and hear you whisper in my ears, ‘I love my son.’”



I can continue to mention the inconsistencies that Christmas season brings. Family? But suicide is at its highest all over the world. Where is family? Fun? But the accumulation of another thing, a new set of clothes, a new cell phone, a new pair of shoes, the noise of Christmas music, sounds, and partying expose the disparity between those who have and those who have not. The world creates the ideal that Christmas is family, food, and fun to capitalize on our wishful thinking as children. Yet, when we become adults, we are faced with the reality that what we wished for as kids has remained unfulfilled. Christmas celebration sometimes becomes a reflection of how we deal with our unfulfilled wishes in trying to find out which of those wishes in childhood may still be realized today. Our childhood wish list, now as adults, remains unmet. We attempt to resolve this by engaging in our fantasies. The problem is that a fantasy can never meet a legitimate need.

In Luke 2:1, the Roman Emperor Augustus decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire at that time. Palestine, the nationality of Joseph and Mary, was under the Roman Empire. This meant that since they were subjected to a census, they had to go to their original home address. The purpose of the Emperor was to identify the scope of his military power and of tax collection. This historical event of national slavery of Palestine was the same event used by God to fulfill His promise of a Savior not only for Palestine, but for the world.

The two ironies recorded here is that the Roman Emperor Augustus (considered god by the Romans) asserted his power by counting people and collecting wealth. Yet, the true King and God of the World, Jesus Christ, was born as a child in the humblest circumstance, in a manger. God’s fulfillment of His kingdom plan is not by power, nor by might, but by the mystery of weakness.

The historical event of a census confirmed the slavery of a nation. But the same historical event was used by God to bring freedom to his people because God controls history. Jesus was born in the very town prophesied for his birth (Micah 5:2), even though his parents did not live there. Where does this historical event surrounding Christmas lead us? Silenced!

Yet, it is only in the silence of our hearts and the ironies of Christmas that we can hear the restlessness of our soul like Augustine who says, “My heart is restless until it rests in Thee, O Lord.”

# Meet Poncho and Jeanette



Christians' Haven is very pleased to introduce to you our newest partners in ministry in the Philippines. Poncho and Jeanette Faburada have been hired to be the Pastors of the College House. This part of our ministry is very exciting and very important to the ultimate return of our children to their culture as trained adults who will make a difference for Jesus.

The following is printed for you without editing. Pancho describes well his spiritual pilgrimage as well as his own experience on the streets. As English is not his first language some grammar will not be smooth but will communicate his heart very well.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I am Pancho Gargar Faburada. I was born in Palma Kibawe, Bukidnon last December 22, 1963. My father's name is Fortunato. He died when I was 22 years of age. My mother's name is Felicidad. She died when I was 8 years old. We are 9 in the family and I am the fifth child. During the time when my mother died my life became so miserable. One year after my mother's death my father found another woman and became my stepmother. They had four children after us. Since we are so many in the family my father was not able to send us all to school due to lack of financial support. My father decided that some of my siblings will live with our relatives for us to survive. For a while I was living with my father and stepmother but I can sense her unfair treatment compared to her children. Until they finally decided to leave all of us his children from his first wife and went to another place. I was then living with my grandparents from my mother's side. Because life was very hard, at the age of 14 I started to find ways that I will survive and get the things that I wanted. I met friends who had bad influence to me. Most of the time I lived outside the home. I learned then to do so many bad things, like taking drugs and taking things that were not mine. It was then that I was caught by an authority. I was put to jail. My father believed that when I was in prison I would change. But it became worst. Nobody trusted me anymore except my grandfather. Because I did another robbery in my town I decided to run away and stayed with my older brother in the city of Cagayan de Oro. I again met worst friends and get involved in pick pocketing.

I decided to visit my hometown but since I had past offenses, an authority brought me and was sentenced for 6 to 12 years imprisonment. I was under age during that time so I filed a probation under the DSWD, so I was only in prison for 4 months. Despite I was under probation I still continued to do pick pocketing to places where I went with my friends. Until the year 1983 when I received a threat because of the bad things I did. It was December 1984 when one of my friends shared to me the love of Jesus. We went to a Bible study and asked if it was true that God can still forgive me despite of all the wrong doings I did. I then accepted Jesus and continued to learn more of Him and gradually changed my life's perspective. There was hope and a chance to have a new life. A year after I received Jesus I enrolled into a short term bible school. Years passed and I worked in the church where I attended in the music ministry and as Sunday school teacher. 1986 I was employed at Del Monte Philippines as a company worker. I worked in that company for 11 years while doing God's work. I went other places to share the word of God and attend to seminars in the church. In the year 1995 of December I got married to the woman I love. After a month we decided to do a pioneering work in the place where we lived. After a year I was ordained to be the pastor of the church where I am pastoring now for 14 years. In 1996 my brother in law found a sponsor to finance my college education. I took up Bachelor of Science in Secondary education major in Guidance and counseling. I graduated my college degree at the age of 38. For a year I was doing three major things, working in Del Monte in the morning, going to school in the evening and doing my responsibilities in the church. The Lord has expanded our work through a preschool where my wife is working as the administrator.

Indeed God is faithful in His words, He uses ordinary people like me. A lot of things has changed.

It cost to lay down a life to set free all who have been in bondage and I'm one of those. Indeed His love is great to take me in His arm and be with the new family and that is God's family. Now I understand the real definition of life and the reason for living. God has a purpose for each and everyone's life. I have the joy of knowing that no matter what my past was, my present and my future always has a chance to become new because I believe God can do great things in my life.

## Making a Year-End Gift

"It's beginning to look alot like Christmas." Those words from a song extract multiple emotions from folks. There may well be the warm fuzzies of holiday cheer or the dread that we are way behind in shopping and other holiday preparations. There may even be the sadness of facing a holiday season without a loved one for the first time or the prospects of Christmas without income and the fading expectations of getting a job by year's end.

With all of that very well understood, let me remind you of the unfailing faithfulness of God. "Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:21-23)

Christians' Haven is asking for a special gift from you at this special time of the year so that our precious children can experience God's faithfulness through your generosity. Christians' Haven continues to be proud of wise stewardship practices and effective ministry in the disciple making ministry to the street children and orphans of the Philippines.

Your special year-end gift will go a long way to help us continue this dynamic ministry. Please pray about a special tax deductible gift to advance God's work to those yet unreached by the love and care of Christians' Haven. You may even want to send this gift as a memorial to a loved one in honor of a Christian servant. We would love to help you honor these special people.

To insure a tax deduction for 2010 please make sure your gift is postmarked by December 31st.



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for your  
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### *Three Girls Rescued!*

A walk through the back alleys of the fresh fish market in Illigan City is not like walking on scenic Fisherman's Warf in San Francisco. No tourists frequent this place. As a matter of fact, they would be discouraged from going near that place. The conditions are unclean, unsafe, and downright despicable. As bad as this place is, it is surrounded by worse situations including prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse, and the worst of poverty.



In the back portions of this hidden hell on earth is a ten by ten half-walled surround that is called home to a family. A single mom with many children lives in that cubical surrounded by the blight and abuse of the market area. That is where we found Chenelyn and Cherelyn Baricuatro. They are 12 and 13 years old respectively. They have never been to school due to the extreme poverty of the family. They are currently enrolled in first and second grade.

They join their older brother Cherwin who has been in our care since 2001 and is now a freshman in college living in our College House. We knew nothing about his family until we had to research Cherwin's birth documents. That is when we found his younger siblings and observed their great despair.

We also welcome Shastelle Antoinette Balajadia age 14 to our home. She is in her first year of high school. She was abandoned by her mother and was placed in foster care where she experienced physical and verbal abuse. She was continually threatened in that environment. She was very shy upon entering Christians' Haven but various activities within our campus soon changed that.

Please pray for them as each now begins her journey as a disciple of Jesus. We are also looking for sponsors for these precious girls. Please contact us at [office@christianshaven.com](mailto:office@christianshaven.com) or call 417.673.8641 if you are interested.

