

January 31, 2008

Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings from sunny Belize. This week we said goodbye to the rainy season and ushered in five days straight of beautiful sunshine. It's nice and warm too, but not yet hot. This is truly the best time of the year here seasonally.

The big news here is that HilaryMayhew (age 21) is living with us for 11 weeks. She is doing an internship in interpreting and Spanish with Goshen College. Hilary is hearing but signs well. She is helping in my classroom on Mondays and Fridays and interpreting for and tutoring deaf children in the Corozal district of Belize on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. It is wonderful to have her here and a good opportunity for her to combine her Spanish skills with her sign language skills. In the picture above Hilary is working with Kristel on her spelling words. Sulmi and Sair are in the background.



Girl's Night is the highlight of my week. We are slowly reading our way through Matthew. It's one setting where we truly dive into God's Word and wait on God to speak to us about it. Two weeks ago we read the story of Jesus calming the storm. I love the story and know it well, but this time the Spirit brought it home to me in a different way than I had thought about before. I'd always keyed into the "With Jesus in the Boat You can Smile in the Storm" idea. In fact my brain seems to have an automatic

"play" button and starts singing that song when I read the passage. BUT this time I saw something different. The disciples are in the boat, it's sinking and Jesus is snoozing. The disciples tell him, "Hey do something...we know you can save us." The thing that struck me is: That's not a bad confession. I would have done the same thing. Yet Jesus rebukes them saying their faith is small. What did they do wrong? The clue is in the next line when he says: "Why are you afraid?" Not only the girls, but I also worry about many things. It's silly and steals my peace. I worry about people I encounter who are suffering, I worry about relationships, I worry about our church and the "20-somethings" in our church who have relational issues...all this worrying prompts me to do something even though I hear the still small voice of God saying "Wait. I've got it under control." I'm trying to learn to discern when to wait on God and when to dive in and fixit. It's a SLOW learning curve.

Jesus Deaf Church is in a fluctuating period right now. Three of the young adults who were fighting before Christmas came back to church two weeks ago and...apologized for showing disrespect and said they wanted to follow God. God is working on their hearts. Yet at the same time one of our young deaf leaders is now attending the Jehovah's Witness worship. Yikes. I had a long meal/conversation with him and tried to find what attracts him to the JW. He said that it is primarily that they are training him to preach every other Sunday...to Deaf. Hmm... I'm trying not to worry and singing "With Jesus in the boat..." Please pray for him and all of the young adults in our church who are struggling with faith issues. Also pray that God gives me wisdom about how to transfer some ownership of the church to the young adults, when only three are baptized believers.



In the picture above Sherwin is sign/singing the song "Praise him when the sun goes down" with the word "serve" substituted.



Check out those toe socks! Sulmi and Kristel thought it was so funny to wear toe socks. My sister Jeanne's friend sent us a care package and in it was a TWISTER game and toe socks. The girls laughed and laughed as they slipped on the on the plastic surface. I must have



been laughing too hard to take a good picture... but you get the idea of what some of our evenings are like. I continue to thank God for the joy Sulmi and Kristel bring to my life and grateful for the opportunity to be a part-time parent to Sulmi.

Wishing you all the perfect peace that comes from resting in the faith and knowledge that God is in control.

With love,
Nancy