MANILA TO BAGUIO

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Category: Observations

We had to set off very early this morning to allow the driver to get to our destination and then drive home again before dark.Â The first part of the journey was uneventful, just a long drive along wide roads bordered by rice fields. I tried (and failed) to sleep most of the way.

After a couple of hours we pulled off the road into a car park and right next to a Starbucks, which seemed like a very good idea. I find it hard to get to grips with the way in which small towns in the Philippines have lots of Western fast food outlets - it's very different to Africa. Then again, I've never seen a sign like this on the door of a Starbucks in the UK.



The second half of the drive was spectacular as we climbed up into the mountains. I'll try and post a couple of photos when I can download them from my camera (the Starbucks one was taken with my phone). The hotel where our meeting is being held is spectacular - the swishest place I've ever been to stay by a long way. I hope I'm awake enough to enjoy it. As always on these occasions, it was encouraging to meet some good friends at journey's end.

One last thing: on the way here I read a few chapters of Mission under scrutiny by J. Andrew Kirk. I'll post a longer review at some point, but I thought this quote was well worth putting here.

> *... how well does it (the church) communicate with its context? Is the church reviewing the*

> *efficacy of its attempts to transmit the good news of Jesus Christ within its neighbourhood? How aware is it of the distance between the Gospel message and the beliefs and values of most citizens today. Has it really taken on board the fact that the vast majority of people living in Europe now are no longer lapsed Christian believers, or even the un-churched in the sense that belonging to the church would still be culturally appropriate? Neither Christian belief or moral values nor belonging to a faith community are remotely within their horizon. There is little or no residue of a common language that could form a bridge between the Jesus story and their own stories. The church often gives the impression that it is content to minister to an ever dwindling population. Christians have to learn how to make the unchanging message of salvation in Christ meaningful to generations preoccupied with other concerns. (p.95)*

In other words, how do we translate the Gospel into the language of post-Christendom Europe.