



SCOTT AND DEBBIE CHRISTIANSEN

February - April 2016

Dear Pastors and Praying Friends,

“. . . to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.” (Philippians 1:23) As many of you already know, my sweet wife Debbie was ushered into the presence of her Lord on March 22.



Debbie at Scott's 60th Birthday

Precious in the Sight of the Lord

In February, Debbie continued to weaken in body but continued to be strong in spirit. She was able to celebrate my 60th birthday on February 10. To the last week of her life, she continued to walk with God and to have a sweet spirit.

Our son Micah and his wife Abbie came to Dumaguete for another visit from March 3–18. They were an encouragement to us, and Micah was able to spend time saying goodbye to his mother. During this time Debbie was able to contact our other children by Skype, and it was a time where love and gratitude could be expressed for the last time this side of Heaven.



Memorial Service in Our Apartment

Debbie's death was the most peaceful one I have ever had the privilege to witness. God answered my prayer, and there was no struggling or pain at the end. I was able to lay by her side and hold her as I quietly sang hymns we loved and told her how thankful and proud I was to be married to her for 37 years. I was able to watch her smiling and peaceful face as she was gently ushered into Glory. It will always be a memory I will treasure, as the Lord took her unto Himself from the mission field. Truly, *"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."* (Psalm 116:15)

On March 31, our daughter-in-law Lacey had major open-heart surgery in Maine. The Lord was gracious to us all, and she is doing well in her recovery.

A Service at International Baptist Church of Dumaguete

Following Filipino traditions, Debbie's casket was placed in our apartment, and three evenings of visitation were held. Our college girls did a great job of helping and decorating for the memorials.

On April 5, our church had its first funeral since it was founded in January of 2011. Dr. Mark Bosje of FBMI flew in from the U.S. to be present. Our whole team and the Bible college students did everything to make the service a time of prayerful reflection on Debbie's faithful life and praise to our wonderful Saviour. Pastor DeMoville wrote a beautiful poem to honor my wife and preached a comforting message. Dr. Bosje conveyed the love and prayers of those in the States and honored her many years of service for Christ. Our college students sang as a choir, and special music was sung by three of the Lawrenson children. I had the honor of showing a video made by Micah and me to depict her life, and I delivered the eulogy. *"Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."* (Proverbs 31:28)



A Stateside Service



Scott Gives Eulogy at Memory Lane Service in Crown Point

It took a solid three weeks of work and several divine interventions to work out the details to transport my wife's mortal remains back to the United States. On April 22, another service was held for Debbie at Memory Lane Memorial Park in Crown Point, Indiana.

Our family was touched by the many expressions and acts of love and kindness from First Baptist Church of Hammond and friends who traveled many hours to be with us. Pastor John Wilkerson took extra time to encourage and comfort me. His message and the way he conducted the service was a blessing to our family. Dr. Bosje again was very kind as he praised Debbie's faithful service as a missionary. Dr. Zane Abberger read Debbie's poem and reflected on the long friendship he and his wife Elaine shared with us.

We draped Debbie's coffin with a Christian flag made in the Philippines, and she was carried to the graveside by our five sons and Mike, our son-in-law. The graveside service was conducted by Pastor Wilkerson as our young men stood at attention and the Christian flag was folded and presented to me. It was a fitting service to say farewell to Debbie as a loving wife, dedicated mother, and faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Short Furlough

Since I have not been to the States in 4½ years, I am taking two months to rest, visit family members, and report to a few of my supporting churches. I will be returning to Dumaguete on June 17 and look forward to continuing the work at our Bible college and the other ministries of our church.

The Work Continues

Debbie wanted me to keep serving the Lord even as she was confined to bed in our apartment. I was able to teach college classes, attend most services, and to go soul winning due to the help of Ritchelle, our Filipina caregiver.

On a Thursday night in February, I was able to take a group of soul winners to a local park. While there, I was able to stop and witness to a group of high school students. Ten of them trusted in Christ as their personal Saviour!

The Saturday after Debbie died, I went soul winning and was able to lead a man to Christ who had been in the same bed in his home for five years. It was only after I shared that my wife had gone to Heaven that week after spending most of a year in bed that his heart softened and opened up to the Saviour. Later I was able to go back to give him the mattress Debbie had used and was able to led his 16-year-old son to Christ as well.

When I left for the States in April, our church had already seen 2,887 saved and 129 baptized in 2016. The week after I left, IBC had their summer break Vacation Bible School outreach. Our college students and church members conducted 25 neighborhood meetings every day for 4 days and saw 803 different children attend and 482 saved. On the next Sunday, in spite of a power outage, over 300 attended the morning service; and 11 were baptized.



Debbie's Coffin Draped With a Christian Flag Made in the Philippines

Thank you to so many of you who prayed, encouraged, and gave to my wife and me during this last year. Debbie has now laid aside all her pain and burdens and is with Christ, which is "far better." My heart is grieving now, and I know that life will never be the same for me again as I continue life without her. But God's grace has been very real, and I know that Debbie would want me to be faithful to the end, just as she was. I have been blessed!

May her life be a challenge and encouragement for you to be faithful to the Lord in your part of God's harvest field.

Thankful for your prayers and support,

Scott Christiansen

"Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." - Proverbs 31:28

She Is Praised

Who is this woman for whom the children arise,
And what deeds hath she done to receive such a prize?
Have you heard the love they have so often expressed,
As though with every breath, they have called her blessed?

Not only have they, but another has risen,
He has not been shy with the praise he has given.
What work hath she done, and by what doth she amaze
That so many would offer for her so much praise?

She's a virtuous kind, not flashy nor garish;
With modesty she has found right things to cherish.
Some may think her weak for the path she has chosen,
Yet her great strength lies in her selfless devotion.

She's stood by her husband, a most faithful friend,
Someone upon whom he could most surely depend.
Both frugal and wise, she has caused him no worry,
Yet patient and kind through life's oft-trying journey.

Sometimes she was mother, sometimes she was teacher;
For others she was just the wife of the preacher.
Not in the limelight, but in the shadows she stayed;
One thing she did well was that for others she prayed.

And when cancer came calling to claim her dear life,
Her concern was for him, who would be without wife.
With grace and with much courage that battle seemed won,
And then a new chapter of their lives had begun.

By all accounts, she'd served her husband and her Lord.
You might even say, she gave all one should afford.
Yet in a distant land was a work for them both,
For their lives would be spent helping others see growth.

Now her life is cut short of the threescore and ten,
Yet in others it remains, as ink to paper from pen.
An indelible mark has been made from her life;
Though in body she's gone, her work doth survive.

So who is this woman that is honored and praised?
Why the fanfare, and why are so many amazed?
She has been a wife, a mother, and a dear friend,
Who has been faithful and true, clear through to the end.

- Pastor Randy DeMerville

In Loving Memory

Debbie Kay Christiansen
August 30, 1956 - March 22, 2016



All the children were at the U.S. service.



Scott's parents



Family members present for the U.S. service



Debbie's Bible on display



Pastor Wilkerson leading the pallbearers



Graveside service led by Pastor Wilkerson