

March 2017

Dear Praying Friends,

Psalm 90:17 ends with a powerful statement: “. . . yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.” As we near the end of our second round of deputation, that verse summarizes my feelings perfectly. For nearly two years, we have been amazed time and time again by God’s incredible blessings on our deputation. In the two months since our last prayer letter, we’ve had eight new churches begin supporting us! In addition, starting in the month of January, one of our faithful supporting churches decided to double their regular support. These combined factors have pushed our support level up to 88%! However, as our deputation begins to wind down, there is an incredible amount of work that must be done in preparation for our departure and future ministry. Of course, we have been preparing for our return ever since we left the field in May of 2015, but now the work begins in earnest!

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At the end of January, I made my last calls and filled up the remainder of our schedule. HALLELUJAH! (Pardon my outburst, but as I wrote that last sentence, I suddenly felt an overwhelming urge to break out in a stirring rendition of the “Hallelujah Chorus”!) With phoning in the rearview mirror, Ruth and I are working feverishly to complete a multiplicity of projects, some of which we have been working on for many, many months; and I’ve been very encouraged by the progress God has allowed us to make.

As we’ve said in previous letters, we believe that God is leading us to plant a church in Dapitan City on the island of Mindanao. We’ve chosen the name Truth Baptist Church (TBC). We have already written and designed TBC Gospel tracts in Cebuano and English. We are currently working on finishing our own hymnbook, made up entirely of songs in the public domain. (Getting hymnals in the Philippines can be challenging, as well as expensive. This way we can print them ourselves without worrying about copyright infringements.) We have also received permission from Pastor John Wilkerson to translate his discipleship lessons. We are working right now with a very capable young lady in the Philippines. She is doing the actual translating, and I will be laying the booklets out in a parallel English/Cebuano format. In addition to all that, I need to finish laying out our ministry financial structures, and I am currently in the middle of building the church database we will use to follow up on visitors and track our statistics. Oh, I almost forgot, somewhere in the midst of all our ministry preparation work, we need to finish packing and shipping all our personal belongings and then get ready to move to the other side of the world! ☺ The life of a missionary family is never boring!

I’m not telling you all these things to complain. On the contrary, I love my work! I am happiest when I am up to my eyeballs in projects. I am having the time of my life trying to get all the projects done before we leave. However, the more we work, the more I become aware of my incredible need for God’s blessing on our efforts. My prayer, as we draw closer to the time of our departure, is that God would establish the work of our hands, and I would ask that you would also pray to that end. We’ve seen God’s provision on the deputation trail; now we desperately need His power as we prepare for the work.

I have one last prayer request that I would like to mention in closing. As I mentioned in my last letter, I will be taking a two-week trip to the Philippines at the end of March. To be specific, I will be flying out on March 28 and returning to the States on April 12. The primary purpose of this trip is to find a house in Dapitan City. Lord willing, we will be moving to the Philippines this coming July, and it would be a tremendous blessing if we already had a house lined up and ready for our arrival. Finding a house in Dapitan can be a real challenge, but I am asking God to do something special and allow me to quickly find a house that will meet our needs. Please join me in my prayer that God would bless this trip in a special way. I know that God has a place for us, but He has to help me find it. Thank you for your faithful prayers and support. We are almost home!

### Dividends on Your Investment

God has really blessed our soul winning over the last couple of months. Since our last letter, God has allowed Ruth and me to lead 15 precious souls to Jesus Christ. I wish I could tell you every story, but space and time will only permit one.

It was about 5:40 p.m. on Sunday, February 28. I was taking a walk before the evening service, trying to prepare my heart for the message that I would be delivering in just a few minutes. As I walked along the back of the property, the pastor saw me and thoughtfully offered to let me inside an empty building where I would have some privacy. I thanked him and stepped inside the building. As I walked and prayed, I heard the sounds of someone dribbling and shooting a basketball outside. I finished my walk and stepped outside. I walked around the corner to the basketball court and saw a young teenage boy dribbling and shooting by himself. I walked over to him and shook his hand. Because he was playing on the church’s court, I assumed that he was a church member, but I quickly learned that he was not. His name was Joseph, and he was 13 years old. Once I realized that he wasn’t a church member there, I reached in my pocket for a tract. As I handed it to him, I said, “This has the best news I ever heard: how you can know you’re on your way to Heaven. You’d like to know that, wouldn’t you?” He nodded his head, so I asked him, “Do you think you’re gonna make it?” This time he lowered his eyes and shook his head. When I asked him why he didn’t think he would go to Heaven, he replied that he had done many bad things. I was short on time, but I liked his answer, so I pushed on. “So where do you think people go who do a lot of bad things?” I asked. He shrugged despondently and said in a hopeless voice, “Hell.” I looked at my phone, I had 15 minutes until church. I usually like to take at least 25-30 minutes when I present the Gospel, but I couldn’t just walk away and leave the poor kid. He already knew half of the Romans Road, and he was practically begging for somebody to tell him the rest of the story! I opened my Bible, and as quickly as I could, I showed him that all his sins had already been paid for, and he didn’t have to pay! At 5:58p.m., Joseph bowed his head and put his trust in Jesus Christ! I took one more minute to teach him the basics of eternal security and then turned and sprinted towards the auditorium. There’s never a dull moment on the deputation trail, and I love it! ☺

Yours for souls,

  
Mike Morrissey

Contact Information  
Email: [mikemorrissey@fbmi.org](mailto:mikemorrissey@fbmi.org)  
Web: [fbmi.org/missionary/morrissey](http://fbmi.org/missionary/morrissey)

**Missionaries to the Philippines**

*“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.” 1 Corinthians 16:9*

