

November 2017

Dear Praying Friends,

I'd like to start this letter by saying that I still love being a missionary! I cannot imagine any other life. In the less than four months since our arrival, we have successfully settled into our apartment, and Dapitan City has become home. Certainly there have been times of struggle and difficulty. There were the three times that the area directly above our bookshelves transformed into a Filipino "Niagara Falls" due to a problem in the exterior wall of our apartment! Okay, so it wasn't really that bad. However, I think it would be perfectly fair to call it "Niagara Trickles." Just keep in mind that books don't like trickles either!

In all seriousness, we have already gone through some difficult times, but when you are in a battle against evil, that's just to be expected—no matter which side of the world you happen to live on. However, even in the struggles, God's hand of grace and blessing has been so incredibly obvious! Allow me to share a brief overview.

A Young but Growing Church

In some ways, it is hard to believe that Truth Baptist Church of Dapitan will be three months old in just a few days. What God has done in these early days of our ministry has been nothing short of amazing! We are currently averaging in the low- to mid-thirties in attendance in all three of our weekly services, and we just recently launched our Sunday morning Junior Church! Already God has given us a core group of people who, along with our staff, have bought into the

vision and have made Truth Baptist Church their church. I am continuously amazed by their responsiveness and their desire to grow in their newfound faith.

Zealous, Young Soul Winners

As much as I enjoy our church services, I must say that my favorite weekly events are the Saturday morning and Tuesday evening soul-winning times. Every week I go

home after soul winning, encouraged and praising God for the young soul winners whom He is allowing us to train. Over the last two months since our last prayer letter, we have averaged 18 different people out soul winning every week! Since our arrival in Dapitan, our members (non-staff) have led a total of 205 souls to Jesus Christ! GOD IS GOOD!



TBC Saturday Soul Winning

It's amazing to think that most of these soul winners have been saved 3½ months or less!

Dividends on Your Investment

I have been repeatedly amazed by God's creativity in how He blesses us! It seems that He always brings us people in such a way that only He can get the credit. The following story is just one of many that I could share from our 12 weeks of ministry in Dapitan.

Shortly after we started TBC, I was taking Beth for a ride around Dapitan on my motorcycle when I found myself riding down a street near the state university. I wasn't soul winning. I was just spending some time with my daughter. As I rode past a group of college students in front of a large boarding house, one of them called out "Hey, Joe!" I hear those words EVERYWHERE I go. The nickname "Joe" is a throwback to the "GI Joe" of World War II, and it is still the Filipinos' favorite nickname for Americans. I wasn't in a hurry at that particular moment, so I wheeled my bike around and drove back to the boarding house. I gave all of them tracts and invited them to church. Three of them looked at each other, nodded in agreement, then promised that they would attend our next Bible study. Their names were Dexter, Dennis, and David. As it turned out, all three of them were already saved but had gotten away from the Lord since moving to Dapitan. To my surprise, all three of them showed up the following Wednesday evening with two of their friends! Over the next few weeks, Dexter, Dennis, and David (more commonly known at our church as "3-D") brought multiple visitors to church from their boarding house, all of whom eventually trusted Christ!

Dexter and David have now returned to their respective hometowns, but Dennis is still with us. I have been thrilled to watch him grow. He is now faithful to all the services and regularly brings people with him. He is developing into a faithful, rock-solid, soul-winning church member; and to think it all started with "Hey, Joe!" OUR GOD IS AWESOME!

Prayer Requests

Thank you for your prayers. With each passing day, I become increasingly aware of my absolute dependence on God for success in even the smallest of areas. Please keep the following requests in mind:

- That God would bless Ruth's and my efforts to increase our proficiency in the Visayan language (I have learned that being able to converse in Visayan is very different than preaching in Visayan three times a week!)
- That God would give me wisdom as I seek to lead my family and ministry
- That our young converts would continue to grow and become faithful
- That God would break the chains of Catholicism that bind so many people of Dapitan City (Though God is clearly blessing our efforts, Dapitan is still very much a Catholic stronghold.)

Yours for souls,

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Missionaries to the Philippines

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



Visayan Glossary

One big difference between Dumaguete and Dapitan is how many people speak little or no English. When a convert signs up to begin our church discipleship program, they are given their choice of an English or Visayan Bible. I shipped over 200 English Bibles from the States, fully expecting that most of our converts would prefer English. Boy, was I in for a surprise! Of the 50 to 60 Bibles that we've given away since starting our church, over 80% have been Visayan. Praise the Lord! We have a very accurate translation of the Bible in Visayan, the King James equivalent in the Visayan language. Unfortunately, many of the words used in the translation are what Visayan speakers call "deep Visayan." Just like there are words in the King James Bible that are not as commonly used in daily conversation, there are a lot more words like that in the Visayan Bible. Needless to say, I don't believe in "dumbing down the Bible," so we are working to educate our people. Two or three weeks into our ministry, my staff members began reading through the books of Psalms, Proverbs, and the Gospel of John. I instructed them to list every unfamiliar word they come across. From those three books alone, we had a total of over 250 words that need to be defined. Lord willing, we will print the first edition of *Heart Language Glossary for the Visayan Bible* sometime in the next few weeks. I believe that it will be a tremendous blessing to our young converts who have begun reading their Bibles.

I have found that being able to converse in Visayan is very different from preaching three times a week in Visayan. Please pray that God would bless my efforts to learn Visayan more fully.