

May 2019

Dear Praying Friends,

No matter how long I live in the Philippines, the temperatures in May catch me off guard every single year. With more than half of the hot season behind us and the hottest days yet to come, we are officially looking forward to the rainy season and the cooler temperatures that it will bring. Don't misunderstand me—I am not complaining. When I see the temperatures that many of you are still "enjoying" there in the States, I am perfectly happy to be "suffering for Jesus" on a beautiful tropical island where the temperature rarely drops below 70 degrees! ☺

In the meantime, God continues to bless our efforts. We are currently averaging a little over 50 in attendance on Sunday mornings and between 30 and 40 on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. Many of our people are learning to tithe, and our soul winners continue to faithfully share the Gospel. Last week, we had 22 different people out soul winning and a total of 61 souls saved! I love it!

So many things have happened in the last couple of months that I would love to tell you about, but I feel compelled to focus on a unique door of opportunity that I believe God is opening for us.

Property for Sale

We started the Truth Baptist Church of Dapitan on Sunday, August 20, 2017, which means that we are still over 3 months from our second anniversary. We spent our first 12 months as a church in a garage-like area located under our apartment. Then God miraculously arranged for us to move to our current location, giving us a larger building while simultaneously decreasing our rent. As a pastor, I don't like the word "decreasing" except when it is referring to our expenses. In that case, it is a wonderful word! ☺

Since moving to our current location, I have had no complaints. It has been a great building for us, yet it seems that God may be preparing to move us again—this time permanently. There are still many details that God needs to work out, but we may have an opportunity to purchase a piece of property about half a kilometer from our current location. The property is a little less than 600 square meters (6,458 square feet) and surrounded by several empty lots, giving us plenty of room to grow in the future. However, here is what makes this property unique: it was formerly a Kingdom Hall, so it already has a church building. There is also a decent-sized house out back that, once remodeled, would function perfectly as a Junior Church. Best of all, the price is very reasonable for a property within Dapitan proper. Without breaking down the numbers, let me give you some context: there are multiple *empty* lots in Dapitan that are selling for twice as much or more. The former Kingdom Hall has been sitting there empty for over two years because nobody is interested in buying a church building. I think that God has been saving it for us! Monday, I spoke to the property representative on the phone, and it appears, at least right now, that they would be open to the possibility of a lease-to-buy contract. If it is indeed God's will to give us that property, we could be ready to move by our second anniversary!

I would ask that you would pray for us during this time. I really need God's wisdom and guidance. I told our church last Sunday that if this isn't God's will for us, I don't want to do it. However, if it is God's will, I don't want to miss the opportunity! Thank you so much for your prayers, support, and friendship.

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

Dividends on Your Investment

A little over a year ago, while visiting the Dapitan City Jail, I met an American man named Gary Junker. He is in his fifties, a former Army Ranger who was falsely accused and is now in the fourth year of his trial. I don't have time to tell all of Gary's story, but during his time in jail, God has changed his life. Someone gave him a Bible a few months before I met him, and he started reading it. He may have been saved before, but in jail he got the assurance of his salvation and has developed into an avid student of the Scriptures. His is a unique situation: he is studying God's Word with very limited outside instruction. With just his Bible and a few books, he is unknowingly developing into an independent, fundamental Baptist! As one man put it, "The Bible makes us Baptist!" It has been so much fun to watch him grow.

A couple of weeks ago, I went to visit Gary, and he introduced me to another prisoner who had been asking questions about salvation. The man's name is Runolfo, but everyone just calls him Cap. Because Gary speaks very little Visayan, he couldn't answer Cap's questions, so he introduced him to me. I have never in my life witnessed to a man who was more ready to be saved. When we came to the sinner's prayer, Cap began to pray, then just broke down and wept. It was a very moving time. I gave Cap a Visayan Bible, and he immediately started reading it.

The following week, I went back to visit Gary again. While we were talking, I saw Cap walk out of the cellblock and sit down with a woman in the visitor's area. The woman turned out to be his wife. I walked over, introduced myself, and learned her name is Lilybeth. Sensitive to our limited time, I quickly turned the conversation to the Gospel. Cap was SO excited! As I shared the Gospel with Lilybeth, Cap repeatedly interrupted to answer the questions I was posing to his wife. When I got Romans 6:23 and began explaining that eternal life is a gift from God, Cap couldn't contain himself any longer. He jumped into the conversation and excitedly said in Visayan, "Yes, and if you believe in Jesus, He'll save you!" Apparently, I was taking too long to get to the conclusion. ☺ I regained control of the conversation and finished my Gospel presentation. A few minutes later and with tears in his eyes, Cap got to watch his wife put her faith and trust in Jesus Christ!

I don't know anything about Cap's case, but I would ask you to pray for him. I would also ask you to pray for Gary, that the false accusers would be exposed and that justice would be done.

