

September 2019

Dear Praying Friends,

Allow me to begin by quoting a verse from a well-known Bible story. *"And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine."* (I Samuel 17:48) When I was in sixth grade, a friend of mine began teaching me the game of chess. After teaching me the basic movements of all the pieces, he gave me a simple but very important piece of strategy advice. He said, "Always remember, the best defense is a good offense. When you start playing defense, you're in trouble. **STAY ON THE ATTACK!**" Someone else said it this way, "Defense may win battles, but offense wins wars." When David faced Goliath, he didn't wait for Goliath to come to him. He **RAN** toward the enemy! When he saw the battle coming, he **ATTACKED!** We could put it this way: David was not a "Hold the Fort" Christian. He was an "Onward Christian Soldiers" Christian! He took the battle to the enemy!

This letter is going to be very transparent: the last couple of months have been among the most difficult we have ever experienced since our arrival in Dapitan a little over two years ago. I can hardly think of a family unit represented in our church that has not come under direct and intense Satanic attack during the last two months. Our church has been dealt one stunning blow after another, and to be painfully honest, we staggered into the month of September like a bloodied boxer returning to his corner at the end of the round. To be sure, we've landed a few punches in the last couple of months. We've seen a lot of souls saved, and God has given us some great victories, but in most cases, they have felt like the British victory at Bunker Hill or the Japanese victory at Wake Island: they have come with a very high price tag. With the turning of the calendar page, I wish I could say that the tide has turned and God has given us the victory, but that is simply not the case. We are still very much in the middle of the battle, and we continue to need your prayers during this time.

A few days ago on a Wednesday afternoon, I found myself spiritually disoriented and asking God, "What in the world should I do? Where should I put my energy? What fire should I try to put out first? Should I go visit people, or should I stay here and spend some extra time in prayer? God, I just don't know what to do." At that moment, God gave me the answer: **ATTACK! TAKE THE BATTLE TO THE ENEMY!** For a while now, I've been toying with three different ideas for our ministry. I was considering launching a program designed to help get our people excited about reading the Bible, I was considering having a special push to raise money for our future church property, and I was considering launching a new soul-winning program specifically designed to help train our men to be soul winners. I wasn't sure which idea I should launch first, so this past Wednesday, I decided to launch **ALL THREE.** ☺ By God's grace, we are taking the battle to the enemy! Thank you for your faithful prayers, support, and friendship.

Dividends on Your Investment

Shakina Bandejon got saved and started attending our church in February of 2018. At the time, she was 12 years old and could best have been described as a bundle of energy with a flare for the dramatic. There is never a dull moment when Shakina is around!

Shortly after Shakina got saved, I went to her house to try to witness to her parents. Her father Ricardo was not interested and soon walked away. Her mother Marites, on the other hand, was very interested but also very confused by the Catholic doctrine that had been systematically pounded into her since childhood. To make a long story short, her mother did not get saved that day, but a few weeks later, one of our teenage girls got to lead her to Christ. Unfortunately, I never got another opportunity to witness to Ricardo . . . until July 17 of this year, that is.

In the year and half that Shakina has attended our church, her parents have seen the difference in her life, and it has clearly had an effect on them. On July 17, I was driving through Shakina's neighborhood a little after 9:00 p.m. when I saw Ricardo sitting by himself in front of his neighbor's house. I was tired and ready to go home, but the Holy Spirit immediately impressed upon me to try to witness to him. I stopped my bike and struck up a conversation. He invited me to come over and sit with him, and I happily agreed. When I sat down, I realized that he wasn't really alone; his neighbor, who turned out to be his brother-in-law, was sitting just out of sight around the corner of the porch area. After a few minutes of small talk, I turned the conversation to the Gospel and was thrilled to discover that Ricardo's attitude had changed dramatically since the first time I tried to witness to him over a year before. He and his brother-in-law invited me to go inside the house, where I had the privilege of leading both of them to Christ! Shakina was **SO EXCITED!** She told me later, "Now only my older sister Marlin needs to be saved."

The following Saturday, I decided to try to visit Marlin during Saturday soul winning. When I arrived at their house, she was sitting outside by herself on her neighbor's porch. When I first approached her, she acted hard, but I was soon able to bypass her shell and began telling her about Jesus. After a few minutes, she sweetly trusted Christ! After she got saved, I began telling her how her father had just been saved four days before. She interrupted me and said, "Oh, I know." I looked at her in bewilderment and asked, "How do you know that? Did he tell you?" She replied, "Mama and I were listening from the other side of the wall." Marlin had listened to the entire Gospel message when I shared it with her father. She was just waiting for somebody to share it with her. That just goes to show that you never know what God is doing in the background!

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