

January 2020

Dear Praying Friends,

The year 2020 is upon us! It is incredible to think that it has been nearly 2½ years since our arrival in Dapitan! It seems like it was just last week we were on deputation, wondering if we'd ever get back to the field. So much has happened since then. So much has changed! Our kids look so much older now . . . and so does their dad. I, however, prefer to think of it as "looking more mature." I mean, who needs hair anyway?! My wife Ruth, on the other hand, doesn't look a day older. She might even look a little bit younger. 😊 (I have to say that. She proofreads all my letters.) Those of you who know our kids would be amazed by how much they have changed since we returned to the field. Beth is now 9, Michael is 7, and AJ is 3. When we first arrived in the Philippines, Ruth and I would speak Visayan when we didn't want Beth and Michael to understand. Now they are teaching us words! AJ, who was not yet talking when we left the States, is now speaking in complete and coherent sentences—in two languages! A few weeks ago while we were eating supper, Ruth was teasing Beth by pretending to not understand a certain Visayan word Beth was using. After a couple minutes of banter, three-year-old AJ decided to help his "confused" mother. He leaned over, gently patted her on the arm, and said softly, "It means 'chair,' Mommy." I suspect that won't be the last time our "Filipino" child corrects our Visayan. 😊

Looking back over the last two months, I once again find myself struggling to decide what to include in this letter. The last two months have been among the most encouraging of all our time here in Dapitan! Let me give you some of the highlights.

Friends and Family Sunday

November 17 was Friends and Family Sunday at Truth Baptist Church. God gave us a great day, with many visitors and salvations and a record attendance of 136!

Christmas Program

On December 13, we put on our Second Annual Christmas Program entitled, "What Child is This?" The entire script and most of the songs were in Visayan. Our young people did a great job, and God really blessed. We had 82 in attendance, with many visitors and salvations!

A New Sunday School Teacher

I am once again running out of space, so let me just share one more exciting piece of news. On January 19, Jodie de Guzman will replace my wife as the children's Sunday school teacher at Truth Baptist Church. I led Jodie to Christ in March of 2018. He is the father of Sofia de Guzman, whom many of you may remember. She is the little girl with the heart defect, whom I have asked prayer for in the past. Jodie will be the first person reached through our ministry to become a Sunday school teacher! Hopefully, he will be the first of many. Thank you for your prayers, friendship, and faithful support.

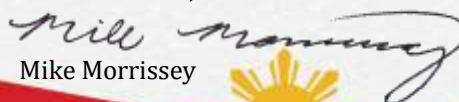
Dividends on Your Investment

Several months ago, God opened up an opportunity for me to take over a ministry at our local jail here in Dapitan. (The ministry was previously run by a Baptist church from a nearby city.) I get to preach to the prisoners every Wednesday morning, and God has really blessed. It was there at the jail that I met Francis Hadjirul, better known as Hadji. Hadji was a self-proclaimed Muslim, charged with second-degree murder. He was always friendly but was not at all interested in the Gospel. In mid-November, Hadji was found guilty and sentenced to 14-17 years in prison. The next Friday, HE WAS IN MY BIBLE STUDY! God had gotten his attention! He had been scheduled to ship out sometime in January, and he was scared. He sat in that first Bible study, and I could see the conviction in his eyes, but he wasn't ready yet. He came back the next week and the next. After the second or third Bible study, I went to the jail on a Friday to try to talk to him one on one. He and I sat down in the visiting area, and I began sharing the Gospel with him. He was finally ready to listen! As I neared the end of my Gospel presentation, I said in Visayan, "Hadji, do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" He thought about it for 10 to 15 seconds, then slowly nodded his head and said, "Yes, I do." At that moment, the jail bell rang, signifying the end of visitation. HE WAS SO CLOSE, but my time was up! As he stood up to go back to his cell, I promised to come back to see him again soon.

We were incredibly busy the next week preparing for our Friday evening Christmas program. I was able to preach in the jail on Wednesday, but I didn't have an opportunity to talk to Hadji.

The Wednesday after our Christmas program, I took my family, my staff, and a group of our young people to the jail to put on a condensed version of the Christmas program. We had a great turnout, with 35 prisoners in attendance. I had planned on preaching the same message at the jail that I had preached at the Christmas program the week before, but on Tuesday night, God changed my plan and gave me a brand-new message. Believe it or not, my text verse at the jail that morning was Revelation 21:8. I may very well be the only Baptist pastor to preach on Hell at a Christmas program! After our mini-Christmas program, I stood up and preached for 45 minutes on who will go to Hell. I then took them to I Corinthians 6:11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed . . ." I said, "I'm not asking you today if you're a sinner. I'm asking if you've been cleansed." At the invitation time, I had the prisoners stand and then brought my soul winners up to the front. I then invited anyone who wanted to be saved to step out and come to the front. Hadji was the first one to step out! In short order, 12 other prisoners followed his lead, giving us a total of 13 salvations! OUR GOD IS AWESOME!

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

