

March 2020

Dear Praying Friends,

I cannot remember the last time I was as excited as I am right now! I am writing this letter on March 10, 2020, from a hotel room in Cebu City, where I am awaiting the arrival of two of the most influential men in my life, my father and my pastor, Brother Steve Hobbins. Humanly speaking, I can't think of two other men who had a greater impact on my life during my developmental years. My father developed my character and work ethic, and Pastor Hobbins, who was one of our church youth directors at the time, kept me on track when I was an unstable, insecure teenager. They are scheduled to arrive at 10:25 tonight; and, Lord willing, we will be flying to Dapitan City tomorrow afternoon in time to be a part of our midweek service. I feel like a little boy on Christmas Eve; two of my heroes are coming to visit my little ministry in Dapitan City, and I can hardly wait! This coming Sunday, March 15, will be our Charter Service at Truth Baptist Church of Dapitan. Pastor Hobbins will be our guest speaker, and I will get to sing with my dad. I don't tend to be an emotional kind of a person, but if I make it through this Sunday without crying, it will be a miracle. Please be in prayer for our special day. As of right now, it looks like about 35-40 of our faithful people will join us this Sunday in becoming charter members of Truth Baptist Church. God truly has been very good to us!

Our First Sunday School Program

The last couple of months have been busy as usual. Last Sunday, we concluded our first official Sunday school program. We took a demolition-derby theme and called the program "Sunday School Smash." Each week in the evening service, a member of each class was chosen to represent their team on the platform. The winning class received ice cream after the service, and the representatives of the losing classes had to have their picture taken wearing a neck brace, symbolizing their defeat in the demolition derby.

A Preacher Boys' Soul-Winning Conference

Every Saturday night after music practice, we have P&P Zone, a program just for our young men, where I teach them about preaching, song leading, and how to lead a church service. On Friday evening, March 6, we invited our whole church to come to our first P&P Zone "Conference." Needless to say, it wasn't a real conference, but it gave our young men an opportunity to put into practice what they've been learning on Saturday nights. They ran the entire service: the song leading, the opening and closing prayers, and, of course, the preaching. All I had to do was introduce each preacher. It was a really good evening for our whole church. Our adults really enjoyed it, and the young men did a great job. I look forward to the day when we have dozens of preacher boys training to make a difference all over our area. Thank you for your prayers and faithful support. God is truly doing something in our little church in Dapitan City.

Dividends on Your Investment

On Friday afternoon, January 17, I took my daughter Beth for a ride on the motorcycle. I was trying to find a good place to take our soul winners the following day. To properly understand this story, you need to understand that "Downtown" Dapitan City is completely surrounded by water. On one side is the ocean, and the remaining three sides are surrounded by rivers and fishponds. About a 5- to 7-minutes' drive from our church is a strip of land on the other side of a river that is completely inaccessible by car or motorcycle. Though it is technically not an island, there are no roads to that area. On that little strip of mud stand about 20 houses. For months, I had looked across the river and wished that I could take my soul winners to that seemingly God-forsaken little neighborhood.

This particular day, I decided to see if I could find a way across the river. When Beth and I reached the river, there were several small boats on the bank, but their owners were nowhere to be seen. We walked a little way up the riverbank, looking for someone who could help us, and then a little boy appeared on the opposite side. He climbed in a tiny little boat with a balancing arm on the side and began paddling towards us. It was then I realized that he was pulling another tiny boat behind him. When he got within earshot, he asked me if we wanted to cross the river. I looked at him skeptically and asked his age. I was not prepared for his answer. "Seven," he replied calmly. I looked at Beth, then back at him. I asked, "Do you think you can pull us across?" He was confident, but Beth was not. She was terrified. The boy dragged the second boat up the bank, and Beth and I got in and sat down. The boat could not have been more than 16 inches wide, but we were committed. We had entrusted our lives to a barefoot, seven-year-old boy.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, we reached the other side, where we were met by a group of very friendly people. As we were passing out some tracts, we met a man named Edwin and his wife Mercy. I wasn't able to witness to them at the time, but Edwin offered to take us home on his bamboo raft. We happily agreed, remembering all too well the "adventures" of our first crossing. Edwin's raft was quite large, so I asked him if he would be willing to help me get my soul winners across on Saturday. He agreed, and the next day, I, along with about 15 of our soul winners, rode the raft across the river. In the next hour and a half, 21 people from that muddy little village put their trust in Jesus Christ and were saved, including Edwin and Mercy! I had the privilege of sharing the Gospel with both of them. After they got saved, Edwin began to cry, and he said to me in Visayan, "Thank you for coming to share God's Word with us. No other religion has ever come here to teach us God's Word."

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