



THE BLUSTS

EMPIRE BAPTIST TEMPLE • PASTOR ERICH P. McCANDLESS, PHD
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Dear Pastor and Brethren,

March-April 2026 Prayer, Praise & Progress Report

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Perla had pneumonia (both lungs), allergic to pharmaceuticals, took nutritional products, fully recovered by end of March.

Bible-Way Baptist Church, Cubao, Quezon City celebrated its 27th Church Anniversary being organized in my ministry by EBT on March 1, 2020. Two God called evangelistic faithful trained men ready to start a church plant in the near future. Please feel free to communicate with Pastor Bryan Javier <bryjavier030120@gmail.com>

The gospel of Christ has been preached to thousands, and by God’s grace, hundreds of poor people have responded, their municipalities and villages spread throughout the mountain province of Bukidnon the past three years. We have victories and we also have unique battles. To you all who invest so sacrificially in our ministry, I endeavor to be transparent and give as much specific ministry details as possible. I’m thankful that even with our obvious deficiencies, the Lord has used us and continues to use us to reach these wonderful people in Bukidnon.

Malaybalay City mission church: Two people got saved on Sunday January 11: 1. Ariane (14) Rodrigo. Attending for 5 years. **2. Perla’s cousin’s step daughter Rose Shane (12) Yuboc.** Her father died during Covid. Garlito (31) Fundamental Bible church (Baptist-GARBC) Barangay Sumpung (near our house), his wife and their two children were invited by a member to attend our church meetings. While hearing the preaching, Garlito stood and cried out “I found the truth.” He said he’s dissatisfied with Baptist (GARBC) churches because of wickedness: adultery/mistress, fornication, homosexuals, covetous, drunkards, gossip, strife, etc... He believed baptism saved. **Two week later on Sunday March 1, Garlito got saved** (repented of his sins and believed the gospel of Christ).

A Baptist missionary visitor said “Bible preaching is archaic and offends people. He doesn’t understand why so many people are attending our church meetings to listen to Bible preaching.” He said that “if he preached the Bible in his ministry, he wouldn’t have any members. Not only would they quit, they would take the tithes with them.” I said if he preached the Bible, his members will get saved and give tithes. **“Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalm 119:165).** **“...blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me” (Luke 7:23).**

Municipality of Impasugong (one hour away). Three people got saved who rejected sinner’s prayer salvation and repented of their sins and believed the gospel of Christ. **Barangay Bontongon: Elmer (16) Dunggo and his sister Cecil (35) Pelistan (Baptist-GARBC) on Sunday February 15.** **Barangay Impalutao Sitio Kibuwa: Rosa Mae Dunggo (Baptist-GARBC) on Sunday January 11.** And her husband is a deacon in another church.

They are so excited to attend our church meetings that they arrive an hour early to sing English Bible songs. Perla translated the song’s message. They said they like English Bible songs especially “He Set Me Free [former Baptist GARBC members who were slaves to sin], “I Can Tell You The Time” [former Baptist GARBC members who didn’t know the time, now they do], “I Want To Know More About Jesus” [they’re learning, growing, increasing in the knowledge of Christ (Col.1:9-10; 2 Pet.3:18)], “Keep On The Firing Line” [they’re serving God].

Municipality of Kitaotao (four hours away): Barangay Kisapwak: Evangelism restarted after four months as Rulle (32) Boholano farmer’s wife Me-an (25) Matigsalug tribal gave birth to a healthy boy. **Barangay Panganan:** Ongoing daily evangelism in multiple locations. Ronie (52) Matigsalug tribal, former General Baptist deacon and former barangay officer who got saved a year ago in November is evangelizing the gospel of Christ to hundreds of people which resulted in four new outreaches in a nearby purok and three sitios (two hours round trip by walking).

Praise God that obedience to His Word produces an effectual (effective and successful) ministry. “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Corinthians 16:9). “Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power” (Ephesians 3:7). “That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus” (Philemon 1:6). “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

Teaching our members the purpose of God’s law in evangelism: “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). God’s law reveals the knowledge of sin and shows the sinner why he needs a Savior. If God’s law isn’t used to prepare the heart, false conversions will fill the churches. Modern evangelism has made that very mistake. It preaches the good news (the fine being paid) without first convincing the sinner that he is a lawbreaker OR that repeating the sinner’s prayer formula is God’s salvation. No wonder so many reject the gospel of Christ—it makes no sense to them. Without God’s law to drive them to the cross of Christ, the message of God’s salvation is reduced to a shallow promise of “happiness.” [We ask questions to unbelievers separately to gauge their understanding of God’s salvation to lead them to Christ. Please pray for precious souls to escape deception and darkness and come to the light of the world, Jesus Christ].

Jesus never hid the demands of discipleship. Following Him means putting Him above all else. Discipleship isn't self-improvement. It's dependance on Jesus (John 15:4-5). Disciples don't just keep the faith; they spread it (Matthew 5:13-16). Jesus didn't die to make converts. He rose to make disciples—men and women who would follow Him wholeheartedly. Churches need disciples who live like Jesus, love like Jesus, and lead others to Him. The growing churches are the ones that open the Bible and teach it book by book, verse by verse and line by line.

Modern churches in Bukidnon have succumbed to: 1. Secular humanism, moral relativism and political correctness, abandoning Scripture for cultural trends like Marxist-inspired social justice, LGBTQ affirmation. 2. Reducing faith to consumerist rituals—Sunday performances without genuine devotion or daily surrender. 3. Peddling a counterfeit gospel of comfort over conviction, risking Christ's rebuke: "I never knew you" (Matthew 7:23). 4. Prioritizing entertainment and emotional highs, losing reverence for God's holiness and justice. **Without the fear of the LORD (Isaiah 6:1-13),** they become spiritually weak and unable to discern truth from deception. Every soul will stand before Christ, and only those written in the Book of Life will escape eternal separation. Hell is a conscious, eternal punishment for the unrepentant. **Note:** The Word of God exposes the rot within modern Christianity while also offering a roadmap back to biblical fidelity. True Bible faith is marked by Bible obedience.

Teaching our members "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Pr.9:10). Those who don't fear God haven't begun to get wise. "...by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil" (Pr.16:6). Preached lawfully, God's moral law has the ability to put the fear of the LORD into the hearts of careless and sin-loving sinners. Modern pastors have failed to do this and has resulted in modern churches with no fear of God and a lack of moral influence upon the nation. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Mt.5:13). That's the state of modern churches. It has become irrelevant. Meanwhile, the world sinks further into moral depravity.

Fear has a way of creeping into our lives, doesn't it? It whispers doubts, magnifies worries, and makes us feel trapped. But here's the truth—we don't have to live that way. As Bible believers, we have a promise stronger than any fear. The root of fear and how faith overcomes it. Fear often comes from uncertainty. What if things go wrong? What if I fail? What if I'm not enough? These questions haunt us because we forget who holds our future.

☞ "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

That means fear isn't from God. It's a lie meant to steal your peace. Faith is the antidote. When you trust God, fear loses its grip. How Jesus defeated fear for you. Think about Jesus in the storm. The disciples panicked while Jesus was "...asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:35-41). Jesus has authority over everything that scares us.

- ◆ He controls the storms—your struggles aren't too big for Him.
- ◆ He's with you in the boat—you're never alone.
- ◆ He speaks peace—His words calm chaos.

If Jesus can quiet a raging sea, He can quiet our anxious heart. Practical steps to replace fear with faith. Fear doesn't vanish overnight, but you can train your heart to trust God. Here's how:

- 1 Pray honestly – Tell God what scares you. He already knows, but speaking it weakens fear's hold.
- 2 Memorize Scripture – Fight lies with truth (Psalm 56:3; Isaiah 41:10).
- 3 Worship – Bible singing and Bible preaching shifts focus from problems to God's greatness.
- 4 Place your faith in God's Word – Fear grows in isolation. Stay connected to strong believers.

What happens when you choose faith over fear. Fear says, "You're stuck." Faith says, "God's got this."

When you choose faith:

- ✓ You gain courage – Boldness replaces hesitation.
- ✓ You see breakthroughs – God works when you step out in trust.
- ✓ You inspire others – Your faith becomes a light for someone else.

Fear will knock on your door. But you don't have to let it in. Jesus already won the battle. Our job is to stand on His promises. Next time fear whispers, ask yourself: "Is this thought from God?" If it's not, replace it with truth. You're free. Live like it. 🔥

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him" (Ps.34:7-9).

We have intense heartfelt love for the Word of God and the beloved Baptist brethren who are faithful obedient servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Much appreciation for the Lord's Baptist churches who are beacons of hope, standing in the gap, reaching lost souls with the gospel of Christ. May God bless your labour for souls in your ministry. Thanks for praying, sacrificing, and partnering with us. Your giving is making a life-changing impact in the Philippines.

Jeffrey C. Blust

Philippines

"People that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many" (Dan.11:32-33)

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