



# THE BLUSTS

**EMPIRE BAPTIST TEMPLE • PASTOR ERICH P. McCANDLESS, PhD**

412 S. Hawthorne Ave • Sioux Falls, SD 57104 • 605-339-2038 • EBT@EmpireBaptistMinistries.org



Dear Pastor and Brethren,

November-December 2025 Prayer, Praise & Progress Report

**“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (1 Corinthians 9:15).**

**Malaybalay City mission church: Two Jehovah Witnesses Princess (39) and her daughter Leah Amor (16) got saved on Sunday September 21.** Princess husband Julie (46) Baptist (GARBC) not a member anywhere attended our church once. Evangelizing/witnessing to our neighbor Cora (74) Catholic for 6 ½ years. She believes in the Bible, but not as the literal Word of God that must be obeyed. She said her Catholic church is ecumenical, believes in a one world religion and that all religions have the same God. Pray God removes the spiritual blindness. Christian (14) attending our church meetings for two years. His father is a Spiritista and his mother is a Mormon.

**Municipality of Impasugong (one hour away): Barangay Bontongon: Romy (56) Higaonon tribal Baptist (GARBC) got saved on Sunday September 21.** He said that he grew up in a Baptist church (GARBC) since childhood. However, he and thirty members quit their local community church because seven deacons control the pastor and the pastor’s daughter is a lesbian. He said their friend Stewart (48) former Catholic who is our first convert there last March, invited and encouraged them to walk five hours (one way) from the mountains across the Pulangi river down to Malaybalay City and are faithfully attending our Sunday church meetings. He said that it was the first time they ever heard a message on what the Bible says about God’s salvation. And that they never heard their pastor preach a message on sin, God’s judgment, hell, heaven, sinless blood of Christ, cross of Christ, Lordship of Christ, repentance from sin and faith in Christ. He said their pastor is a storyteller who invites visitors to talk to him after story hour prayer meetings that they will go to heaven if they repeat the sinner’s prayer. He said their pastor’s focus is church fellowship, not ministry. And that church growth comes when single members marry Catholics or pagans. He said he’s now concerned for the salvation of the thirty people with him and the pastor and former members there. Romy wife Elena (52) lost her mind (starvation) after giving birth to their last daughter.

**Municipality of Kitaotao (four hours away): Barangay Panganan:** Ongoing daily evangelism in multiple locations. Ronie (52) Matigsalug tribal, former General Baptist deacon and former barangay officer who got saved last 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): **1.** Purok 6 Centro; **2.** Sitio Bugtong Lubi; **3.** Sitio Mahayahay; **4.** Sitio Tagawili. Matigsalug tribals in these four locations are followers of Matigsalug tribal religion (pagan) and hearing the Word of God for the first time in their life. **In Sitio Mahayahay: six pagans got saved:** Abelino (40) & Ester (42) Pangkat on Sunday August 17. Dina (39) & Marry Jane (25) Lipandas & Cecil Lauronal (24) on Sunday September 21. Sherine (16) Enamoc on Saturday October 4. Pray more souls get saved.

**Municipality of Cabanglasan:** Ongoing evangelism in multiple locations: **1.** Sitio Patulangan Barangay Manggaod; **2.** Purok 8 Sitio Calacapan Barangay Canangaan; **3.** Purok 9 Poblacion. Three surrendered communist New People’s Army guerrillas: Alex Enggay (66), Thelma Pabon (42), Alma Donato (30) got saved in September.

**Pagans, Communists (Marxism), some Catholic teenagers (Darwinism/evolution) attending public schools** have never heard of God as Creator or about Adam & Eve. These Bible studies begin either in Genesis ch.1 or 2. Preaching repentance and the gospel of Christ is powerfully breaking through the religious blindness that permeates the Philippine culture. The past three years, we have seen Assassins, Baptists, Catholics, Communists, Drunkards, Iglesia ni Cristo, Jehovah Witnesses, Pagans, Pentecostals, SDA, Sorcerers and Spiritista get saved in our ministry.

**Teaching our members that saved “good ground” pastors/missionaries/members “bring forth good fruit”** (Psalm 126:5-6; Proverbs 11:30; Matthew 13:8,23,26; Mark 4:8,20; Luke 8:8,15; John 15:1-16). Likewise, those “not good ground” do not bring forth good fruit “And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mark 4:19) “...bring no fruit...” (Luke 8:14). “Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?” (Luke 13:7). “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matthew 7:19). That pastors/missionaries are known by “...watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist [evangelizing in their local/nearby communities], make full proof of thy ministry [discipling members; training men to be preachers/pastors in the local church]” (2 Timothy 4:5). A missionary’s ministry report should never be empty of ministry activity (evangelism/discipleship).

**Teaching our members the God given duty of pastors/missionaries** (2 Timothy 4:5) is training their members for any type of evangelistic ministry. That pastors/missionaries (2 Chronicles 15:3; Ezekiel 44:23; Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28) are discipling their members especially men (Proverbs 9:9) and developing them from spiritual babes (Isaiah 28:9-10; 1 Peter 2:2) to spiritual teachers (Hebrews 5:12-14; 2 Timothy 2:2). **1.** Sound Doctrine (2 Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:1). **2.** Reading/Studying/Applying Bible (1 Timothy 4:13-16; 2 Timothy 2:15). **3.** Following Jesus (Matthew 4:19). **4.** Living By Faith (James 1:22). **5.** Church Accountability



(Hebrews 10:24-25). **6. Service and Mission (Romans 12:1-2).** That the pastors/missionaries/members purpose is proclaiming the kingdom of God, doing the will of God on earth, influencing the people and culture to the ways of God, resisting anyone or anything that exalts itself against the truth of God's Word. Obeying God's Word, standing against evil, fighting the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). Sadly, many people sit quietly on the sidelines, waiting to see what happens next hoping and praying for someone else to do something to prevent the final demise.

**The apostle Paul exemplified contentment in his life and teachings.** "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:11-13). Overall, Paul's teachings encourage believers to find peace and satisfaction in their relationship with Christ, regardless of life's challenges.

**The early Baptists churches** lived in a world (not unlike our own) where their belief in Christ often left them at odds with the political powers, the economic realities, and the social norms. They were surrounded by idol worship. Would they stand firm, or would they give up under the pressure and the pain of following Jesus? **Christians today are faced with the same dilemmas.** The Bible tells us to worship God only—not to be trapped by materialism, selfish pleasures, and dishonest practices of this present age. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). Christians are called to be Christ's light in the world. And Christians are called to be examples of what Jesus taught when He lived among us that we should follow His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

**We are strangers and foreigners living in a world ruled by Satan, sojourners among the enemies of God, and we're commanded to "occupy" until Jesus returns.** We live in a world that hates Christ and true Christ-followers, yet we've been given a command, a duty, marching orders: to use the talents that we've been given to serve our King, bring the lost and perishing into His kingdom and occupy until He returns. Therefore, our assignment as followers of Christ is to be the salt of the earth and light of the world, snatching souls from the enemy Satan, impacting the wicked culture of darkness and death and showing the lost the only way back to God.

**It shouldn't come as a surprise** when evil men don't mock Buddhism, Hinduism or Islam, but only Christianity—and the deity of Jesus Christ. This is because He is the one who condemned lust as adultery (Matthew 5:27-38) and said that the world's deeds are evil (John 7:7). The Bible makes it clear that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). How should we then respond as Christians? Our agenda is to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). It's not primarily to change the culture, but to change the heart. When someone comes to the LORD Jesus Christ, not only do they find everlasting life, but they suddenly love righteousness. That's the miracle of the new birth, and that's the uniqueness of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ that we've been commanded to preach. In a culture of fear and intimidation, we will ignore our fears. Instead, we look to the heavens and say, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6).

**These are dark days we're living in, and the darkness is growing ever more ominous.** The clock is ticking, and the devil's time is running out, even as his rage increases minute by minute. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:12). **So if this world seems more hostile, more violent, more sinful, more evil and wicked, it's because it is.** On judgment day, we'll be called to account for our obedience to the Word of God in this spiritual battle; for how we've invested the talents God's given us and whether or not we stood our ground, "having done all, to stand." If it seems like the devil is winning this war, it's only because those enlisted to stand against the enemy have failed in their duties. Nations are self-destructing because they've turned their backs on God having thrown Him out of every area of society and culture, thinking they know better, we now have a world on the brink of absolute desolation. We're seeing the results of rebellion against the one and true God of heaven: depravity, great delusion, madness, drug addiction, sexual perversion, exploitation of children, violence, rage, homelessness, lies, deceit, open worship of evil, and economy in ruins. Satan is intent on our destruction. The days ahead will require discernment, courage, and unwavering faith in God's sovereignty over human history.

**God tells us how we should respond when the world attacks us for our faith (1 Peter 4:12-19).** Persecution and suffering is unavoidable (2 Timothy 3:12). The suffering we endure on earth in our service to Christ pales in comparison to the hope of eternity that awaits us in Heaven (2 Corinthians 4:17). Our members clearly recognize that there is a cost to following Jesus (John 16:33). They are overcomers when reviled, insulted, persecuted and mocked by the enemies of God, but God's Spirit dwells within them (1 John 4:4; 5:4-5). They are witnessing His mighty hand working in their life as He defeats the enemies. They rejoice that "Jesus Christ is the VICTORY!!!"

**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)*

**Field Address:** Ruben Rodano St Brgy 1, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon 8700 • Philippines • jeffblust\_12@yahoo.com.ph