



# THE BLUSTS

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

March-April 2025 Prayer, Praise & Progress Report

**We thoroughly enjoyed Pastor McCandless visit to our ministry here in Bukidnon from February 10 to 14.** It was a time of sweet fellowship and it was truly a blessing and joy for our members to hear him preach the Word of God to them. We know that it will help our home church to better pray for us and to understand the challenges and great blessings of our ministry here in Bukidnon. Much appreciation to EBT and our supporting churches for personally getting involved in “helping our ministry in Bukidnon succeed with much success by the grace of God.”

**Malaybalay City mission church: One person saved. Stewart (48) Catholic tribal from Impasugong (upper mountains) on Sunday March 2. Perla’s relative Adelio Galve (42) Catholic widower from Impasugong and his fiancé Shantamae Gandilan (38) Catholic tribal widow from Transmitter (near our house) have been attending our church meetings since the first Sunday of January. He has five children and she also has six children. Fourteen more of Perla’s relatives from Impasugong are now attending our church meetings.** They have gone from a negative mindset in 2022 to a positive mindset in 2025. Praise the Lord that they are becoming more open. They’re amazed at our church growth from three years ago. Lots of youth. **Befriended and evangelized Perla’s first cousin Lydia (68) Catholic widow from Nabunturan Davao De Oro (seven hours away) who visited us from Jan.27-29 and Feb.08-25.** She said she has been unlucky in life and wishes that she was dead because: **1.** Her father is Chinese and her five sisters are Chinese looking. Tall, fair and beautiful. While people have mocked her in the past for looking like a Filipina maid. **2.** She got married to a man she barely knew when she was 21 and separated from him when she was 30 because he had eight mistress and nine children with them. **3.** Her son has six children. His wife refuses to be a stay home mom. Works outside with the guys. Her son got jealous. Stabbed his wife. Was thrown in jail. Relatives begged Lydia to bail out her son. Her son’s wife moved back in with him. Lydia is here again to attend our church meetings because she wants her life to change and desires God’s salvation. **Cagayan De Oro City Uptown (three hours away): Befriended and evangelized twenty of Perla’s relatives (Catholic and SDA) on Monday February 24.** Own a tailoring shop. Perla has not seen them in thirty five years.

**Municipality of Kitaotao: Six people repented and believed the gospel of Christ. Renato (57) and Jay (25) on Wednesday February 12. Susan (44), Lorena (45) and Merlyn (50+) on Sunday February 16. Melody (18) on Sunday March 2.** Matisalug tribals. General Baptists who formerly believed that salvation was placing your hand on Bible and baptism. Ronnie (50) Matisalug tribe, former barangay official and former General Baptist deacon saved last November is being discipled and he’s teaching Bible to his family, relatives, neighbors, friends. Evangelistic Bible studies with General Baptists and Jesus Miracle Crusade International Ministry from 7pm to 9pm in each location with an attendance of 300 to 500 people. They are neighboring barangays. Fifteen minutes apart. **Municipality of San Fernando: One person saved. Ronald (32) on Sunday February 2.** Parents are members.

**NOTE 1:** From Malaybalay City to San Fernando is 1 ½ hours. From San Fernando to Kitaotao another 1 ½ hours. From Impasugong to San Fernando to Kitaotao, the mountain ranges are on both sides. Off the two-lane highway, in multiple locations, need to drive a truck or walk a motorbike through the waste deep moving river. If it rains, the river becomes impassable until the next day. If the path is narrow, only a motorbike can reach the destination. One of the past typhoons flooded the entire barangay of the General Baptists, the people lost all clothing/valuables.

**NOTE 2:** Most Filipinos live in poverty. Many are farmers who work all day and earn little to nothing. They do not have sustainable income to meet their daily needs. Tribals and Visayans living in the mountains of Bukidnon eat once daily (root crops). They do not have money to buy rice. Many Filipinos in rural areas are open to attend evangelistic Bible studies if you provide a snack and a drink and you show compassion, humility, respect, patience. Several tribals and Visayans have told us that they are ashamed to attend our evangelistic Bible studies because they are destitute and devoid of clothing; all they have to wear is a couple pairs of worn-out clothes with holes that someone gave them. Therefore, we help/provide used clothing so they can attend our evangelistic Bible studies. One of Perla’s relatives is an expert on buying used clothing from ukay-ukay stores (thrift clothing stores) and Lydia (who needs God’s salvation) has nephews/nieces who quit banking to buy and sell used clothing from Japan.

**NOTE 3:** Fifteen datus (tribal leaders) heard reports from other tribals about our ministry that multitudes of tribals and Visayans have received God’s salvation and that God is changing lives. The datus (tribal leaders) have attended our church meetings and they asked us to evangelize more than five thousand tribal people including entire barangays in the mountains of Kitaotao (primarily Matisalug tribals) and in the mountains of San Fernando (primarily Tigwahanon tribals) in Bukidnon and in the mountains of Kapalong Davao De Norte (a neighboring province). However, evangelization was temporarily postponed until further notice after tribal in-fighting broke out. Tribal law is if you kill someone, someone in your family must die. The datus (tribal leaders) don’t want someone in their tribe to be caught in the crossfire (the killing). When this issue is resolved, evangelization begins.

**Multitudes of people around Bukidnon are spiritually hungry** and Satan is keeping them on starvation rations of false religion and many other devices he is very adept at employing. Our success in attracting people to eternal life in Christ depends upon our obedience and cooperation with the Holy Spirit in showing them we have something wonderful that they don't. He lives within us and is the ultimate soul winner we take with us everywhere we go. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:36-38).

**Seen many hard hearted people get saved (Jeremiah 23:22-24, 29-32) after years of evangelizing, witnessing and prayer.** The average Christian after a couple rounds of short Bible talks with people have already concluded that person will never get saved so they've closed the door of salvation on them (Matthew 23:13) with no life time investments in them, no relationship building with them and no continual witnessing to them to lead them to Christ. For those who trust in Christ, our future is not one of fear and control, but of hope, freedom, eternal security in Him. Fear, insecurity and secularism is why many ministries see little results (2 Timothy 1:7). "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:5-6). "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18).

**Praise God for our local Baptist congregation mission works overflowing with fruit and faithful members.** We may erroneously think the primary joys in ministry are found in our local congregations thriving and bearing obvious fruit. They're not. Christ our God is our greatest joy — and not only in "good" times, but also in the difficult and lonely ones (Psalm 73:25-28). This Christ-centered, God-exalting joy will sustain patient ministry. Furthermore, this joy is precisely what we want to reproduce in those who would disciple others. Enjoying Christ as both central and supreme stabilizes us so that we can pour ourselves out for our local Baptist congregations, those we disciple and our neighbors, without depending on any of them, for our contentment and peace (Philippians 4:4, 11-13). **We pour ourselves into the lives of ordinary, slow-growing saints** because they are the certificate and diploma proving our credentials as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every member matters. And together, they are our joy and crown (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). Such is the God-centered, others-oriented validation behind the apostle John's striking sentiment: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4). We can testify to a unique delight in watching men we have disciplined serving, loving, leading, and investing in others in ways that spread a passion for Christ's supremacy. **The apostolic pattern for discipling and raising pastors and teachers** "So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us" (1 Thessalonians 2:8). We teach Christ not only publicly, but from house to house, often through tears and trials, considering our life of no value in order that we might finish our course and ministry (Acts 20:18-24). If we're going to help people grow and change, we have to share our whole lives with them, open our homes to them (Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2), and be willing to be regularly inconvenienced and vulnerable, confessing sin and modeling repentance (Psalm 51:12-13; Luke 22:31-32; James 5:16). **Sharing ourselves also means sharing our responsibilities** in such a way that those whom we disciple feel the pressure to serve in situations where much is on the line. Taking some risks in letting men lead the gathering, lead a ministry initiative, or even preach publicly. Generally, we call all members, men and women, to faithfully exercise their spiritual gifts for the spiritual growth of their congregation.

**Much appreciation** for the Lord's Baptist churches who are beacons of hope, standing in the gap and reaching lost souls with the gospel of Christ. The LORD knows how to reward His faithful obedient servants for their sacrifices.

#### Prayer Requests:

1. Pray the Word of God will be forever obeyed and the Lord Jesus Christ will be forever glorified.
2. Pray for more souls to repent and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. Bukidnon is a SOUL-MINE.
3. Pray for laborers in God's harvest. Our ministry is growing fast in the last two years and three months. Everyone getting saved is telling everyone about God's salvation and God is changing lives with hundreds or a thousand people added in a dozen locations. My wife and I are overwhelmed.
4. Pray for our Bible school and our Bible students.
5. Pray for dozens of men to be pastors in a dozen locations.
6. Pray for our safety.
7. Pray for us to have strength and good health.
8. Pray tribals/Visayans in our ministry will receive sustainable income from God for their daily needs and tithes and offerings (via Philippine economy) to build a five thousand people church facility and other multiple church facilities in multiple locations and twenty buses for bringing people to church.

Because Of His Faithfulness And Abundant Mercies ----- Let Us Go Forth And Sow The Seed!

*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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