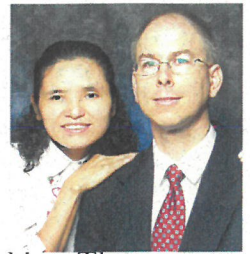




# THE BLUSTS

EMPIRE BAPTIST TEMPLE • PASTOR ERICH P. MCCANDLESS, PHD

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Dear Pastor and Brethren,

September-October 2023 Prayer, Praise & Progress Report

**Souls have been saved.** By Scriptural Baptist baptism, the Lord added them to the membership. These poor saints are growing in the knowledge of the Word of God. They serve God with determination, understanding that nothing is free, and that they are going to have to expend time and effort to make something happen, and that they have got to work in accordance with the Word of God. They bring people causing significant numerical growth. They bring tithes (two mites) into the storehouse (treasury) to prove God, if He will not open the windows of heaven, to receive a blessing (sustainable income via Philippine economy), that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Pray spiritual vision will be sharpened in our members throughout the next year in the service of God.

**Seven spiritual births:** Laina Arcala (25) INC on Monday July 31. Deroy Pinohan (50) Catholic and Antonio Arcala (31) SDA on Sunday August 6. Ermilenda Bungkahan (51) Catholic on Tuesday August 8. Mary Jane Mancilla (38) on Sunday August 20. Ronilo Banuag (39) on Saturday August 26. Sarah Labiano (49) on Sunday August 27.

**Jovel our pastor in training** "hath not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution (from religion) ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Matthew 13:21). A tribal Pentecostal church offered him a pastorate, money, choice of women (must separate from tribal Baptist wife...our member...for tribal Pentecostal wife), and oversee their church dance program, etc..., and that Bible obedience and judgmentalism of what is sinful and what is right or wrong from God in the Bible is unacceptable. Therefore, he insulted his 18 year old wife. He told her that she is ugly and that she stinks and that she is stupid. He told her that he would come back for their son when he is two years old. Jovel's wife faithfully attends our church and our Bible school classes.

**Many Filipinos in Bukidnon are living in a deep spiritual darkness caused by their rejection of a close personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.** By rejecting the only light of the world, Jesus Christ, and replacing Him with a long list of lifeless counterfeits, including drugs, alcohol, sports, movies, sexual lusts, personal ambition. They've been blinded from seeing their adversary the devil's schemes unfolding right in front of them.

**We love God Jesus Christ and the Holy Word of God and we love taking care of helpless and needy people** who are destitute daily survivors (eat once daily). Offer them a Sunday meal and snack, sometimes second hand modest clothing. They receive love and support from us as we bring the light of God Jesus Christ to a dark and dire world and as we preach God's salvation (repentance and the Gospel of Christ) to them all. This is what God Jesus Christ has called and commanded us to do is to showcase His exaltation on the Cross, His Perfect Sacrifice, His Divine Sinless Blood, His Burial, His Resurrection as He Conquered/Defeated Sin, Death, Hell and the Devil.

**Our mission church (1)...mission works (2-3a, 4)...mission outreach (3b, 5-9):**

1. Malaybalay City (Old Paths Historic Baptist church is experiencing overcrowding and needs bigger facilities to accommodate significant increase in attendance at either Bukidnon State University or Garden Functions Halls).
2. Managok (tribal & Visayan farmers; 30 minutes away; pray for God's provision; relocation to Malaybalay City).
3. San Fernando (barangay Sacramento Valley; four tribal groups & Visayans; communist NPA & SDA relatives).
3. San Fernando (barangay Kibongcog; 300 Tigwahanon tribals; communist NPA & SDA; three hours away; my contact is SDA; his father-in-law is a communist NPA commander; dirt, muddy, rocky roads in the mountains).
4. Kalabugao Impasugong (int'l companies & 20K+ Filipinos building 20M megacity w/ int'l airport, bullet trains, expressways, subdivisions, condos, hospitals, malls, schools, etc... begins October 2023 & completion September 2026. 568 square miles in areas of four provinces. Not a government project. Funded by int'l financial institutions).
5. Indigenous people (seven tribal groups) in two cities and twenty municipalities of Bukidnon (new tribal friends have connections to all IP's in Bukidnon and neighboring provinces). Some young tribal people when they see me, they stop and bow before me. I asked why? They said it's a sign of respect. They believe that I'm a pastor.
6. Uniformed personal (military and police especially retired generals who are not involved in illegal drug trade).
7. Communist New People Army guerrillas (evangelized the Gospel of Christ to a communist party NPA lawyer).
8. Sorcerers (evangelized the Gospel of Christ to a tribal and a Cebuana...resisted at first...opened up a little bit).
9. Muslims (evangelized two men the Gospel of Christ. They rejected it. Told me that they will cut my head off).

**San Fernando: barangay Kibongcog...pray that God opens doors for regular not infrequent Bible studies:**

**SDA asked for a public Bible debate.** He began first. He used a JW Watchtower Bible. I laughed. Asked why, when he is SDA. He argued his position for SDA, EW and her writings. He said salvation is via baptism and ten commandments. After he finished, I argued my position for Baptists, God Jesus Christ & His writings in the KJB. God Jesus Christ is eternal salvation. Ten commandments isn't salvation (Rom.3:19-20, 28; Gal.5:4; James 2:10). Baptism is church membership. Difference between you and me is you follow unbiblical prophetess Ellen White (Mt.11:13; Lk.16:16), USA, 18<sup>th</sup> century. I follow God Jesus Christ who during His earthly ministry built a Baptist church in Israel 30AD. Baptists are the original Christians. Baptists not SDA have God given authority to baptize. There is more, but the SDA became very silent and embarrassed to the point that he asked me for Baptist material.



**Indigenous people:** A lot of tribals are communist New People Army guerrillas or as sorcerers (witchcraft): Tribals ancestral historic traditions and customs is paganism (later many adopted Spanish Catholicism) involved in sorcery (witchcraft)...casting spells...breaking spells...paranormal activity (Luciferian third eye, ghosts, demonic activity, etc...) inherited from their ancestors is common among tribal groups and Visayans in the mountains of Bukidnon. From birth, childhood, adulthood, they heard, witnessed, shared these fables and tales. The instruction-remedy-solution is NOT superstition (amulets, lighting candles until the wax is melted, Satanic animal sacrifices, drinking blood, breaking glass, needles, powders, etc...). It's through fasting and prayer, the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ. God's people are resistant to spells. Tribals need the message of hope and an encounter with the Prince of Peace. They listen as we share that we are sinners and that God Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins on the cross. The light of Christ must enter tribal households so they can respond to God's salvation. Pray conversions (repentance from sin and faith in Christ) to Biblical Christianity (Baptist) to transform their ideas, mentality, social practices as they go against the traditional beliefs/customs of their local community.

**Bukidnon State University** continually invites tribal sorcerers to conduct animal sacrifices outside in public view on school property for ghost removal. Twice in the last year, major commotions at Bukidnon State University, both teachers and students were running outside screaming that there are ghosts, doors opening and closing, lights turning on and off, book pages flipping fast, ghost talking, playing, working in different campus areas. I asked what causes it? They said there are ghosts dwelling in Japanese tunnels underneath school property from World War 2. Daily monitoring of dormitory students using witchcraft manuals; chanting cause demon possessions; tribal exorcisms.

**Erwin (31) orphan.** Muslim father; communist NPA commander mother killed by military. NPA & sorcerer tribal relatives. Raised by 21 different families. Confessed he is a former assassin; drank their blood. College educated working at Bukidnon State University in warehouse with ghosts. He talks to them. His co-workers afraid of them. He regularly visits our house. Discussed/proved Scriptures with him: 1. Sorcery and 2. Catholicism are unbiblical. 3. King James Bible is the Word of God. 4. Preached repentance from sin and belief in the Gospel of Christ to have eternal life (Biblical salvation). He said "that's it?" Explained religion must be rejected and he needs a spiritual birth relationship with Christ. He said "it's the first time he heard it." His wife is studying for a Master's of Biology at the University of the Philippines Diliman Quezon City. Pray we can continue to make a difference.

**Muslim people in Malaybalay City Bukidnon (20%): Islamic-Arabic prayers over loudspeaker 5 times daily: Muslims told me that they hate Christians preaching the cross of Christ.** They said Muslims who convert to Christ are to be killed. And that Christians must convert to Islam and worship Allah or be beheaded. We witnessed Muslims issued death threats even to other Muslims which surprised us. Islamic belief system is hateful and violent.

**God Jesus Christ is working** in the hearts of five hundred Catholic and tribal people from all over Bukidnon who witnessed, protested and complained to the authorities about a militant Muslim leader (and his ten Muslim bodyguards) who in public was preaching Islam and blaspheming the Deity of Christ and as we walked away, he angrily issued death threats via beheading upon my life (probably because he perceived me as a foreign missionary or some kind of leader). Afterwards, I received support from the people (including three apologetic Muslims). Later, a Muslim man visited my house and told me that "I'm scared for your life. The Muslims intend to kill you." God is putting pressure on the Muslim leader's pride. A month later, he became insane (lost his mind). Heard sorcerers caused it. But I believe God Jesus Christ caused it or allowed it to happen. People are quick to give credit to the sorcerers rather than giving God Jesus Christ the credit/glory. Pray that people will repent and turn to Christ.

**"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1 John 2:22-23).** "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:2-3). "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 Jn.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.** Pray God is always glorified. And protection from the world and the wicked. These perilous times are also a time when we can reach many souls for Jesus Christ, making an eternal difference. **Thanks for your prayers and support of our ministry. May God bless your labour for souls in your ministry.**

#### **Prayer Requests:**

1. Pray all members will prudently discern demonic activity taking place in the world around them in these last days.
2. Pray all members during repeated spiritual warfare (battle after battle) will continue to be victorious overcomers.

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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