



THE BLUSTS

EMPIRE BAPTIST TEMPLE • PASTOR ERICH P. MCCANDLESS, PHD

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Dear Pastor and Brethren,

January-February 2026 Prayer, Praise & Progress Report

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Municipality of Impasugong (one hour away): In Barangay Bontongan: Stewart (48) former Catholic is our first convert there last March and Romy (56) Higaonon tribal Baptist (GARBC) got saved last September. Romy and thirty Baptist (GARBC) members (relatives/friends) walk five hours (one way) from the mountains across the Pulangi river down to Malaybalay City and they are faithfully attending our Sunday church meetings. They invited: 1. **Barangay Bontongan (mountains–Baptists GARBC 60%–Pagans 30%–Catholics & SDA–10%).** 2. **Barangay Impalutao Sitio Kibuwa (mountains–Baptists GARBC 60%–Pagans 30%–Catholics & SDA–10%).** 3. **Brgy. Capitan Bayong Sitio Patulangan (Catholics 77%–SDA 4%–GARBC 3%–Evangelical 3%–Pagans 3%).** [Note: Multitudes of Baptists (GARBC) attend our church meetings. They like bible preaching. No bible preaching in mountain churches. Confessed we are the first to preach repentance and gospel of Christ to them as they are victims of repeating the sinner’s prayer. Forgive them if many can’t regularly attend our church meetings. They suffer deep poverty and hunger. Survival is a daily struggle. They have difficulty finding work to earn money to buy food for their family].

They said: 1. Our church is 10% singing and 90% preaching while Baptist (GARBC) churches in the mountains are 90% singing and 10% storytelling [because their pastors believe that preaching the Bible is judging people]. 2. We’re skilled in bible explanation that cuts to the heart while their Baptist (GARBC) pastors don’t use the Bible, therefore, there is no bible explanation and members don’t fully understand all the stories their pastors tell them. 3. We preach/teach that biblical salvation is repentance from sin and faith in the gospel of Christ to receive God’s salvation to go to heaven while their pastors teach that repentance isn’t in the Bible and that people who repeat the sinner’s prayer will go to heaven [including 50% Baptist (GARBC) men in mountain churches who are drunkards]. 4. Baptists (GARBC) members in mountain churches in small numbers have already been converted by SDA. 5. Baptists (GARBC) members in mountain churches give nicknames to their pastors: Pastor Blind, Pastor Remote, Pastor Moody, Pastor Ignorant, Pastor Boring, Pastor Dead, Pastor Church-killer (caused one or more churches to close down), Pastor Greedy. **My remark:** Is.56:10-12. 6. Baptist (GARBC) churches use church fellowship halls for disco dancing halls for singles church fellowships with all district Baptist (GARBC) churches invited. Baptists (GARBC), Catholics and Pagans also join in public disco dancing. They confessed that there is the lusts of the flesh and immoral conduct. **My remark:** 1 Jn.2:15-17; Gal.5:16-24. 7. Baptists (GARBC) tribals are blood eaters. They attend Catholic fiestas to eat foods dedicated to idols; pagan tribal rituals to eat animal/chicken sacrifices. **My remark:** Gen.9:4; Lev.17:10-14; 19:26; Dt.12:23; 1 Sam.14:32-33; 15:22; Acts 15:20,29; 21:25; Rev.2:14,20. [Note: Baptist (GARBC) mountain pastors feel insulted their former members walk five hours (one way) down the mountains to Malaybalay City to attend our church meetings to hear Bible preaching. Because of that, these pastors are accusing us of being a “Bible preaching judging cult.” Rosa Mae (34) quit going to the Baptist (GARBC) churches seven years ago because no one ever preaches the Bible. Her husband still attends there since he’s a deacon as he/others control their pastor’s agenda].

Baptist (GARBC) pastors and missionaries are given assigned locations by the denomination and churches are deacon controlled. If they don’t like the assigned location, they look for another church where deacons give higher salary and ask for denominational approval. There are Filipino Baptist (GARBC) missionary-pastors who think they outsmarted God by cheap evangelism by having entire barangays in the mountains repeat the sinner’s prayer. This is all done in the push for quick inflated numbers to impress their supporting churches, and their own ego (image), and to increase their livelihood. This has resulted in many unrepentant, unregenerated, unconverted, untrained Filipino Baptist (GARBC) pastors, missionaries and members. Since their pastors and missionaries lack training, they send members interested in learning the Bible to the Baptist (GARBC) denominational Bible school. [Note: Ineffective Baptist missionaries can be in the ministry for 3, 5, 7, 10 years, but not really in the ministry since their ministry reports is photos of tourist sites, idolatrous churches, this and that, with no mention of evangelistic activity anywhere. Thus, no one is getting saved. Most brethren prudently understand that non-evangelistic missionaries aren’t God called men.

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). **Ten people got saved in November:** 1. Purok 6 Centro: **Five General Baptists:** Grace Ann Anggoling-16, Jeran Anggoling-26, Melecia Dago-34, Sherine Joy Enamoc-15, Jenny Ann Latawan-21. [General Baptists believe that placing their hand on the Bible and baptism is salvation]. 2. Sitio Bugtong Lubi. 3. Sitio Mahayahay: **Four Pagans:** Omena Enamoc, Cecil Ladronal-24, Lita Lipadas-75, Ebeth Manik-15 and **One Evangelical Churches of Christ Universal:** Merry Ann Lipadas-25. 4. Sitio Tagawili. Almost all Matigsalug tribals in the three sitios are followers of Matigsalug tribal religion (pagan) and are hearing the Word of God for the first time in their life.

Teaching our members that pastors, missionaries and members in all local congregations are accountable before God, and that we can't expect to reap a harvest of souls, where we haven't sown the seed. That many pastors, missionaries, local congregations spend many hours a week on many programs, but they aren't seeing any transformation happening. That many pastors, missionaries, members "bringeth not forth good fruit" (Mt.7:19; Mk.4:19; Lk.8:14; 13:7; Jn.12:24; 15:4-6) since they aren't even going outside in public to meet people who need Christ. Thus, they aren't preaching, evangelizing, winning souls nor making disciples (Mk.16:15; Pr.11:30). Being called of God is preaching the Word of God, evangelizing the gospel of Christ, winning souls and making disciples in our local/nearby communities. Jesus discipled twelve men who turned the world upside down after He departed. By obeying Christ's commands, we will be intentionally preaching, evangelizing, winning souls, making disciples, having an impact on other people's lives. "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).

Jesus presents the concept of "reaping where thou hast not sown" in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). Through this story, Jesus prepares His disciples for future events after His death. He gives them practical guidance to help them live in continual readiness for the day of His return. In the parable, the master (who represents Jesus) is arranging to leave on a trip for an extended, but unknown length of time. The master entrusts his wealth to three of his servants. These servants are responsible to use what the master gives them wisely. **Responsibilities:** 1. Received talents – good and faithful servants are sowing and reaping (Dt.11:13-15; 13:4; Jos.22:5; Mt.6:19-21,33; 2 Cor.9:6). 2. Lifetime commitment (overcomer—1 Jn.5:4-5). 3. No excuses (Job 15:6).

Fear of failure and lack of faith kept the third servant from obeying his master with the gifts, talents, and responsibilities under his care. These verses reveal the unfaithful, lazy servant didn't truly know His master's heart. He saw him as a hard and shrewd taskmaster. His description of his master as "reaping where thou hast not sown and gathering where thou hast not strawed" paints a picture of one who expects a return where no investment has been made. In other words, the servant felt his master expected too much from him. Because he played it safe, he became an unprofitable servant. Jesus' point is that readiness for His return involves being active, responsible, and obedient. Sowing good seed reaps saved good fruit (Mt.5:14-16; 13:8,23,25; Mk.4:8,20; Lk.8:8,15; Jn.15:16).

Living in readiness for Christ's return involves wisely investing our lives—giving of our time, talents, resources in God's kingdom. It is our privilege and honor to make the most of every opportunity to serve the Lord and work for the advancement of His kingdom. We can't expect to reap a harvest where we haven't sown seed. We shouldn't look for returns where we haven't invested. We must stay busy doing the Lord's work until He returns (Jn.9:4-5).

The age of comfort Christianity is ending. The days are coming when confessing Christ will cost us everything—our freedom, our livelihood, even our life. Be sober, be vigilant. Walk in the Spirit, crucify the flesh daily. Christ offers freedom, peace, and eternal life. If we stand firm, even unto death, we will reign with Christ forever.

Scoffing is not merely intellectual rebellion—it is moral rebellion. It flows from a heart unwilling to submit to God's authority. When God's Word confronts sin, many do not repent—they mock. The New Testament repeatedly warns that these attitudes erode holiness, distort doctrine, and lead others astray. This is why believers must remain anchored in truth, vigilant in discernment and faithful in Bible obedience. As the spiritual atmosphere darkens and hostility to truth grows, the responsibility of God's people intensifies. Believers are called to be salt and light—preserving truth and shining hope in a world drowning in confusion. The world is hungry—even desperate—for truth. Ironically, the intensity with which many mock the gospel of Christ reveals how deeply they crave what only God can provide. Their scoffing masks a spiritual longing. But tragically, some scoffing today is fueled not by ignorance alone, but by churches mishandling of Scripture. Churches can damage its own witness. The world watches churches closely—and often responds not only to what we preach, but do we believe and obey. People are perishing — mocking what they don't understand — while churches missteps reinforce their unbelief. The world is becoming more hostile to the gospel of Christ as a result that most churches are not obeying the Word of God and are struggling to keep its witness pure. People are drifting into confusion, cynicism, and hopelessness.

But God has placed His people here for such a time as this (Esther 4:14). We are called to:

- Hold firmly to sound doctrine
- Proclaim the Gospel with clarity
- Avoid sensationalism and distortion
- Live holy lives that reflect Christ
- Speak truth with humility and love

Mockers will come. Scoffers will shout. But the Word of God will stand. Jesus is still saving. The Spirit of God is still convicting. The gospel of Christ is powerful to save. We speak truth, love boldly and offer hope to the lost. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 1:21).

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

Jeffrey 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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