

January 2025

Dear Praying Friends,

Well, it is official: I am now “over the hill.” I apologize for my delay in sending this letter, but through that delay, it just so happens, without any intention on my part, that I am now writing this letter on my 40th birthday. Though I have no tendencies whatsoever towards sentimentality, a strange realization has slowly come over me in these last few weeks. I’m not a “young preacher” anymore! For over 20 years, I’ve considered myself to be just a “young preacher” trying to figure things out. Now, seemingly all of a sudden, I’m 40 years old, and I’m still trying to figure things out! 😊 Truly, “we spend our years as a tale that is told.” I just hope that our tale here in Dapitan is worth telling someday. A thought occurred to me a few minutes ago. I was born in Toledo, Ohio, on January 23, 1985. Just 24 days earlier, about 140 miles away in Akron, Ohio, another man was born who has become *SLIGHTLY* more well-known than I am. You may have heard of him at some point; his name is Lebron James. At the age of 18, as Lebron James was beginning his first season in the NBA, I went off to Hyles-Anderson College to study pastoral theology. There I met my future wife and answered God’s call to the mission field. Twenty-two years later, I have no idea how much money Lebron James has made in his NBA career, but I imagine it is probably a *LITTLE* more than I have made during that time. 😊 However, if you read any article about Lebron James in 2025, one thing is very clear: he is in the “twilight” of his career. At 40 years old, he is almost done. I, on the other hand, feel like I’m just getting started!

We’ve been on the field since May of 2010, and I’m just starting to feel like my grasp of the Visayan language has increased to the point that I truly understand the Filipino culture. I’ve reached the point where I am able to write most of my messages in Visayan, rather than writing them in English and then translating as I go along. The difference this has created in my preaching cannot be overstated. I have learned that a single, carefully worded Visayan sentence written in my outline and delivered with conviction is infinitely more poignant than 10 or 15 minutes of extemporaneous explanation in English or Visayan. I am by no means suggesting that I have “arrived” or somehow “figured it all out,” but I feel like I’ve figured out what I need to learn to really make an impact on the Visayan-speaking people. Additionally, I feel like our staff, most of whom had no Bible or ministry training whatsoever prior to being hired, are really starting to grow in their practical ministry skills, as well as in their understanding of their pastor’s philosophy of ministry. I say all that to say this: I believe that we are just getting started here in Dapitan City, and I sincerely believe that 2025 is going to be a hallmark year for our church. Please be in prayer for our Bible institute. Our staff and students are growing, but I desperately need God’s guidance and help going forward. Thank you for your prayers, friendship, and support.

Dividends on Your Investment

Last week, starting on Monday morning at 2:00, a wave of illness swept through our family. Beth started it, and then Joey followed suit a few hours later. On Wednesday, just as Joey was getting better, Ruth and AJ came down with it at about the same time. On Thursday, it was Michael’s turn, leaving just Hannah and me to run for our lives. Ultimately, only Hannah escaped unscathed. On Friday afternoon, just two hours before our scheduled soul-winning time, I felt the fever coming on. Initially, I thought I could push through and still go soul winning, but by the time we started the meeting, I could hardly stand. I was frustrated to the point of tears as I struggled to lead the meeting. After we finished, I went home to rest while our soul winners went out without me. In spite of my personal frustration, I couldn’t help but be proud of our people. Even without their pastor there to lead the charge, our faithful soul winners led 69 people to Jesus Christ that afternoon!

That being said, I was still frustrated, but I have learned over the years that on the rare occasion that I don’t get to go out soul winning at my usual time, God will often bring soul-winning opportunities to me. Such was the case this past Monday. One of the great blessings of our ministry here in Dapitan is the fact that God chose to give us property within walking distance of the public high school. Consequently, many of our young people come to the church to eat lunch on school days, often bringing their classmates with them. This past Monday, I stepped out of my office sometime around noon and saw one of our young ladies standing outside with two of her classmates from school. One was already saved, led to Christ by one of our young men, but the other was not. His name was Erik, and upon meeting him, I immediately felt that the Holy Spirit had been working in his heart. My hunch was immediately proven correct when I asked him if he was sure that he was on his way to Heaven. His eyes moistened as he shook his head and said that he wasn’t sure. I asked him if I could take a few minutes and show him what the Bible says about how to be saved, and he eagerly agreed. We sat down in the auditorium, and I led him down the old Romans Road. About 20 minutes later, Erik happily bowed his head and put his faith in Jesus Christ! Soul winning still works, and sometimes God will bring them to you!

Yours for souls,

Mike Morrissey
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Missionaries to the Philippines

“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.” 1 Corinthians 16:9