

The Mike MORRISSEY Family

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Dear Praying Friends,

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD . . ." (Psalm 37:23) I find this statement very encouraging. One thing I have learned over the last nearly 8½ years in my first, and hopefully only, pastorate is that God likes to lead me ONE step at a time. It is true that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, but allow me to add, based on my personal experience, that THEY CAN ALSO BE VERY CONFUSING!

When we arrived in Dapitan in July of 2017, I had a plan for our ministry here. It was detailed; it was organized; it was in writing. Unfortunately, it was also completely shattered less than six months after we started our church. Nothing has gone like I expected and planned! Over the years, God has slowly dismantled my ministry dreams and replaced them with something very different. Obviously, some things are never going to change. Soul winning, standards, separation from the world, and strong preaching against sin are nonnegotiable—and I would rather die than change! However, if you had told me 8½ years ago that I would one day develop a Visayan songbook from scratch, I don't *think* I would have laughed in your face, but I'm not sure! I PROBABLY would have politely chuckled and said, "No, you've got the wrong guy. I'm a doer, not a scholar." Let me just be honest; I enjoyed almost everything about Bible college . . . except for the classes!

When we first arrived in Dapitan, I assumed that we would have a ministry like most other missionaries in the Philippines. I assumed that I would start a Bible institute to train pastors and ministry workers, and if God so willed, it might even become a Bible college at some point. In those early days, for some reason, it never occurred to my feeble brain that a man who really didn't like class just might not be the best qualified person to run an academic institution! I will say this: I am absolutely certain that God led me to start an institute back in 2020 as we were coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. I do not believe that it was a mistake; God pushed me into it, but not for the reasons that I thought. During that time of dealing with our students and trying to figure out what they most needed to learn, God began opening my eyes more and more to the linguistic needs of the Philippines. Our students learned a lot, but I learned a lot more. In 2022, through a series of very difficult events, we were forced to put our Bible institute "on pause" for an indefinite period of time. It would be nearly two years before that "pause" came to an end.

In 2024, God began pushing me to restart our institute, and I'll be honest, this puzzled me immensely. By this point in my life, I was much more aware of my shortcomings in the area of teaching and academic administration, and at the same time, God was clearly pushing me more and more into the linguistic arena. I could not, to save my life, figure out what God was doing, so I just took the next step and started having classes again. It was during this second round of our Bible institute that God really began opening my eyes to linguistic needs that I had never before considered. After several months, God, in His mercy, allowed us to stop the institute, probably for the final time.

I say all that to say this: over the last 12 months, God's long-term plan for my life and ministry has finally crystalized in my heart and mind. I know what God wants me to do! Allow me to use a Bible story to illustrate what God has shown me over the last year or so. In I Samuel 13, Saul was preparing to go to battle against the Philistines, but in Verse 22, we read these startling words, *"So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found."* Saul had the soldiers he needed to win the battle, but he didn't have any weapons to give them! If that doesn't describe ministry work in the Philippines, I don't know what does! The Philippines is the lone bright spot (with the possible exception of South Korea) in a very, very dark region of the world. The Philippines has accurately been described as "the doorway to Asia," and for good reason! God has been working in the Philippines for decades. Great ministries have been built, and thousands of men have surrendered to the ministry. We HAVE the soldiers, but we LACK the weapons they need to reach their greatest potential in the battle! Certainly, we have given our soldiers the most important weapon—the Sword of the Word of God. Unfortunately, even this weapon is often "wrapped in a cloth" of ignorance of the English language. When you look at this story of King Saul and his army, you have to ask the question: "Why didn't they have any weapons?" We find the answer in Verse 19. *"Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears."* Saul's army had no weapons because the enemy had made a priority of preventing their production. Over the last year or so, God has made it clear to me that He has called and gifted me to be a smith. We will never have a "normal" ministry here in Dapitan, and I'm okay with that. Would you please pray specifically for our linguistic projects? Our enemy is very aware of how important they are, and he is doing everything he can to stop us. Thank you for your prayers, friendship, and support.

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