

February
2023



GLOBAL TRAINING
NETWORK

Our Itinerary



- Jan 12-Feb 4: Philippines Ministry**
- Feb 17-19: GTN Leadership Gathering**
- Feb 23-March 19: Nepal/ Kurdistan Ministries**
- March 26: Mesa Baptist Church**
- April 16: Grace Church, Chino Valley (tentative)**
- May 4-June 4: Rwanda Ministry**



In His Grip

Starting Where We Began

When we began our training ministry in 2009, some of our earliest training forays were in the Philippines. Now we are in our 14th year, and we've started 2023 with three weeks of ministry in the Philippines. I left home on January 10 and flew to Seattle, Taipei, and Cebu in the Visayan Islands. After a day to catch up to the 15 hour leap in time zones, I flew from Cebu to Bacolod on the Island of Negros Occidental. A few more hours in the car and we were in Cauayan, my home for the first week. I taught for the second time at the Berean Bible Institute in Cauayan.

My students were very young, ranging in age from 16 to 25 with an average age of about 21. Some of them



are already pastors. Others are very definitely heading for ministry while a few may simply be getting a good Bible education. Our subject was Christian Stewardship, the second course in the Timothy Leadership Training curriculum. Some of the students reported on the action plans they completed after the last class. Those who carried out their plans led more than



200 people to Christ. The majority of these conversions resulted from the work of one student named Ruth who is very outgoing and obviously has a gift of evangelism. I was able to help another student who was extremely nervous presenting before her peers in class. After class we had a good conversation about the ups and downs of being

God Finishes What He Started!

"...knowing this, that he who began a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil 1:6 KJV) I was a little surprised at just how much I enjoyed teaching college (and high school) age students during my recent ministry in the Philippines. I'm not exactly the youth pastor type. The truth is, I simply believe in them. No, that's not quite it. I believe in what God is going to do with them. I am completely confident that He will use them greatly! This fills me with enthusiasm for these delightful kids with all their adult lives ahead of them. God has started with them, and He always completes His work. Now that I've been in ministry for 40 years, or thereabouts, I've seen this truth again and again. I've known lots of people over a period of decades and have been able to take enormous joy in their spiritual progress. I've baptized young couples and later baptized their kids. I've walked through hard things with people and seen them rise from the ashes of defeat to know victory once more. I've seen impatient angry people grow to be loving and gracious. I've



seen harshness turn to tenderness, stinginess to generosity, cynicism to faith. I've seen marriages rebuilt after teetering on the brink of utter ruin. I've seen young pastors, rough in all their ways, be polished by God over time to become precious gems to the people whose lives they influence. Already in their young lives some of these students have

been powerfully transformed. In my report, I mentioned a young woman named Ruth who has a gift of evangelism and leads people to Christ regularly. What I didn't mention was that Ruth is an abortion survivor. Her mother informed her of her attempt to end her pregnancy and her wish that she had succeeded. How does a teenage girl get past something like that? It may sound glib, but for Ruth it has simply been a matter of faith. She knows how much she is loved by God. She trusts Him for that. It has given her the confidence to do things unusual for a young woman. At 25, Ruth is our oldest Cauayan student. Prior to her coming to Berean Bible Institute, she joined the military and did well there, becoming a fully qualified aircraft mechanic. Her grasp of God's love is also what makes her the confident and loving evangelist that she is.

Ruth is not the only one with a story. Everybody has one. For believers it is always a story of change. While there may be days (weeks? months?) when it seems that nothing is changing except possibly for the worse, God has the bigger picture, and He has promised to bring the story to a good conclusion. So, when I look at bright young faces of spiritually sensitive young people, I can't help grinning. I've seen too much to be uncertain

Starting Where We Began (cont'd)

an introvert. I shared some techniques I've learned that help make presenting to a small audience feel less threatening. (Oddly, a large audience is less personal and therefore less scary for many introverts.) These students really enjoy one another and had a wonderful time on picture day.

From Cauayan, I returned to Bacolod and flew on to Manila where I once again led a class on Integrative Theology for masters' students at the Conservative Baptist Seminary, Asia. This time we studied the doctrines of Salvation, the Church, and Last Things, examining each subject from historical, biblical, systematic, apologetic, and practical perspectives. It was a challenging week for students and professor alike. In addition to the academic rigor of the subject matter,



it was an evening class, and it took me a few hours to wind down afterward before I could sleep. However, for some perverse reason, I went right on waking up before dawn as usual. Our sessions were recorded for future use and went out on Zoom for students joining us from southern Luzon. We had the opportunity to visit some of them on Thursday. Two pastor/students in that class are leading really significant ministries. One leads a church of 500 members with a Christian school of 400 students. The final exam was on Friday. Having learned from my experience last time, I put a lot less essay into the test with a lot more multiple choice. While I have not yet had the opportunity to grade them, I believe the students did very well.

I finished my Filipino foray in Davao on the Island of Mindanao. Like the south side of Chicago in Jim Croce's old song, Mindanao

God Finishes What He Started (cont'd)

about their ultimate future. Will they face hard things? Everyone does. Will they stumble? Quite possibly. Will they know heartache? Almost certainly. But are they the precious souls for whom Jesus died? Absolutely! Will they grow to reflect their Lord more fully and faithfully? Without question! Is God going to do great things through them? You know He will!

It is a privilege to have some small part in the spiritual formation of young and open-hearted people whose greatest desire is to do God's will with their lives. I laugh and have fun with them, but inwardly I am filled with hope because of them! I give glory to

God for their lives! I also thank all of you for partnering with us as we help to launch them into a life of service for God. Let's keep going. Our labor is not in vain.

represents the 'baddest part of the Philippines.' It's a rough island. During this, my first visit, I

taught a class of pastors from Davao Del Norte (the Province of North Davao) in the city of Tagum. I led them in the same material I used in Cauayan: Christian Stewardship. We also spent some time on the subject of church management in general. They had many questions. Since this was a new group, I gave them our pro-life presentation and gifted them 50 fetal models to use in their own ministries when they need to speak up for life. There is a possible further opportunity here to teach tribal pastors beyond the Davao area. This will require further exploration, but it is a further opportunity for ministry.

Once class was over, I returned to Cebu and from there made the trip home via Taipei and Los Angeles (landing in L.A. before I took off thanks to the international date line). Next trip is coming up at the end of February and will involve Nepal and Kurdistan. Carpe Deum. Soli Deo Gloria!



Our Praises & Prayer Requests



- Praise God for good giving at the start of the new year.
- Praise God we already have more than 200 souls in 2023.
- Praise God for successful ministry in the Philippines.
- Please pray for our upcoming GTN leadership gathering in February.
- Please pray for our ministry in Nepal and Kurdistan in February/March.
- Please pray for our upcoming move to Iowa.

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"Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account... And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:17, 19)

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