

July-August 2006 Newsletter

Leaders and Baptism:

Some of you who will read this newsletter might recall a couple of our very first prayer requests while we were on deputation in 2002. We asked each church that we visited to pray specifically for those first souls that would be saved and for the first leaders that would emerge. We began praying for them almost a year before we arrived in the Philippines. Our prayer was that God would soften their hearts and that He would begin to make our "path straight" as we planted churches. We have filled these lines over and over with praises for what God has done in and through these first few men and women who accepted Him. We have seen God work greatly as He has grown the ministry here step by step. One of these important steps recently was the ordination of one of our men (Nonoy Benculado) who has been so very faithful over the past three years. We celebrated the call that God has placed on his life and he has responded with an even greater resolve to serve his Lord.



We had our first baptism in the fall of 2003 and to date I have been the one to baptize each new member. It has been my burden that this area of our ministry is purely indigenous and I have prayed for over a year for the right time to hand off this ministry of baptizing to our leaders. Nonoy told me in the middle of June that we had several waiting for baptism and so we scheduled baptism for the first of July. I shared my heart with him in advance and asked him to pray about being the one to baptize each of these new believers. He nervously accepted and asked me to join him in the water on the day of the baptism. I stood there with tears in my eyes as I watched my hearts desire come to reality as Nonoy baptized 13 new believers that day.



I have never felt more joy in ministry as I do watching these new believers become disciples and then become leaders. Please join us in praying for the new leaders we have training now and the effect of their ministries as they begin to reach to their family, friends and neighbors.

Visitors:



The past few months we have hosted several teams from various areas of ministry both here in the Philippines and from the States. We have had times of great fellowship and each team has been such an encouragement to us and to our people.

We have been blessed by the V.S.M. teams that have ministered in the past and this year's team was equally as much a blessing. Bro. Stan Scroggins, from First Baptist Church in Magnolia, Arkansas, led the team of seven students from Texas and Arkansas. We traveled to four different islands and did work projects and ministry outreaches for the time they were here. Whether by jeepney or boat, motorcycle or tricycle, they were always more than ready to do whatever it took to complete the ministry. Thanks team for your selfless service of the Lord and the people of the Philippines!!



Over the past couple of years, we have hosted several Filipinos church planters who were preparing to go to other parts of the country and even outside the Philippines to begin working. The first week of August was just such a time for us and the ministry here in Cebu. We had the privilege of hearing the heart and catching the

vision of a few of God's finest servants as they came here to observe the ministry in Cebu. We would ask that you would join us in prayer for these men and their families as they leave their homes and familiar surroundings in order to take the Gospel to nations that aren't open to Christianity. (We are not placing their names here for their own protection but please continue to pray for "those faithful" who are being sent out from the Philippines)

New Phase of Ministry:

With the strengthening of the local ministry and the development of our leaders here in Cebu, we have found this to be a good time to begin new areas of ministry. Cebu is a city of 2.5 million people so we don't have to go far to find areas that are in great spiritual need. We



have small established works in the mountains, in the small islands near Cebu and other areas of Cebu city where we could focus. We ask that you would join us in prayer for God's will as we make important decisions concerning this new phase of ministry.

As always, we are so blessed by your prayers and support of our family and the ministry here in the Philippines! Your prayers and emails are very encouraging! Thank you so much and God bless each of you!

The Robert Murphy family