

Launching into the New School Year

August 2016

Dear Friends and Prayer Supporters,

It really WAS like a rocket launch.

It began with a two-month summer countdown from April to May while we frantically tried to get all systems “go” for the coming school year – discipleship materials, training for our Bicol University student leaders, renovation of our new student “missions control” center, transfer of our church to its new launch pad, and my personal relocation to the student center as well.

It was a lot harder than I had expected. Especially problems with our student center renovation bogged us down. But then, ready or not, the launch commenced. It began with 12 boarders descending upon our center. Then, hardly able to catch my breath, I was jettisoned into 7 new weekly Bible studies and ministry activities. Until now I continue to feel the g-force of ministry as we push through the spiritual stratosphere of this new semester of campus work.

And yet, even though a little bumpy, like any rocket ride you might take, the ascent hoists you into wide new breathtaking vistas of God’s glory. This was no less true of my flight. As I passed through the first clouds of dust from our student center renovation and then the shock wave of so many new activities, I also began to see God’s work in new awe-inspiring ways.

The first scene that opened before me was the rising of our new student leaders. Left with a big leadership gap when both our student president and vice president graduated last year, we were forced to replace them with students still pretty young in faith and experience. At first we weren’t sure if they could handle the ride. And yet they exceeded our expectations and really soared to meet the challenge of the new school year. Their shining commitment was inspiring!

Then like a second-stage engine ignition, God blasted me into a new senior-high ministry as well. I had prayed for such an open door before, but didn’t know how it could happen. Then, unexpectedly, I received a call from a friend who had been recruited to teach 11th grade Earth Science. The appointment had been sudden, he hadn’t been able to arrange his schedule yet to meet all class periods, and so needed a substitute. I took the challenge, and within three days became an earth science teacher for three classes. It was a short burn, but by God’s grace it generated enough thrust to launch three new Bible studies in the school. This ministry is still not quite in orbit, but I am praying hard and working diligently with a few students to see if these studies can unfold into a wider senior high school ministry, similar to our Bicol University ministry, ASC. Please pray for this! It’s a new unclear flight path, and so navigating the course is not so easy.

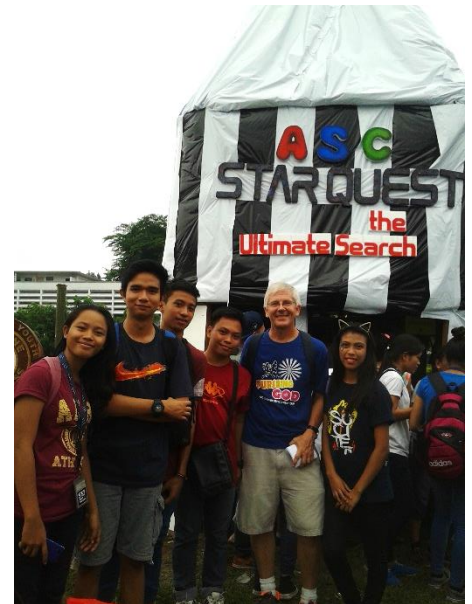
One other highlight of this upward ministry flight was the chance to join the BU Student Welcome Party. In this event each campus organization was given the chance to design a booth to advertise their group. So we joined. Our booth took the form of – yes, you guessed it – a rocket! Inside this “rocket” we simulated an extraterrestrial signal from SETI as well as built a 6-foot-high planetarium. Through a series of astronomy games, we introduced the gospel to the students who visited. It was an explosive hit, and God surprised us by allowing us to win “best booth” for the event. What a flight!

God is good. His journeys are not always easy, free of bumps, nor void of a few scary moments. And yet they always bring us closer to Him and allow us to see His glory more clearly.

Thanks for flying with me and being part of this amazing journey with Jesus. There is no One better to fly with than Him!

Soaring by the grace of the Lord,

Dave
David Matthews



Standing with students in front of our rocket booth at the BU Welcome Party.

Faith in Action
P.O. Box 23, Tabaco City, Albay 4511, Philippines
e-mail: davecmatt@gmail.com

Fueling the Work Through Prayer

Every rocket needs fuel – lots of it. In fact, about 96% of a rocket’s weight can be fuel. It’s a lot like that in God’s work. To really soar in ministry, that ministry needs a lot of fuel – fuel in the form of prayer.

That’s why I’m really so grateful if you are adding your prayers to the work here. I really need them a lot! Every day I can see where prayer has punched holes in the spiritual atmosphere and opened doors for God’s Word. But I can also see where perhaps lack of prayer has kept things from being too easy or fruitful. I fear the latter. So thank you for praying!

Here are a few things that could use special attention this month in the student ministry, as well as my personal life:

1. ***Open doors for senior high school ministry.*** The effort to start a new high school ministry is moving forward but hitting some turbulence along the way. Inconsistent schedules for students have caused some loss of momentum, and we need lots of prayer to solidify the system and schedule for this ministry.
2. ***Consistency of college students in ministry.*** We’ve had some really encouraging results from outreach and Bible studies on campus. However, as always, when schedules tighten up and pressures mount for students, there is fall-off from ministry activities. Please pray that the Lord continues to make attendance in Bible studies possible for students and motivate them to attend. This also goes for other believers both in our Legazpi and three island churches (the latter where Pastor Fernando and Leo are handling the churches).
3. ***Completion of Student Center.*** Problems with workers have really slowed down the work, and until now it is not finished. Please pray that the workers can come in and work efficiently and within budget, and finish things quickly. With school in progress, I don’t have much time now to oversee them.
4. ***Back problem.*** As I shared before, I have problems with 2 discs in my lower back, which two orthopedic surgeons have said need surgery soon. Despite the daily pain last summer, I sensed God saying I should push through with the work as long as possible. When I made that decision, amazingly the pain began to subside! However, the problem is not solved, and there are times I really feel them. So I really need prayer for God’s wisdom and healing. Thanks!
5. ***Continued growth in my relationship with the Lord.*** Nothing is more important than flying close with the Lord. So please pray I can continue well in my journey of growing in Him so that I can glorify Him and help others know Him better.

Thank you again for your partnership through prayer. I appreciate you a lot!