

Leaf by Leaf by Leaf...

March 2012

The bamboo reverberated with an undeniable cracking sound under my foot. Since I was presently suspended nine-feet off the ground helping install the new anahaw palm-leaf roof on our San Miguel Island chapel, it wasn't really the sound I wanted to hear. I quickly grabbed the wooden beam above my head, only to find the cracking sound quickly replaced by the laughter of the other men who somehow found it amusing to see the sudden terror on my face! We better supported the bamboo scaffolding and kept on working to install the roof – leaf by leaf, leaf by leaf – all 2000 of them!

Putting the roof on the new chapel has been just one of my many varied activities since returning to the Philippines last December. No day has passed that has not been unique and interesting (as island life typically is)! Yet, as varied as the activities have been, one thing has been common to them all: each one has been a part of bit by bit – leaf by leaf – expanding the Kingdom of God here on the islands.

One of the main areas of expansion has been in our radio ministry. Returning to a radio ministry already broadcasting 17 hours/day, I still found a number of needs. The frequent power-outages were resulting in cuts in our broadcasting, Bible teaching was still too light, and some far-flung families were still having problems receiving the broadcasts. Yet with the installation of a new antenna, a battery charger to supplement our solar charging, a 2nd battery, plus the addition of a couple more programs (I am now teaching daily through John as well as continuing a daily morning devotion), our radio station is now “leaf-by-leaf” running a lot better.

In addition to this, we have also been joined by CJ, a new Christian in our church, who is helping us gather news from around the islands to broadcast. This is part of our focus to better connect to the non-Christian community and draw them into the “fellowship of the station” where they can hear God's Word. CJ's a great blessing!

Campsite construction continues as well. Although all major projects are looking good, there are a lot of important “minor” ones. We are presently remodeling our old campsite chapel to become an office, small meeting room and library. We continue to work as well on some landscaping. God has been so faithful in supplying for these projects!

The churches continue to shine as lights for the gospel in three areas. We continue along the road of one day eventually by God's grace turning all the churches over to local leadership. It is a leaf-by-leaf process. This February we adopted a new system in which two of the three churches will be overseen primarily by two of our elders, while I will continue with the third church as a model for the other two. Please pray for God to raise up more leaders committed and zealous for the Lord, as well as His patience while I wait upon Him to do so. Thanks!

The building of God's Kingdom is not always something that happens overnight. Since it involves changes in people, it can be a very long process sometimes. Yet if we just keep working and trusting, leaf by leaf, person by person, Bible study by Bible study, and prayer by prayer, eventually the Lord will establish His church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it. It's to that hope that I continue to cling day by day.

Thanks so much to those of you who continue to build with me through your prayers and support. Though you may not know it, it is you who are helping keep the scaffolding from cracking under my feet so that I can accomplish that for which I have been called – leaf by leaf by leaf. Thanks!

Still suspended by His grace,

Dave

David Matthews



Standing on the beam (this time cement) & installing another leaf in our new Maliktay, San Miguel Island Chapel (Our former chapel will be used for Sunday School)

Faith in Action

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Building Prayer by Prayer

Your prayers are truly the scaffolding of the work here, and I depend upon them so desperately! Thank you so much for continuing to lift the work up.

Here are a few areas where I could really use continued and sustained prayer as I continue to press on with the Lord in His work here:

1. **Wisdom on how to build.** Truly there is so much to do here, and the setback of not being able to turn the churches over has acerbated this fact. Please pray that the Lord will grant me wisdom on how to use limited time to deal with what seems to be unlimited needs! Also please pray for wisdom on how and when to eventually make the move to turn things over.
2. **Leadership development.** This past week I began a series of 5 different trainings for those in the church interested in serving. These will run for 10 weeks, Lord willing, in an effort to energize more workers, who we need badly. Please pray for God's strength and anointing as I lead these trainings, as well as for His Spirit to draw more people to attend (A total of thirteen are involved at the moment). Also please pray for Michael, Cesar, Silverino, and Ramir, four men in whom I especially see potential for leadership yet who are still young and inexperienced in service.
3. **Upcoming camps.** Summer is almost here, and with it a series of camps. Please pray that we can finish all campsite projects in time, and that the Lord will give us the grace and strength we need to set up and run the upcoming camps.
4. **Radio ministry.** Please continue to pray for licensing of our radio ministry. By God's grace we were again granted a one-year mayor's permit, but are still waiting on the National Telecommunications Commission and Far East Broadcasting Company to work out details as to whether we can be fully licensed as a low-power FM station.
5. **Personal spiritual strength.** The many needs here in the ministry sometimes take a toll on me physically and spiritually, and for this reason I would really solicit your prayers as I continue to seek to keep in step with the Lord and allow Him to carry the load. May my heart always be filled with His joy and hope!

Thanks again so much for praying, and may the Lord continue to build you up as well in your most holy faith and bless the work of your hands for His glory!

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