

Replanting

October 2012

Dear Friends and Prayer Partners,

It's a basic principle of nature that you reap what you sow. If you wish to reap a large harvest you need to sow much and sow often. If you are content with weeds, long afternoon naps on the hammock will do just fine.

Understanding this principle, these past months we here on the islands have embarked on an aggressive plan for sowing - and re-sowing. With the death of one of our elders, Rudy Bueno, last April, as well as another leader stepping down from his position a year ago, the church ministry has suffered some discouraging setbacks. Whereas I was envisioning turning over the work to local leadership this year, I am now finding myself having to resume ministry even previously delegated. In addition, since we are nearing completion of our campsite construction (only a few projects ongoing), a significant number of men in the church who we previously employed have left to look for work in Manila, further eroding our leadership base here.

Honestly it's been a little hard to accept this chain of events, and yet, rather than allowing it to discourage me too much, I have instead taken the challenge to sow afresh and see what new work the Lord may do. For example:

These past months we have really beefed-up our **radio ministry**. Still broadcasting 17 hours/day, we added a number of new programs aimed at encouraging people in their faith. We now have twelve, of which I handle four.

Next we have initiated a new thrust of **door-to-door outreach**. Two days each week enthusiastic groups from the churches join me to walk the dirt paths of the islands to share the gospel with those who have not heard. The results have been encouraging! People have proven much more open than we expected, and there have been a number of decisions for Christ as a result. Three new home Bible studies have been opened, and there are now new attendees in the churches as well. Besides all of this, we discovered through our visits that a lot more people are listening to our radio station than we previously thought! So, our radio sowing seems to be paying off as well.

During these past months I have also begun sowing into a **fresh group of potential workers**. Our five youth interns are one such group. Between our nightly devotions and their daily ministry involvement, the interns are all maturing noticeably in their faith. Several new men in the church are also taking steps into ministry, and, though they are still a ways from being able to replace the leaders we lost, the positive growth in their lives is encouraging.

Besides all this spiritual planting, we have also accelerated our **agricultural ministry**. Our past few years of experimenting with organic agriculture have proven that we can generally double to quadruple the normal vegetable harvest people get here. As a result, in August I took the step to start weekly trainings for 7 church families in organic agriculture. Each family is required to start their own organic garden, and my hope is that their enthusiasm will inspire others to do the same. Poverty is a big problem here, but I really believe an impact can be made if the people learn how to steward the resources God has already given. Please pray for a good harvest!

To be a farmer - physically or spiritual - you need a lot of perseverance. As storms can destroy crops, there are also spiritual storms that can seem to topple ministry objectives. And yet, because we are called by the Lord of the Harvest to step out into His harvest field, we must press on and keep sowing, keep replanting - and keep trusting - for only then can we hope to experience the bountiful harvest He has promised.

Again I want to thank all of you so much who through your prayers, love, encouragement or support have helped me keep planting in God's field for me. And in whatever field He has placed you, may He also help you persevere until you see the harvest He intends through you as well. Thank you again so much!

With two hands to the plow,

Dave
David Matthews



Ready to replant - holding an avocado seedling

Faith in Action

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Sowing in Prayer

Throughout the Bible we see story after story of people who sowed in prayer and reaped amazing results as a result of God's answers. We would be foolish to think we could reap any better without laying all our concerns and needs before the Lord.

Thanks so much to those of you who sow in prayer for the ministry here in the Philippines. Your prayers mean a lot to me, and I know I need them daily.

Here are a few ministry seedlings that really need to be planted in prayer in the next couple months. Thanks again for being a part of this!

1. ***New believers and attendees in Bible studies or Sunday service.*** Please pray that they will grow in their faith and become active participants in the work God is doing on the islands of San Miguel and Cagraray.
2. ***Potential leaders*** -- pray for Ramir and Cesar, two men who are showing a real interest in serving the Lord. Both are leading home fellowship groups, and Cesar has agreed to be a co-leader of one of my new Bible studies as well.
3. ***Radio ministry*** -- God has blessed this ministry in so many ways. It still amazes me we have this opportunity. However, broadcasting 17 hours daily with multiple programs doesn't allow us much time to relax! Please pray for stamina and wisdom in running this ministry. Also please pray for the ongoing process of trying to get fully licensed.
4. ***Agriculture*** -- Please pray for the seven families participating in the first organic agriculture training: that they will remain interested, and that God will give them a good first harvest to encourage them on and inspire others. Pray also for me also, since the weekly training requires a sizeable investment of time. Thanks!
5. ***Livelihood Development*** -- After everything else is done, we continue to push as well to develop new livelihoods, believing that catalyzing such livelihoods, particularly among the Christians, is a key not only for their own financial stability, but also for that of the churches. Please pray that we will be able to successfully complete an order for 2000 key chains for Singapore this month and that the Lord will open many doors as well to sell our handmade Christmas cards this holiday season in the US.

Thank you again for all your prayers! I know they are the fertilizer to make each of these ministries bloom and bear fruit.

For more info about what God is doing on our islands, please feel free to visit:

www.fianews.wordpress.com