



The Bruce Rice Family IN THE PHILIPPINES

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A QUICK LOOK BACK OVER 2017

Jeanne and I are directly involved in two ministries here in western Mindanao island. During week days we live in Dipolog City and work in Westside Baptist College of Ministry. The school is a ministry of Westside Baptist Church. When I resigned as pastor of the church in December of 2012, one of my associate pastors, Anecito Calibuhan, became the senior pastor of the church. I have remained as executive director of the Bible college to allow Pastor Calibuhan to concentrate on the needs of the church and to focus on his personal growth as a pastor. In 2017, there was a total of 482 persons who made professions of faith in Jesus Christ through the various ministries of our Bible college students and staff.

On the weekends, Jeanne, Emily and I head south for the city of Molave in the neighboring province of Zamboanga del Sur. It is a ninety-minute drive south through the mountains. We have been doing this for over three years, working to establish the Salug Valley Baptist Church. Last year, there was a total of 586 persons who made professions of faith in Jesus Christ through the ministry of Salug Valley Baptist Church. In addition, 37 persons followed the Lord in baptism. The average Sunday morning attendance for the year was 110 persons.

During Christmas vacation, we hosted a one-day youth camp in Molave. One hundred and twenty young people participated from six different churches. Over half of them were from Molave. Seven young people received the Jesus Christ that day.

JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2018 IN MOLAVE

In January, we had our first world mission conference at Salug Valley Baptist Church. The attendance was good in every service. Interest was very high among both the adults and the young people as they learned about New Testament missions and their place in God's plan. Pastor Angelito Magna was our guest speaker. He and his wife were both trained at the first Bible college we started in Cagayan de Oro City. Pastor Magna was the last man we commissioned to start a new church from Westside Baptist Church, before I resigned as pastor in 2012. He has established Sanito Baptist Church in the city of Ipil, here on the Zamboanga Peninsula. Pastor and Mrs. Magna have four children and are a faithful couple. One of their converts donated property to the church and they are now slowly constructing a small auditorium and a parsonage. If you would like to help them financially that would be a great blessing.

During the Sunday evening services in February, we worked to invite visitors to come and hear a simple Gospel message. Even though two of the four nights were hindered by rain, there were still quite a few visitors who attended during the month and over 29 of them received the Lord Jesus Christ.

THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT

March 21-23 – The first Westside Baptist College of Ministry Alumni Bible Conference – to celebrate the tenth anniversary of our first commencement in 2008. We are inviting all alumni and their families to join with us. Dr. John Collier from Parkview Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, is the main speaker for all of our graduation activities. Pastor Collier and his church have faithfully supported us and prayed for us since 1985.

March 23 – The WBCM Annual Graduation Banquet – honoring the graduating Class of 2018. Related to the anniversary celebration, we will recognize the local pastors of the churches that have been a blessing to the college financially since we opened in 2005.

March 25 – The WBCM Commencement Ceremony – with seven persons receiving their degrees, five of them are male students and two of them are female.

April 24-25 – The Zamboanga Peninsula Baptist Youth Camp – hosted jointly by Westside Baptist Church in Dipolog City and Salug Valley Baptist Church in Molave. This is the third year the two churches have worked together in hosting this camp. We again anticipate an increase in the number of young people attending and the number of churches participating, as we experienced in the first two years.

May 16-17 – The first combined LBC&I and WBCM Alumni Camp – for the graduates of the two Bible colleges we have started here in Mindanao. Lapasan Baptist College & Institute was begun in 1988 in Cagayan de Oro City; and as I mentioned earlier, Westside Baptist College of Ministry was started in Dipolog City in 2005. My wife and I have a great desire to help the graduates of the two schools form closer relationships among themselves and among their churches.

Jeanne and I are hosting this Alumni Camp ourselves through the ministry organization we started three years ago, Baptist International Ministries of Mindanao, Inc. We have encouraged the alumni to bring their families and we will take care of their meals. It is difficult to know in advance how many people can attend because of the cost of transportation for them, but we anticipate at least 450 persons will be there. We are trusting the Lord to provide what they will need for travel expenses and what we will need to feed them. Everyone is excited and looking forward to this event.

June 19-22 – WBCM Enrollment, Orientation and Revival – for the 2018-2019 school year. We begin the new school year with a week of teaching and preaching services to help prepare both the students and the staff for the challenges ahead. It is always an exciting week for everyone.

June 27 – Departing for a One-year Furlough – which will be seven years since our last furlough. There are a lot of preparations to be made in WBCM and in Salug Valley Baptist Church to allow us to be gone that long. I believe our extended absence will be very beneficial for those men and women who will have increased responsibilities and obligations while we are gone. It can be a time of growth for them and an opportunity to gain valuable experience.

I celebrated my sixty-first birthday in February. Jeanne and I were both twenty-eight years old when we arrived in the Philippines in 1986. We have spent over half of our lives in Mindanao. I have never ceased to be amazed about what God is doing here, and how much there is to do for the Lord. I am already looking forward to returning from our furlough in June of 2019. And yet, I often feel great sadness when I think about how much more I could have done and how much still remains to accomplish in this small part of the Lord's harvest. Please pray for us.

May God continue to bless you and guide you by His marvelous grace as you navigate this new year, with all of its possibilities, opportunities, surprises and trials.

Sincerely in Christ,

Bruce A. Rice

