

The Mindanao Report

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Urgent Prayer Request

What you're looking at in the picture above is the almost finished fence for the church area. Although enclosing 1 hectare of land with a wall is no easy task, we are happy to be making progress. If we don't put the fences up first, anybody will wander across our place, put their animals there to graze, and just hang out (yes, I'm speaking from experience - "fences make good neighbors!"). This being our first project in a foreign country, there are a lot of factors to consider and a lot of different laws to research and comply with. Here in the Philippines you can pay off just about anybody and they will commit to turning a blind eye to breaking the law, which makes for an interesting opportunity to teach new Filipino Christians about following the law correctly and being blameless in all their operations.

Well, that brings us to the present distress. The Mayor is the head of the city, and the smaller portions of the city are called "barangay" (bah-rahng-g-eye) and they have a "captain" who runs the local affairs. The barangay captain is not happy that we would not give him a bribe for our building projects, so he is causing us as much grief as he can. But it's a chance to show grace and be an example to the locals here, and also to investigate the legal processes involved and understand how much authority the "Cap" has.

We have been paying for "water sharing" with a group of locals from a deep well across the street. The neighbour who controls our water doesn't like an American here and apparently doesn't want a church here either. So for over a month he has been not turning on our water properly, and that means we haven't had enough water to do basic things. Also, it is summer... and the days are very, very hot... did I mention we have no shade on the property? Pity on the workers here also!

In order to counter this lack of water we have been buying large jugs of filtered water from a local water source. That has cost us about \$8 a day. The electric company just raised the price of electric for everybody, and they are a private electric company for this area so everyone is suffering. When the electric bill came in for the "water sharing" well, it was way too high and the people couldn't pay it, so the power company cut the line and now there is no power to the pump, and hence - no water for anyone.

Needless to say, we needed to find a different water source. The most obvious solution is to dig a well. So we found the best price for a driller, settled on everything and began to drill. The barangay captain came and said he would not allow us to drill on this piece of private property. He had a better idea, that we would finance a well for him (the local barangay) and he will "pay us back." As you can guess, making such a deal with someone who has caused us problems already is out of the question. Plus, this well is for a church - not an American fund for their government projects. We checked the laws to make sure we met all of the requirements, said "no thank you" in a polite way, and continued drilling. The barangay captain was furious and demanded that we stop immediately even though we hadn't broken any laws. He went to his friend the Mayor and they both agreed that the American needs to fund their government well.

Now we have to go to a higher authority (the DNR) to get national authority to get a well on our private property which is dedicated to the service of the LORD. The barangay captain and the mayor both agreed if we had DNR approval, there was nothing more they could do. Unfortunately, it is a lengthy and complicated process, but we don't have any other choice. When you're backed into a corner and there is no way out, you need some good aerial support - help from above!

Please pray with us about this situation.

In Christ Jesus, The White Family