

The Bruce Rice Family

In the Philippines



Field Address

P.O. Box 157
Dipolog City 7100
Zamboanga del Norte
Philippines
63-917-577-4610

Sending Church

Higher Plain Baptist Church
6810 N.W. 122nd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73142
USA
405-702-7715

Mission Board

Baptist International Missions, Inc.
P.O. Box 9
Harrison, TN 37341
USA
423-344-5050

June 8, 2026

Dear Friends:

"You were a ticking time bomb for a heart attack." As Paul Harvey used to say, "Now, the ressst of the story." On Thursday morning, May 14, I woke up with a bulging vein on the top of my right foot that was extremely sore to the touch. There is a history of hypertension, diabetes, atherosclerosis, and heart disease on my mother's side of the family. My mother also had problems with blood clots. Over the last year or so I had been experiencing a heavy tightness in my chest and a noticeable difficulty in breathing when exerting myself in a way that caused my heart rate to increase. I did not mention it to anyone, but I knew I needed to get an appointment with my cardiologist, whom I had not seen in over two years. I had a slight stroke thirteen years ago when I was 56 years old. After I fully recovered from the stroke, I was not diligent in taking care of myself or getting regular check-ups. Consequently, when I woke up that morning with the enlarged vein on my foot, I suddenly woke up to the reality that I needed to get something done.

One of many reasons I am glad we live in the Philippines is that I was able to see my cardiologist that same day. Very different than in the United States and Canada. The doctor said the swollen area on my foot was just a large varicose vein, but he noticed my legs and ankles were swollen. He immediately ordered a list of lab work and tests to be done. A week later I went back to see him again after all the results were complete. He recommended an angiogram as soon as possible, with the prospect of multiple stents, and a very likely coronary by-pass surgery. This news was quite unsettling for both Jeanne and me. Complicating things even more, the procedure could not be performed in Cagayan de Oro City because no hospital here accepts our international insurance through Cigna.

On Sunday evening, May 24, Jeanne and I flew to Cebu City where a hospital was located that would accept our insurance. The next day I had an angiogram which revealed five main areas where the plaque build-up was very concerning. The doctor told me afterwards that if I was younger, he would have done multiple by-passes. However, because I am almost 70 years old with a few other health concerns, he chose the less invasive option of angioplasty.

Stents were inserted in three places. The blockages in those areas were 95, 85, and 75 percent. Another area was too difficult to insert a stent; therefore, just an angioplasty was performed with special medication imbedded in the artery wall to inhibit the reformation of plaque. The last vessel of concern had to be sacrificed and closed off to allow a larger artery to be opened up and receive a stent. That closed artery caused the worst immediate pain during recovery, making me feel like I was having a heart attack.

The first attempt to perform the angioplasty was done through my right arm. However, when the catheter reached my upper forearm, the vessel had a spasm and contracted, injuring the vessel. As a result, they were forced to transfer to the femoral artery, which allows much less margin for error. They proceeded without incident. Then surprisingly, when the procedure was finally completed, they realized that the injury earlier to the artery in my arm was hemorrhaging internally. That was taken care of and I was wheeled away to the Coronary Care Unit for the night. The whole procedure required over three hours, unusually long. We praise God for Christian doctors.



We arrived back home in Cagayan de Oro City on Monday night, June 1. My recovery has gone well. The arm where the injury occurred has taken the longest to return to normal. Going forward I must increase exercise. My heart is healthy and functioning normally, but I need to strengthen it. I must significantly reduce my weight, my blood sugar, and my cholesterol levels. My diet and eating habits must be modified. I must significantly reduce stress. I still have to figure out how do that as we work to establish this new church, continue with our building project, lead six staff members, teach modular subjects in our Bible college seven hours away..... Please pray for Jeanne. I think this whole ordeal has affected her more than me. She is investing a lot of time learning the best kinds of food to prepare for us. Praise the Lord for His grace.

Let me share a great blessing with you. It was unexpected and unanticipated. While we were in the hospital in Cebu City, the three churches we started in Dipolog City, Molave, and here in Cagayan de Oro City, took up special offerings to help with our medical and travel the expenses. The income of an average person in the Philippines cannot compare to the U.S. or Canada. And yet, the total amount from the three churches was P299,000 Philippine pesos. That is \$5000 U.S. dollars. Very humbling. The greatest blessing is not the amount of the money, rather it is the love and concern shown by God's people.

Yesterday was the first follow-up visit with my cardiologist in Cagayan de Oro City. He looked over the records of the procedure that I brought back from Cebu City and said, *"You were a ticking time bomb for a heart attack."* Wow. God is gracious.

Thank you for the heart you have for world missions. People like you have made it possible to for us to continue serving the Lord in this place for four decades. May God continue to bless you in return.

*Bruce A. Rice
Cagayan de Oro City
Philippines*