

BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

May 2023

Editor Janelle Daum

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“If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.”

II Corinthians 1:6

Last month we started to look at Paul’s message to us regarding suffering. If anyone understood what it meant to suffer for the Lord it was Paul. He describes the depth of his suffering in II Corinthians 1:8-9a, *“For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death.”* Paul constantly experienced

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different levels of tribulation in his service for Christ.

In illustrations of the ancient Roman method of threshing grain they almost always show one man stirring up the sheaves while another rides over them in a crude cart equipped with rollers instead of wheels. Sharp stones and bits of iron were embedded in these rollers to help separate the husks from the grain. This simple cart was called a tribulum, from which we got our word “tribulation.”

The tribulum plays an important part in this entire passage. Paul has been underneath that tribulum. He has felt it crushing him and grinding him. In v.5 he makes the statement that “...*we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings...*” The word actually speaks of excess or ‘super-abundance.’ Paul suffered here as he had never suffered before. Even being stoned and left for dead didn’t compare to what he had just endured. He understood suffering.

What is positive is that he realized that there was more to suffering than just proving that you could make it through. In v.4 Paul tells us that God comforts us in affliction so that we can, in turn, comfort others who are caught in any affliction. The super-abundance of Paul’s affliction was met by the super-abundance of God’s comfort which was poured out on him. That’s the promise in these verses... the affliction will never be greater than the comfort provided.

Verse 6 tells us very clearly that affliction and God’s comfort always have a public purpose, “*If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer,*” v.6. A. B. Simpson once declared, “You will have no test of faith that will not fit you to be a blessing if you are obedient to the Lord. I never had a trial but when I got out of the deep river I found some poor pilgrim on the bank that I was able to help by that very

experience.”

That’s one of the most important purposes for suffering – it prepares us to reach out to others in new ways to minister to their needs. Suffering is going to come in this world. We can’t avoid it. So we need to learn to endure it and to overcome it. Suffering gives us the opportunity to reach out in ministry in ways we never thought possible. Paul describes it as a learning experience for those who are going through it, “...*who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God,*” v.4. He also describes it as a ministry experience for those who have already been through suffering, v.6.

There is a pattern that is pictured here for suffering. The suffering comes. God, in turn, supplies an equal or greater amount of comfort to the sufferer. Then that sufferer, who has overcome that situation, goes out to minister to those who are suffering. There is only one point at which that pattern can break down, and that’s the last one. We have to go out and use our experience of suffering to open up doors of ministry.

George Truett, who for many years was an effective preacher in Dallas, is a good example of that. In his youth he accidentally shot and killed a close friend while hunting. The shock and sense of guilt over what he had done weighed heavily on him, but he refused to let it defeat him. He determined to live for God and endeavored to do the work of two men. People who knew him said that his early experience was one of the reasons that he glowed with a passion for the lost and gave himself so fully to God’s service. Suffering draws us to ministry.

Blessings,

Pastor Randy

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DISCIPLESHIP TEAM REPORT

APRIL 25, 2023

The discipleship team met Tuesday April 25, 2023, at 2pm. Present were Pam, Pastor Randy, 2-D, and Theresa. Theresa opened in prayer. The VBS theme this year will be “Stompers and Chompers.” The dates are set for July 23rd to 27th from 6:30 to 8pm for preschoolers through middle school age. More details will be discussed at the next meeting after the material arrives. The committee discussed possible curriculum for summer Sunday School and what age groups to include in each class. Teacher appreciation will be held the last Sunday in May and recognition of all Sunday School teachers and helpers along with Childrens church, Awana and youth leaders. The discipleship team will bring treats for fellowship time. We will continue to be in prayer concerning the Sunday School attendance and outreach. A tentative meeting will be held toward the end of May.

OUTREACH TEAM REPORT



APRIL 16, 2023

On April 16, 2023, Tim Brenner, Executive Director of Crystal Springs Baptist Camp, presented information during Sunday's worship service. The camp has been undergoing many projects including updates to housing for the staff and campers. Tim shared with us the mission of the camp is not just for the campers to have fun while they are there but more importantly, for them to hear the Gospel of the Lord and find Jesus Christ. He shared a fun video of the camp along with moving testimonies and stories of campers whose lives have been changed forever. Another incredible place that Brandon Valley Baptist Church partners with!! Thank you, Tim, for making the long drive to be with us to share your wonderful story! Your presentation was very moving and inspirational!

Coming up on May 21st, Harlan Moss with Prison Ministries will be here to present to us. On June 11th, Amanda Benson will be home from the Philippines and will be here to share with us. On July 16th, Tom Roberts with the Children's Home Society will join us to speak about CHS.

ABOUT CRYSTAL SPRINGS BAPTIST CAMP:

Our Mission Statement:

“Crystal Springs Baptist Camp exists to glorify God by creating an environment where people can be renewed through encountering the truth, love and joy of Jesus Christ.”

Our Values:

Giving Glory to God

At Crystal Springs Baptist Camp, we strive to ensure that everything we do is centered on Jesus Christ. All things were created through him and for him, and his work on the cross to bring us to God is the most glorious, and important act in history. He is the ultimate reason this ministry exists, and we will give glory and honor to his name.

Proclaiming the Gospel

We stand on the foundation that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is true. If Christ is not raised, then all our efforts in ministry are in vain. We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God and is powerful and relevant to every aspect of our lives. We are not ashamed of the Gospel, and desire to share it with all that make use of our facilities. But this message of truth is powerless if we cannot communicate it with words and actions that also display the bountiful love and joy of the Lord. We will serve those that come to Crystal Springs Camp with willing hearts, and show them that as God has loved us, so we will strive to love them in all that we do.

Bringing People Together

We believe that the fellowship of believers is essential to both fighting the fight of faith and to understanding the goodness of God. As a unique tool of ministry, our camp will seek to be a powerful gathering place for God’s people to encourage one another and experience

the sweetness of God's spirit together. Through providing this place of fellowship we will help to deepen the faith of believers and call to repentance those who have not yielded their hearts to the Lord.

Creating a Beautiful, Restful and Safe Environment

Our hope is that people would find Crystal Springs Camp to be a special place where they can quiet their spirits and hear the voice of God. We will foster this environment by maintaining facilities that are clean, comfortable, safe, and ultimately able to convey the beauty of God's character.

Having Fun

With the firm conviction that our greatest pleasure in life is found in knowing the Lord, we will make it a priority to relax and have fun in God's presence at Crystal Springs Camp. He has given us life, breath and every good thing, and we will continually rejoice as we worship him together.

From three camps in 1955 to over 60 camps and events each year. From two dorms and outhouses, to nearly 350 bed capacity, modern washroom facilities, a new administrative building/dining hall, new girls and boys dorms, and a renovated chapel. Nearly 4,000 campers & staff attended camp each year. Numbers and facilities aren't everything. But it is the goal of the camp to reach more people with the Gospel and in even more effective ways. We've come a long way, yet we have a long way to go and many people to reach for Jesus Christ.

Thank you! Thank you!! Thank you - to each man, woman, boy and girl who has been a part of the vision and ministry of Crystal Springs Baptist Youth Camp over the past 59 years. Without you, the campers, camp leaders, summer staff, work crews, cleaning crews, board members, counselors, contributors,

caretakers, prayer partners and camp promoters, Crystal Spring Camp would not be possible. You are Crystal Springs Camp! You are important! You are appreciated! Take pride in your accomplishments through Crystal Springs Baptist Youth Camp in partnership with God. Take hold of the challenge of ever-widening ministry to a needy world without Christ.



STEWARDSHIP TEAM MEETING UPDATE

APRIL 2023

The Stewardship Team has had a very different year than the last number of years with providing a considerable amount of snow removal. We have used nearly the entire year four budget for lawn care and snow removal already.

Two flow control valves and a coupling have been replaced on the geothermal units. A notification has been set up so we will know if the heat has switched to resistance due to geothermal failure which happened in January. Please notify one of the Stewardship team know if you detect good warm air coming out of the heat ducts since this is an indicator resistance heat is being used. Resistance heat is very expensive.

The paper towel dispensers are in the process of being replaced. The new ones are easier to load and appear to work better as long as towels are pulled straight down.

We will be having a spring clean up day and will need help in mowing and some repairs on the outside.

We need to roll the lawn to smooth it out. Let us know if anyone has a roller we could use.

Submitted by: Eugene

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MAY AND BEYOND

EVENTS CALENDAR 2023:

Sunday's

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Fellowship

10:45 a.m. Sunday School for the Whole Family

Wednesday's

1 p.m. Women's Bible Study meeting in homes

6:30 p.m. Middle & High School Youth Group

Saturday's

May 6, 8 a.m. Men's Bible Study via Zoom

May 20, 8 a.m. Men's Bible Study via Zoom

Upcoming Events

May Meeting Date TBD, Discipleship Team Meeting at Church

Monday, May 1, 6 p.m., Spiritual Vision Team Meeting at Church

Monday, May 1 - Monday, May 15, Meals on Wheels Delivery

Thursday, May 4, National Day of Prayer

Thursday, May 11 - Saturday, May 13, Youth Rummage and Baked Goods Sale – Tagged rummage sale items can be brought to

the church anytime and bakes good closer to the date.

Saturday, May 13, 8 a.m., Leadership Meeting at Church

Sunday, May 14, Mother's Day

Sunday, May 21, Harlan Moss-Prison Ministries Presentation

Newsletter Articles are Due

Tuesday, May 23, 7 p.m., Outreach Team Meeting at Church

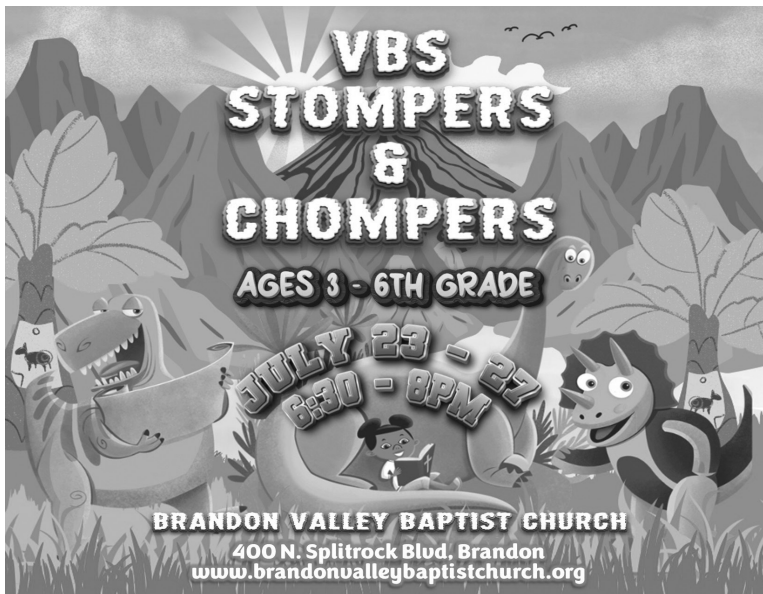
Monday, May 29, Memorial Day

Monday, May 29 - Tuesday, May 30, Church Office Closed

Sunday, June 11, Amanda Benson Missionary Presentation

Sunday, July 16, Tom Robert's Children's Home Society
Presentation

Sunday, July 23 - Thursday, July 27, 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., Vacation
Bible School – Stompers and Chompers



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2023

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES!!

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young. Instead, set an example for the believers through your speech, behavior, love, [and] faith...” 1 Timothy 4:12

Maegan Rae Questad – Washington High School, Sioux Falls, SD

Graduation Celebration at Questad home

3217 S Dubuque Ave, Sioux Falls, SD

Saturday, May 20, 2023

11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Garret Ray James – Brandon Valley High School, Brandon, SD

Graduation Celebration at Brandon Valley Baptist Church

Saturday, May 20, 2023

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Noah Feal – Homeschool, Brandon, SD

MISSIONARY UPDATES

AMANDA BENSON - PHILIPPINES



April 18, 2023

We Have a House!

I have so much I could say and could make this a really long email, but for now I'll spare the details (I'm sure they'll come in a future email...). But I want to share the good news: we have a house!

This is the house I mentioned in the email update I sent at the beginning of April. In the past two weeks, we have found out that the current couple (whose daughter I taught) is moving out at the end of April. They are SO excited to have Faith Academy teachers living there! The landlord wants to make repairs before we move in, so we don't have a move in date yet, but we are praying everything will be ready by the end of May so we can move our things in before we leave for the summer. We are working on the details of the contract, which hopefully will be signed soon.

With this house comes the responsibility to fill it! We want the house to be fully furnished so that new staff members who stay with us don't

have to worry about furnishing a place for their first year and can just work on transitioning to the country, culture, and school. The family moving out is selling their belongings and is giving us a great deal on the ones we want. However, that means that we need to raise \$1500 by the end of the month to purchase these items.

The items we will be getting include multiple sets of tables and chairs (for the dining room, balcony, office, and living areas), two sets of couches, various chairs, and a deep freezer. Additionally, we are needing to purchase other items for the house, such as a stove, three beds, wardrobes for each room, and lots of other odds and ends to make the house livable. We are hoping to raise an additional \$2000-\$3000 by the end of May to cover all of these remaining expenses.

It has been amazing to watch God work out the details for this house. It is so close to Faith and really has been essentially everything we have been looking for in a house to serve new female staff members of Faith. Would you consider supporting us financially by giving a one-time gift to help us fill the house so we can serve these ladies?

Thank you for all the prayers you have given in this process. Please continue to pray with us as all the last details are worked out.

Thank you! Amanda (and Marissa!)



PRAYER AND PRAISE UPDATE FROM AMANDA BENSON

April 19, 2023

Praises

- I am thankful for the many conversations I've been able to have with my English class, my advisory, and my Bible study girls. There have been so many opportunities to speak truth and share from my heart and point them to Christ.
- Work has been not too stressful in the last week or so. I'm thankful for some respite after such a stressful third quarter.
- I'm thankful for the ways God is continuing to work in my life and the ways He meets me in the middle of hard paths and provides rest and care and comfort, just letting me know that He is always with me, no matter what.

Prayer Requests

- I am reading *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand with my 8th grade English class. Though it is a book with a hard subject, we focus a lot on what God is doing in the main character's life, even before He is a Christian. Pray that God will use the many conversations we have to work in the hearts of my students in whatever way He wants to as we read and study this book.
- Pray that the details of the house would continue to fall into place (that we would get the contract signed soon, that the landlord would find someone to make repairs, that we can move in by the end of May, that God will provide funds to furnish the house, for the people that will be living with us next year).
- It's been a rough week with a lot of things putting me in a weird mood. Pray for wisdom as I continue to process my life and that I

would know the truth deeply and believe it.

Ongoing Prayer Requests

- That God will do great things in the hearts of students and staff this year at Faith Academy. Our school theme is Renew, Revive, Refresh.
- That Marissa and I would use our house well to serve our housemate and our community.
- That God will provide all the staff we need, both for the rest of this year and for next year.

DARWIN & KAREN STOESZ



April 25, 2023

God is Big, I am not

Anna and Clara know that I (Darwin) would often say when looking up at the sky: “God is big, I am not.” When I go on a walk, it is easy to look down at the ground and think about all the challenges that I’m facing, but when you look up at the grandeur of the sky above me you take your focus off yourself, and you put the focus back where it should be and that is on God. Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”

In early January we announced a change in our ministry assignment with SEND International. Darwin has been appointed as the Assistant to the International Treasurer giving him the opportunity to help all SEND International missionaries get to their fields of service and remain there for as long as God enables. We are excited to see how God uses Darwin in this expanded role with the same mission to send God’s people to the world He loves.

What is God doing?

God provided a house in Whitewater KS to purchase in a timing that could only be orchestrated by God. (Closing is currently scheduled to take place in mid-July)

God provided a rental vehicle – Buick Lucerne – long enough till we could find suitable vehicles to purchase – 2006 Malibu Maxx and a 2006 Honda Accord.

God provided opportunities to get to know people in the Whitewater / Elbing community through providing bus driver job as a substitute driver for two local schools.

God provided a missionary temporary house (Berean Mansion) with enough space for Karen and Darwin to each have our own office space.

God provided a school (Berean Academy) for Clara where she could academically flourish and make good friends.

God is providing a great base of supporters (Like you) who pray and give to partner with us as we begin a new season of helping missionaries from all over the world to thrive by helping in the financial resources needed for them to do ministries all over the world.

God is providing the financial resources for SEND International USA needed for ministry – in 2022 SEND International USA had 13,116 givers give a total of \$18,869,764 – This amount of money requires a team of people to distribute and receipt these funds in a way so that it is done correctly.

God is providing new support for our ministry with SEND International as we transition to the International Office as the assistant to the International Treasurer.

Transition trip back to Japan this summer

We have purchased tickets for Japan to go and say “goodbye” to our many years of ministry there and to settle our affairs. The dates that we will be in Japan are June 6 to July 11.

Prayer / Schedule Update

Our tentative schedule so far is as follows. Of course, all dates are subject to change. Please pray for us especially for these events:

Apr 26 AWANA Awards night (Last day for the year)

May 5 John Brown University last day

May 7 Fly to Detroit, MI from Wichita, Kansas

May 8-12 SEND International Headquarters for Darwin training – Farmington Michigan

May 12 Fly home from Detroit, Michigan into Wichita, Kansas

May 15 Anna leave for her summer job at Winshape Camp at Mount Berry, Georgia

May 15 Karen’s last day of online classes with Moody Bible Institute

May 18 Berean Academy last day

May 31 Move out of Berean Mansion in Elbing, Kansas

June 6 Fly to Narita Airport in Tokyo, Japan via Dallas Texas

June 26-30 Yamanaka Chalet at the base of Mount Fuji

July 4-7 SEND International Japan Family Conference at Okutama Bible Chalet

July 11 Fly to Wichita, Kansas from Narita Airport via Dallas, Texas

Mid July Close on our house in Whitewater, Kansas

July 29 Darwin Birthday

July 30 Anna return from Georgia

Aug 1 Darwin to begin role as International Office Assistant Treasurer

Aug 9 Clara Birthday

Aug 16 Berean Academy First Day

Aug 31 Anna Birthday

Please pray:

Pray that Darwin's teacher Mr. Tsuneizumi and Karen's friend Yuko-san would put their faith in Christ.

Pray for Anna and Clara that they would have continued growing relationships with Jesus.

Pray for Anna at John Brown University and studies kinesiology.

Pray for Clara at Berean Academy that she would seek God and make good friends.

Pray for our continued support needs. Many partners have been with us for a long time, and some are reaching the end of their giving ability.

That Anna and Clara will be able to adjust well to this significant change.

Our goodbye trip to Japan this summer would be able to accomplish the goals of saying goodbye and at the same time go through in a few short weeks all our items in storage.

Wisdom for Darwin as he begins training for this new position.

Wisdom and patience for Karen as she gets near the end of her education that she is doing online with Moody Bible Institute.

Pray for our housing for us as we would like to live in the Whitewater

community, once we get housing pray that we would find the furnishings required to make our house a home.

That our supporters will continue to support our ministry as we still rely 100% on support

Thank you so much for your prayers, financial support, and encouragement.

Darwin & Karen & Anna (19) & Clara (15) Stoesz

HARLAN MOSS - PRISON LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY



April 2023

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” Romans 1:16

Without the resurrection, we would have no hope in this life or the next. Christ, our perfect sacrifice, took the punishment we deserved, on the cross! Isaiah 53:5 says, “He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our peace was upon Him.” Thank the Lord for salvation through Jesus Christ!

I have visited with Max weekly for the past five weeks. We talked about what it meant to be a Christian, and various Bible passages. I asked him if he was growing in his knowledge of Christianity. He told me, “Last week when Pastor Greg was preaching, I committed my life to Christ!” He will be baptized on Easter morning! PTL! Pray for him as he continues to grow in his faith.

I have known Henry for a year, since he has been in prison. Henry has grown in his faith. He let the gang know that he was following Jesus now and would not be part of their gang. We prayed for God’s protection around him because those in the gang would not like to hear of anyone leaving the gang. It is great to see Henry grow

spiritually! He also wants to be baptized Easter morning!

Ty, who I wrote about last month, gave me some more information about his life. He said, "I know that angels and demons are real. One time when I was alone in my vehicle I had a bad accident. I was going 70 mph and the car went end over end.

When I looked to my right there was a big person in the passenger seat. He had his hand and arm over my chest. The motor came through the dash, and I came out of that with minor injuries. The other night I felt a dark presence in my room. I was frozen in my bed, I couldn't speak or move. I couldn't even speak the name of Jesus out loud, but when I thought Jesus' name the dark presence left. Then I could move again, so I am a believer in angels and demons." Ty struggles in his walk with the Lord, but he continues to grow in the Lord!

One young man, Tom, told me that his mother was in prison when he was growing up. His father was not present in his life. He ended up in a juvenile detention center for four years. While in the detention center someone lead him to the Lord! Tom was really growing in his faith while he was there. Then he was moved from the center to a county jail with adults, and his faith fell by the wayside. He came to the prison from jail. Tom has been in and out of trouble while in prison, but has been coming to the weekly church service. He told me, "I am not following the Lord by the way I am living and want to get back with the Lord. What is my next step?" Tom admitted that he had sinned and did not deserve God's grace and forgiveness. After praying for the Lord's forgiveness and inviting Jesus to take over his life, he knew this was what he needed to do.

Thank you for your prayers and financial support! Praise the Lord for so great a salvation! Have a blessed Easter!

In Christ, Harlan

PAUL & JANET HARKNESS - AWANA



April 17, 2023 – THE MEMO

Hi Friends,

I trust that your week is starting off well; ours is! Janet is doing so much better. The latest antibiotic did the job. She says it's the best she has felt for months. Our son, Ben, is much improved in his health. He has also reported that the class he is teaching is going well. Last Thursday, we had an Awana display at the Village Missions Rural Ministry Conference in Kearney, Nebraska. We were able to make several good connections with pastors and leaders and also were blessed by hearing very good speakers. Yesterday morning, Janet and I enjoyed the fellowship of the believers at Cedar Creek Church near Burwell, Nebraska. I had the privilege of bringing the morning message. These folks had quite the week beforehand. A prairie fire broke out on Tuesday burning 6,000 acres! One dear member, a retired overseas missionary, lost her home and all except one outbuilding. The fire got literally up to the wall of the church building, but since it was stucco, it did not ignite. However, the wall was so hot that the vinyl venetian blinds at the windows melted.

THIS WEEK:

- Janet and I will be working on the April-June Newsletter
- Making plans for this summer's Awana Connect Meetings
- Later in the week, we are taking an extended weekend to travel to Dallas, Texas. There we will be attending the 50th Celebration of EvanTell. EvanTell founder Larry Moyer and I have been friends for nearly half of that time, and I have used his "Bad News, Good News" approach to sharing the gospel since 1987. Pray for safety in all of this, and pray for encouragement in our own evangelism opportunities.

We thank you for praying for us and this ministry. Thank you also for the good response to The Memo.

Paul & Janet Harkness

RICK & DEBBI BARDIN - CAMEROON



MARCH 22, 2023

Dear Faithful Prayer Warriors,

Well, when in Africa, one must be flexible. The department has reset Dr. Mbanga's presentation date, now promising next week. We will keep you posted as we get further info. Although it may seem crazy to us westerners, this is life in Africa often. Our prayers are not wasted, God is holding on to all of them. God's timing is the best!

Joy in Jesus,

Debbie and Rick

March 26, 2023

Greetings All,

We finally have a date again! Dr. Mbanga is scheduled for March 29 to present and defend his research project. Let's continue to lift him up in prayer. Also, for the written and oral exam dates to be set. Thanks for your perseverance in prayer. God's time is perfect!

Joy in Jesus,

Debbie and Rick

March 30, 2023

Good Morning from Cameroon!

God has answered all our prayers and Dr. Mbanga had his presentation yesterday!! He said the professors commended him on work well done. They commented that with a few additions it could be published. So this hurdle is done and the exams are yet to be scheduled. Thanks for sharing this journey with us, Dr. Mbanga sends his greetings to all and appreciates your support in prayers and giving!!

Joy in Jesus,

Rick and Debbie

JOSHUA FUND



APRIL 2023

Israel RIOTS, STRIKES, Create Unprecedented Societal Divide.

Usually, we pray for God to protect Israel from external enemies. But right now, we need to pray that God will show mercy to Israeli citizens who are more deeply divided than at any time in the last 75 years of the modern state. The battle over the judicial reform legislation being advanced by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government coalition has created an unprecedented crisis. It's dividing Israeli society worse than anything I've ever seen before. Historic strikes have impacted almost all aspects of Israeli society. As of this writing, Ben Gurion airport has suspended flights, restaurants and retailers have closed, and kindergartens, primary schools, high schools, and colleges have been shut down. The strikes have even impacted hospitals. Major roadblocks and traffic from the protests have significantly slowed down Joshua Fund operations, making it more difficult for our teams and ministry partners to carry out much-needed food distributions throughout the land. With such a massive disruption to society, it is likely that even more aid will be needed for a greater number of people. This is an incredibly challenging time in Israel – especially for Believers.

As supporters of The Joshua Fund, you directly impact these brothers and sisters living in the Epicenter through your prayers and through your giving. Thank you!

THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS



The **Voice** of the **Martyrs**

April 20, 2023 - PERSECUTION & PRAYER ALERT

“Praying for others is the best thing for our souls: it enlarges our hearts and deepens our concern....Praying for others is the best thing for the church: it is the fuel for spreading the Gospel.”
~ J.C. Ryle, Author of “Do You Pray?”

UZBEKISTAN: Easter Worship Services Raided - Pray for wisdom as Ubek Christians gather.

While members of the Baptist church in Karshi, Uzbekistan, were gathered for worship on Easter Sunday, April 9th, police broke open the door and forced their way inside. Using electrical prods, they incapacitated some of the attendees while others cried and prayed. Ten members, including young people, were taken to the police station where they were held in custody until mid-afternoon. The detained believers were released after records of offence were drawn up against them. Church members say that the raid followed their attempts to rent local halls for a presentation of the Christian faith to commemorate Easter. Visiting German musicians were to be involved in these services, but all rental attempts were blocked.

The next day, police raided another worship service in the city of Denov, where the musicians from Germany were performing. The authorities claimed that the meeting was illegal and forced those who were present to disperse. While the music group had intended to visit other various locations of the country, there were concerns that the arrests may have taken place due to the presence of the traveling team. During the Second World War, the German-speaking Council of Churches [for] Baptists was exiled to Siberia and Central Asia (this includes Uzbekistan). During the time of Soviet rule, church registration was used to control and persecute Christians throughout the former USSR. Because of this history, as well as theological reasons, this group of churches refuses to abide by the registration requirements. To learn more about the persecution of Christians in this Central Asian country, go to our country report.

Ask the Lord to provide Christians who are encountering opposition in Uzbekistan ongoing wisdom, guidance and strength. May they remain faithful to Christ, as they presently face potential punishment. In the meantime, please intercede on their behalf, praying that there will be no ramifications from the recent incidents, and that any formal charges brought against them will be dismissed. Also pray that each of the officials responsible for the raids would be convicted of their own personal need for eternal salvation and the forgiveness of sin, to the point of fully surrendering to the powerful message of Jesus' death and glorious resurrection by placing their faith in Him.

NIGERIA: At Least 35 Killed During IDP Camp Raid

On Friday, April 7th, a camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) was raided by militant forces believed to be members of the Fulani tribe. The camp in Benue State, Nigeria, houses approximately

30,000 people, mostly Christians who have been forced to flee their villages due to previous attacks. The militants surrounded the village at around 7 p.m. and began indiscriminately killing anyone they encountered. While the statistical information provided by the above-mentioned news sources vary, at least 35 people, including pregnant women and children, were slaughtered during the attack. Of the numerous surviving victims who sustained injuries, more than 50 of them were reportedly transported to hospital. While the violence plaguing Nigeria has ethnic and political elements, Christians are often specifically targeted by militant Islamic groups seeking control. For more information on the violence perpetrated against Nigeria's Christians, and/or to view available video reports, go to our country report.

Please prayerfully uphold the tremendous number of surviving inhabitants still residing in this Nigerian refugee camp, especially the family members and friends of those who have been recently killed, asking God to surround each one of them with His comforting presence during their time of mourning. Additionally, ask Him to minister physical healing to the many who were injured during the attack and psychological healing to all who have experienced so much trauma in their lives due to the ongoing persecution. May these displaced villagers be able to resettle in safe locations where they are shielded from future violence. Further, pray that the leaders of the camp, as well as the country's governing officials, will ensure greatly needed measures are taken to protect those who are vulnerable.

CRISIS IN UKRAINE



April 21, 2023

From one of our partner churches in Ukraine:

“We visited Izmail with two of my ministry partners in the youth and college ministry. We brought basic necessities for our church partner. We met up with our translator, a Romanian pastor who previously lived in Ukraine and has been consistently involved in relief efforts for the past year. He spent the first three months of the full-scale war at the border of Ukraine helping the refugees fleeing into Romania. The church we partnered with in Izmail actively serves the refugees in their community. They have a team from the church who organize ministry to the refugees. They have a large service twice a month to hand out food bags to about 700 refugees and share the Gospel. Forty to fifty of these people (the refugees who come every other week for food) attend Bible studies during the week. They also check with these people at each service to see if they need medication, housing, someone to visit or help them in some way. And then they do their best to meet those needs. They also travel into other parts of Ukraine to bring relief. They send teams to Odessa and Kherson with food and water, and they share the gospel with those that come to receive relief...

The leaders of the church were encouraged to have our team visit. At the beginning of the full-scale war, support and teams rushed in, but have slowed to a trickle now. While our lives move on, the Ukrainians continue to face war each morning. It meant a lot to have us there and see that they are not alone. The Saturday we were there, they told us they didn't have money to buy food for the people. They used to have 4 services/month where they passed out food, but they can't sustain this financially. But they have seen the Lord every time, and the church never had to cancel a service for the refugees. Both services were packed with 300-400 people. Many of these refugees fled from Russian occupied cities (places like: Mariupol, Kherson, Melitopol.) They suffered through horrible conditions, endured and witnessed terrible atrocities. War has no respect for age, societal class, or titles before or after your name. Many of these people previously had prestigious jobs, owned their own businesses and were pillars in their community. Now, they come to receive bags of basic necessities.

Yet, it is also encouraging to see that many of these people have turned to Christ as Savior and Lord as a result of this war. Only the Lord can redeem like this! A lot of the refugees became Christians and were baptized since the start of the war.

Thank you for helping us minister there!" Thank you for giving and praying for Ukraine. God is using his people and his church to do incredible things in the midst of the crisis in Ukraine.

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PO BOX 513, Farmington, MI 48332, Missionary #169352

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To partner with us by your donations:

Go to <https://www.awana.org/missionary/harkness/>

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free to send us a text)

How To Give To North American Baptist Missionaries:

Step 1: Go to the NAB's new missions webpage nabonmission.org.

Step 2: Click on the "missionaries" label.

Step 3: Click on the national missionary to whom you would like to designate your support.

Step 4: Click on the "give to.." button on the national workers page.

Step 5: Fill out the form. All gifts given through the NAB are tax deductible.

2023 ALL CHURCH BIRTHDAY PARTY





**BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH
PRESENTING A CHANGELESS CHRIST FOR A CHANGING WORLD**