



# BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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Editor Janelle Daum

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*“And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”*

*II Corinthians 1:21-22*

In the last couple of months we have seen Paul focusing on attacks that were being made on his integrity. To his credit Paul understood that this was a crucial, make-or-break moment in his ministry. If he did not reestablish his integrity then his ministry was essentially over.

His detractors were attacking him over two issues. They claimed that he was insincere – that he was pretending to be working for God

but he was really working for his own purposes. It was a question of motives and so Paul spent time praying and searching his heart to see if his motives were truly selfish. His conclusion was, “but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.” His motives were pure. He was simply ministering the grace of God to them through the message of God.

The second issue was his vacillating schedule. His attackers used that to say that people couldn’t trust what Paul had to say and therefore they couldn’t believe him. Paul had sent to the Corinthians a tentative plan that would take him from Ephesus straight to Corinth, and from there to Macedonia, then back to Corinth, and then on to Judea. But before he could make that trip events arose that changed his schedule. He ended up going from Ephesus to Troas and then on to Macedonia. When he let the Corinthians know about the changes his enemies attacked him for doing what was best for him with no regard for the problems or needs at Corinth. In v.18 he told the people that the message from his detractors was wrong. He didn’t vacillate. He didn’t give ambiguous messages. Everything he did was guided by his submission to the will of God. All human plans should always be subject to change according to God’s sovereign will. To restore his integrity Paul explained his actions in light of his submission to God. In that context his decisions made perfect sense.

The third step in restoring his integrity was to reaffirm his guiding principles. The word “sincere” comes from two Latin words that mean literally “without wax.” Artists of Middle Eastern countries fashioned extremely expensive statuettes out of a very fine porcelain. It was so fragile that extreme care had to be taken when firing the figurines to keep them from cracking. Dishonest dealers would accept cracked figurines at a much lower price and then they would fill the cracks with wax before offering them for sale at the full price. Honest merchants

would display their uncracked porcelain wares with signs that read in Latin, “sine cera,” or “without wax.”

Sincerity, or integrity, was determined by how well you maintained the purity of your product. For Paul that purity was determined by how well he lived out the guiding principles of his faith. In v.18 he had mentioned God’s faithfulness. In v.19 he builds on that thought, *“For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in Him it is always Yes.”* The Corinthians had heard the Gospel message from three different men, and in each case the message was the same. Jesus was the source and content of that message and v.19 confirms that there was nothing inconsistent about Him. All of the promises that God had given them about the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus. All of the truths of salvation were founded concretely on Him. That was the message that Paul preached and lived. The word “Amen” shows agreement with that message, and the Corinthians had affirmed the fact that they did agree with Paul’s message to the glory of God. They had accepted him as a messenger of God’s faithfulness and love.

John Bunyan once said: “You have one tongue in your head and two tongues in your shoes and no matter what the tongue in your head is saying, the tongues in your shoes tell what you are doing and where you are going, and the awful truth is that the tongues in your shoes have the last word.” The tongue in Paul’s head had said that he was guided by the faithfulness of Christ. The tongues in his shoes had proved that fact, and the Corinthians had acknowledged it.

Three other guiding principles of Paul’s life are mentioned in vv.21-22, *“And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”* The first principle is that

God establishes us in Christ. The word “establishes” was a legal term that spoke of a seller guaranteeing the validity of a purchase. The evidence of sanctification in a believer’s life is proof that God is establishing us. The second principle is God’s anointing. That speaks of a commissioning for service. Spiritual gifts are the proof of that. The third principle is the seal of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit within us is the proof that we belong to God and that God will fulfill all of His promises. Ryrie tells us that the “seal indicates security, and the pledge is a guarantee that God will fulfill His promises.”

Guiding principles are important. They establish a starting point for everything else that takes place in life. Paul’s starting point was his guaranteed position in Christ, and his belief in the consistency and the faithfulness of God. His desire was to emulate that in his own life. That was the goal that drove him. How could he be guilty of a lack of integrity when his entire life was given to that goal?

Reaffirm these guiding principles when your integrity is questioned. Let people know where you start, and that your beliefs haven’t changed. That goes a long way toward restoring damaged integrity.

Ted Engstrom has quoted an anonymous poet with these words: “When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.” Integrity is critical to our faith. We need to maintain it at all costs. If you serve the Lord your integrity is open to attack. Satan loves to destroy the integrity of God’s servants if he possibly can. In Paul’s case he used other believers to misinterpret the godly message and actions of Paul.

When attacks come it is important that we respond in the correct way to restore our integrity. If your motives aren’t pure and godly then deal with your sin and straighten out the wrongs that you have done. If your motives are pure and godly, then defend them. Interpret your

actions according to your motives. Reaffirm your guiding principles. Center yourself once again on the truth of God and reaffirm that it is your starting point for all that you do and believe.

Horace Greeley once said: “Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wings, those who cheer today may curse tomorrow, only one thing endures – character.” Maintain your integrity as a servant of God.

Blessings,

Pastor Randy

# **UPCOMING EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 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

**September 6, 6:30 p.m.** Awana Begins Ages 3 - 8th Grade

**\*\*Go to our website for more info and to register!!**

**7:30 p.m.** Youth Group 9th - 12th grade

### **Upcoming Events**

**Sunday, September 3, Noon - 11 p.m.** LifeLight

**Monday, September 4,** Labor Day

**Saturday, September 9, 8 a.m.** Leadership Team Meeting

**Tuesday, September 12, 2 p.m.** Discipleship Team Meeting

**Tuesday, September 26, 7 p.m.** Outreach Team Meeting

**Sunday, September 17,** Newsletter Articles are Due

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**GO TO CHURCH - THEN HEAD DOWNTOWN**

**Festival Schedule: Noon-11PM**



## MISSIONARY UPDATES

### AMANDA BENSON - PHILIPPINES



**August 1, 2023**

**I STAND AMAZED**

The past week has been stressful but also amazing. We have seen God work in ways that feel unheard of in the Philippines!

I returned to Manila after my summer in the US on July 24. Because our house was not set up, we had made plans to stay in the dorms for the night. However, the dorm family wasn't back yet, and when we got there around 12:30 am, the place where the spare keys were kept was locked. We couldn't get ahold of anyone, and we had nowhere else we could go. However, we decided to check with someone who had flown back with us who had two spare rooms. We were able to stay there, which was such a blessing (and it is right next to campus)!

The next day, we were able to get much of our kitchen set up, with the help of some friends. We also had some big needs to figure out: we needed internet, a second helper, to find a gardener, a new water heater installed, a gas tank for the dryer, and to get our stove connected to gas.



Here's what God did:

- Because a coworker has a church mate who is an executive in the internet company, we were able to apply for our internet and get it installed two days later.
- Our helper referred a friend of hers to be our second helper, who was in need of a job after a traumatic experience with her last job. (We have helpers in this country to help provide jobs for people. They do most of the work around the house for us.)
- Our helper also mentioned she knew a gardener who had a free day. Turns out he works for some coworkers of ours, and they really like his work!
- Faith Academy sent someone to install our water heater!
- We were able to call the gas company for a gas tank replacement for our dryer, and they were at our door in 30 minutes. And then we realized we also could get a tank for our stove, so they went and got it and came back! (And...God provided the right gas tank for the dryer. There are different regulators, and the one tanks that were left for us by the previous house owners happened to fit my dryer already, saving us quite a bit of money!)
- Additionally, our dryer died somehow while it was working. We were able to set up an appointment for the next day and get it fixed right away to finish drying our wet clothes (which won't dry quickly by hanging, since it's been raining non-stop since we've been back).

So right now, the only major task we have left is to hook up the stove, which is scheduled to happen Thursday.

Usually in the Philippines, it takes a long time to get things like this accomplished. We go into things here expecting to wait...and wait...

and wait... I chuckle often when I go places and hear the common phrase “wait for a while ma’am.” It is used like the American phrase “just a moment,” but we laugh because it could literally be a while. Or it could be a moment. We just never know. This time it happened to be just a moment, praise God!

All of these things have reminded me that God is in this. He is doing some great things. He has lined up everything for this house. He provided an awesome house that was what we were hoping for. He provided the funds to buy all that we need to fill it. He has worked so quickly to set up all these services for us. And that tells me that He is going to do great things, and I can trust Him with all the other details.

On Thursday, Marissa and I welcomed Anne and Mercy into our home. Anne is from New Zealand and is teaching Middle School ELL. Mercy is from Kenya and is teaching Pre-K. We are so excited to get to provide this house for them. We can’t wait to see what God is going to do this year. He is so faithful.

We deeply thank each one of you for your part in setting up this house. Whether you prayed or gave or encouraged us in this journey, each part was important and contributes to God’s work.

May He be glorified in this ministry.

Amanda

P.S. I’ll try to send pictures and a video of the house in the next update. We just still have much to unpack and set up!

### ***Praises***

- I had smooth travels in July, both around the US and back to the Philippines. My time in the US was refreshing and has helped prepare me to be back for another year.

- God has provided in so many ways for this house!
- Anne and Mercy have been able to join us.

### ***Prayer Requests***

- Right now I am a bit stressed with all that needs to happen. If you're reading this the day it was sent, then we're currently at All Staff Retreat. On Wednesday, we return to campus and have only two days to prepare for the school year. I haven't been able to do anything for that yet, since I've been working non-stop at the house, and I feel like we still need another week to get the house put together. Pray that I can have peace and patience with the house things, have time to get ready for school, and also find times to rest.
- Pray for us as we start school. Pray for this school year, that we would honor the Lord, be unified, and that God would draw hearts to Him and closer to Him.
- Pray that Marissa and I would serve Anne and Mercy (and the student teachers who will join us later this year) well. Pray that we would all mesh together this year, be able to work through conflict, and be able to strengthen one another in the Lord.

# RON & JEANNIE SECK - HUNGARY



**August 2023**

## **“JUST A SECK” TIMES**

### ***Prayer***

- Pray for Ron’s health issues to be resolved so we can return to Europe before the end of September.
- Pray for spiritual fruit from the summer camps in Boldog, Apc, and Zsambok.
- Pray for MEK Team member Juli Olah’s full recovery from thyroid and heart issues.
- Pray for access to a reliable, heavy-duty vehicle to help Leonard Hanykovics deliver relief goods to Ukraine.

### ***Praises***

- We praise God for keeping Ron safe from serious physical harm from a month of undiagnosed A-fibrillation.
- PTL for the NAB Fuse Team led by Randy Schmor working with our MEK Hungary team in summer camps.

*In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.*

**COLOSSIANS 1:6 (NIV)**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in God’s work,

On August 1, we went to my doctor’s office to be fitted with a heart monitor that I must wear for the next 30 days.

The last three months have been truly an adventure for Jeannie and me; and the next three promise to be even more so. It is wonderful to know the God who knows the future, even when we do not.

While we were in Hungary in May, after completing an intense schedule of visiting CHE EuroNet teams in Hungary, Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia, and Kosovo, I started having what I thought were strong asthma symptoms. After a month of visiting doctors and taking meds for asthma and just getting weaker, we found out in the ER of a hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that what I had was atrial fibrillation. We got back safely to Phoenix, Arizona, where my cardiologist did a cardioversion to regulate my heartbeat. Since then, my heart is not quite behaving itself, hence the heart monitor.

We were to return to Hungary August 1 for a four-month stint; but I am grounded until my meds and heartbeat get straightened out and my doctors say I can go. That is certainly something you can pray about for us. We can do admin work from here, but we would rather be there, especially for the annual CHE EuroNet Gathering September 27 to October 1 in Albania. We’ve been leading the organizing of this conference where all our CHE teams meet for advanced training, challenge, inspiration, encouragement, fellowship, and networking, so we would love to be there. Of course, we must say, “Lord willing,”

and that means more to us this year than most.

Speaking of heart issues, Juli Olah, a precious member of our MEK Hungary team, suffered a mild heart attack two weeks ago while in the hospital for thyroid issues. She is now home resting and feeling better. Keep her in your prayers as well.

We have lots of news to report to you from our field. Our month-long trip in May was to introduce my replacement as CHE Central Europe Coordinator, Hessel Keuter, to most of our CHE teams and their projects. We were challenged and inspired by the difficulties they are facing and by their plans to go deeper into outreach and development in their current projects, and to enter new communities as well. What they need most is sustainable partners to accomplish their visions. Pray for God to supply this need.

In the summertime, our Roma villages empty of adults, who are off to work in the farm fields and vineyards of Central Europe and the Balkans. It is a great time to focus on the village children and youth, and that means summer camps. Here is Jeannie's report on MEK Hungary's camps in Boldog, Apc, and Zsambok:

**BOLDOG CAMP:** After a bumpy first day, the Boldog camp finished well, praise God. Fifteen Roma children attended. Members of the MEK team were able to work with the kids, and sensed that the Lord was working in their hearts. You can see some pictures here: <https://daroczicsuhai.com/2023/07/23/243-boldog-children-camp-boldogigyerek-tabor/>.

**APC CAMP:** The North American Baptist Fuse Team, led by Randy Schmor, arrived safely in Hungary the week of July 24 and were able to help with the larger children's camp in Apc. MEK team member Sandi Temesvary returned from serving as teacher/translator at the Hungarian English camp to also join the team in Apc. Read Randy's

newsletter to learn more about Apc.

**ZSAMBOK CAMP:** MEK team members Feri and Juli Olah pastor the local church in this village. It has been a good place for MEK to share Christ in summer camps for many years. We praise the Lord this summer that MEK is blessed to have help from the NAB team in this outreach. It is taking place this first week in August. Randy will be sharing more about that in his writings.

**UKRAINE RELIEF MINISTRY:** MEK team member Leonard Hanykovics continues to bring relief supplies of food, medicines, and life's necessities to the Ukraine border, where a network of Ukrainian Christians picks it up and takes it to churches to be distributed to needy families uprooted by the ongoing war. He reports that every Ukrainian family has felt the pain of the war and suffering is nationwide. In the midst of this, the Gospel is preached and precious souls are coming to Christ. Keep giving and praying for God's mercy work there. Also, pray for a replacement for Leonard's minivan that suffered its second major breakdown due to the heavy loads it is carrying.

For His Kingdom Come in Central Europe and the Balkans,

Ron & Jeannie Seck



# DARWIN & KAREN STOESZ



**August 5, 2023**

## **Ministry Update**

Thank you for your prayers for us. We arrived safely back from Japan on July 11th after a very meaningful time in Japan where we were able to meet our objectives: We cleaned up our storage unit, we had very meaningful goodbyes to many relationships we have had in the past 18 years, went to places that were important to us, and had a farewell with both SEND International Japan and Nishibori Christ Gospel Church where we attended many years.

Upon our return from Japan, we closed on the purchase of our first home and moved in very soon thereafter. We are thankful to see how God orchestrated a last-minute change to the house we were going to purchase. We now have a house that we can both host people and have an office for Darwin to work from.

We are overwhelmed with gratitude for the help from our community here in Kansas in both gifts of furniture and things, as well as helping to clean so that we could move in. Thankful for the 25 people who helped us move in and provide food on moving day. In the first time in over 25 years all our possessions are under one roof.

On August 1st Darwin started his new ministry opportunity as Assistant Treasurer for the SEND International Office. He had a good first week and he is really looking forward to this new responsibility. This new opportunity will come with its own challenges, difficulties, and hardships. It is encouraging that we can find meaning, satisfaction, and fulfillment in this new ministry, knowing that we are doing what God has called us to do. (Philippians 4:11-13, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 4:10-11)

This last week Darwin was able to help missionaries in both Japan and in Spain. It is helpful to know the missionaries' names in Japan, but the bank names and missionary names are all new in Spain. He also reimbursed a mission leader for travel expenses, prepare a reoccurring general ledger to help better record salaries in the new software that missionaries in Japan were receiving.

A well-known accounting principle that has helped Darwin in training this week is:

“Income into your bank account is a credit and expenses out of your bank account is a debit.”

What's the difference between a bank and an angry rhinoceros? The bank charges more.

Karen begins her last two classes (“Theology and Philosophy of Ministry to Women” and “Theology and Practice in the Early Church through the Reformation”) with Moody Bible Institute on August 22, but until then she is busy taking care of the family and setting up the home and trying to find places for everything. She also has a big yard that she is looking forward to working on. Karen's happy place is gardening, and this new house has many opportunities for her to be happy.

## **Family News**

Anna is back from serving at a camp where she served as the sport's assistant at WinShape Camp in Rome, Georgia. She oversaw the sports activities during the camp and made sure they ran smoothly. She said that during the summer around 120 kids made a profession of faith. She was able to learn a lot about herself and she made some new relationships with other staff at the camp that she really enjoyed.

On August 19th Anna will return as a junior at John Brown University in Siloam Springs Arkansas where she is majoring in kinesiology with an emphasis in sports medicine and a minor in general science and psychology.

Clara likes her new bedroom and has already painted it to her liking. She looks forward to being a Sophomore at Berean Academy in Elbing, Kansas which is about seven miles from Whitewater. She enjoys working for a local family in town this summer and time spent with her big sister.

## **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:

Aug 1 Darwin to begin role as International Office Assistant Treasurer

Aug 9 Clara Birthday

Aug 16 Berean Academy first day

Aug 22 Karen's classes begin

Aug 19 Anna move to John Brown University

Aug 31 Anna Birthday

Sept 27-29 Missio Nexus - Annual Mission Leaders Conference –

Orlando, Florida

Nov 2-4 Columbia International University Homecoming 2023 –  
Columbia, South Carolina

Dec 5 Darwin and Karen's 25th wedding anniversary

**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.

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.

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 Stoesz

## SHAN REED - JAPAN



**August 2023**

### **FAITHFUL**

#### ***Praises***

- Praise God for his faithfulness to us.
- Praise the Lord for his faithfulness in the church around the world and here in Japan.
- Praise God for his faithfulness to the women who attend the ladies' seminars around the Japan Baptist Conference and to Yuri and me as we lead and facilitate the seminars.

#### ***Prayer***

- Pray for God's work in and through Komyo Christian Church, that we will shine the light of Jesus to those around us.
- Please pray for Yuri and me as we rely on God's faithfulness, seeking his guidance for the future.
- Pray for us to hold unswervingly to the hope we profess as we minister in Japan.

- Pray for the youth of Komyo and Kongo churches, as well as the whole JBC, to learn to trust Jesus with their whole lives.

*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

### **HEBREWS 10:23-25 (NIV)**

Recently I was listening to a CD I haven't played for a while by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. When I read the verses above from Hebrews, I am reminded of one of the songs on the CD, "He's Been Faithful." The chorus states, "He's been faithful, faithful to me. Looking back, His love and mercy I can see." I truly am grateful for his love and mercy, which teach me of his faithfulness to me, to us.

This quarter has been filled with reminders of God's faithfulness. As I was thinking about the theme of faithfulness for this update, I realized that I have used this theme before and found that it was one year ago in my August 2022 newsletter! I guess this is the time of year God's faithfulness is on my heart.

One year ago, Paul and Melissa Ewing left for home assignment. As many of you know, during their home assignment, God has called them back to the United States. God's faithfulness in their lives and ministries have been so evident over the 22 years they have been serving in Japan. We do not know the plans of God, but we trust him because he is faithful! For the Ewings, July was spent cleaning and packing and filling out many forms as they prepared to leave Japan as NAB missionaries. It has been an amazing privilege to serve alongside them at Kongo and Komyo Churches in southern Osaka. I am thankful for God's faithfulness in establishing his church here in

Japan and allowing us to journey together in ministry.

God has called us to continue meeting together to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Yuri and I have seen God's faithfulness in this area as we have continued facilitating ladies' seminars throughout the Japan Baptist Conference (JBC). In May, June, and July, we had seminars in five regions of the JBC! Mie was the final region to host their first seminar. It was exciting to serve the three churches there and especially to see the generations of women studying God's Word together. In 1996, when I first arrived in Japan as a short-term missionary and couldn't speak Japanese, I had met some of the women who attended. Twenty-seven years later, God's faithfulness was palpable to me as we studied his Word together, in Japanese.

I have so many stories of God's faithfulness in ministry to share. However, I am going to close with a story of his faithfulness in my personal life. In 2019, I turned 50 years old. My college roommate and I began planning a trip to celebrate. Then, 2020 happened and the world shut down. For a variety of reasons, we had to postpone our trip until this year. We were able to spend 10 days traveling together in central Europe. We met so many lovely people and learned the history of lands and people we hadn't known before, people of strength and courage who believed in the faithfulness of God. God's timing and provision for us to take the trip this year reminded us of his faithfulness to us, too.

Thank you for your prayers and support of me and the ministry in Japan. I pray that you also are experiencing the faithfulness of God in your life. May you consider how to spur each other on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together. Our God is faithful. May he find us faithful. Shan Reed



## BRANDON & MARCI JONES - BRAZIL



**August 2023**

### **RECEIVING AND SHARING JESUS**

#### ***Prayer***

- For the spring semester at the seminary, that students will grow in applying ethics and the doctrine of the church to their lives and ministry contexts.
- For the good news of God's kingdom to reach more and more people in Rio Grande do Sul.
- For continued grace as our family navigates life in different hemispheres.

#### ***Praises***

- For the calling of church planters to share Jesus all across our state!
- For safe travels for Daniel's visit to Brazil.
- For God expanding our reach with Kairos.

*Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.*

## **MATTHEW 14:19-20 (NIV)**

Every year, the Baptist churches of our state have a local missions campaign that focuses on church planting. This year's theme is Receber e Compartilhar Jesus – “Receiving and Sharing Jesus.” This theme comes from the story in the Gospels when Jesus feeds thousands of people, using just five loaves of bread and two fish. The disciples continued to receive food from Jesus and kept on sharing with the crowd until everyone was satisfied.

Rio Grande do Sul has a large crowd, because nearly 11 million people call it home. And they are hungry for the good news of God's kingdom. The state has over 500 cities, and so many of them do not have a single gospel-preaching church. That is, they do not have one yet. Christians here have not only been receiving from Jesus but are sharing him as well. There are currently 13 church planting projects! The crowds are being fed, and they are not yet satisfied.

During this year's convention meeting in May, Marci and I had the privilege of seeing first-hand what it looks like to be equippers of the gospel message. During the meeting, Brandon and Leandro, a doctoral student with Kairos, shared how current pastors could use Kairos to help them further in their journey of discipleship as they serve their respective churches. Leandro is currently planting a church in Pelotas, the fourth-largest city in our state. His brother Anderson is also a Kairos student and is planting a church in the city of Caçapava do Sul.

The seminary is vital for the Christians of our state to have access to high-quality theological education. Through the pastoral formation course, and now Kairos, they can be well equipped for whatever ministry to which God is calling them: church planting, church leadership, lay ministries, pastoral care, and even missions!

The second Sunday of June is national pastors' day here in Brazil, so we hosted all the pastors and their families from the church of which we are members to join us for a special taco lunch after morning worship. When Kerry Bender preached at our church in April, he mentioned tacos in an illustration, but no one was familiar with them, so now we can say that at least our pastors' families have had them. And they liked them!

June also brought a highlight to our family because our son, Daniel, returned to Brazil for the first time since 2021. He was able to stay with us for five weeks, and one highlight of his visit was taking him and his sisters to Rio de Janeiro for the first time. We did all the classic touristy things and even enjoyed going to the beach in the winter, though none of us got in the water!

As we welcome August, a new semester is upon us. Brandon will teach Christian Ethics and help teach Ecclesiology (doctrine of the church) this spring. Monica and Olivia will begin 10th and 8th grades at their international school. Daniel will soon begin his sophomore year at UMKC. Marci will also be entering her second year as an MDiv student with Kairos in September.

As we look backward and forward, we are reminded of the gift we have been given both to receive Jesus and to share him. Thanks for your continued prayers and financial support. May you also continue to receive and share Jesus!

In Christ,

Brandon & Marci Jones

## HARLAN MOSS - PRISON LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY



**August 2023**

***“We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” II Corinthians 5:8***

I have heard it said, “It is not how you start, but how you finish.” This is true of life. Some people grow up in difficult circumstances, which can lead to drug addiction to cover up the pain. The good news is that Jesus came to set captives free. Some of the men in prison have been born again and set free and will finish their life well with Christ.

I first met Tyler in the hospital about a year ago. He told me that he had stage four liver cancer and had a year to live. When he left the hospital, he was moved to the Jameson Annex’s infirmary where I visited him weekly. Tyler told me, “I didn’t do the crime that they charged me with, but I did other things that were not right. I was not a good person in the past.” He had many health issues to deal with in the past year, but he was always thankful for the Scripture readings and prayers. Tyler always had a smile when I came into his room no matter what health issues he was dealing with, even though they were difficult. When Tyler died I was able to have a memorial in the chapel

for him and invited the nursing staff. They were very appreciative of the memorial service. There were a dozen nurses present which was an opportunity for me to thank them for caring for Tyler. It was also a time for them to hear about the Lord and eternity.

Jacob had throat cancer a few years before I knew him, and he had difficulty talking. The first time I met him was when I was distributing Christian literature cell to cell. I asked him if he knew Jesus Christ, and if he would go to heaven when he died. Jacob told me a year later when he started attending church, that he didn't like my question, it offended him. Later he realized it was an important question. He was moved to the infirmary because he was so weak. When I asked if he was trusting in Christ alone for his salvation he nodded affirmatively. When I said to him, "You are going to beat me to heaven & you are getting out of prison"! He had a big smile on his face. Jacob died three days later. PTL, he knew Jesus!

I wrote about Bobby in my June newsletter, and how discouraged he was at that time. When I visited him this past week he had a completely different attitude. He had a smile on his face. I asked him what happened to change his attitude from discouragement to joy. Bobby said, "After you visited me the last time and I read the booklet you gave me about eternity, I realized what is important in life. God does care about me because he sent you when I needed encouragement. I watch very little television, and when I do it is mostly Christian channels. I enjoy reading my Bible and going to church services and Bible studies." The Lord will never leave us or forsake us regardless of how we feel.

Your prayers and financial support are appreciated! Continue to pray for the released Christian inmates and for those who come to Christ and have a long prison term. Please pray for those who make decisions concerning volunteer policy! In Christ, Harlan

## PAUL & JANET HARKNESS - AWANA



August 13, 2023

Greetings,

The South Dakota weekend (8/12 - 8/13) of ministry went great! Thirteen leaders were trained at Restore Church in Yankton on Saturday, and nine leaders were trained Sunday afternoon at the Reformed Church in Dell Rapids. Meeting many loving, caring adults anxious to reach kids with the gospel and disciple them was very enjoyable.

That Sunday morning, we had a great time with the believers at Brandon Valley Baptist Church in Brandon, as I had the honor of bringing the morning message.

Thank you for your faithful prayers!

This coming Saturday, I will be presenting breakout sessions at the Kansas City Awana Ministry Conference. Pray for safe traveling as I will go there on Friday and return home on Saturday night.

Until then, there is a lot needing to be done in the office.

Paul Harkness

Serving Nebraska, South Dakota, SE Wyoming, & SW Minnesota

# **NEWS FROM CHAIN OF LOVE HOMES**

**April/May/June 2023 Newsletter**

**Dear COL friends,**

It's hard to believe, but we've just crossed the halfway point of 2023! So much has already happened. In this newsletter, we'll share some things that took place over the last three months at Chain of Love.

## **INTERNATIONAL BOARD MEETING**

After two years online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had our first in-person international board meeting!

In addition to our Brazilian board members, the following people were present at the meeting: Kerry Bender (NAB Vice-President for Missions), Rick Dunbar and Jean Dunbar (missionaries/representatives for Chain of Love in Western Canada), Robbyn Hanstad (missionary/representative for Chain of Love in the US), and Corinne Schalm (Canadian member of the board).

It was a wonderful time to evaluate what COL did the previous year and to introduce our plans for 2023.

## **TEAMS, TEAMS, AND MORE TEAMS**

We were excited to welcome to Chain of Love several special teams from the US and Canada! In May, we had a team from different churches from Alberta, Canada. Also, we were blessed by a team from Crosspoint Church in McKinney, Texas. In June, we were blessed by a team from a collaboration of churches in Eastern Texas. Later in the month, we had a team from Stony Creek Church in Utica, Michigan. Each team brought us so much joy and support. We had fantastic experiences as they interacted with us, did work projects, taught Bible lessons and crafts, and shared powerful testimonies.



Difficult issues, such as the problems related to pornography were addressed in a boys and men conference organized by the Crosspoint Church team. Also, our girls and housemothers had Bible studies to strengthen their trust in the Lord. Several teenagers accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior!

We are grateful to all these teams and praise the Lord for them.

The time they spent here was very meaningful, and we look forward to seeing them again.

If you would like to come to COL as part of a team, as a family group, by yourself, or with a spouse or friend, please contact us at [robbynhanstad@gmail.com](mailto:robbynhanstad@gmail.com) (if you are in the US) or [chainoflove.canada@gmail.com](mailto:chainoflove.canada@gmail.com) (if you are in Canada), and we will be pleased to help you.

## **DEREK MILLS**

Derek Mills is a college student from South Dakota and son of a missionary couple. He visited Chain of Love for an extended time to help as a facilitator to the teams and COL staff this summer.

This phenomenal young man is a committed Christian who gave Bible studies, helped teach some of our kids English, led worship, and did many other things. Derek has become part of our local family here. We praise the Lord for his life and are already missing him (he will return to the States on July 18). Everybody here wants him to stay, but because this is impossible now, we have already invited him to come back next year and spend an even longer time with us.

## **FAREWELLS AND WELCOME**

Unfortunately, Anderson and Clenice, houseparents in Off-Campus Home 3, have left Chain of Love. After a time serving the Lord, they realized that their time here had come to an end. They did an excellent

job, and we praise the Lord for their lives.

In their place, we have welcomed Dassaev and Rita, a couple whose hearts are committed to the Lord. They love serving. The children are adjusting very well to their new housemother and housefather.

Chain of Love also said a sad goodbye to Pastor Carlos Arthur and his wife, Sandra. After serving at Chain of Love as a chaplain, Pastor Carlos Arthur understood he could no longer help our teenagers because of his age. He and Sandra did an amazing job while with us.

We are currently looking for someone to fill the chaplain position. A “spiritual committee” was created, and services are led by churches attended by some of our staff. Pastors are invited to preach, and their worship teams help with the songs. When we have North American teams here, we ask individuals from their teams to preach. Although this is a temporary solution for the absence of a chaplain, it has been effective, and our houseparents and children are enjoying this experience. During the week, the international teams are also leading Bible studies.

## **CHAIN OF LOVE ON TV**

Local affiliates of Brazil’s two main TV stations-Globo TV and Record TV-came to COL to interview Telmo Camargo (COL Executive Director), housemothers, and staff, to learn more about Chain of Love. We had the opportunity to present our needs to millions of people who live in Rio Grande do Sul so that they can help our children, and to openly talk about how God is important in this ministry. Praise the Lord!

## **A CYCLONE**

In mid-June, an extra-tropical cyclone hit the Eastern part of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, where Chain of Love is located. Although our

campus and off-campus homes were thankfully unscathed (Chain of Love is on a hill and will never have problems with flood-unless Noah's flood hits the world again!), the cyclone tremendously affected several places in our state. Sixteen people died from landslides, floods, and strong stormy winds, and another 15,000 had to leave their homes.

The cyclone also impacted the homes where a small number of our Chain of Love teenagers and children are currently living with their biological families on a trial basis as part of reunification efforts by legal authorities.

Although they live with their families, these kids are still formally under the care of COL until a final judicial decision is made. Should the judge(s) determine it's not safe or in their best interest to be officially returned to the care of their families, the children will return to live at COL. Chain of Love was already helping these families by giving them old (but safe) furniture and appliances as well as groceries. Hopefully, we can make their lives easier, even while they are not with us. As they continue to recover from the cyclone, we continue to provide needed support to them.

According to the weather forecast, because of a phenomenon called El Niño, our state will be hit by other potentially intense cyclones (intense by South American standards, but nothing compared to hurricanes in the Caribbean) until December.

Please pray that this dismal weather forecast doesn't come to pass and that if strong winds do hit our state, they won't cause much damage, and lives will be spared.

We also want to assure any sponsors concerned about your sponsored child's safety or those planning to travel to COL in the coming months for a mission trip to not feel discouraged or afraid to come. While small cyclones are common in Brazil, our COL structure

is solidly built and has never sustained damage from a cyclone in our 30 years of existence. This is because the vast majority of homes damaged in Brazilian cyclones are near rivers or creeks, so they are impacted by flooding caused by cyclones. COL's homes were built with strong materials designed to withstand strong winds, such as solid rocks and bricks, providing increased protection for those within their walls. Comparatively, it tends to be the less solidly built homes made of poor materials that usually sustain heavier damage, such as those of the families many COL kids were born into. These houses destroyed are mainly in illegal hill areas prone to mudslides and are inhabited by people who don't have money to buy or rent a house. Please remember in your prayers these people who don't live at COL, but in poor and dangerous areas of Southern Brazil.

### **MORE PRAYER REQUESTS**

- For our finances
- For more conversions to Christ
- For our houseparents, who dedicate their lives 24/7 to the kingdom by looking after children from terrible backgrounds who have experienced severe and complex trauma
- For Telmo Camargo's promotional trip to Canada in September and the US in September and October and for his COL team (Rick and Jean Dunbar and Jaques Ribeiro in Canada, and Robbyn Hanstad and Wesley Camargo in the US)
- Praise the Lord for the young people who gave their lives to Christ at COL thanks to work done by teams on short-term mission trips.

Thank you for being part of this ministry!

Jaques C. Ribeiro

## THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS



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

### **August 17, 2023 - PERSECUTION & PRAYER ALERT**

#### **INDIA: Pastor and Family Detained; Multiple Other Christians Arrested**

Sources: UCA News, Christian Post, Church in Chains

A pastor, his wife and their three-year-old son have been jailed in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh after holding a prayer service at their home in Haidargarh on July 30th. Pastor Harendra Singh and his wife Priya were arrested and remanded on allegations of “luring innocent people to Christianity.” Because both of these parents were detained, they had to take their young son with them to prison.

This family was among several other groups of believers who were recently arrested in Uttar Pradesh. An unnamed Christian leader in the region stated, “The situation has reached such a stage that holding a prayer service or reading the Bible at home can land you in jail.” On the same day that Pastor Harendra and his family were taken into custody, Pastor Amarjeet Ram and 14 other Christians were arrested at a prayer meeting in the village of Balapur. While 11 of the believers had been released on bail soon afterwards, Pastor Amarjeet and three others remained in custody until they were granted bail on August

9th. Additionally, in two separate incidents that occurred around the same time in other districts of the state, similar arrests were made of seven other Christians.

State law prohibits any change of religion through allurements, force or coercion. However, false accusations frequently lead to charges where there has been no such inducement. Uttar Pradesh tops the list of states in India where Christians experience persecution because of their faith.

**Pray that all charges will be dropped against these Christians who now must legally contend with judicial authorities in defence of the false accusations presented against them because of their faith. In the interim, may Pastor Harendra and his family, as well as the other believers remaining in custody, tangibly sense the Lord's comforting presence with them. Amid the increasing religious tensions taking place in various states of India, pray that followers of Jesus will find effective ways to continue sharing the love and grace of God with those around them.**

### **INDONESIA: Access to Church Building Blocked**

Source: International Christian Concern

Gaining permission to build a church building in Indonesia has proven onerous for many followers of Jesus, creating multiple instances of conflict between Christians, community members, as well as their governing leaders.

The Indonesian Pentecostal Church in Sungai Barar, which is located on the island of Sumatra, had managed to successfully go through the approval process and complete the construction of their new building with all necessary permits. Rather than being able to enjoy gathering in their government-approved facility, the congregation now faces a

new challenge: local community members have built a wall that is blocking the only passable road to the building.

In a social media post that was published on July 24th, Pastor Ruyanto Situmorang shared how surrounding landowners had constructed a wall across the road, preventing congregants from gathering. Alternate roads were impassable due to large holes and other obstructions. The church's leadership has brought their case before the Regional Representatives Council of Jambi Province, whose members are imploring the local government to help the congregation resolve the issue.

**Pray that the officials of Sumatra's provincial and local governments would be open and willing to assist this congregation in finding an amicable resolution to the dispute relating to the wall built by opposing neighbours. May this challenging situation serve as an opportunity for these church members to demonstrate the love, grace and peace of God to their opposers. Furthermore, please pray for the Lord's blessings upon the ministry of this body of believers as they faithfully reach out to those of their community with the Good News of the Gospel.**

## **PRAISE REPORT**

### **ERITREA: Several Imprisoned Christians Released!**

Source: VOM USA

In a Persecution & Prayer Alert report that was published on July 27th, a call had been issued for prayer on behalf of two Christian leaders who have served more than 7,000 days in prison, without charge, because of their faith.

Although Pastor Haile and Dr. Kiflu presently remain imprisoned,



along with hundreds of other Eritrean followers of Christ, we can at least rejoice over the good news that 13 believers were released from custody in late July. The seven women and six men had reportedly been in prison for approximately ten years. Due to security concerns, the names of these recently released Christians have not been made public.

Speaking of the recent releases, Todd Nettleton from VOM USA states, “We may never know [on] this side of heaven exactly how all those pieces fell into place.” Todd further explains that he does not believe it was merely a coincidence that these Christians were freed so soon after ‘the call to prayer and action’ was issued on behalf of believers imprisoned in Eritrea. This serves as an encouraging reminder to us all that prayer changes things!

**Please join us in praising God for the recent release of the 13 Eritrean believers, while also continuing to pray for the hundreds of other Christians remaining unjustly imprisoned in the country. May God intervene in the hearts and minds of the officials responsible for detaining these persevering followers of Jesus, as well as the fellow inmates with whom the Christian prisoners interact each day. Finally, pray that the Lord will grant His sustaining grace, protection and strength to each one of our suffering Christian family members in this East African nation.**

## CRISIS IN UKRAINE



**August 22, 2023**

We have had the privilege of assisting Pastor Alexander and his team in Babai, Ukraine over the past few months. They are on the southwest edge of Kharkiv and are very near the conflict zone.

They have provided material relief to those who are suffering from the war and emotional/spiritual relief in the form of camps. They spend much time in and out of bomb shelters. They pack food and literature and pass it out to those in need. This courageous church still makes many trips into the occupied territories to bring relief.

Pastor Alexander recently sent this baptism video from Babai, Ukraine, and we share his joy! God is moving mightily in Ukraine!

# KRAMER'S POTLUCK/PICNIC AUGUST 20, 2023



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(Feel free to send us a text)

**Our New Address:**

101 S Cottwonwood St,  
Whitewater, KS 67154

**How To Give To North  
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**Step 1:**

Go to the NAB's new missions  
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**Step 2:**

Click on the "missionaries"  
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**Step 3:**

Click on the national missionary  
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