



BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

December 2023

Editor Janelle Daum

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“So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.”

II Corinthians 2:8

Don Nut says he and his wife have been married 50 years. He says that the secret is that they never went to bed without settling any differences between them. But Don concedes there have been times when he went 10 days without sleep.

Last month we started to look at how a life of forgiveness lessens the suffering caused by sin. In II Corinthians 2:1-7 we saw how forgiveness lessens the emotional impact of sin. Now we see how forgiveness lessens the physical impact of sin. The funny little anecdote we

started with helps us to picture that physical impact. A lack of sleep can be one of the physical impacts of sin.

Exodus 15:26 confirms for us the fact that sin has physical impact: *“And He said, ‘If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.’”*

In the case of this man in II Corinthians, a lack of forgiveness could create severe physical problems. So Paul reaches down to the depths of his spirit to beg them to show their forgiveness through practical acts of love toward this man, *“So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him,”* v.8. The word translated “reaffirm” literally means “to validate.” If they forgave him they needed to show it so that he would clearly know where the church stood. Practical displays of love make claims of forgiveness come alive.

Chuck Swindoll tells of two unmarried sisters who lived together. Because of a slight disagreement over an insignificant issue, they stopped talking to each other. Unable and unwilling to move out of their small house, they continue to use the same rooms, eat at the same table, and sleep in the same bedroom... without one word. A chalk line divided the sleeping area into two halves, separating a doorway and the fireplace. Each could come and go, cook and eat, sew and read without crossing over into her sister’s domain. Through the night each could hear the breathing of the other, but because neither was willing to take the first step to reconciliation and forgiveness, they coexisted for years in grinding silence.

That should never happen in the church. The physical effects on the people involved and on the church as a whole are too devastating.

Everyone ends up suffering because of the division. Forgiveness, displayed in practical acts of love, takes care of those physical effects of sin.

Live a life of forgiveness. Live in God's love!

Blessings,

Pastor Randy

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR DECEMBER 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

6:30 p.m. Awana Ages 3 - 8th Grade

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

Thursday's

1 p.m. Women's Bible Study at Various Homes

4:30 p.m. Women's Bible Study at Various Homes

Saturday's

December 2, 8 a.m. Men's Bible Study via Zoom

December 16, 8 a.m. Men's Bible Study via Zoom

Upcoming Events

Saturday, December 2, 10 a.m., Decorating the Church for Christmas

Sunday, December 3, Caroling & Soup Potluck

Thursday, December 14, Newsletter Articles are Due

Saturday, December 16, Sunday School Christmas program practice

Sunday, December 17, Sunday School Christmas program presented

Sunday, December 17, 5 - 7 p.m., Open House at the Kramer's

Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24, 6 p.m., Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Monday, December 25, Christmas Day

MISSIONARY UPDATES



AMANDA BENSON - PHILIPPINES

November 1, 2023

WAGING WAR

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” ~ Ephesians 6:10-13

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I lay on my stomach as I hear the shots fire around me, causing ringing in my ears. The smell of dirt and sulfur fill my nose as my face presses into the ground. I army crawl, trying to get past the rounds being constantly fired at me. This battle feels unending. I want to get up and run, but I know that is foolish. I know I must push through until this battle is over. Round after round, the enemy attacks. I begin to

lose heart. I begin to wonder if this battle will ever end. I'm tired of the fight. The commander has said the war is over, but the enemy seems to not believe it or understand it, and the attacks persist.

And then. Then someone crawls up alongside me. They have a shield and protect me from the rounds being shot. Hope and peace wash over me. They help me move past the worst of the battle and into an area of shelter. The battle is not over, but at least there is some reprieve.



Life is a battle. As believers this side of Heaven, we are daily engaged in a battle with the Enemy. My problem is that I so often forget this battle because it isn't physical. On the outside, life seems "normal" and there appears to be no battle. And I often live as if there isn't. I often live each day as if what I see physically is all there is and is what is real. But then I am reminded through different circumstances that this spiritual battle, even though unseen, is just as real as what I see around me.

Often, this battle rages in my head. There may be outward signs of it to those who know me well, but often it is internal and hidden. The enemy taunts me with lies. You are not wanted. *You're not a good friend.* He subtly slips in untruths...or even worse, mostly truths. *You are selfish. You've failed.* Those are the hardest to defeat. How do you fight with Truth what already seems true?

There have been times in the past year, and particularly in the last month, where this battle has been overwhelming. Times when I feel like a lone soldier on an open field being constantly shot at by the enemy to the point where I cannot stand. I know I cannot leave this battle, but I just want the battle to be over. **But then God shows up.** He reminds me that I'm fighting a battle, which is the first step in

overcoming. He brings others alongside me to pick me up and carry me. He reminds me that I am chosen and I am His. He reminds me of His Truth. He reminds me that He has already won the victory. He reminds me that He fights for me and He brings others to fight alongside me and for me.

Sometimes he brings rest from the battle. Sometimes He brings someone to come alongside me and keep me company and remind me of how to fight. Sometimes He gives strength to keep going. **He always shows up.**

The battles this side of Heaven will continue to rage. But I find comfort in knowing that God must be doing a great work in and through me, or the enemy wouldn't be working so hard to destroy me. I find comfort in knowing that God has equipped me for battle. I find comfort in the Spirit who lives inside of me and encourages me.

I know these battles are for good. God is doing a work in my heart and in my mind. I trust that it has a purpose that is far beyond my wildest imagination. I know that even sharing this with you now is a tool that helps me continue to defeat the enemy and hopefully will help you do the same. Satan hates when his tactics are brought to light.

What battles are you facing today? What thoughts wage war in your mind that are from our enemy who has set out to destroy you? What circumstances is he using to try to defeat you and weaken you? Don't forget to fight, friend. Don't forget the unseen battle. Don't forget that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against Satan. Fight hard against the enemy. The Lord will teach you how if you ask. Stand strong. If God is for you, who can be against you?

Victory is not only possible, it is assured.

Amanda



P.S. I've been listening to a podcast called "The Place We Find Ourselves," by Adam Young, and he has a series on warfare that has been really insightful for me. It starts on episode 41 if you look up the podcast.

### ***Praises***

- October was filled with many things that were restful and refreshing for me, including a week break where I got to go to the beach and rest. I am thankful for the times God has given to take breaks and rest from work to be refreshed and continue on.
- I'm so thankful that God brings people around me to fight the battles with me. I'm thankful He walks with me. I'm thankful for the work He is doing and the things He is teaching me.
- We have a student teacher staying with us for two months! She seems to have had a smooth transition so far.

### ***Prayer Requests***

- Pray that I would continue to fight the battles well. Pray that God would teach me how and would bring victory.
- I have a cold at the moment, and many staff and students are also sick. Pray for healing and that we can get through this season of sickness.
- Pray for wisdom as I am planning Outdoor Ed. A lot will happen now this quarter, and we need to make some major decisions on the basic structure for this year.

# DARWIN & KAREN STOESZ



**November 12, 2023**

## **Ministry Update (Short Version)**

Update on what Darwin is up to as Assistant to the IO Treasurer

Support update

Karen finished her bachelor's degree from Moody Bible Institute

Retracing our honeymoon from 25 years ago

Family news

Prayer / Schedule for the next few weeks

## **Ministry Update**

Dear Friends and Ministry Partners,

How do you like your new job?

This is a question that Darwin gets a lot since taking on his new role since 8/1/2023.

In short: He loves it. He is still just as actively engaged in the day-to-day activities in Japan as ever before. One of the responsibilities

that he has taken on is being the temporary bookkeeper for SEND International Japan. The field is going through a very significant accounting system change and my nine years of experience really helps till they can get someone in the position trained.

More detailed: The online software allows Darwin to switch from many of the field's finances with the simplicity of just a click. In one moment, he can be working on a transaction in the International Office, then switch to Southeast Asia and Japan all within a few minutes. In one field he may have authority to enter the transaction in the accounting software (Called Microsoft Dynamics Navigator) but cannot post it. In another field he just posts transactions after someone else has entered it into the accounting software. SEND has started to use an online reimbursement program (Called Certify) that once the local treasurer approves the reimbursement it goes to Darwin to process the transaction and enter the reimbursement into the accounting software. He also does the final approval for payments to individuals and groups throughout the world so that missionaries all over the world get reimbursed for their ministry expenses. There are other responsibilities to the position as well, it is safe to say that it is a full-time position as Darwin often finds himself in his office for most of the day.

Darwin's official title is: "Assistant to the International Treasurer" for the SEND International Office Treasurer. This position is vital to assisting missionaries from all over the world to continue to minister in their field of service.

### **Support Update**

We serve as continued employees of SEND International USA office and our ministry location is SEND International Office. In short, our paycheck comes from SEND USA, but Darwin works for SEND IO.

We do not get any compensation due to the position, but rather rely 100% on our support from faithful partners like you. Due to an increase in the cost of insurance, benefits etc., we would welcome any one-time gifts and if the Lord leads an increase in your monthly support to cover lost support that we have seen recently in our account. Thank you for praying about this need.

### **Karen finished up her bachelor's degree**

Karen is celebrating the last of her classes from Moody Bible Institute to be eligible to graduate with her bachelor's degree. This has been a long three-and-a-half-year adventure for her as she desired since 2001 to go back and finish her degree. She was able to do it entirely online and we are thankful for a generous gift that helped pay for this without any debt.

### **Retracing our honeymoon 25 years later**

We got married on December 5, 1998, in Whitewater, Kansas. It truly was a celebration to remember. 25 years later we look and feel older, but our commitment to each other remains. (Which is good.) For many years we have wanted to go back to Columbia, SC where we moved right after getting married. We used the excuse that Columbia International University (CIU) was celebrating 100-year anniversary of its existence by having an alumni reunion. We flew to Columbia, SC and stayed three nights with friends meeting many people we hadn't seen in many years. It was a great time to reflect on God's faithfulness in our lives. We then drove four hours to Roan Mountain Tennessee to Fairhaven Ministries to cabins in the mountains where we went on our honeymoon. We were able to enjoy reflecting on how God has been good to us through the years and how faithful God has been through the years.

## **Family News**

Anna is back at John Brown University in Siloam Springs Arkansas where she is majoring in kinesiology with an emphasis in sports medicine and a minor in psychology. She enjoys volunteering with her church Siloam Springs Bible Church where she helps lead the soccer outreach ministry and the 5/6th grade youth groups on Wednesday nights.

Clara is a sophomore at Berean Academy in Elbing, Kansas. She enjoys art, reading, and biking around Whitewater with her friends who live in the area.

Darwin enjoys helping with AWANA on Wednesday nights - he helps with the 6th grade boys.

Karen hosts a ladies Bible study every Wednesday evening in our home.

### **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:

Nov 13-17 Thanksgiving break for Anna and Clara

Dec 5 Darwin and Karen's 25th wedding anniversary

Dec 15 Anna last day of classes at JBU

Dec 17 Darwin preach at Whitewater Community Church

Dec 20 Clara last day of classes at Berean

Dec 31 Stoesz Family Christmas - Mountain Lake, Minnesota

Jan 3 Clara first day of classes - Berean Academy

Jan 8 Anna first day of classes - John Brown University

**Please pray:**

1. Pray for Anna and Clara that they would have continued growing relationships with Jesus.
2. Pray for Anna at John Brown University and studies kinesiology.
3. Pray for Clara at Berean Academy that she would seek God and make good friends.
4. Wisdom for Darwin as he serves as the assistant treasurer for the International Office.
5. Wisdom as Karen seeks her next ministry.
6. That our supporters will continue to support our ministry as we still rely 100% on support.
7. Pray that Darwin's Japanese teacher Mr. Tsuneizumi and Karen's friend Yuko-san would put their faith in Christ.

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

Darwin & Karen & Anna (20) & Clara (16) Stoesz

**Serving this generation of missionaries who are mobilizing God's people and engaging the unreached in order to establish reproducing churches.**

## RON & JEANNIE SECK - HUNGARY



**November 2023**

“JUST A SECK” TIMES

### *Prayer*

- Ten adults accepted Christ in Apc recently. Pray for their spiritual growth.
- 250 people went through medical screening in Meksiko and TriBagremi, Macedonia. Pray for the next steps to be organized to meet spiritual and physical needs in both villages. Pray for the construction of the solar panels that will provide electricity to run the water pumps for clean water.
- We have a CHE Vision Seminar coming in eastern Slovakia. Pray for clear understanding and a positive response to start a CHE program in this very needy region.

### *Praises*

- Read the letter below! Amazing things are happening!

*“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel:*

*‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.”*

### **ZECHARIAH 4:6 (NIV)**

**Today, as I sit writing this letter in the MEK Hungary office in Hatvan, it is All Saints Day, a holiday here in Hungary.** On this day, many Hungarians visit the graves of their family ancestors, festooning them with flowers and lighted candles in glass jars. Tonight, the graveyards of Hungary will be all lit up to honor the dead. The pagan theology on which this tradition is based has long been forgotten.

**Meanwhile, I am looking back at an incredible month of God-blessed ministry to the living! Jeannie and I just returned from participating in a Community Health Evangelism (CHE) medical screening in the villages of Meksiko and TriBagremi outside Prilep, North Macedonia.** There, we met up with an awesome short-term medical team of eight people from Crosspointe Christian Church (NAB) in Detroit, Michigan, led by Pastor Matt Swiatek and Dr. Margit Chadwell.

Pastor Alit Halidoski, his wife Senela, and the CHE Macedonia team did an excellent job of preparing the people of both impoverished communities for the children’s health screening. **We screened over 210 children, plus about 40 needy adults in just four days!** The community meetings to go over the results were both dynamic. The CHE team will now discuss the results with the leadership committees in both villages to decide what health care needs and projects to prioritize. **Each child who was screened, plus parents and adults, also participated in a “spiritual health” screening** where the Gospel was presented to them using a beaded bracelet they received that was based on Child Evangelism’s wordless book. Thank you so



much, Crosspointe team. You were awesome.

**At the same time as the medical screening, a very significant CHE event was taking place in the city of Leskovac, Serbia.**

Three trainers from the CHE Serbia team were presenting a CHE Vision Seminar to 50 members of one of the largest Roma churches in Central Europe and the Balkans. Our CHE lessons are very participatory, and the lead pastor of the church remarked that he was amazed at the enthusiasm, the mature answers, and wisdom coming from his people as they discussed how to transform their lives and their communities using CHE's biblical strategies.

**The next step will be** CHE Serbia master trainers training workers from the church so they can train others to do outreach and development in their neighborhoods and villages.

**September 27 to October 1, our CHE teams and partners came together south of Durres, Albania, for our Annual CHE EuroNet Gathering.** Praise God, the conference was everything we planned and prayed for! We were one hundred strong, plus children, from 12 different countries. This included newcomers from Bulgaria, Slovakia, and two churches in Serbia.

Terry Dalrymple, the Global CHE Network Coordinator, challenged our vision with CHE-oriented messages and reports from around the world.

Expert CHE trainers came from the US, Finland, and Canada to facilitate highly applicable seminars (trauma, human trafficking, disabilities, support-raising, etc.) that will lead to future in-depth training of our workers. Those who came to learn more about CHE have scheduled vision seminars and trainings for their leaders back home. We all felt the Holy Spirit's refreshing work in our lives during these four days.

**What about back home, here in Hungary? Two encouraging things to report.** In Boldog, a Saturday church service that had been stopped due to Covid has been restarted. Attendance has been about 10 villagers. In Apc, up to 30 folks have been attending a weekly prayer meeting. **Three weeks ago, 10 of those people stood to receive Christ as their Savior.** A weekly Bible study and a monthly community meeting with about 50 people are also taking place. The Lord is using home visitation two days a week by the MEK team to stimulate these results.

**Friday, November 3, we head to Serbia** to meet Marijana Čizmanski to visit a possible new CHE project with a possible new partner. We will then present at the second annual CHE Serbia Conference on Saturday. Meanwhile, Kerry Bender will be spending a few days with our MEK Team in Hatvan.

**The following weekend we travel to eastern Slovakia to do a vision seminar for a Slovakian and a Roma church.** The pastor there has a vision to plant a church in every Roma community in Slovakia. We would love to help him!

**On a personal note,** aside from a week long light bout with Covid, Jeannie and I are doing well health wise. My AFib that I experienced in May-June has not returned. We thank the Lord. We will be returning home to Phoenix on November 17.

If you or your church want to get in on the action here in Hungary, Slovakia, and the Balkans, contact me at my email address.

Ron & Jeannie Seck

## BRANDON & MARCI JONES - BRAZIL



**November 2023**

SPRING SHOWERS

*Prayer*

- That God will continue to bring new Kairos students and scholarships for them.
- That our spring semester will finish well with our pastoral formation program students.
- That our entire family can keep connected during the holiday season despite the distance between us.

*Praises*

- Kairos Brazil has produced its first graduate!
- Our daughters have been doing well in their classes at school.
- Brandon and Marci continue to receive opportunities to serve the churches and people here.

*We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. **ROMANS 6:4 (NIV)***

Brandon once wrote a book about baptism called *Waters of Promise*, and in it he recalled all the things water can do, including how it can cleanse, refresh, drown, and sometimes even overwhelm. This spring, we have been reminded of all those things, as what are always the wettest months of the year, September and October, were even wetter than usual for us.

Sadly, all that rain brought disastrous flooding throughout our state and even to our city.

As the weather dried up and the flood waters receded, the mess that was left behind was revealed. It was encouraging to see the response of God's people as many of our area churches stepped up to help their brothers and sisters in need.

Although this semester has been busy with Brandon teaching two classes, we celebrate how God has given us opportunities to minister beyond the seminary classroom. Brandon has become a mentor to one of the local pastors. Twice a month they meet and have been working through the book *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* by Eugene Peterson. This opportunity to mentor has been a great encouragement to him and came as he was on the verge of burnout. Please pray for the pastors here as they carry a large ministry load.

Brandon was also given the opportunity to speak at a nearby ministry called Hope House. This ministry offers a stable place for recovering addicts to stay while they work on re-entering society. As a Christian ministry, Hope House offers its residents opportunities each month for them to learn more about being a disciple of Jesus Christ. He presented two sessions on the power of habit in our spiritual formation, using James K. A. Smith as a conversation partner. It was exciting to meet new people, pray with them and for them, share a meal with

them, and get them to think more deeply about the ways they are formed by their desires and also how the Holy Spirit can work to reform those same desires.

Marci continues to work on her Master of Divinity degree through Kairos University. She recently spoke at two church events. One was a ladies' tea, where she shared about God's heart for the foreigner through the story of Hagar. She also gave a missionary testimony at the 104th anniversary celebration of Floresta Baptist Church.

The spring also brought an opportunity to take a short break. The girls had a week off school, so we decided to take a short trip to our neighboring state, Santa Catarina. We visited a German town called Pomerode and also a beach town called Balneário Camboriú, but the water was still too cold for any swimming. We traveled with our new friends, the Vargas family. The Vargases have a daughter who is in Olivia's class, and they became good friends this school year. Over time the whole family has become good friends with us. It was a joy to travel with a Brazilian family, and something we would have not thought possible just a few years ago. As we look back at our progress in Portuguese and acculturation, we are thankful for how far we have come in our journey!

As November rolls in, spring will slowly turn to summer. Our spring semester is nearly complete, with only a couple weeks of regular classes left before Pastor Cam Roxburgh visits from Canada to teach a one-week module on discipleship.

As we wind down another semester at the seminary, we are pleased to announce that Kairos Brasil has its first graduate! We celebrate our student Anderson Weige Dias as he finished his Master of Divinity degree. We have also opened enrollment for our second group of students! We have already had inquiries from a variety of applicants

all across the state, and even the country. Join us in praying that God will continue to use Kairos to equip the next generation of leaders and even teachers in this state! As we look to enroll the next group of students, we ask that you prayerfully consider giving to the Kairos Brazil Scholarships Fund. It is through your generous donations to this fund that we are able to keep the program affordable to our students (<https://nabconference.org/give/special-projects/>).

The Great Commission not only mentions making disciples and baptizing them but also teaching them, which reminds us that teaching is Great Commission work. We are pleased to be partnering with you in teaching here. We cannot do it without you.

With hopes for showers of blessings,

Brandon & Marci Jones

## SHAN REED - JAPAN



**November 2023**

LITTLE BY LITTLE

### *Praises*

- Praise God for walking with us daily, helping us to walk little by little into what he has planned for us.
- Praise the Lord for his faithfulness in the church around the world and here in Japan.
- Praise God that we could gather for youth camp in August and be reminded that we are not alone.
- Praise the Lord for the way he is working little by little, unifying his church at Komyo Christian Church.

### *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 continue seeking his guidance for the future.

- Pray for missionaries in Japan to be encouraged as they notice God's little-by-little work in the world.
- Pray for the youth of Komyo and Kongo churches, as well as the whole JBC, to learn to trust Jesus with their whole lives.

*Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.*

### **EXODUS 23:30 (NIV)**

In a podcast devotional I listened to a few weeks ago, the host read the above verse from Exodus and challenged us to be aware that God often works this way, little by little. When he brought the Israelites to the edge of the Promised Land, he did not drive out all the nations immediately. He drove them out little by little. The second half of the verse tells us why. We often see what God is calling us to do, where he is calling us to go, but our character is not ready to handle it yet. So, God walks with us little by little, preparing us to take possession of the land, to step into the calling to which he has been guiding us. What a loving, attentive Father and Creator we have!

This quarter I want to share with you a few places where I see God working little by little, accomplishing his goals in his way and his time.

### **Youth**

Since the pandemic started in 2020, our Japan Baptist Conference (JBC) youth gatherings have been online, and finally, recently, in person again. However, we have not had an overnight gathering since our summer camp in 2019. This August, we were finally able to meet again for an overnight camp. The students were thrilled to be together again after the little-by-little return of in-person gatherings. For many of the students, it was their first time meeting some of the people from other churches.



We had a BBQ and talked about God's love for us and how to love each other well. It was fun to see the students rebuild and build new relationships. After one of the times of fellowship, a high school girl said that she was happy to find that other people have similar struggles. "I am not alone!" That was a highlight for me as a leader.

### **Fall Day of Prayer**

The missionary community here in Japan knows the truth of working little by little. Meeting together for encouragement, prayer, and fellowship is an important way that God helps us grow our character and endurance. In October, the Kansai region of the Women in Ministry (WIM) arm of the missionary community gathered for a day of prayer. It was our second day of prayer since we started this gathering earlier this year. What an encouragement to hear stories of God's faithfulness in the lives of missionaries, our Japanese friends, and the church in Japan.

Being part of the leadership team gives me the bonus of fellowship while planning the day of prayer. I am grateful to know God is working little by little in all our lives. I can say with the high school girl, "I am not alone!"

### **Komyo Christian Church**

March 2020 brought Komyo Christian Church a Japanese pastor after we had just made the move within the JBC from church plant to established church. It seemed like life in the church was speeding along. A week later, the entire world shut down due to the pandemic. (I wonder what little by little things we all learned during those days!) As Paul Ewing and Pastor Saijo worked together in the beginning months, little by little God has been enlarging the leadership of Pastor Saijo.

As with any transition, Komyo Christian Church has also been learning little by little how to walk with our new pastor. We are learning to notice God's guidance together as we shine the light of Jesus brightly in our neighborhood.

We are looking forward to the Christmas season to see where God is at work and to join him in sharing about the beautiful gift he gave the world in Jesus.

Thank you for walking with me in this little-by-little ministry of sharing the love and light of Jesus in Japan. I pray that your celebrations of our Savior's birth may be filled with the light and peace only he brings.

Shan Reed

## RICK & DEBBI BARDIN - CAMEROON



**November 2023**

ONWARD AND UPWARD

### *Praises*

- Open roads and market
- Resuming of work on the bunker for the radiation cancer center
- Continued work on the expanded water supply for the hospital during dry season
- The scanner made it safely to South Africa

### *Prayer*

- That the scanner be fixed and returned in working order
- That the roads and market remain open and patients can get here easily
- That the new water system be functional for dry season
- For the work on the bunker to be finished

*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

**PHILIPPIANS 3:14 (ESV)**

We hope this finds you well and rejoicing in Jesus. Here's a quick update of what's happening here at Mbingo Baptist Hospital.

First of all, we are thanking God that things have been more peaceful in recent months than they were in the earlier part of the year. The road to Mbingo from Bamenda finally opened after a three-month lockdown. Even though it has many potholes now, traffic has been moving. Work on the radiation therapy project has also been proceeding with pouring of concrete for the bunker that will house the linear accelerator. Also, a water tank project to increase the water supply to the hospital and associated housing is continuing. The third water tank is complete. The remaining part of the project is to connect it to the filtration system to make it drinkable water.

In August, we had our annual NAB retreat. There were only a few of us on the field this year, so we had a small but very fun and relaxing retreat in Yaoundé with Craig and Maureen Moody and Kristi TenClay. It's always good to take intentional time to come together and pray for each other in person and get to hear firsthand the testimonies of what God has been doing in our lives over the past year.

The next item is both a prayer request and a praise. The slide scanner that was purchased over one year ago worked well and made it possible for pathology reports to be issued during my absence, at the time of our previous furlough. Unfortunately, a few months ago, after the warranty expired, it developed a fault that required us to ship the machine to a service center in South Africa. This required packaging it in its original packing material and sending it to the DHL office in Douala, about eight or nine hours from Mbingo. This was no small task. I recently received word that it did arrive at the service center in South Africa. We are thanking God for that! The prayer request now is for the repairs to be completed, quality assurance testing to be

done with good results, and the machine to be returned soon, safely to Mbingo, in good working order.

You may be aware that Debbie has been occupied with a new task as of September of last year - that of data entry. Her prayer request in May was that a Cameroonian person be hired that she can teach to do the data entry. Thankfully, this request has been honored, and the new person is in place now, working part time.

By the time you receive this letter, it will be near Thanksgiving time. We are indeed thankful for the tremendous privilege of serving our Lord in Cameroon and for the support we receive from you all, through your prayers and donations. We wish you a blessed Thanksgiving celebration and a joyful and meaningful Christmas season.

In His Matchless Love,

Rick & Debbie Bardin

## HARLAN MOSS - PRISON LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY



**November 2023**

***“Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”***

***1 Peter 3:15***

It is enjoyable to see some beautiful sunsets and sunrises. God is a great artist! Now we see the changing of the seasons by the beautiful colors of the trees' leaves (for a short time)! God demonstrates that He is real in the beauty of nature He creates! The opposite of beauty is war. The world is full of unrest and violence. God has prophesied these things would happen. Even many unbelievers realize Bible prophecy is coming true. I had the opportunity to visit with a prison staff member about what is going on in Israel from a Biblical point of view. She did not know all the things that were prophesied in the Bible. That same day an inmate poked his head in the Chaplain's office door and said to me, "I bet you know what is going on in Israel." I thought that was interesting because this same guy practices another religion. A few years ago when he and I talked about the gospel, he was not interested in hearing it. Evidently, he knows the Bible speaks about Israel!

A couple of weeks ago, Danny asked me to call him to the Chaplain's office because he wanted to know more about the Lord. While talking with Danny about the gospel, I could see he was very interested in knowing Jesus. After hearing the good news of salvation, Danny trusted Christ as his Savior. We also prayed about some other concerns he had on his mind. A week later he told me all the things we had prayed about were answered! Danny asked me, "What can I do to repay the Lord for these answered prayers?" I was surprised at his question because this is the first time I heard someone ask me what they could do for the Lord for answering their prayers. I told him the best thing is to get to know the Lord better through reading the Bible and going to Bible studies and church. We talked about how the best pay back to the Lord is to love and obey Him.

I appreciate your generosity through your prayers and financial support! You are a blessing! Your prayers are vital because there is a lot of negativity in the prison at this time. There is a lack of staff, therefore the inmates had some programs cut. I am thankful for the opportunities we still have to spread the gospel there!

Since we cannot do any homemade fudge, we have to buy prepackaged snacks for the Christmas sacks for the men. This a great reminder to the men that they are not forgotten! The information below is how you or your church can give monetary gifts to the Christmas sack program.

Blessings, Harlan

Please mail donations to: **SDPCA Christmas Sacks**

**601 West 57th St., Sioux Falls, SD, 57108.**

**Please put "Christmas Sacks" in the memo line of your**

## THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS



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

**November 16, 2023 - PERSECUTION & PRAYER ALERT**

**MYANMAR: Alleged War Crimes Against Christians**

Sources: International Christian Concern, Voice of America, ABC News

Five Christians, who have been victims of persecution as a result of Myanmar's military dictatorship, recently filed a war crimes complaint in a Philippines court. Although these believers were originally from Chin state, they have emigrated to Australia, Britain, Canada and India. The alleged victims argue that a 2009 Philippine law obligates the country to prosecute war crimes committed elsewhere under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

The perpetrators named in this complaint include the head of Myanmar's ruling military council, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, eight of his military commanders and a state minister. The complainants filed the request for prosecution on October 25th, and the government prosecutors have 90 days to either approve or dismiss the complaint.

The complaint states that members of Myanmar's military killed a pastor and two church elders in the town of Thantlang during September 2021. It also accuses the military of directing attacks against churches, and burning hundreds of houses that were located within the same town,



between August 2021 and June 2022. In a press release, one of the plaintiffs, Salai Ling, stated: “We are a Christian people whose pastors are being murdered and whose churches and faith-based schools are being destroyed in a systematic campaign by junta forces. With this persecution of Myanmar’s Christians continuing, we pray that our brothers and sisters in the Philippines will hear our cry and grant us justice.”

Though the action taken by these Christians is unique, it demonstrates the desperation of the numerous survivors who were affected by the atrocities. Since the military coup seized control of the country in February 2021, at least 4,155 people have been killed, and more than 19,600 remain in detention. Many of the attacks specifically targeted Christians under the guise of uprooting rebel forces.

**Prayerfully uphold all those who are involved in this court action, including the prosecutors of this case, as well as the governmental leaders of the Philippines, asking the Lord to provide them wisdom and guidance. May He also work mightily in the hearts of those presently ruling over Myanmar, in hopes they will understand the serious ramifications of their destructive actions and turn to Him in sincere repentance. Also pray for the ongoing ministry of church congregations throughout Myanmar, that these persecuted followers of Christ will receive encouragement, strength and provision so they can faithfully meet the spiritual and practical needs of others in this war-torn country.**

### **CHINA: Church Leaders Detained in Raid**

Source: Early Rain Covenant Church

On the morning of November 9th, Elder Li Yingqiang – along with a few other church leaders from the Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, Sichuan Province – were visiting a new church that had been established in Dazhou, which is about 400 kilometres away. There, the believers of the two churches worshiped together, held a baptismal service and shared communion. However, this special service was abruptly interrupted when

police from multiple departments forcefully entered the building.

While a total of 13 Christians had been taken to a police station that day, 11 of them were released in the evening. However, the police held Elder Li and Hou Duoshu, the leader of the Good Soil church plant, in custody overnight. The next day, Li was sentenced to ten days of detention, along with a fine. Even though Hou was sentenced to five days' detention, it was not enforced because of his poor physical condition.

In a recent episode of the Closer to the Fire podcast, host Greg Musselman was joined by guest Dr. Eric Foley from The Voice of the Martyrs Korea to discuss the Chinese Communist Party's push towards integrated faith and political ideologies – another attempt of the socialist government to enforce its demands for total loyalty from the people of China. We encourage you to listen to this informative discussion at [VOMCanada.com/video/china-foley](https://VOMCanada.com/video/china-foley).

**Please continue to prayerfully remember Elder Li, as well as the many other believers who are facing relentless persecution from Communist officials for remaining committed in their allegiance to Christ. Pray that China's church leaders will stand firm by upholding the truth of God's Word, regardless of the demands imposed upon them from governing authorities. In doing so, may the hearts of the opposing officials be radically transformed, allowing the ministry of the Early Rain and Good Soil churches to proclaim the Gospel among the many spiritually searching members of their communities before our Lord's imminent return.**

## REPORT UPDATE

### **NIGERIA: Blasphemy Case Hearing Scheduled for November 27th**

Sources: International Christian Concern, Christian Solidarity

In May 2022, Rhoda Ya'u Jatau was arrested by security agents on accusations of causing a disturbance, cyberstalking and showing "contempt of religious creed" for sharing her dismay on social media over the mob

killing of a Christian woman.

Human rights advocates have repeatedly expressed their concerns for this mother of five, who remains incarcerated while her case slowly works through the courts. In addition, a United Nations Special Rapporteur has expressed “deep concern,” while calling for the accused woman’s immediate release. Meanwhile, Rhoda’s family has gone into hiding, and her husband has sold their belongings to finance his wife’s legal defence. The judge overseeing this case has refused to grant bail on the grounds that it could trigger rioting by militant Islamic groups.

Although the prosecution has closed its arguments, there have been repeated delays as the defence attempts to begin. In the most recent hearing, which took place on October 16th, it was determined that the defence would present its case on November 27th. At that time, the judge will also consider a “no-case submission” by the defence, calling for the case to be thrown out.

Rhoda and her family live in Bauchi State, one of 12 northern Nigerian states that have introduced Sharia (Islamic law) into their criminal code. If convicted, the 45-year-old mother could face capital punishment.

**As this upcoming hearing soon approaches, please pray that the Holy Spirit – whose many roles include that of “Advocate” – would empower Rhoda’s lawyers while they prepare to defend her innocence in court (John 14:26). May the judge wisely heed the Spirit’s promptings, and thus rule equitably in her case – leading to a favourable outcome. In the meanwhile, also prayerfully lift up Rhoda, her husband Ya’u Adamu, and the couple’s five children, who are all in need of God’s peace, comfort and encouragement during this waiting time apart. Pray that the Lord will not only minister to each of them spiritually but also provide for the costs of Rhoda’s legal defence and the family’s day-to-day needs.**

## CRISIS IN UKRAINE



# HELP UKRAINE



**November 7, 2023**

From one of our seminary partners in Ukraine:

“Kremenchuk Evangelical Seminary would like to thank you for your partnership, prayers, and financial help. The donation you sent in November to purchase air conditioners and to buy a generator were received and used as intended. Because of the Russian Federation’s military aggression against Ukraine and the constant shelling of our country’s energy structure, the purchase of inverter air conditioners and a generator allowed us to provide heat and electricity for our seminary...This has allowed us to continue to care for the refugees who have found shelter in our dormitory, we can continue to provide daily assistance to those affected by war, and humanitarian ministry, and we continue to successfully fulfill our mission of equipping Christian leaders to serve and build up the Kingdom of God. May the Lord bless you all for your generosity and fill all your needs according to the riches of His goodness.

Sincerely, Rector KES Ivan Ovcharenko”

## Missionary Contact Info.

### **Rick & Debbi Bardin:**

See instructions Below

### **Amanda Benson:**

**Website:** send.org/benson

**Email:** oboejo09@gmail.com

**Address:** 113 E. Leighton St.  
Brandon, SD 57005

**Tax-deductible donations can be sent to:** SEND International  
PO BOX 513

Farmington, MI 48332

Missionary #169352

### **Brandon & Marci Jones:**

**Website:** teachingbeyondborders.org

**Email:** PastorBCJones@gmail.com

**Address:** U.S. mailing address is:  
1003 Baretta Ct.  
Aurora, MO 65605

**Address in Brazil is:** Avenida Cristóvão Colombo, 3452/201, 90560-002 Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil (Cards are wonderful, but please contact us before sending a package)

### **Harlan Moss:**

**Email:** hp moss1@Yahoo.com

**Phone:** 605-940-4220

**Address:** South Dakota Prison  
Chaplain's Association  
Harlan Moss  
601 W 57th Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57108

### **Ron & Jeannie Seck:**

**Website:**

<https://justaseck.wordpress.com>

**Email:** ronseck@gmail.com or  
jeanseck@gmail.com

### **Shan Reed:**

**Email:** shaninjapan@mac.com

**Address:** Ibukino 3 Chome 14-9-903  
Izumi Shi, Osaka FU 594-0041 Japan

### **Darwin & Karen Stoesz:**

**Darwin Email:** dstoesz@send.org

**Karen Email:** kstoesz@send.org

**Our main phone number for text and calling:** 316-708-0127 (Feel free to send us a text)

**Our New Address:**

101 S Cottwonwood St  
Whitewater, KS 67154

### **How To Give To North American Baptist Missionaries:**

**Step 1:** Go to the NAB's new missions webpage [nabonmission.org](http://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.

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