



BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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Editor Janelle Daum

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“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of gods, for His steadfast love endures forever. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for His steadfast love endures forever.”

Psalm 136:1-3

Almost one month ago two seconds changed the course of our lives. I was hanging some new pictures in our living room. We have cathedral ceilings on the main floor of the house and our entertainment center sits against the tall wall. Our entertainment center is a little bit over 7 feet tall but it is dwarfed by the wall behind it. So the project was to hang three pictures in that empty space above the entertainment center. To

E-mail: jbvbeditor@hotmail.com your article.

make a long story short I was preparing to hang the first picture when I suddenly lost my balance and ended up flat on my face on our living room floor. The first thing that I realized as I lay there was that I had no feeling or movement in my legs and arms.

What do you feel when you can't feel anymore? It turns out that I felt plenty. My first feeling was overwhelming fear. In those first moments after the fall I was terrified by the idea of living the rest of my life as a quadriplegic. My next thought was, "God, what are you doing? Where are you leading us on this journey?" I knew down deep in my heart that God was sovereign and overseeing what had just happened. I wish I could say that the words of Psalm 136 came to my mind at that moment, but it didn't. What I did feel was a sense of peace and love wash over me. I knew that this situation was bad, but I also knew that God was there with us so we didn't have to be afraid.

Recently I ran across these words from the book *Songs In The Night*. The book is written by Matt Redman and it recounts the many ways that people's lives have been touched by the song *10,000 Reasons*. It's a lengthy passage but it transformed my heart as I saw myself in his words:

In the world of nature, you only really find out whether a tree is evergreen when the season turns to winter. Throughout all the other seasons, to the untrained eye, it can be hard to tell the difference between those trees that will eventually shed their leaves and those that will keep them. Yet once the sun fails to climb quite as high in the sky and the temperature drops, the truth begins to emerge. When winter sets in, it soon becomes clear which trees have kept hold of their leaves and which have not.

And so it is too in the spiritual life. As worshippers, perhaps we don't really know what we're made of until we encounter a little

winter in our lives. When things are at their toughest, when life feels at its most frail, that's when we really find out what kind of worshippers we are.

Can we remain evergreen followers of Christ, still able to bring a song of praise in the deep dark of winter? Anyone can sing during the daytime when life is all brightness and ease. When there's peace and prosperity, when the people we love are healthy and the plans we have made look as though they're in line with God's will, it's not so hard to raise a hand and utter a thank-you. But can we still find our way to the place of praise when the sun goes down? Can we offer up a song in the night?

Perhaps we don't really know what we're made of until we encounter a little winter in our lives.

That's a phrase that comes up several times in Scripture. The book of Job talks about the God who "gives songs in the night" (35:10 NIV). We can see it in action too in the story of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:16–40). There they were in jail; it was midnight. Their hands and feet were bound in the stocks and they'd been treated unfairly. In the darkness of that prison most of our hearts would perhaps give way to fear, discouragement, or dejection. But not Paul and Silas. Their bodies might have been chained up, but their spirits were free. And what were they doing? Singing. From their lips came songs of worship, trust, and praise. And that praise became their sound track for a miraculous release from prison.

Then there's Jesus at the end of the Last Supper (Matt. 26:17–30). As He celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples, we're told that they sang a final hymn. Most likely the song they chose was the "Great Hallel," Psalm 136. Imagine Christ standing there, His

final hours already counting down, and He adds His voice to the others as they sing over and over again, “His love endures forever ... His love endures forever ... His love endures forever” (NIV).

In full knowledge of what was soon to come, and with the shadow of the cross falling over Him, Jesus chose to sing with His disciples this song of praise. Facing toward Gethsemane and headed toward Golgotha, and yet the Son of God sang of goodness and love.¹

This time of recovery is a winter season in our lives. There is still a lot of pain and struggle to come. But God is still on His throne. He is still watching over each one of us, no matter what life looks like. He always loves us through all the ups and downs of life. So our default response to life should be to sing that Great Hallel, “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.” The song 10,000 Reasons says it this way. I pray that this is the daily song of your heart:

Bless the Lord O my soul
O my soul, O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I worship Your holy name²

Blessings, Pastor Randy

¹Redman, M., Borlase, C., & Lucado, M. (2016). 10,000 reasons: stories of faith, hope, and thankfulness inspired by the worship anthem. Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook.

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UPCOMING EVENTS FOR AUGUST AND BEYOND

EVENTS CALENDAR 2021:

Sunday's

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Fellowship

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

One Room Sunday School for Preschool (age 4) - 8th grade

Wednesday's

Awana Clubs resume in the Fall

6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. Middle School/High School Youth Group

Thursday's

12 p.m. Prayer & Women's Bible Study at BVBC

Women's Evening Bible Study will resume in the Fall

Saturday's

Men's Bible Study will resume in the Fall

Saturday, August 14, 8 a.m. Leadership Team Meeting

Sunday, August 22, Newsletter Articles are Due

MISSIONARY OF THE MONTH
PAUL & JANET HARKNESS - AWANA



Paul and Janet Harkness became particularly impressed with how God was using Awana Clubs to impact the lives of children and youth, during their 20 years serving in pastoral ministry. In 2009 they became Awana Missionaries serving in Nebraska, South East Wyoming, Southern South Dakota, and South West Minnesota.

Paul and Janet were both born and raised in the Ord - Arcadia, Nebraska area. Janet trusted Christ as a child at age 7, and Paul trusted Christ as a young adult at the age of 20. They have four adult married children and ten grandchildren.

Contact:

Paul and Janet Harkness

North America – U.S., United States

Email: paulh@awana.org

July 6, 2021

Hello Everyone,

We had a great July 4th Weekend connecting with High School classmates from 1975 at our Alumni Gathering on Friday evening. Then connecting with the Eighth Grade Class of 1971 on Saturday evening. On Sunday, Janet drove the Transportation Van from our local hospital in a community parade in Comstock, Nebraska. Sunday evening, we spent

some time with Janet's brother and sister-in-law. Monday, being a holiday, we rested!

This week, the first two of nine Awana Connect summer meetings. Wednesday at Pleasant View Bible Church in Aurora, Nebraska. Thursday at Bethel Church in North Platte, Nebraska. Both 7:00-9:00 pm.

If you will be attending either meeting, please let me know by emailing me.

Thank you, and thank you for your prayers.
Serving Nebraska, SE Wyoming,
Southern South Dakota and SW Minnesota

MISSIONARY UPDATES

SHAN REED - JAPAN



Hello Friends,

Greetings from the prairies! I am amazed that I have been back in the US for six months now for home assignment. So much has happened in these past six months, and I am sure each one of you can relate.

Church Visits

Thank you for your prayers over these months. I have appreciated

getting to share virtually with many of you in worship services, small groups, youth groups and prayer groups. Although not the personal connections we usually enjoy, I am grateful for the technology that has allowed us to connect. Some of you I was only able to visit via video. Thank you for your understanding and continued prayers. (If you or your church did not have a chance to see my video let me know and I will send it to you!)

I was also able to be part of a new event NAB missions has started sponsoring called Cultivate Partnership. On Zoom we gathered for a time of sharing and prayer. I appreciated visiting with many of you! This event was recorded so if you were not able to attend or are interested in what was shared, let me know and I can send it to you.

Family

Besides the global pandemic, another reason I was not able to travel much during this home assignment was because of various family health issues. I am happy to share with you that my sister's surgery and follow up radiation treatments have resulted in using the past tense when talking about her cancer: She had cancer! Praise the Lord! Thank you for praying with us.

Another family health issue has been my mom's declining health due to Parkinsonism. (This is slightly different from traditional Parkinson's Disease, but I cannot explain the difference well!) Because my mom's health has declined, the assisted living facility where she was living could no longer legally care for her. In May we moved her to skilled nursing care. It has been a tough transition on all of us. Since my mom was living in assisted living and now in skilled nursing care, I did not want to endanger her health or the health of any of the other residents. Yet another reason for minimal travel and more virtual visits.

SD Home

After my mom moved to assisted living we sold my childhood home. My sister and brother in law graciously allowed me to live with them during this home assignment. However, as I thought about the future, talked with my family and prayed, I decided to buy a condo in Sioux Falls. This will allow me to have a home on this side of the ocean, too. I am grateful for

this provision and leading by God. It has already been an oasis for me during this home assignment.

Please change my postal address in your address book to:

Shan Reed

7701 S. Townsley Ave.

Sioux Falls, SD 57108

Prayers and Praises

- Praise God for this time in the US to connect with family and supporting churches.
- Praise God for my sister's good report that she had cancer!
- Pray with me for my mom's continued transition to her new living situation. Pray for me as I prepare my heart for returning to Japan. It will be bittersweet and very difficult for me to return knowing my mom's condition.
- Pray for my preparations for returning to Japan on July 28. The number of COVID-19 cases in Japan is not decreasing and there are several steps I need to take before departure and upon arrival.
- Praise God for the way Komyo Christian Church leadership and members are stepping up to minister while Ewings and I are all away.

Thank you for your faithful prayers for me, the ministry in Japan, and my family.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Shan (not) in Japan

"Even though you cannot always see it, you are growing in grace and strength." Morgan Harper Nichols

AMANDA BENSON - PHILIPPINES



July 1, 2021

SUMMER!

This past month has gone by in a whirlwind! I spent a week with my younger brother and his wife in Idaho, then went for a long weekend bachelorette trip to Arkansas. After that, I spent a week with my parents before returning to Omaha to help my friend get ready for her wedding, which took place last Saturday and was a blast! Since the wedding, I've been watching my niece and nephews while my older brother and his wife have a get-away in Florida. Tomorrow we will all head back to my parents' house to celebrate their 40th anniversary.

To be honest, a big part of me didn't want to come back to the US this summer. Covid has made traveling so much harder, so much more expensive and so much more uncertain. And yet, being back here has definitely been a huge blessing. I have had so much quality time with so many people. Being back in a country without many restrictions has been refreshing. I can go places and do things. I could get my vaccine (the one I wanted instead of not getting a choice in the Philippines). I can just enjoy being with people.

And this has been so restful for me, which has been my prayer for this trip. This past year has been so crazy and stressful. As soon as school ended on May 28, I have had no desire to do anything for school. I have barely checked my email and have only responded to ones that absolutely had to be answered. Instead I have been focusing on the people around me. I've enjoyed hikes and games. I've enjoyed good food and adventures. I've had incredible conversations. And my soul is full.

At this point, it seems that I should be able to get back to the Philippines on July 18. I was hoping for a shorter quarantine time because I'm fully vaccinated now, but the US wasn't put on the list of "green countries," so I'll need to spend ten days in a hotel then finish quarantining at home. Though this isn't what I wanted, God has provided. That's another thing that has been highlighted to me this summer...God's abundant provision. He always provides what we need, whether we have much or little. And my prayer is that my long quarantine back in the Philippines will also be what I need. He is so good.

How has God provided for you recently? I'd love to hear your stories!
I hope you enjoy the rest of your summer!

Praises

- It has been a great summer spending time with people! I've enjoyed the rest and the fellowship.
- It looks like I'll be able to get back to the Philippines, unless things get a lot worse in the next two weeks. It has been fairly stable there for the last month or two.
- God continues to provide all that I need, including the finances for extra things like the hotel in the Philippines.

Prayer Requests

- Pray that our endorsement request would be passed quickly through the Department of Foreign Affairs so that our new and returning staff can get visas and come to the Philippines in the next few weeks. The new staff are supposed to be there by July 19 so that they can quarantine before new staff orientation. It takes maybe a week to ten days to get the visa once the endorsement goes through.

- Pray for the rest of my summer, that I would continue to have quality time with my friends and family.
- Pray that my quarantine time in the Philippines would be meaningful. I am bring some games with me and am also hoping that I can get a hotel that allows deliveries. I also plan to spend some time with God in preparation for the upcoming school year (this is something I do every summer...and since I'm going to be locked in a hotel room for ten days, that seems like the perfect time to do it!).
- Pray that I would continue to grow in my walk with God and that my trust in Him would deepen even more through all of these experiences.

July 14, 2021

PowerUp! Prayer Update

Praises

- I have had a great week! It's been very relaxing, and I've been able to get together with a few friends and relax with my parents.
- Just this week, the Philippines has started allowing kids 5 and up out of their houses for the first time since Covid started! They still aren't allowed in buildings, but they can do outdoor activities and eat at restaurants outside. This is a big step forward!
- I'm so thankful for my roommate, who is putting some of my things together, and my neighbors, who are going to deliver them to my quarantine hotel before I get there! My hotel won't allow deliveries once I'm there.

Prayer Requests

- I fly back to the Philippines on Sunday, Lord willing! I leave Omaha early afternoon to fly to LA, then I switch airlines and leave LA around 10:50 pm local time, arriving in Manila around 4 am on Tuesday morning, local time. Pray for safe travels, that I would have all the paperwork I need, that my luggage would all arrive with me, and that I would be able to quickly get to my quarantine hotel.
- Please continue to pray that our third endorsement would be passed quickly through the Department of Education and the Department of Foreign Affairs so that new and returning staff without visas can get into the Philippines.

Ongoing Prayer Requests

- That God will give rest and refreshment to students during this summer.
- That God will provide the staff needed for the next school year, and that all staff will be able to get into the country this summer.
- That God will continue to draw me closer to Him and use me to further His kingdom.

Missionary Contact Info.

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

Paul & Janet Harkness:

Website: highplainsawana.org

Email: paulh@awana.org

Phone: 308.730.2468

Address: 1713 L ST, Ord, NE 68862

To partner with us by your donations:

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

Shan Reed:

Email: shaninjapan@mac.com

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

How To Give to North American Baptist Missionaries:

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

Step 2: Click on the “missionaries” label.

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

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

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