



BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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Editor Janelle Daum

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“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.”

Luke 14:26

We live in extremely unsettled times. We all know that last year our lives were turned upside down by a pandemic that seemingly came out of nowhere. What we once considered to be normal no longer existed. Schools were closed. Businesses were closed. Restaurants were closed. Churches were closed. In many cases even the most basic of necessities like cleaning supplies and even toilet paper disappeared

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off store shelves as people panicked and started hoarding everything they could find. New terms like masks and social distancing became part of our normal speech. Eventually everything settled down and shuttered buildings and businesses began to reopen.

But that wasn't the end of it. As Covid-19 spread, and more and more people died, drug companies were working 24/7 to develop vaccines that would provide immunity. The promise was that we would not have to worry about the virus if we were vaccinated. We are now finding out that the promise isn't true. Vaccinated people, like Colin Powell, still can get the virus and die.

The scary part of this is that now the vaccine is being used to abridge our basic rights. Vaccinations are being mandated by local governments and businesses. Suddenly, in many places, you can't keep your job. In some places you can't use public transportation, or eat at a restaurant, or even buy basic necessities unless you prove that you have been vaccinated. Parents who express concern and anger at school board meetings are now labeled as domestic terrorists, subject to investigation by the FBI. It has gotten to the point that our President just stated at a town meeting that you are a killer, murdering people, if you are not vaccinated. Where is all of this going to go? It shows us how easily the mark of the beast can be introduced to the world.

We are now left with the fallout of all of these shutdowns and political decisions. Inflation is starting to hit us hard. We are learning new terms like supply chain, something we were never concerned about. Because there are not enough dock workers and truck drivers we are looking at empty store shelves. This time it goes beyond cleaning supplies and paper goods. Now we are being told that meat and canned

foods are going to become scarce. Food prices are skyrocketing. Gasoline prices are going through the roof. Just this week the news came out that in Gorda, California the price for a gallon of regular gas is \$7.59. We are also being told that prices for heating our homes this winter are going to double and possibly even triple. So, we can't eat. We can't drive. We can't stay warm in our homes. There is even the possibility that celebrating Christmas won't be possible.

It raises the question about who is in charge. Why are we going through this? Where is God in all of this? Is He really sovereign?

Of course we know that the answer is, "Yes, God is sovereign and God is still in control." God is still watching over us and taking care of us. Our God is a God of power and might. Our God is good, and He is always with us.

Here is where we need to change our perspective. The question should not be about God. The question should be about us. Are we the disciples that we should be? Our lives have already been changed by current events and it looks like they will change even more. We are going to have to determine what is most important to us. Can we give up the comforts we have experienced in our lives and still love God and serve Him?

Luke 14:26 speaks directly to that question. It tells us that God wants our complete commitment. Nothing should be more important than God. That includes even our families and the most intimate relationships in our lives.

Let me share with you this account that appeared in an "Open Doors" newsletter. It speaks to the heart of what it means to be a disciple:

“A Christian medical doctor in China shares his experience when he refused to bow down or ‘kowitz’ to an image of Mao because of his love for Jesus. After severe beatings did not succeed in influencing him, the authorities resorted to a more subtle strategy by getting his whole family to stand around him and weep. Here is the story in his own words:

“I had seven children as well as my wife all surrounding me and weeping. Crying bitterly, my wife said to me, ‘If you don’t kowitz you will surely die and then what will we do?’ For three days they stood around me weeping until my wife’s eyes were dreadfully swollen. ‘After you have died, what will happen to these children? Please, for the sake of your family, just kowitz.’ They cried and cried. I really did not know what to do. I felt that I had no more strength so I prayed, ‘Lord I have no strength left, what must I do?’

“On the third day, the Lord’s word [Luke 14:26] came, Hallelujah! There is no word of the Lord that is without power. The Lord through His Word filled me with the life and power of God. I said to my wife, ‘Stop crying. It’s no use your crying. I am the Lord’s disciple. For the Lord’s sake I am ready to die!’

“Then the day came when the authorities called me and said, ‘You had better consider your situation carefully. If you want to live, you must kowitz otherwise it will mean certain death for you. Tonight we will make you eat the “steel bean” (bullet). You will be executed! This is your very last opportunity!’ And so he sent me back to think it over. “There was, however, no need for me to think it over. I was ready for the bullet. But the night passed without my being called. Next day I saw that outside folk were running hither and thither and I wondered whatever had happened to cause such alarm. Later I was to learn

that immediately after I had left the office, black swellings appeared on the prison warden's legs and it was frightfully painful. Because he was the chief, all the doctors in the hospital were rushed to his side to give him aid. But within twenty-four hours he was dead.

"The doctor was later released from prison and returned to his family and medical practice."

That medical doctor lived Luke 14:26. God was on the throne of his life and God used that disciple's faith to display His power and glory.

I believe that God has allowed us to be in that kind of situation. Difficult times call for us to look deep into our hearts and determine what kind of disciple we really are. What is most important to us?

We have the unique opportunity to display our faith and belief in God, even when everything is taken away. God wants to use our current situation to work through us to display His power and glory. God is calling us to put Him first before everything else. God is looking for Luke 14:26 disciples. It won't be easy. It certainly wasn't easy for that Chinese medical doctor to take the stand that he took, but he showed radical faith in God.

What kind of disciple are you? Are you completely and totally sold out to God? Is He the first and greatest priority in your life? Will you choose to stand for God no matter what happens in this world? Those questions are going to be answered in very visible ways as events play out over the next few months and years. Will your life display radical faith in our holy and sovereign God?

Blessings,
Pastor Randy

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DISCIPLESHIP TEAM REPORT

The discipleship team met at Brandon Valley Baptist Church on October 13, 2021 at 5:45pm. Present were Pam, Theresa, 2-D, and Erica. Theresa opened in prayer. Budget for the discipleship team was reviewed from the year 2021. Question was brought up concerning \$1000 amount under youth category. Discussion of what is all included in this amount will be looked into by Erica. Otherwise all other category amounts will remain the same for 2022 budget. Date for the Sunday School Christmas program was tentatively set for December 12th with practice date set for December 11th. Erica will ask Jan about program ideas and Pam will look into the suggestions emailed by Pastor. A suggestion was also made to have a Sunday School social again sometime in January or February after the holidays. There will be no Sunday School on December 26th or January 2nd. Next meeting scheduled for November 9th at 2pm.

WORSHIP TEAM REPORT

Worship Team met on October 17. Agenda items included determining budget needs for the coming year and services for the holiday season coming up. In place of a hymn sing in November we are planning Christmas caroling for December 5 following our regular Sunday morning services. The Youth group will eat lunch at the church following Sunday School and then travel to different homes to carol in the afternoon. Then at 5:30 we will be livestreaming Christmas caroling from the church sanctuary followed by a soup supper. More details to follow. We will be putting out a sign-up sheet and sending out a church email with the information for anyone that would like to have carolers come to your house. Please plan to join us for this kick-off of the Christmas season.

Old business included a discussion of the status of livestreaming the worship services. We are working on training people to run the camera and should be ready to go soon. We would still welcome anyone that would want to get involved in this project.

We have also been discussing options for a new pulpit and communion table.

Dixie, Erica, Matt, Hailey and Jan

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER 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

6:30 p.m. Awana Clubs

7:45 p.m. Middle & High School Youth Group

Thursday's

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

6:30 p.m. Women's Evening Bible Study meets at various homes.

Contact Stacy Frost for location.

Saturday's

8 a.m. Men's Bible Study on Zoom

(1st & 3rd Saturdays of the month)

Sunday, November 7, Daylight Saving Time Ends

Tuesday, November 9, 2 p.m. Discipleship Team Meeting

Thursday, November 11, Veterans Day

Saturday, November 13, 8 a.m. Leadership Team Meeting

Sunday, November 14, Newsletter Articles are Due

Thursday, November 25, Thanksgiving Day

MISSIONARY OF THE MONTH

BRAD SEIFERT



The Great Plains Association is made up of North American Baptist Churches in most of South Dakota and the Northwest corner of Iowa.

The new Regional Minister is Brad Seifert, a well-known pastor in the Central Plains Region, Brad is a welcome addition to the role of regional minister. His primary responsibility is to provide systems and resources so that every church in his region will grow to consistently help people love God, love people so they become disciples who make disciples of Jesus Christ at home and abroad.

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MISSIONARY UPDATES

AMANDA BENSON - PHILIPPINES



October 1, 2021

THE PATH TO STAGNATION

Day after day, I sit here. It seems that most days are the same... meetings, prepping, grading, more meetings. And yet this life has become normal, comfortable even. I am in a routine that allows me to get most of my work done as well as spend quality time with other people. Work and play seem to be in a good balance (ok...maybe I play a bit more than I should, but I wouldn't be me if I didn't!). And all the time, we are praying that soon we will be back to face-to-face school. We are one of five nations in the world that has not yet resumed in-person schooling.

Just two weeks ago, our president finally agreed to allow some pilot programs for face-to-face school. He said that 100 public and 20 private schools will be chosen. As a school, we have been prepared for this possibility, so we have already submitted our plan and proposal

to the Department of Education in hopes that we can be chosen. We have no idea of a time frame of when the schools will be chosen or even if we have a chance of being chosen, due to our location. If we are chosen, it seems that it will still only start for Pre-K through grade 2 and maybe a few other aspects of school, but it is unclear. However, we still are praying that we are chosen for this!

As much as I want to see my students in person, I also know that whenever we transition to seeing them again, it will be hard. It will take me out of this comfort zone I've found and put me in a place where I don't really want to be (teaching a hybrid model of school). But I know that if that is what it takes to work towards getting back to normal, then that is what needs to be done. I also know that if this is how God leads, then He will provide the strength and wisdom to make it through.

I recently read the book *Dune* by Frank Herbert. The main character of the book was learning to be a leader. The author says, "And always, he fought the temptation to choose a clear, safe course, warning 'That path leads ever down into stagnation.'" I like choosing the safe, easy, comfortable path (let's be honest...who doesn't?!). But that is often the path that leads to complacency and stagnation. It is during the trials and challenges of life that I grow the deepest as a person and in my walk with the Lord.

In my women's Bible study, we are studying Deuteronomy. It has struck us as a group how God so often reminds the people that when they entered the Promised Land, and they had an abundance, they were not to forget God and all that He had done (Deut 11:13-17 is one example). He knew that when they had more than enough, they would be tempted to forget that all of it was from Him in the first place. And that is exactly what happened to Israel (See Jeremiah 44:15-23).

And so, even though I don't necessarily enjoy the challenges, I am so thankful for them. I am thankful that God doesn't let me just

go to a place of stagnation, or if I end up in that place on my own, He doesn't leave me there. He puts me through trials to refine me. What a great God we serve, who molds us as the potter molds clay until we are exactly who and what He wants us to be.

How has God used trials in your life to mold you and draw you closer to Him? Have there been moments of stagnation in your life because of choosing the safe path? I'd love to hear more of what God has taught you in these areas in your own life! :)

Thank you for your continued prayers and support as I walk this journey.

Amanda

Praises

- Praise for a great first block of school! We had our first week off and have started our second 5-week block. I had a fabulous break!
- In the past 9 months or so, it seems that something has switched in my connections with others, and they seem to be so much deeper than before. I'm not exactly sure what happened, but I'm really thankful for the great community God has given me here.
- Praise God that the president has given the OK for the pilot programs for face-to-face school (something we thought might not happen for at least another year).
- It seems that God has been doing a great work in the hearts of our staff members. It seems that there has been a shift in the culture and that we are growing together in our walks with the Lord.

Prayer Requests

- Pray that we would be chosen for the pilot program for face-to-face school if that is part of God's plan.
- Next week we are having our mid-term accreditation check. Pray that all the meetings and observations go smoothly. I will be participating in an interview on Thursday. (The whole review is virtual.)
- Pray for those students and staff who are still really struggling with

distance learning. Some really are not doing well with it.

- Pray for me as I disciple students. I have two (possible three) high school girls I am discipling, and I just met with my middle school group for the first time (online) today. Pray that these would be fruitful times and that God would draw all of us closer to Himself.

October 20, 2021

PowerUp! Prayer Update

Praises

- The government decided yesterday that we would move to a different quarantine system today, which allows students to come up to campus again to exercise! Praise God! I believe it may also mean that they can go to some public areas, depending on what local governments decide.
- I am thankful for friends to laugh with and process with. God has truly blessed me!

Prayer Requests

- It has been a heavy week so far with many things to think about! There are a lot of potential changes for the upcoming year that I need to think through and pray about. Pray for wisdom to know what God is leading me to do in these areas.
- I haven't slept well the last two nights (I think in part because of the previous prayer request), and today I haven't been feeling my best. Pray that I can sleep well tonight and wake up refreshed and ready for tomorrow...since tomorrow is my birthday and we're celebrating Friday and Saturday! :) I'd really like to be in full health to enjoy these events.
- Pray that we would be approved for a face-to-face school program and that all the logistics would be worked out if we are.

Ongoing Prayer Requests

- That God will revive the hearts of the staff and students this year,

that we would passionately follow after Him.

- That God will give us wisdom as we continue to navigate the Covid situation, and that we would be able to meet in person at some point this year.
- That God will lead me to opportunities to disciple students this year.

DARWIN & KAREN STOESZ - JAPAN



October 17, 2021

Stoesz Ministry Update

We continue to have transitions happen with missionaries in Japan and Darwin recently helped two missionaries move by being the truck driver. We also continue to stay busy in the office as there is always an email or some item that needs to be handled. SEND Japan is happy that we have a guesthouse cleaner now hired, but Darwin has taken on the role of guesthouse manager for the time being. We also hired two SEND MK's to clean the office and so it is nice to have these MK's helping with the cleaning.

Darwin recently helped missionaries by taking a load of trash to

the local garbage recycle area. There always continues to be things to be done to have our facilities in nice shape for the future.

The borders of Japan are still currently closed but once the borders open there are many new missionaries that are wanting to arrive. Pray that these borders will open soon as it is creating challenges not only for missionaries, but for the Japan economy.

Since June 2013 Darwin has been serving as the business manager for SEND International Japan. Serving together with others in the office we can help the 60+ missionaries do evangelism and discipleship in Japan.

October 7, we experienced one of our biggest earthquakes in recent history. It was registered as a 6.1, but what was significant was that the epicenter was in our region. No big reports of damage and only a few injuries reported. We were fine, but it was big enough that Clara went under the table.

State of Emergency – COVID-19 – Japan News

Japan has lifted the state of emergency starting on October 1. Everyone is still encouraged to take proper precautions especially when it comes to large gatherings. The COVID-19 numbers have been greatly reduced, but there are fears that a sixth wave of COVID-19 will come. Japan has a new Prime Minister with Fumio Kishida who replaced Yoshihide Suga on October 4th. Ten days into his role as Prime Minister he dissolved the lower house and there will be an election later this month.

Family Update

Anna had an opportunity to go back to Kansas for Fall Break. She continues to do well at JBU and has a better idea of what classes she will be taking next semester. She continues to be very active in the intramural sports made available to her. She has found a church in Siloam Springs that she enjoys going to.

Clara is enjoying 8th grade at Christian Academy in Japan. Clara

really likes Spanish class. She has been invited to a party with friends and she is excited about going to that. She can usually be found painting in her room or watching movies.

We made our annual trip to Karuizawa last weekend, and we enjoyed celebrating Karen's birthday there. We had a really nice time there, but unfortunately, we were a little early to see the Fall colors. Karen is starting up another online class this week called "Story and Structure of the Bible" through Moody Bible Institute.

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:

- Oct 18 Karen meet with CAJ IT staff working on CAJ Board website
- Oct 19 Karen serves at a board meeting for Christian Academy in Japan
- Oct 27 Darwin will give a financial report to mission leadership
- Oct 29 Clara has a party with friends
- Oct 29-31 Darwin attends a SEND Japan Men's Retreat at Okutama Bible Chalet
- Nov 5 Darwin is going to Okutama Bible Chalet to volunteer trimming trees
- Nov 12 Darwin donates blood with the Japan Red Cross
- Nov 16 Karen serves at a board meeting for Christian Academy in Japan
- Nov 27 SEND Japan Thanksgiving at Okutama Bible Chalet
- Nov 30 Darwin will give a financial report to mission leadership
- Dec 5 Stoesz wedding anniversary – 23 years
- Dec 15 Darwin will give a financial report to mission leadership
- Dec 25-30 Stoesz family trip to Yamanaka Chalet
- June 16 Stoesz USA Home Service begins

Please pray:

1. Pray that Japan would have wisdom to know how to curb the spread

of the COVID-19 virus.

2. Pray that Darwin's teacher Mr. Tsuneizumi and Karen's friend Yuko-san would put their faith in Christ.
3. Pray for wisdom for decisions that need to be made in the SEND Japan office and at Christian Academy in Japan.
4. Pray for wisdom as CAJ looks for a new Head of School starting in 2022.
5. Pray for Anna and Clara that they would have continued growing relationships with Jesus.
6. Pray for Anna at John Brown University and studies kinesiology.
7. Pray for Clara at Christian Academy in Japan that she would seek God and make good friends.

Thank you for your continued partnership in our ministry.

Thank you so much for your prayers, financial support, and encouragement so that we can stay here in Japan.

Sincerely,

Darwin & Karen & Anna (18) & Clara (14) Stoesz

HARLAN MOSS - PRISON LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY



October 2021

“But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Your works.” Ps. 73:28

It is good to keep track of the blessings God brings our way! It is easy to remember the negative things that happen to us or around us. Throughout the Bible it says, “Remember”. One thing we should never forget is how the Lord has delivered us from the pit of hell. We need to remember how God answered our prayers when we were going through difficulties. If we don’t remember God’s blessings, it is easy to focus on the next thing we are asking Him for. I believe the Lord wants us to want Him more than anything else in life, because He is our greatest blessing!

One of the men who transferred in on the bus from Pennington County jail a week ago, told me that he got saved on the bus ride. One of the inmates on the bus was talking to other guys about Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation. He overheard them talking about Jesus and gave his life to Christ on the bus ride to Sioux Falls. This new believer

said to me, "I do not deserve to receive God's forgiveness because of all the wrongs I have done. I could have bled to death in a fight where another man had a large knife and cut me bad! But God allowed me to live and give my life to Him. If I would have died, I would be in hell right now!" He realized God's goodness to him and was thankful that God saved his soul. I had the opportunity to visit with him a few times and give him some Bible studies.

As I was handing out Christian literature cell to cell, one inmate called me over to his cell and said to me, "I need to come to your office and pray, I need to repent." In the office he told me how beat down he was because his father and his mother were different races. He tried to live near his mother and half-brothers, but they rejected him. They continually told him that he was worthless, and he did not belong with them. He really got depressed so he started to drink and use drugs again to cover up his pain of rejection. His father who lives in another state told him to get right with the Lord. We talked about how God does not make any junk and that no one is a mistake. We looked at Psalm 139 and how God knows us before we are born. He asked the Lord to forgive him for falling back into his addiction. It bothered me to see how verbally abused he was from his family, but I know he was encouraged after he repented and realized that he was not a mistake. He started to recognize that God did have a purpose for his life.

I mentioned Jim in the last newsletter, and he continues to find ways to share his faith. His job now is to cut inmates' hair, and he uses that opportunity to talk about Jesus with the men when he feels they might be open to listening. One of the men he cut hair for (Steve), listened to Jim talk about Jesus. He then realized he needed a Bible to read. Steve, who is about 50, has not been in church since he was a teenager. After I explained the gospel to him, he invited Christ into his life to be his Lord and Savior! The next week he told me he was

talking with his cellmate, and he is interested in coming to church as well! PTL! It is a blessing to come along side the men God is working in!

This ministry continues because of your prayers and financial support! Have a blessed October!

In Christ, Harlan

RON & JEANNIE SECK - HUNGARY



“How beautiful...are the feet of those who bring Good News, who proclaim peace...good tidings...salvation...” Isaiah 52:7

Hello, prayer partners from beautiful Hungary where the autumn is bringing great color to the bike paths of Hatvan which we enjoy.

We are asking you to pray this week for the MEK Hungary team:

~ as we engage in intense spiritual battle in the village of Boldog.

~ For good weather, safety and open doors as we do door-to-door follow-up visitation of the participants in last spring’s Covid food project.

~ For open hearts, since Covid lock-downs and summer work schedules postponed the follow-up, and there have been many difficulties in the community since then.

~ For the team's boldness as we visit in each home with the message of the Gospel, calling for true commitment to Jesus Christ our King.

~ For the team's Power from the Lord as we invite listeners to revival prayer time for repentance at "the container" on Thursday morning and evening.

~ For lasting commitment to Jesus, His Word and each other.

We will keep you in touch on what happens this week! Please Pray!!!

Thanking you with grateful hearts,
Ron and Jeannie for the MEK Team

Missionary Contact Info.

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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.

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