



BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

October 2021

Editor Janelle Daum

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"Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that to you also. Only let us hold true to what we have attained."

Philippians 3:15-16

In our last newsletter I talked about the importance of setting a goal for our spiritual lives and then pressing on toward that goal. Using the example of an Olympic athlete we talked about what it means to be committed to a goal. An Olympic athlete sets the goal of winning a medal. Then they start the grueling process of training for their event. Elite athletes train for eight to ten hours a day, getting up early in the

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morning and working all day. Then they clean up and eat, get ready for bed, and go to sleep, just to wake up and do the same thing again the next day. Day after day, month after month, year after year they train that way. A truly committed athlete gives up everything that we would consider normal in life because they are working toward that goal.

Paul uses that to describe his own life in Christ. In Philippians 3:11 he states his goal: *“that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”* What strikes me about this goal is Paul’s mindset. If anyone could feel like they had it made and could just coast through to the end of life, it would be Paul. He saw the resurrected Jesus. He was called by Jesus to serve Him as an apostle. He had suffered horrifically in his pursuit to serve Jesus. What more would it take to be certain of reaching his goal? But he says in v.12, *“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own.”* Then, as if he needed to cement that truth in everyone’s minds, he repeats himself in v.13, *“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own...”*

The one man who should have never had any doubt about his future lived as if it was in question. So he says at the end of v.13 that he *“strains forward to what lies ahead.”* In v.14 he says, *“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”* He never quit. He stayed strong and kept on going. He never quit because he understood that the Christian life is a training ground for eternity. For Paul, salvation was the starting point for that training., It’s a marathon that we keep running and we don’t stop until we achieve the goal... heaven.

Paul tells us, in v.15, that is the mindset of a mature Christian. He says that if we don't think that way then God will reveal it to us. In that statement Paul is leaving room for renewal and redemption for those who fall away from their faith. The Holy Spirit is always calling us to come back to our faith.

What I understand from Paul's testimony in Philippians 3 is that God is the God of second chances. We may stumble and fall, or get tired of the training and sacrifice, and take our eyes off the goal, but we can always turn back to Christ... no matter how long it takes. Paul had seen some of the Philippians get tired and fall away from the Lord. In v.18 he says with tears in his eyes that they were walking "*as enemies of the cross of Christ.*" Fortunately, it's rare for someone to fall that far, but if we do stumble, there is always a second chance.

Here is an experience that helps to describe what Paul is talking about:

Japanese Marathon Runner Shizo Kanakuri competed in the domestic qualifying trials for the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. Kanakuri set a marathon world record and was selected as one of the only two athletes that Japan could afford to send to the event that year.

However, Kanakuri shockingly disappeared during the 1912 Olympic marathon race. He had had a rough 18-day-long trip to Stockholm, first by ship and then by train all through the Trans-Siberian Railway, and he needed five days to recover for the race. He didn't get that rest. Weakened by the long journey from Japan, Kanakuri lost consciousness midway through the race, and was cared for by a local family. Being embarrassed from his "failure" he returned to Japan without notifying race officials.

Swedish authorities considered him missing for 50 years before discovering that he was living in Japan. In 1967, he was offered the opportunity to complete his run. He accepted and completed the marathon in 54 years, 8 months, 6 days, 5 hours, 32 minutes and 20.3 seconds, remarking, “It was a long trip. Along the way, I got married, had six children and 10 grandchildren.”

It's always better if we live like Paul and stay on course and don't fail in our commitment to God. But if we do fall we can always come back and start running the race of the Christian life again. The Holy Spirit never gives up on prodigals. That is the beautiful grace of God that flows throughout this wonderful passage.

Blessings,

Pastor Randy

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR OCTOBER 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

6:30 p.m. Middle School Youth Group

7:45 p.m. High School Youth Group

Thursday's

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

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

Saturday's

8 a.m. Men's Bible Study on Zoom resumes Oct. 2

(1st & 3rd Saturdays of the month)

Saturday, October 9, 8 a.m. Leadership Team Meeting

Sunday, October 24, Newsletter Articles are Due

SONRISE SINGERS

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Thank you for your prayers and encouragement through the years that we have been able to share our love for the Lord through our music. Harlow is in heaven 9 months already. What would I, what would you do without the Lord. I am still learning how to be a widow, and am finding that there is a lot to that title!

We have been blessed with many CD's and I have pondered and prayed how best to share them. They are all "paid for" so I would like to share them as an outreach. Please use them as you see fit to share the gospel via music. Harlow would be so thankful if you would share them in this way. Thank you for doing that.

I trust and pray that you are doing well and are staying strong in your love and message of salvation. I was able to go to Herreid, SD, Harlow's earthly resting place. His GRACEstone (not gravestone) was set in place. My friend wrote this as a typo! I don't think so! By God's GRACE Harlow is with His Lord.

God Bless and keep you,

Jarene Rudolph

14295 E. 49th Dr.

Yuma, AZ 85367

P.S. If you would like more CD's, please let me know.

harandjar@gmail.com

MISSIONARY OF THE MONTH

VENNELL MISSION AVIATION:



Since 1998, Tim and Tonya Vennell have served as missionaries with MAF in many locations. Tim has been asked by MAF leadership to assume the lead in the process of MAF changing to a part 135 aviation operation and is currently working at MAF headquarters in Nampa, Idaho, in support of worldwide operations.

Website: <https://maf.org/missionaries/>

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MISSIONARY UPDATES

RON & JEANNIE SECK - HUNGARY



September 2021

Greetings to you from the MEK office and our apartment in Hatvan, Hungary!

We have just returned from our lakeside work/rest vacation in Balatonboglár, Hungary. Above you see one of the many beautiful sunsets that we witnessed. I had the joy of painting this watercolor of one such scene.

We are thankful for your prayers throughout the summer for us and for the busy CHE teams. Here are some of the answers we experienced.

* FOR our major transportation problems:

The MEK Hungary van has finally been sold and replaced by two reliable vehicles (one is a brand new Dacia Duster!), through the generosity of one of our wonderful and sacrificial supporting churches! This has met a huge need.

Our own car is still in repair! However, we are able to use the new Dacia for our upcoming trips to Slovakia and Serbia, North Macedonia and Albania. This should keep us from losing our transmission

rounding a mountain curve. We are so thankful to this helpful church family, and to the LORD!!

* FOR Ron and me:

We had no Covid issues or travel complications as we flew to Albania and Ukraine to teach CHE from June 24 to July 8.

* FOR continued progress with the water project in Prilep, N. Macedonia:

God moved some large mountains because of your prayers in faith!

The fresh water connections are nearing completion; and the village landowner, on whose property we drilled the well, has moved from being skeptical about our true intentions to being a friend of this effort and of the team members.

~ FOR summer outreaches by CHE teams:

Many lives were touched by the Lord. Between 18 and 20 made professions of faith in Serbia and North Macedonia and are now being followed up!

PLEASE PRAY:

~ for the completion of the fresh water projects in both Meksiko and Tribegrami, outside Prilep, North Macedonia. Pray also as the CHE Team shares the message of the true Water of Life, Jesus Christ in both villages.

~ for those who have made professions of faith in Jesus to grow and develop wholistically.

~ for our upcoming trips to Slovakia next week and to Serbia, N. Macedonia, Bulgaria and Albania the weeks after.

• Pray that the team we meet with in Slovakia will have a fresh vision to begin a CHE program in their nearby village. (The missionaries who trained them recently left the field.)

• Pray for the vision seminar we will be doing for Bulgarian Roma pastors on September 19-20.

- Pray for our annual CHE Teams' Gathering in Albania, September 29 to October 2. Covid is rearing its ugly head again!

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS AND CONCERN, AS WELL-- WE THANK OUR FAITHFUL GOD FOR HIS PROVISIONS AND LOVE. Jeannie and Ron

Some PROVISIONS Below: Watching the MEK van drive away! A look at our new Dacia Duster!

AMANDA BENSON - PHILIPPINES



September 1, 2021
BREAKTHROUGH

The mud attempts to ensnare my feet with every step, the weight of it making me wonder why I still try to keep walking. The fog surrounds me, so thick I can barely see where I am going. I hear whispers in its thick folds.

*Why are you even trying?
He doesn't hear you.
You will never leave this bog.*

The voice becomes louder. I stop at times, wondering if it speaks truth. If I will ever find my way out of this bog. If the light will ever break through the clouds. If God hears my cries. But I know I must press on. So I do. I don't understand it, but I do. The truth that has been planted inside me becomes louder than the voice in the fog.

He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion.

Philippians 1:6

When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. Psalm 34:17

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13

Even though I don't feel it, I know I must press on.

I look back, and I can see how I got to this place. It was my choice to do something different, to change my habits for the sake of others, though I never dreamed it would lead here. That was a gradual slope down into this bog. And I know in my heart that there is a way out. I just wish I knew what and when it was.

And then one day, when I least expect it, the fog breaks and the rays of the sun begin to stream through the clouds. The mud dries up. And the voice becomes quieter and quieter. My foot steps on that dry ground, the hill starting to climb back up onto the path that I was on - the path I want to be on. The breakthrough has come.

There has been one area of my life in the last two years that has felt like I have been walking through a bog: my prayer life. I have spent much time talking to God, sharing with Him my thoughts and my feelings and praying for others. But my prayer life had felt like it was just another thing to check off of my list rather than a chance to spend time with my Maker, the one who loves me and whom my soul loves. My times talking with Jesus often ended up with me just talking, and no relationship does well if one party constantly talks and never listens. I found it hard to just sit and be in His presence and to

listen.

And the sad thing is that I know why I have come to the point where I am today. During my first term in the Philippines, I created a habit to spend extra time with God on Sunday evenings. I loved this time, and though it wasn't just a time to pray, prayer was a big part of it. But when I went on furlough, I decided not to do that for various reasons. I still spent time with the Lord each morning. I still fellowshipped with others and worshiped. I still was growing and learning. Overall, life was great. But in this one area, I started walking just a bit downhill without even realizing it.

Upon my return to the Philippines last December, I was excited to have this Sunday evening time with the Lord again. But I quickly found out I was no longer where I had been. It was a HUGE struggle for me to sit down and just be with the Lord in prayer. I kept pushing back the time, filling it with other things. I was still doing things that taught me more about God and grew my knowledge of Him, but I had a hard time sensing His presence or hearing from Him. I soon realized that I was afraid--I was afraid that I was going to sit down to pray, and He wouldn't show up--that I'd just be talking to myself. I longed to talk to Him audibly, as I talk to those around me, though I know He has chosen to not speak that way very often.

The struggle persisted. I fought the voice of the enemy in my head, which kept telling me to just give up trying and telling me that God wasn't listening, even though I knew He was. I realized that this was a spiritual battle that I couldn't fight on my own and began praying for God Himself to bring me through. And as this school year came, God brought this verse to mind: "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful" (Colossians 4:2). I realized that I was never going to get out of the bog or learn to more clearly hear His still, small voice if I didn't commit to persevering and just praying, regardless of how I felt. I realized growing in my prayer life is much

like playing an instrument or a sport; as much as I wish I could, I will never become an expert overnight. Growing in these areas takes practice and commitment. So as the year started, I set commitments to prayer (the kind where I am still and silent and listen and not just talk the whole time) - a bit every day and again on Sunday evenings.

I led a prayer walk during our All Staff Gathering, where we prayed M-Th for God to bring revival to the hearts of the staff and students this year. The first day of the prayer walk, we had 9 show up in person. And the next day, it was only one other person and myself. It was discouraging going from what I thought was many to few, but we prayed anyway. The next day, we went back up to 5, and then again the last day was only two. That voice came back to me during these times:

It's not even worth it. Only one other person showed up. Why even pray?

But I persevered. And on that fourth day, as my co-worker brought her shofar and blew it around campus, and we walked around praying for the spiritual health of the students and staff, the fog broke and the sun came pouring through in my own heart. I could sense again the presence of God. I could feel His Spirit in my soul, speaking with power through my words as I prayed for spiritual breakthrough. And my times with Him have been so, so sweet since then. I know I'm still working my way back up the hill to the path I want to be on, but I also know that this life is filled with hills and valleys. It is a life lived by faith and not by sight. And I know that God will never give up on me. He will continue the work that He has started in me. He will speak to me, even though it probably won't be audible until the day I see Him face to face (and what a glorious day that will be)!

My dear friend, no matter what bog you may be walking through, you can rest in His promises. He speaks to us so clearly through His word, and we need to rely on those truths, even when we don't feel

them to be true or don't feel His presence. We have to do it even if we just have to keep telling ourselves over and over in our heads that it is true, trying to convince our hearts to believe it. We need to keep on seeking. We need to keep on persevering. God makes Himself known and wants to be found by us.

Breakthrough is coming. Amanda

Praises

- Praise God for His work in my life, breaking through the fog in my life and revealing Himself to me, and for how He pursues us and draws us closer to Him, even though we don't deserve it.
- This school year has gotten off to a great start! It has been fun to connect with students and staff again, even if we are still teaching online.
- I have not been stressed or overwhelmed this school year like I was last year. Though I'm a bit behind on my grading, it hasn't been a burden.
- Many staff have been able to make it back in the country! We have quite a few more returning during our first week break in September.

Prayer Requests

- Pray for continued growth in my walk with God, particularly as I focus on prayer and listening to Him.
- Pray for wisdom as I seek God's direction on who to disciple and how to do it well.
- Pray that those returning to the Philippines soon would have safety as they travel and would be sustained during their ten-day hotel quarantine.
- Pray for the Covid situation in the Philippines. Our numbers are higher than they have ever been, and it seems like many people at school or with kids at school are sick or know people who are. Our healthcare system cannot handle high numbers of cases.
- Pray for continued good transition for the new staff who are figuring

out what life in the Philippines is like (especially since it is different now with Covid) as well as adjusting to teaching at Faith Academy.

September 8, 2021

PowerUp! Prayer Update

Praises

- I am getting a bit more grading done!
- I have enjoyed teaching this year so far, even with it being online. We are doing more live meetings, so I'm getting a bit more contact time with students and get to do some live teaching, which is nice!
- I've been making friends with some of the new staff and am really enjoying them!

Prayer Requests

- Covid seems to be all around us here. My neighbor across the street died this week, and two or three others in his family also have it (I wasn't in contact with them). Many, many Faith Academy families are currently dealing with it, though not too many staff members that I know of. Cases continue to be very high. Pray that cases would start going down.
- Pray for wisdom as we are setting up middle school discipleship groups. Pray that if God wants another male leader, that He would provide the right one. I will be co-leading a group with another staff member. Pray that we would be unified and learn from each other as we lead.
- Pray for continued rest and balance of time. Some of my really good friends are leaving in a week and a half, so I'm trying to spend as much time with them as I can. But I also have grading and planning to do. :) We do have a week break coming up soon, so I'm thinking I'll be able to get caught up then and be able to stay caught up after that.

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.

September 15, 2021

PowerUp! Prayer Update

Praises

- We are almost done with our first block of school! Just two more days, and then we have a week off. It is much needed for all of us!
- Praise God that I can have joy even in the midst of the stress of being behind on work. I praise God that most of the time, I haven't been too stressed out about being behind.
- Praise God for the friends that He has provided for me. I feel like many of the friendships I have are growing stronger, and there is a new staff member that I've quickly become friends with. She is from Iowa, and we seem to have a lot in common...plus we both live far away from school and she doesn't have a car, so I'm her only option for rides if her roommate doesn't go to school. :)

Prayer Requests

- There are quite a few staff members arriving in the next week. Pray for smooth travel and transitions for all of them. I believe only one is a brand new staff (to my knowledge).
- I hit a wall yesterday with feeling like I am never going to get caught up on my grading, which is why I'm so thankful for the break coming up. I was able to work through it and get some grading done, and today was a better day, but please pray I can get caught up and that I am able to start the next block caught up and stay that way.
- Covid is getting closer and closer to school. This week, quite a few people went into quarantine because of someone in their family having

Covid or being in contact with someone who has tested positive. Pray for continued protection and that this would pass soon. We are all sick of all the lockdowns (as I'm sure many of you are ready for this to all be past, and it is a lot more strict here than in the US).

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.

SHAN REED - JAPAN



September 2021

Dear Friends and Family,

Thank you for your prayers for our family. On August 30 at 6:05AM my sister and I witnessed as my mom was released from her diseased

body and ushered into the presence of her Jesus whom she had loved and served well on this earth. We miss her more than words can express, however, we are grateful she is no longer suffering and is in the presence of Jesus.

I will remain in the US for a few more weeks to help my sister and brother in law with the business affairs for my mom. Then I will return to Japan.

Prayers and Praises

- Please continue to pray for my family as we grieve together, share stories, and work through the business affairs.
- Please pray for my heart as I prepare to return to ministry in Japan.
- Please continue to pray for Komyo Christian Church as we navigate life in this continued pandemic time.
- Praise God with me for a life well-lived in service to her Savior.
- Praise God for a plane ticket that has allowed me to change departure dates without fees.
- Praise God for the prayers of his children strengthening and carrying me and my family.

Soli Deo Gloria

Shan (not) in Japan

**Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful
servants. Psalm 116:15**

WARRIOR 180 FOUNDATION



August 25, 2021

Dear Church Family,

**Now the Lord is the Spirit - and where the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is freedom! 2 Cor 3:17**

Freedom - isn't that what we all long for these days? Freedom to go where we want, spend time with our family and friends, freedom from this threat of illness that has been hanging over us all for over a year and a half. I hear people say back to normal - but the reality is that I believe this is our new normal.

But the promise from Jesus isn't about our physical freedom to travel or gather - he's talking about a freedom from the old law, a constricting legalism that holds a bondage to rules and tradition, a gripping fear of making a mistake or missing out. In Christ we have a peace and freedom that even if we do make a mistake we are not abandoned, because the Lord promises to never leave us or forsake us. (Duet 31:6). We have a freedom of peace that we are now His and He will stand with us thru any storm.

As I have stated before, we are living surrounded by active military and veterans - just off the post of Fort Bragg. Daily I talk with those who have and are serving our country and some feel that they have messed up far too much for any god (little g) let alone The God to forgive them. They live under the old law of works-based acceptance - they feel they have fallen so far that there is nothing they can do to regain ground let alone stand before a holy God. Not one of us is perfect, not one of us has it all together - we each have a flat side but God, in spite of ourselves, loves us even the more.

Just last week we had 1000 from our area deploy to Afghanistan - and the seriousness of this let me tell you is felt all around the community. We are reaching out to those who are sitting at home awaiting news and returned flights, we offer resources but more importantly we are offering Jesus, prayer, a listening ear and a shoulder to lean/cry on. We have no doubt that God has us here for a much larger than us job to be done.

This week as we were studying this image came to Criss - we are the picture frame, but Christ is the photo inside. Is our life either frilly, colorful, or simple surrounding the Savior? Do those who look our way see us in that frame or Jesus? He is the center of our lives - the most important part - the purpose that we are here. Luke 1:17 - in talking about John the Baptist (the end of the verse) 'to make ready a people prepared for the Lord'. In the Message Bible it says 'he'll get the people ready for God'. Are we doing this today? I am not the only one who believes that the time for the Lord's return is nearer everyday-are those around us ready? When Christ returns will our neighbors (who don't know the Savior) be left wondering why salvation was never offered to them? Do they live their lives next door to us looking at our picture frame?

Our desire is to live a life used by the Lord - showing those who are hurting that this life is but a blink and we have so much that has

to be done in that time. We all have our work cut out for us. We truly appreciate your support in us standing firm on what God called us to do, be and where to serve. Thank you for stepping in and being apart of this mission. Today it feels overwhelming - BUT GOD!! He is here, He is holding us up, He is opening doors, He is moving us into situations that we have no explanation on HOW other than God! We truly covet your prayers not only for us but for those still serving and those who suffer because of their service.

Serving those who faithfully chose to serve us,
Rev. Jeff Hastings
Executive Director/Warrior 180 Foundation

HARLAN MOSS - PRISON LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY



September 2021

"But now that you have been set free from sin, and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 11 Rom. 6:22

Sanctification is the process of becoming more like Christ. I realize

that sanctification in my life comes mainly through difficult times. The good thing is that the Lord is with us to help us grow in our faith, for without Him we can do nothing. It is great to see God working in the lives of the men behind the walls!

I have visited with Jason many times since he has been in prison. He has slipped a few times in his Christian walk and has ended up in segregation. About six weeks ago I gave him a book by Chip Ingram titled, "Yes, You Can Really Change." In the past few visits with him, he was telling me how much this book has made him think about how to grow in the Christian life. The last time I visited with Jason he was excited to tell me what he read in the book. The author said that as a Christian we are all a part of a bigger picture, the Kingdom of God. Chip explains the importance of growing in community with other Christians. Jason talked with his brother on the phone explaining to him about the importance of Christian community and getting involved in that community. His brother got excited because he had never heard Jason talk with such enthusiasm. Now his brother was encouraged to find a good church so he can be part of the bigger picture, the Kingdom of God! All of this made Jason thankful that he could be a good influence on his younger brother!

I wrote about Jim in Last Month's Newsletter.

He is now coming to all the Christian services. I let him open the Bible study with reading a Bible passage and prayer. I asked him to explain why he picked the Bible passage he did in Zephaniah about the great Day of the Lord. He told me that he wanted the men to think about Christ's return. Jim talked for about five minutes and after he was finished, the 27 inmates clapped and thanked him for his word! At the next week Bible study, I let him talk for a half-hour. He is very knowledgeable about the Bible, and he knows how to give the glory to God. The men took him very seriously. Jim has a passion for the souls of men in prison. He is praying for a great moving of the Holy

Spirit among the men in prison!

One of the men who has been in mental health for many years sometimes gets discouraged. He feels he does not see any results from his being good. Last week he told me he was giving up on God because God didn't care about him. He said, "I have been good for eight months and I still do not see any benefit from it. I don't want to talk about God." I told him that God does love him and so do I. When I came back the next week, he was still upset but he said, "I can't give up on God because He is the only one who cares for me beside you." He went on to say, "I know you care because you sent me letters when you couldn't come in because of covid last year. We had a good prayer time together.

It is a blessing to come alongside the men and walk with them through their difficulties. The Lord is growing them up in the grace and knowledge of the truth.

Thank you for your support! You are a blessing!

In Christ,
Harlan

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WARRIOR 180 FOUNDATION, INC:

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As you prepare for the gift giving - remember if you shop on Amazon a donation can be made to Warrior 180 Foundation.

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**