

BVVB

July 2017

Editor Janelle Daum

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UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JULY AND BEYOND

Birthdays:

July 2017

- 2 Gary Rommann
- 5 Vera Bartell
- 6 Erica Skogen
- 7 Matt Fischer
- 7 Caleb Benson
- 7 Carl Johnson
- 9 Aaron Skogen
- 13 Ahava Rundus
- 18 Rachel Kramer
- 24 Lexi Hokenstad
- 27 Pam Thorson

- 8 Aaron & Erica Skogen
- 24 Mike & Lisa Hokenstad

Nursery:

July 2017

- 2 Dee Olson & Dan Hanson
- 9 Aaron Skogen
- 16 Shawna James
- 23 Marlene Smith
- 30 Justin & Sara Tiffany

August 2017

- 6 Aaron Skogen
- 13 Pam Osmanson & Hailey Skogen
- 20 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
- 27 Erica Skogen

Anniversaries:

July 2017

- 2 Henry & Vera Bartell
- 2 Heath & Janelle Daum

September 2017

- 3 Ginger & Katrina Nelson
- 10 Dee Olson & Dan Hanson
- 17 Aaron Skogen
- 24 Scott & Nora Sittig

Children's Worship:**July 2017**

- 2 No Children's Worship
- 9 LaDell Hanson & Hailey Skogen
- 16 Matt Murphy & Cade Fox
- 23 Barbara Young & Kyle Skogen
- 30 Doris Conradson & Hailey Skogen

Scripture Reading:**July 2017**

- 2 Lindy Johnson
- 9 Gene Preston
- 16 Joan Murphy
- 23 Justin Tiffany
- 30 Pat Lacey

August 2017

- 6 Trevor Skogen
- 13 Lindy Johnson
- 20 Hannah Frost
- 27 Kelsey Frost

September 2017

- 3 Theresa Friesen
- 10 Matt Questad
- 17 Gene Preston
- 24 Joan Murphy

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Greeters:**July 2017**

- 2 Dan & Joan Murphy
- 9 LeeRoy & Ginger Nelson
- 16 Glen & Doris Conradson
- 23 Aaron & Erica Skogen
- 30 Gene & Judy Preston

August 2017

- 6 Justin & Sara Tiffany
- 13 Doyle & Barb Young
- 20 Dan & LaDell Hansen
- 27 Lindy Johnson

September 2017

- 3 Dan & Joan Murphy
- 10 Pat Lacey & Scott Sittig
- 17 Ray & Dee Olson
- 24 Paul & Pam Osmanson

Ushers:**July 2017**

- 2 Doyle Young
- 9 Terry Kramer
- 16 Justin Tiffany
- 23 Gene Preston
- 30 Dave James

August 2017

- 6 Paul Osmanson
- 13 Mike Kresak
- 20 Doyle Young
- 27 Gene Preston

September 2017

3 Scott Sittig
10 Terry Kramer
17 Justin Tiffany
24 Dave James

Events Calendar 2017:

Saturday, July 1, 7 a.m., Men's Bible study (at the church)

Sunday, July 2, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service - The Allen Family will sing

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

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

5:30 p.m., Congregational Prayer Service

Tuesday, July 4, Independence Day

Thursday, July 6, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Sunday, July 9, Congregational Meeting (to discuss and vote on pastor candidate)

9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

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

Thursday, July 13, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Saturday, July 15, 7 a.m., Men's Bible study (at the church)

Sunday, July 16, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

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

5:30 p.m., Congregational Prayer Service

Sunday, July 16 - Thursday, July 20, 6:30 p.m., Vacation Bible School

Thursday, July 20, No Women's Evening Bible Study

Sunday, July 23, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

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

Newsletter Articles are Due

Thursday, July 27, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various

homes to be announced)

Sunday, July 30, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

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

REALITY CHECK WITH GOD AND YOURSELF

Pastor's Reflections

Many people today expect to achieve success the first time they try something new, and they get discouraged if they do not. Consider instead, Albert Einstein, who many regard as one of the smartest men who ever lived. He said, "Sometimes I think and think for months and years. Ninety-nine times the conclusion is false. The hundredth time I am right."

Walt Disney failed miserably when he was young. He was fired by a newspaper editor for lack of imagination and wrote, "When I was twenty-one years old, I went broke for the first time. I slept on cushions from an old sofa and ate cold beans from a can."

Henry Ford failed to put a reverse gear in the first car he invented, and once he finished it, he realized he couldn't get it out of his garage so he had to cut a hole in the side of the garage to get it out. Robert Frost worked for twenty years before he sold his first piece of poetry. Today his works are printed in more than twenty-two languages, and he has been honored with the Pulitzer prize for poetry not just once but four times.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale once said, "The Lord expects you to make the most of the talents He has given you. What He wants you to do is to take your gifts, develop them, and attack life with wholehearted enthusiasm. If you do, you cannot help but succeed. When we meet our Maker, we will have to answer one big question, 'What did you do with what you were given?'" In response to this one pastor asked Dr. Peale, "What is the most important thing a pastor can do for his congregation?" He answered, "Love them, love them, love them," It's the one thing Jackie and I have attempted to practice in all our years with you. We love each and every one of you and will always cherish our years of ministry with you.

- Pastor Merv

With Independence Day being a part of the Month of July, I want to include this poem written by Benjamin Franklin:

MY COUNTRY

God grant that not only
the love of liberty
But a thorough knowledge
of the rights of man
May pervade all nations
of the earth, so that
A philosopher may set
his foot anywhere
On its surface, and say,
“This is my country”.

Moments for Moms

by jacqueline

Ahh! Summertime! Like many children, I was delighted when school was dismissed for 3 months of carefree summertime fun! Even though I have always thoroughly enjoyed school and studying, the change and anticipation of a different routine was inviting. Even today summertime is still sweet. It reminds me of a sabbatical meant for refreshment and renewal. It doesn't imply no responsibilities but rather a change of them i.e. no homework but rather helping our parents with yard and house work; no snow removal but rather cutting grass and weeds; not less of worship and studying God's word but also doing so in venues not available in winter. Summer can be a time of growing and cultivating not only food crops but spiritual fruit.

In Genesis 8:23 God says, “ ‘As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.’ “ I am thankful that our almighty sustaining God created seasons for our benefit and enjoyment. May you be blessed with a happy meaningful summer season.

DARWIN & KAREN STOESZ

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

May 30, 2017 Stoesz Ministry Update

Home Service Preparations

Darwin and Karen are busy preparing for our upcoming one year home service. We arrive into Kansas on June 24th. Please pray that we will be able to leave Japan well and that we won't be an extra burden on those that stay behind.

Darwin ended his responsibilities of SEND Japan Business Manager last Saturday. With this responsibility gone, he can help Karen prepare for home service.

The girls are having events where they can say goodbye to their friends. This is an important transition for them as well.

Anna graduated from 8th grade last week. It is hard to believe that she will enter High School in the Fall. Pray for Anna during this important transition.

Anna and Clara are a bit excited and nervous about attending school in the USA. They have many questions what American school is like as they have no recent memories of what it is like to live in the USA. They will be attending Trinity Academy in Wichita, Kansas.

We are hoping that this year of home service we will be able to connect with many of our supporters, friends, and family throughout the USA.

Significant Calendar Events / Prayer requests this week

Saturday, June 3, Clara is having four friends over for a "See ya later party"

Sunday, June 4, Darwin and Karen give speeches at church farewell

Wednesday, June 7 Darwin has a farewell with Mr. Tsune

Friday, June 9, Anna and Clara's last day of school at CAJ

Saturday, June 24 Arrival in Wichita, Kansas

Tuesday, June 27 Darwin flies to St Louis, Missouri to pick up rental car for the year

Wednesday, June 28 Stoesz Family moves into rental home in Wichita

July 1-5 in Mountain Lake, Minnesota

July 17-August 4 meetings at SEND headquarters in Farmington, Michigan

August 11 Anna and Clara first day of school at Trinity Academy

Thank you for your continued partnership in our ministry here in Japan.

Darwin & Karen & Anna (13) & Clara (9) Stoesz

MISSION NETWORK NEWS

Algerian believer faces blasphemy charges

PUBLISHED ON 5 June, 2017 BY Alex Anhalt

Algeria (MNN) - Algeria has been a constant member of the World Watch List published by Open Doors USA, but Miles Windsor of Middle East Concern says the situation for indigenous believers is a little different than most.

“Persecution takes a lot of different forms, certainly in terms of the way the state limits and persecutes Christians,” he says. “There’s huge difficulty that they face in terms of situations relating to burial rites, choosing the names of their children, the import of Christian materials, compulsory Islamic religious classes in schools, and obtaining permission to build churches and register for legal recognition.”

Some of the most dangerous regulations are the strict blasphemy laws. “The blasphemy laws are used often against people who are expressing their views and religious beliefs on social media,” says Windsor.

That’s how Slimane Bouhafis ended up with a five-year prison sentence.

Bouhafis, a 50-year-old Christian who was formerly Muslim, was convicted of blasphemy on September 6th, 2016. According to Windsor, “He was accused of insulting the prophet Mohammed” when he proclaimed his faith on Facebook. Since September, his sentence has been slightly reduced, but Windsor says the government has stubbornly resisted or ignored many of Bouhafis’s appeals.

“He also faces huge issues in prison,” says Windsor. “He suffered attacks within the prison system as a result of standing up for his Christian faith. There was an initial request to have him moved from the prison he was being held in because of the attack, but again, there was no response.”

Windsor urges readers to contact their local representatives in Congress so steps can be taken to free Bouhafis, and that’s not the only way you can help.

“We can lobby human authorities, but the most powerful authority that we can turn to is the Lord,” says Windsor. “Remembering these men and women who are suffering such as Slimane Bouhafis in Algeria...is a very important and powerful way in which we can be supporting our brothers and sisters.”

Education gives vulnerable children hope for a better future

PUBLISHED ON 7 June, 2017 BY Reagan Hoezee

International (MNN) - Following the London terror attack this past weekend, it was revealed that one of the assailants, Khuram Shazad Butt, had previously been reported to the police for trying to radicalize young children.

It's nothing new, as Islamic extremists often target the most vulnerable people to indoctrinate.

"You're seeing sort of in bits and pieces, in the midst of this mass of refugees and these displaced peoples, you're seeing these profiles of the angry young people — young men particularly — seeking a purpose, and then being influenced by more radical leaders," says Howard Dueck of TeachBeyond, an organization that provides Christ-centered education for people across the world.

One game-changer, however, is education. According to UN Refugee Agency, out of 6 million school-aged refugee kids, 3.7 million don't have access to school. That's a population roughly the size of Los Angeles.

"You have children and older people who have the hours of the day with nothing to fill them, and they are very vulnerable. So there's just the immediate reality of filling their minds, coming alongside them when they're very vulnerable and very open," Dueck says.

TeachBeyond is looking to start a pilot program on the island of Lesbos, Greece, which is a primary entry point to Europe for refugees fleeing the Middle East. The program would provide children with a safe haven where they can receive trauma therapy, skills training, and English as a second language teaching.

"We, as much as possible, try to bring English as part of the education package — opening doors, helping to diminish the vulnerabilities in their lives that are caused by a lack of education and that multiply when there is ignorance. If they have a skill, if they have an education, they can get a job at some point in the future," Dueck says. "They can have a purpose."

That's only on a human level. TeachBeyond's overarching mission is to introduce children to the hope of the Gospel and help them grow in their faith.

"We are a Great Commission organization focused on reaching people with the Gospel and discipling them through a Christ-centered education," Dueck says.

"Our heartbeat is to see healing come to their lives with so much trauma, to see

them know Christ, to encounter Christ through dealing with their trauma.

“Then we see them being discipled, relating all of life and learning to God and to His Word, having an integrated worldview and becoming, in the future... powerhouses for the Kingdom, as opposed to future jihadists.”

Believers in Iran sacrifice safety to hear the Gospel

PUBLISHED ON 13 June, 2017 BY Reagan Hoezee

Iran (MNN) - In Iran, like many countries in the Middle East, being a Christian can cost your life. Christianity is seen as a threat to Islamic identity, and Muslims who convert face the most persecution.

Sharing the Gospel and discipling believers are difficult, life-threatening tasks. One ministry, however, is finding efficient and safer ways to do this. SAT-7 PARS, the Farsi-language channel of a Christian satellite television ministry to the Middle East and North Africa, recently upgraded to a new satellite that could triple its reach throughout Iran and neighboring countries.

“It makes me feel that things are starting to happen inside Iran, because after seeing this miracle — allowing us, the first Christian channel ever, to broadcast on this big satellite — I definitely feel that our Lord has a plan for the Farsi-speaking, the Afghan-speaking, the Tajik-speaking people who are inside Iran,” SAT-7 PARS Senior Manager Panayiotis Keenan says.

It didn’t happen overnight. Keenan says the station had been trying for years to broadcast on Yahsat but had been consistently rejected. Keenan says the Muslim-based company out of Dubai rejected the station because of its Christian message. “A month ago, again, we tried through our CEO who met the company in Dubai and they went through the programs, they went through everything that SAT-7 broadcasts,” Keenan says.

“I believe the reason the door was open to us is because of the ethos our programs have. Actually, the ethos is the second reason that we have been accepted. The first reason the doors have been opened is because of our Lord Jesus Christ answering our prayers.”

While television provides a relatively safe means of hearing the Gospel, using technology to learn about God or communicate with other Christians is risky. Keenan says believers live in constant fear and mistrust of the people they interact

with.

“The church is persecuted inside Iran,” Keenan says. “The Christians are persecuted. Social media is filtered, so when you try to go to a page that has something to do with Christianity, immediately your page is shut down. Or, they might let you go to the site so they can find your IP address, see where you are, then come to arrest you. That’s how far they will go.

“Also, they are very, very scared because there are people who work for the government, who act like Christians in order for the real Christians to [connect] with them, and then they get arrested. And we have hundreds of examples that Christians are being arrested and you don’t know their whereabouts for years, or their family might not even know their whereabouts forever.

Still, God is moving in Iran. SAT-7 produces a variety of programs that introduce viewers to Christ and help them grow in their faith. Viewers who respond are eventually introduced to an underground church network where they are further disciplined. Keenan says people’s passion for the Gospel outweighs their fears.

“They take this risk to contact us because of how they are living and the depression and the oppression they have,” Keenan says. “They are eager to learn about Jesus and to be set free. They are so eager that they will take these risks.”

Cambodia: building bridges to end spiritual poverty

PUBLISHED ON 15 June, 2017 BY Julie Bourdon

Cambodia (MNN) - Despite economic growth in the last couple of decades, Cambodia continues to be one of the poorest countries in Asia. But, what would it look like to address not only the physical poverty in Cambodia, but the spiritual poverty as well?

Cambodia is a Buddhist dominant nation with nearly 90 percent of the people claiming that religion. Christianity accounts for just over one percent of the population . In this sense, Cambodia is a spiritually dark nation.

Hope: an answer to poverty

Last year, we introduced you to Tom Faunce, a missionary who is passionate about sharing the Gospel in war-torn countries like Cambodia. Faunce is a longtime friend and distributor of World Missionary Press. Over the last several years, Faunce has established contacts on the ground and the Gospel sharing ministry continues to

grow. In fact, the pastor he works with in the area has been overwhelmed by the number of young Christians who want to learn more about Jesus.

So, how has that happened? What Faunce has learned over the years is that often times, people aren't interested in what you have to say if you can't put action behind it. Simple acts of compassion can open the doors and let people know they are truly loved and cared for.

Faunce says, "We've made a tremendous inroad, mainly up in the highlands on the Vietnam border, not only with the Scripture booklets, [but also with] water wells which open up a tremendous amount of villages."

On his most recent trip, Faunce brought over fifty pairs of shoes for children in the highlands area. He wasn't sure how the distribution would go, considering that they hadn't taken measurements of the children. But miraculously, each and every child found a pair of shoes that fit them.

On previous trips, he and his team have installed wells in villages, some of which house several women who became widows during Cambodia's recent violent history.

Through gifts like these, Buddhist villages that were previously resistant to the Gospel have welcomed Faunce and local Christians into their community. They utilize a variety of Gospel sharing methods including the Jesus Film, child story posters, and audio books from the Bible Alliance to share the Word of God in the villagers' language. Additionally, in Cambodia and beyond, Faunce has been able to saturate communities with Scripture booklets from World Gospel Mission.

Faunce believes the Gospel will be able to touch and heal some of the scars left over from the war. He says, "These are people that know what it is to suffer. And people respond to love."

But it's not just the Buddhist communities who are embracing the Gospel.

Ministering to the boat people

In more recent years, they've also been reaching out to a group of Muslim boat people who live on the river. Upon meeting some of the fishermen one early morning, he learned that the people had many needs, and so he gave them what money and Scripture booklets he had with him.

"I started going back and ended up befriending them. We started bringing the tremendous amount of needs they had."

Many of the families slept under torn tarps, and Faunce helped them get new ones. Others were boiling grass for food, and so Faunce and his co-laborers helped to get them some rice. These acts of compassion have built a bridge between him and the boat people.

“Every trip, I’ve been going back and when I go there, they just come up and just respond. They hug us and just know that we love them. And that’s the Gospel, that you be a testimony to them and serve them.”

But, Faunce says, wherever you go with the Gospel, you will face resistance. In this case, the opposition came in the form of fear. Many of the people Faunce spoke with accepted the Scripture booklets and read them, but would hide them from the rest of the community. The religious leadership was strict, and they could get in trouble for reading the Scripture. But as time went on, the people opened up to hear more about Jesus. And this, Faunce says, is the main thing.

“We can do a lot of good things — wells, feedings, clothing — but if we’re not giving the Word of God, that’s a band-aid on cancer. The answer is Jesus Christ.” In both the villages in the highlands and the community on the river, Faunce continues to share the Gospel and witness the change it is making in Cambodia. Even so, he says he doesn’t try to count the number of people responding. “God knows,” he says. “The important thing is to reach out, [and] begin to establish a fellowship with them.”

In between trips, a young couple Faunce has made friends with continues the outreach to both the boat people and the villages in the hills.

“And that’s our goal, is to continually show up and love them. And the Bible says some plant, some water, but He alone brings the increase.”

Check back in later to learn about Faunce’s upcoming trip to Africa and how you can be praying. In the meantime, if you’d like to support this work, consider partnering with World Missionary Press. This ministry supplies missionaries like Faunce with free Scripture booklets so they can share the Gospel wherever they go.

He says, “It is such a tremendous blessing to have ministries such as World Missionary Press that provide the Word.