

# BVVB

September 2017

Editor Janelle Daum

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## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER AND BEYOND

### **Birthdays:**

#### **September 2017**

- 1 Cassandra Skogen
- 7 Ashley DeWitt
- 8 Sara Tiffany
- 12 Eliana Rundus
- 17 Pastor Merv Kramer
- 20 Kaitlyn James
- 21 Mike Benson
- 22 Cory Hanson
- 26 Barb Denissen
- 26 LaDell Hanson

### **Nursery:**

#### **September 2017**

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

#### **October 2017**

- 1 Marlene Smith
- 8 Justin & Sara Tiffany
- 15 Pam Osmanson &  
Hailey Skogen
- 22 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
- 29 Erica Skogen

#### **November 2017**

- 5 Ginger & Katrina Nelson
- 12 Dee Olson & Dan Hanson

- 19 Aaron Skogen
- 26 Shawna James

## **Children's Worship:**

### **September 2017**

- 3 Erica Skogen & Trevor Skogen
- 10 LaDell Hanson & Hailey Skogen
- 17 Scott/Nora Sittig
- 24 Barbara Young & Kyle Skogen

### **October 2017**

- 1 Dee Olson & Garrett James
- 8 Doris Conradson & Megan Questad
- 15 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
- 22 Barbara Young & Kyle Skogen
- 29 Pat Lacey & Hannah Frost

### **November 2017**

- 5 Dee Olson & Garrett James
- 12 Trevor Skogen & Hailey Skogen
- 19 Matt Murphy & Cade Fox
- 26 Barbara Young & Kyle Skogen

## **Scripture Reading:**

### **September 2017**

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

### **October 2017**

- 1 Justin Tiffany
- 8 Pat Lacey
- 15 Trevor Skogen
- 22 Lindy Johnson
- 29 Theresa Friesen

## **Greeters:**

### **September 2017**

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

### **October 2017**

- 1 Terry & Chris Kramer
- 8 LeeRoy & Ginger Nelson
- 15 Glen & Doris Conradson
- 22 Aaron & Erica Skogen
- 29 Gene & Judy Preston

## **Ushers:**

### **September 2017**

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

### **October 2017**

- 1 Paul Osmanson
- 8 Mike Kresak
- 15 Doyle Young
- 22 Gene Preston
- 29 Scott Sittig

## **Events Calendar 2017:**

**Sunday, September 3, 9:30 a.m.,** Worship Service

**10:30 a.m.,** Fellowship

No Sunday School for the Whole Family

**5:30 p.m.,** Congregational Prayer Service

**Monday, September 4,** Labor Day

**Wednesday, September 6, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.,** Journey 24/7 - High School Awana

**6:15 p.m. - 8 p.m.,** TREK - Middle School Awana

**6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.,** Awana - ages 3 years thru 5th grade

**Thursday, September 7,** No Women's Evening Bible Study

**Saturday, September 9, 7 a.m.,** Men's Bible Study at BVBC

**Sunday, September 10,** Grandparent's Day

**9:30 a.m.,** Worship Service

**10:30 a.m.,** Fellowship

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

**Tuesday, September 12,** Awana staff training at Lincoln Hills Bible Church (Sioux Falls) 6 p.m. snacks, 6:30pm - 9 p.m. training (please register and pay ahead – contact Joan)

**Wednesday, September 13, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.,** Journey 24/7 - High School Awana

**6:15 p.m. - 8 p.m.,** TREK - Middle School Awana

**6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.,** Awana - ages 3 years thru 5th grade

**Thursday, September 14, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.,** Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

**Sunday, September 17, 9:30 a.m.,** Worship Service - Jeff Hastings (Warrior 180)

**10:30 a.m.,** Fellowship

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

**5:30 p.m.,** Congregational Prayer Service

**Newsletter Articles are Due**

**Wednesday, September 20, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.,** Journey 24/7 - High School Awana

**6:15 p.m. - 8 p.m.,** TREK - Middle School Awana

**6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.,** Awana - ages 3 years thru 5th grade

**Thursday, September 21, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.,** Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

**Friday, September 22, Autumn Begins**

**Sunday, September 24, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service**

**10:30 a.m., Fellowship**

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

**Wednesday, September 27, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m., Journey 24/7 - High School Awana**

**6:15 p.m. - 8 p.m., TREK - Middle School Awana**

**6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., Awana - ages 3 years thru 5th grade**

**Thursday, September 28, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)**

## **SPOTLIGHT ON BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST MISSIONS**

Brandon Valley Ministerium (combining funds with Brandon area churches to be distributed from one church chosen each year) Funds are for one time needs, preventing individuals from going to every church and asking for help). LOVE OFFERING September 3 or 10.

Dr. Brandon Steger medical mission support (video in September and offering).

Please be in prayer for the medical missionary family we support, Dr. Brandon and Kim Steger and daughters Hannah, Katie and Grace. They will be heading overseas this August through April to work with refugees escaping ISIS. The family will spend three months in Greece working with refugees and administrative work(through YWAM), whatever God calls them to do. After that they will be in Beirut, Lebanon (through In His Image) where Dr. Steger will be working in a missions medical clinic. The youngest has expressed a concern, knowing there are those who do not want to hear about Jesus, that they could possible lose their lives. She also expressed that she knows they will be in heaven should that happen. When they return to the USA, they will be moving from Oklahoma to Minnesota. We will be showing the video of the Steger family's latest calling in September with an offering being taken at that time. The Stegers have saved enough money to cover their expenses, but have asked that support go to the clinic he will be working at in Lebanon. It costs \$9,000 a month to run and they lose their funding in January. A letter detailing their work will be on the missions bulletin board. You can follow their travels at the blog [emboldenedsisters3.blogspot.com](http://emboldenedsisters3.blogspot.com) or email them at [emboldenedsisters3@gmail.com](mailto:emboldenedsisters3@gmail.com).

# REALITY CHECK WITH GOD AND YOURSELF

## Pastor's Reflections

It doesn't seem possible that this will be my last column with you and that Jackie and I have been here in Brandon just under 40 years. Next month your new pastor will be with you. I pray you will grant Randy & Dixie the same love and affirmation you have extended to us. Suffice to say, we are very grateful to the Lord that He has allowed us these many years to be together in His work. We have grown in the Lord and we trust you have too.

There is no way to put into words all that needs to be said. But in this last issue I want to talk about what I believe is the most important issue in all of life - our encounter with Jesus Christ. The central, decisive meeting of all life takes place when we come face to face with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. None of us is ever the same person after that encounter. We either will have a new loyalty at the center of our life in which we revere Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, or we become more resistant to the things of God and we become more centered in ourselves.

Now, this meeting with Christ is never a surface kind of experience. It's more than signing a membership card or a response form. The New Testament uses a variety of descriptions to define this revolutionary encounter. Paul describes it as a "new creation." He says, in that encounter, the old things have passed away and everything has become new. Life is given new eyes, new loves, new hopes, new ambitions, and even new appetites. In the gospel of John, the apostle of love describes this meeting with Christ as being like a "new birth." Just as we were born physically through a marvelous biological process so we can be born by God's Spirit into a new life in Christ. It's like being born again. And as a tiny baby grows physically, emotionally and intellectually into maturity so we can grow spiritually in Christ. In another place Jesus describes this encounter as coming to a wedding feast where all are invited to come. It's a feast of laughter and singing and great joy. But not everyone comes. And only those who come share in it's joy. All of these descriptions seem to emphasize the fact that there are a variety of ways by which to meet Christ. But however we meet Him, meeting Christ is not like meeting any other person.

Because of who He is (the Son of God) and what He has done for us (died on the

cross and rose again), He comes to claim our deepest loyalty. He is God's answer to our deepest need (salvation).

Either we respond by giving our whole self to Christ in an act of faith, or we turn away. This is the way it is for each of us. We must decide either to accept or reject His offer of new life and forgiveness.

What a thrilling, amazing life Christ shares with us, as He has these past 40 years. And it's ours by faith. It's given to us as a gift when we trust Christ to save us and use us for God's glory.

- Pastor Merv

### **Moments for Moms**

by jacqulene

Parent to child: "Pick up your legos and put them in the box."

Child: "But I'm still playing with them."

Parent: "Pick up your legos and put them in the box."

Child: "I don't want to."

Parent: "Pick up your legos and put them in the box."

Child: "I can do it after supper."

Parent: "Pick up your legos and put them in the box."

Child: "It's not fair. Brother can do it, he's older than I am."

How many times a week do we hear a similar list of excuses from our child when he is told to do something?

Hmmmm...How often do we respond in a similar manner enumerating to God the reasons He shouldn't ask us to do something?

Jesus says in John 14:15, "If you love me, you will obey my commands."

### **SHAN REED JAPAN**

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

August 2017

Dear Family and Friends,

As I compiled pictures to put into this edition of "Shan in Japan's Newsletter," I couldn't help but notice the theme of mentoring that emerged (and the sheer number of pictures that I wanted to share! Sorry for the overload this time!). I

think this quarter's newsletter could be subtitled, "Why I do what I do!" Thank you for being part of what God has called me to do here in Japan!

### Komyo Christian Church

For the past two years we have been hosting seminars three times a year at Komyo Church for the ladies of our regional Japan Baptist Conference (JBC) churches, as well as for ladies from other area churches. The theme for July's seminar was thirst. We talked about the thirsts of our heart and how we try to quench them on our own rather than with God's love and grace. As the ladies get to know each other and their desires for knowing God deepen, the discussion around the tables also deepen. It is such a joy to see these women delving into God's Word and sharing their hearts with each other.

Every Wednesday night and Thursday morning I have the privilege of leading Bible studies for our church members. For the past year we have been studying Acts, learning about Peter's and Paul's commitment to the Great Commission, seeing the Holy Spirit at work in the early church and the lives of the believers, and learning a little geography along the way. We are encouraged and challenged by God's Word and each other each week.

### The Gathering 2017

Being part of the JBC's youth committee has given me many new opportunities to serve over the past three years. In July, Kensaku and Hiroko Higashi and I had the privilege of attending The Gathering 2017 with almost 600 NAB youth and leaders from around the US and Canada. Kensaku is a pastor in the JBC and the leader of the JBC youth committee. The three of us attended the gathering to learn more about what is going on in North America, to see if any of it could translate into a Japanese context, and to connect with leaders and youth of the NAB. I'd say our trip was a huge success!

Each morning the youth and leaders participated in volunteer service projects in the cities of Orange and Anaheim, CA. The three of us worked with Magnolia Baptist Church in Anaheim painting trash cans in area parks. Also in our group was the group from Washburn, ND. We had a great time not only painting, but also fellowshiping with these lovely people.

Evenings were filled with worship, learning and fellowship. One evening we were allowed to share a little about Japan and what God is doing here. Hiroko wore

the yukata, summer kimono, she had made and drew lots of attention. Many students and leaders stopped by our table to chat and learn more about Japan, and sample the candy, of course.

When I was in high school my home church started a wonderful program to help seminary students learn more about ministry while attending seminary. Our first student pastor was Mike Decker who is now pastoring a church in Costa Mesa, CA. He and his wife, Robin, have encouraged me in my walk with God over the years.

While we were in California, Kensaku and Hiroko also had the opportunity to fellowship with and be encouraged by Mike and Robin. At church on Sunday morning we also got to worship with Carol Potratz, who has been a mentor to each of us and was Robin's youth leader in Bismarck, ND, a few years ago. The circle of mentoring continues!

#### Home Assignment

In October I will be heading back to the US for home assignment. I look forward to thanking you in person and sharing how God is at work in Japan. Although my fall schedule is already full, after the new year my schedule is wide open. Please let me know when you'd like me to visit your church for Sunday worship, Bible studies, Awana, youth group gatherings, retreats, camps, VBS, and/or any other fellowship gatherings.

I am grateful for Ken and Rachelle Johnson and their family as they have worked at Komyo Christian Church this past year while the Ewing family was on home assignment! Thank you for your prayers for us this year!

God's richest blessings as you continue seeking and serving Him right where He has placed you.

Soli Deo Gloria, Shan in Japan

#### PRAISES

- Praise God for Komyo Christian Church and each person's commitment to knowing and serving God.
- Praise the Lord for the opportunity to attend The Gathering to learn, grow and fellowship with youth from around the NAB.
- Praise God for the Johnson family and their ministry at Komyo Church this year.

#### PRAYER REQUESTS



- Please pray for Komyo Christian Church as we study God's Word together.
- Pray for continued growth for each member and regular attender at Komyo Church.
- Pray for me as I finish this term and prepare for home assignment beginning in October.
- Please pray for Paul and Melissa Ewing as they transition back into ministry in Japan after a year of home assignment.

## **RICK & DEBBI BARDIN CAMEROON**

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

August 2017

Dear family and friends,

“Raindrops keep fallin’ on our heads” is the theme for this month! We are in the height of rainy season again and we actually don’t mind. It is the coolest time of year. Temperatures range from low 60’s to mid 70’s. The best part is that everything is green and lush and there is no dust. The downside is mold and mud  
Can’t have everything!

We have had several big events at the hospital this last 3 months

- French ambassador visited to check on progress of the buildings as France had loaned money for development
- The new OPD (outpatient clinic) opened
- Our hospital CT scanner is now in the port at Douala, to be delivered here in Mbingo very soon we hope
- We now have phase 2 of our EMR (electronic medical records) in use
- In July, we had our CIMS/PAACS graduation –had 5 graduates this year
- Our church has launched a building project since we are outgrowing our present building; many people sit outside each Sunday for lack of space.

We also have some other great news. Many of you have been praying for Dr. Mbanga to get into a pathology residency so he can join Rick as a fully trained pathologist! Dr. Mbanga had been accepted into a residency in South Africa but couldn’t get visas for his family. We felt God was closing this door as we believe for Dr. Mbanga to be separated from his family for 4 years would not be God’s way. He began the application process again and has now been accepted to a Path

residency in Nairobi, Kenya. This has taken a long time but we just heard a couple of weeks ago that he has been accepted and that visas for the family are not a problem. So, we feel this is a green light from God, and he will be starting early September. Please pray for him and the family during this time of moving and transition. To God be the glory for what He is doing.

Debbie has been able to attend the Women's Group at church this past year. This has been a great time of weekly Bible study, teaching on given topics, visiting the women who have had babies or had deaths in the family, and getting to know the women in the church better. She taught the women how to make snickerdoodle cookies one week. That was a lot of fun. There is a great community spirit here! She completed her classes and was dedicated into the Mbingo Baptist Church Women's Group which is under the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Women's Department. She was one of 10 in the class.

Another bit of news is that Rick has a new ministry. God has given him the opportunity again to disciple one of the CIMS residents. One of our new first year residents had expressed the desire to grow more in his faith. Rick asked if he would like to meet weekly for Bible study and discussion and he was eager to do so. They have been meeting weekly and God has been at work in this young man's heart. Pray for this to be a time of growing closer to Christ for Dr. Gerald.

Thank you for your prayers and ongoing support!

In His Matchless Love,

Debbie and Rick

PRAISES:

1. Four pathologists who will be coming to cover portions of Rick's furlough
2. Dr. Mbanga's acceptance to University of Nairobi for pathology training
3. Our continued health and strength for the work

PRAYER REQUESTS:

1. Still need volunteer pathologists to cover for Rick while we are on furlough (Sept - Dec) – 8 weeks are not yet provided
2. Pray for Dr. Mbanga and family as they get settled in Kenya and he starts his training
3. Pray for our daughter Jeanna's last trimester of pregnancy and safe delivery
4. Safe travel while visiting 14 of our supporting churches that we couldn't reach last furlough

# RON & JEANNIE SECK HUNGARY

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

August 2017

Dear Family and Friends,  
Rest and Refresh

Summer gets very hot in Hungary and in the rest of Central Europe. (Last week temperatures reached 100 degrees.) It is also a time when the Roma (Gypsy) can find temporary work in the farmers' fields and are not as available to us for ministry and community development. Since it is also a summer when we do not have short-term teams to work with children and youth, Jeannie and I decided it was time for us to take some much-need personal rest.

We've rented an apartment for six weeks near Hungary's beautiful Lake Balaton and have been enjoying getting ourselves back into better physical, mental and emotional shape by swimming each day, biking, walking and taking quiet time to talk, relax, read, refresh and reflect. We have also been visiting with old missionary friends and ministry partners, buying another vehicle to replace our old one that was totaled in an auto accident, as well as doing our own ministry work in the mornings.

We are appreciating David's poem: The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing / He makes me lie down in green pastures (in our case, on green beaches) / He leads me beside quiet waters / He refreshes my soul...

Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back

A funny story I heard on The Prairie Home Companion a while ago goes like this: A man hears a knock on his front door. He goes to the door and looks out the window. No one is there. Then he notices a snail stuck to the window. He opens the door, takes the snail off the window and throws it into his bushes. Two years later, he hears a knock on the door. He goes to the door and looks out the window. No one is there. But again, there is a snail stuck to his door window. He opens the door and is about to grab the snail when it says, "What was that all about?"

Sometimes I find myself asking God the same question: What was that all about? For example, the most difficult, on-going ordeal Jeannie and I had in our lives was raising our adopted son who was born addicted to heroin and with fetal alcohol syndrome. He passed away last year at the age of 39 from chronic alcoholism.

When he died, my first question to God, after all the love and effort we put into this broken child, was, “What was that all about?”

In Christian community outreach and development, the rule to remember is “three steps forward and two steps back.” Development does not move forward on a smooth line, ever upward. When we see successes and opening doors, we know to be ready for the two steps back. That’s when you want to ask God, “What was that all about?”

For many of our CHE teams, the last 6 months have been the two steps back after many good steps forward in 2016. Snezana, our south Serbia CHE Team leader, has started a promising Roma community outreach/development project near Lebane. Her support organization, GHNI, sent an American team to help advance the project and they did so very successfully with help from other surrounding CHE Teams. Several weeks later, Snezana’s husband, Slave, a burly, enthusiastic and dedicated pastor passed away after a 2 year battle with prostate cancer. The work has had to slow down. Two steps back.

In Bulgaria, committed and skilled Australian missionaries, Roger and Gail Dine, have tried for 3 years to get a model CHE project started in various parts of their beloved adopted country. They were bucking communities and churches that wanted more free aid, rather than true discipleship that produced development. We have invested our time and resources to help the Dines these three years. Gail has now contracted a medical condition that requires that they move back to Australia. Two steps back.

In Serbia, one of our teams is working in a Roma M\*sl\*m community. The local M\*sl\*m leader has allowed them to use the community’s mosque/community center to do CHE lessons and children’s programs. The program was growing. In February the CHE Team conducted a well-organized medical screening in the community center. However, some villagers jumped to the conclusion that the CHE Team was somehow connected with the M\*sl\*m leader’s political party and that he was trying to score points in an election year! The village council has now passed a rule that no outsiders can use the Mosque/community center any longer. This has changed strategy. Two steps back.

Another Serbian CHE Team we work with closely was ministering in partnership with a Roma church and a Serbian church to do CHE in a large Gypsy community.

An all-Gypsy community leadership team was selected by the Roma themselves, was trained by CHE workers, and was beginning to prioritize church and community projects. They were starting on their first goal: discipleship of Roma church members to reach surrounding communities. Plans were being made to find partners to build or renovate a building into a community center/church. In February the Serbian church, fearing loss of control of the Roma church, blew up the whole project. Two steps back.

Space does not permit me to write of other “3-step, 2-step shuffles” that are taking place right at present. Just take time right now to pray for us and our teams. Thank you.

Developing Christ-transformed lives and communities is not easy for the faint of heart. It has its predictable setbacks. But what is it all about? In my devotions last week I read this prophetic passage where Messiah Himself is speaking of his future ministry on earth: “But I said, ‘I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all. Yet what is due me is in the LORD’s hand, and my reward is with my God’” (Isaiah 49:4). For Messiah, the reward for His two hard steps back was seeing His spiritual offspring from every kingdom, tongue, tribe and nation. For us we know that God does know what it’s all about, even if we do not; and that it does involve the flourishing of His Kingdom. Our reward will be to see exactly that.

## **AMANDA BENSON**

### **BREAK ME**

Extra-ordinary prayer. Do you pray for extra-ordinary things? Of course God wants us to pray for the day-to-day ordinary parts of our lives, but do you ever go beyond the ordinary? Do you pray for God to break you? Do you pray for God to do immeasurably more than you could ask or imagine? Do you pray for more of His grace in your life? Do you pray for more of Him? Do you pray for more of His Spirit?

This was the challenge presented to us by our speaker during our all-staff retreat last week. There are definitely times I pray things like this, but I don’t think I pray like this on a daily basis. We concluded our retreat with a time of individual prayer. As I sat by the lake, surrounded by the beauty of the Philippines, I began

to ask God to break me. But I hesitated.

Break me. That's a heavy prayer. Do I really want God to do that? Do I really want to tell the Almighty God to break me? Am I asking for trouble? Am I asking for hardship? What will that mean for this year?

As I hesitated, however, I realized that I can pray this prayer with confidence because of Who it is that I am asking. I'm not asking my enemy to break me - I'm asking my wonderful, loving Savior to break me (the One who has also been broken). I can ask God to break me because I can trust Him. He has been faithful before, and He will be faithful again. His goal is to make me more like Him, and to do that, He must break the parts of me that are not in His image and re-mold me into the image of Christ. He knows the whole plan. He knows the whole picture. And He promises us in Scripture that "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28). I can ask to be broken, knowing that, like Christ, I can look beyond the suffering and know there is a greater end result.

I want to be more like Christ. I want my students to be more like Christ. I realize that I cannot make any impact on their lives apart from Him. He must break me to make me the vessel He needs me to be to serve the purposes for which He has called me. Does that mean it will be easy? Of course not. But through it all, He will be right there. He isn't going to break me and throw me away. He will break me, pick up every piece and remake me.

The students come back to school tomorrow. This year I will be teaching two classes of 8th grade English and one class each of 8th grade algebra, 8th grade pre-algebra, and 7th grade pre-algebra. I will also be coaching cross-country for the middle school students. I am beyond excited for this year, and I can't wait to see what God will do as I pray extra-ordinary things for my students and for myself.

Will you pray with me? Will you pray extra-ordinary things for my students and for me? Will you pray that God will bring revival in the hearts of the students? Will you pray that God will draw students into a personal relationship with Him if they don't yet have one? Will you pray that God will do immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine? Will you pray that God will break us and remake us? Will you pray for a stronger knowledge of His presence? Will you pray for His grace to abound more and more upon us?

“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” James 5:16b  
Thank you for your part in this ministry. May God do immeasurably more than you could ever ask or imagine in your life as you follow Him.

Amanda

Praises

- I had a wonderful, refreshing summer! I enjoyed having my parents here as well as studying Tagalog!
- Even with teaching three new classes, this is the most relaxed I’ve felt at the beginning of the school year. I’m so excited for it to start tomorrow!
- The all-staff retreat went very well! I even had someone tell me it was the best all-staff retreat they have attended!

Prayer Requests

- Pray for us as we start school, especially for new staff and new students. It can be very overwhelming at times.
- Pray for wisdom as I teach new classes and also as I coach cross country.
- Pray that God would provide prayer partners to cover all of the middle school students this year.
- I have applied for a visa to visit a neighboring country for Christmas, as I plan to go and visit a fellow missionary family who is serving there. Please pray that I am granted a visa and that tickets are still affordable once the visa is granted.

## **MISSION NETWORK NEWS**

Ministries in India face intense government scrutiny

PUBLISHED ON 14 August, 2017 BY Alex Anhalt

India (MNN) - When you think of persecution, a box of receipts is probably not the first thing that would come to mind. Yet for Christian ministries in India, it’s a perfect symbol of pressure from outside forces.

“Since the Hindu party came into power at the central government they have been tightening restrictions, watching things a lot more closely, and putting ministries under a tremendous amount of scrutiny,” says John Pudaite of Bibles For The World (BFTW).

In this case, scrutiny means yearly trips to meet officials with several boxes of receipts and records that will be analyzed line by line by government representatives.

“The government will expect to be able to point at an item and have us produce the receipt for it.”

On paper, increasing financial regulations might not seem like persecution, but in reality, Pudaite says it comes down to one goal: complication. “It takes a couple of weeks and repeat visits and intense scrutiny, and it’s a way that they can really frustrate and try to discourage those who are working in ministry for God’s Kingdom.”

What’s more, Pudaite is concerned that this is only a taste of things to come. He’s afraid pressure from the government and other forces will continue to grow in the coming years.

But the Body of Christ has a distinct advantage. “The way [the government] sees it, it’s purely economic or financial,” Pudaite says. “These forces in power don’t understand that this is about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

“As this is happening, we see the Church growing stronger and coming together.” Smaller ministries are banding together with larger denominations, and the Church is uniting with new vigor in the midst of new pressure.

Want to help? You can provide your prayer and support through BFTW to encourage the indigenous Church in India.

“We just need prayer here for ourselves and our teams, that they may stay diligent and focused on their role of keeping things in order so we can continue to pass these inquiries without any problems,” says Pudaite.