

BETHEL BIBLE CHURCH

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THE BETHEL CONNECTION

March 17, 2021



Dave & Linda Childs will be visiting us this Sunday, March 21. Dave will be preaching in the morning service then we will hold a combined Adult/Teen Sunday School Hour to continue hearing from Dave & Linda concerning their ministry and a time for Q&A.

Dave Childs served as Lead Pastor at Bethel Bible Church from 2000-2007. He is currently serving as the Vice President for Student Services at Appalachian Bible College and Linda is serving as Dean of Women. Bethel Bible has supported them through our Missions program at ABC since 2007. We are excited to have them back, sharing how God has been working in their ministry. Please plan to join us in welcoming them this week!

Remember!!!

Spring Break!

Due to taking a little time away, there will not be a newsletter next week, March 24. Melody will be taking some time off from Saturday, March 20-Tuesday March 23. Pastor will be in the office during that time. Please contact Pastor if you need anything. Also, there will be no Family Night activities next Wednesday, March 24.

Associate Pastor Process:

March 28: Plan to join us during the Sunday School Hour to learn more about the process and to have a chance to ask questions of Pastor and the elders.

April 9-11: Matthew & Evangeline Dodd will be joining us for a weekend of meetings with the elders. Matt will be preaching in the morning worship service on April 11, followed by a combined Sunday School Hour with adults & teens as we hear testimonies from the Dodd's and have a chance for Q&A.

Easter Breakfast:

We will be serving breakfast on Easter morning, April 4, starting at 8:00 am EST. Plan on joining us as the teens prepare a wonderful meal!

We will also have our photo booth set up for you to be able to take pictures with the family.



HAPPENING THIS WEEK:

- **Today, Wednesday March 17—Simple Supper @ 5:30 pm; Family Night classes @ 6:00 pm**
- **Saturday, March 20—Ladies Bible Study @ 9:00 am**
- **Sunday, March 21—Worship @ 9:15 am/Sunday School @ 10:30 am—Dave & Linda Childs will be visiting**

Please remember Alyssa Kreitl (daughter of Jeff & Susan Braun) in your prayers. Alyssa has been diagnosed with a very rare form of cancer that was in her appendix. The appendix has been removed, however they need to determine how much cancer has been spread to the rest of the body. Alyssa is also a few months pregnant. Pray for God's precious grace as they determine the next steps.

The following is an update from Charlie & Rachel Armstrong, one of the Missionaries we support.

Suffering for Christ

Since joining PALM we've had a closer view of how our brothers and sisters in the Arab world often pay a high price for turning to Christ. Recently this came home to us again through the experience of ***Rashid**. He was one of over 100 BMBs (Believers from a Mslm Background) who joined an online discipleship school led by our teammate Gerges this past fall. Recently, Rashid reached out urgently to say that he had been taken captive by extremists in his chaotic, war-torn country, and they were threatening his life. Then his communications were cut. ****As our team prayed for him, we lifted up his safety and pleaded for his deliverance, and we also asked God to give him a bold and clear testimony before his captors. And we even thanked God for the honor he gave to Rashid of suffering for His name.**

Which of any of us would pray this way if God himself had not taught us to in his very own words?

Always suffering?

Sometimes in the West we like to marvel at the cost of following Christ in other parts of the world, as though we were not called to the same cross-shadowed path. Sometimes, too, we oversimplify the story, loving to villify msms or other majority religions, and being too credulous toward those who claim persecution when it isn't the case. I don't say any of this to minimize real suffering for Jesus but rather to look at suffering clearly.

Suffering how?

In the majority of cases, suffering comes at the hands of family members. First comes shock and anger when they learn of a member turning to Christ. Then often comes pressure to recant. When the believer does not recant, next will come rejection, bringing about crushing discouragement and isolation. In cultures where family is everything, being cast out from the family is a staggering and debilitating punishment. We Westerners often underestimate just how deep **this** suffering is for new Arab-world believers.

Not only that, but with the loss of these core, foundational relationships, one is often excluded from jobs, unable to find anyone willing to rent out lodging, etc. Life is made difficult on every side.

Sometimes, the **shame** brought upon the whole extended family by one member becoming an "apostate" is so intense that they will turn to extreme measures to restore the family's **honor**: beating, imprisoning in the home, or even killing their loved one. In the West we have more of a guilt/righteousness orientation, but we can read in the Bible what a shame/honor mindset looks like. Consider Gen 34 and the way shame motivates the sons of Jacob to violence, or how unconverted Saul's zeal for God's honor motivated him to ruthless persecution.

These are the deep fires in which new BMBs are baptized, usually before they have received baptism in water.

And so...?

New believers going through such experiences need loving, fiercely committed mentors to help them through these thorny, difficult experiences as newborn followers of Christ. Sometimes they will succumb to the trial and renounce Christ, leading to their own intense experience of shame and guilt. They wonder if they have cut themselves off from Christ as surely as they have been cut off from their family. They need gracious restoration and encouragement.

Sometimes family relationships can be rebuilt. Sometimes God brings the whole family gradually or suddenly to Christ! But other times, the family is indeed lost for decades, or for life. These suddenly lost, lonely individuals need the community of faith to be a true family they can count on and belong to.

These are just some of the reasons why we are committed in PALM to equipping and mentoring disciple makers and nurturing newborn communities of faith. Thank you so much for your faith-filled prayers and your generous giving that enable us to do this. Know that for every suffering BMB we know about or whose needs we can bring before you, there are countless others undergoing trials unseen.

And Rashid?

Thanks be to God, government officials, understanding his captivity as a political matter, negotiated Rashid's release from the extremist group. When the officials in turn learned of his faith in Jesus they in turn questioned him closely. Indeed, though family usually leads in persecution, governments are also wary of anything that may upset the status quo, or undermine stability. In Rashid's case, he is free again and Gerges is waiting several weeks to contact him, in order to ensure that he does not provoke further trouble. **Please pray for Rashid as he makes sense of the earthly ordeal and the heavenly honor that he has just been through.**