



Mission Update

News from Renaissance Outreach Ministries

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Preparing the way to receive

By Rev. Jan L. Baderstadt, MSJ
President

One of my favorite characters of the Christmas story is John the Baptist. A cousin to Jesus, he is definitely a colorful character. Mark in his Gospel write: "John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey." – Mark 1:6

Definitely an interesting character. He stood in the middle of the Jordan River near the fords of Jericho and preached a message of repentance. His message was to prepare the people to receive their true king: Jesus!

In our time, we often miss the significance of his dress and manner. But to the people of ancient Israel, they would certainly understand the symbolism. To them it was Elijah, who was believed to return to herald the coming of the Messiah.

Elijah was considered the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. He was a fiery preacher. He dressed in outfits made of camel hair and ate locust and wild honey. He was bold before kings as well as commoners.

He could perform miracles. He brought down fire on Mt. Carmel to prove that God was God and the prophets of the priests of Baal were worshipping nothing.

Elijah's appearance represented a total rejection of the things of this world. Camel hair makes wonderful tents as it is waterproof. Camels will shed their hair yearly all at once, leaving large clumps of it around. The poor could simply gather it and make clothing if need be.

Camel hair was free, but it didn't make for the best clothing. It was coarse and scratchy. It didn't breathe

Come Surely, Lord Jesus'

Tune: Away in a Manger

Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night,
Our hearts long to greet you, as roses, the light.
Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage,
One candle is lit for the hope of the age.

Come quickly, shalom, teaching us how to prepare
For a gift that compels us with justice to care.
Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.
One candle is lit for the reign of God's peace.

Come, festively sing while awaiting the birth,
Join angels in dancing from heaven to earth.
Wave banners of good news, lift high thankful
praise.
One candle is lit for the joy of these days.

Come wander where lion and lamb gently play,
Where evil is banished and faith takes the day.
A babe in a manger to fool the world's eyes,
One candle is lit for God's loving surprise!

Words by Mary Anne Parrott

straight paths for him.'"

Mark 1:2-3, NIV

The people came. They traveled down the steep road from Jerusalem, they came from the Galilee. They came from the towns and villages and farms to hear the message of John.

Who was he? Was he Elijah? Was he the Messiah? Was he a prophet? He only said he was the one pointing the way. He was the one to prepare the people for Jesus, the true Messiah.

As I write this message, the season of Advent is nearly over as today is Christmas Eve day. These four Sundays that compose Advent is to prepare us for the birth of our Saviour. What it means is that we should take time to examine ourselves to see just what we need to properly receive the king.

If I am invited to an important event to meet an important person, I would certainly dress up. No doubt I'd even wash the car, get a haircut, have my clothes properly pressed. I would want to make the best first impression possible. So with Christmas coming, how will we meet the King of Kings?

For many of us, we're so busy in all of our Christmas preparations that we often forget about what Jesus wants of us. He asks one thing: to repent and prepare our hearts to be drawn closer to God.

In our preparation for Christmas, let us take the time to look inward at ourselves to see what we need to do to prepare to greet the king. What must we change in our lives? How can we live lives that are more pleasing to God? That is what Advent is about, preparation.

Merry Christmas!

being waterproof. Anyone who wore such an outfit was certainly a very poor person.

The same could be said of his diet. Locust were one of the few insects that were considered kosher. Filled with protein, they actually taste like a sweet meet (I've eaten them in Africa. Actually quite tasty as long as you don't have to look at what you're putting in your mouth!) They were plentiful and easy to capture.

Of course, everyone liked wild honey. That was free for the picking; just fight off the bees!

John's message actions reflected the prophesy of Isaiah:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare the way" –

"a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make

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MISSION UPDATE • CHRISTMAS 2018

Your invited to Nepal

The House of Bishops for the Church of the Himalayas has announced as of December 23 that I will be consecrated a new bishop. They have set the date for Sunday, February 24 in Kathmandu.

As our ministry has been about training pastors and church leaders, I become connected with Rev. George Pierce, a missionary from USA who started the Church of the Himalayas. It is an Anglican denomination that has over 500 churches scattered across the world's highest mountains. We have churches in Darjeeling, Bhutan, Nepal and now Pakistan. Some of the areas the Church of the Himalayas are very hostile toward the Gospel, yet the pastors are boldly committed to serving Christ. Even facing imprisonment or violence for their faith, they continue to boldly declare their love for Christ and His saving grace.

I will serve as Bishop Ambassador, and with that I am in charge of education of all pastors and evangelists.

So you are invited to come and join me in the festivities. In the next edition of *Mission Update*,

Getting old not fun

I hadn't realized just how much starts to fall apart when you pass 60. I did that three years ago and both Barb and I are feeling our age. I need to update you on both of our conditions.

BARB: Two years ago, Barb was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver. Considering that she never was a drinker, we were quite shocked with the diagnosis. It turned out that the cause was from a medicine she took for Reynaud's syndrome which she has had for over 25 years.

Her condition continued to deteriorate and this fall she was hospitalized. The surgeons and staff told her that she needed a liver transplant. So we were prepared for the inevitable.

On Dec. 18, she went to see a specialist at the University of Michigan, and finally got some optimistic news. The surgeon agreed that she will eventually need a liver transplant, but for now, he felt that a change of medication along with diet would be most effective.

The doctor prescribed for her a very high protein diet as well as different medication. So far, it seems to be working as she now has much more energy than she's had in a long time.

Barb continues to teach at Head Start in

Whittemore, Michigan. Continued prayers are requested for her as she deals with her liver issues.

Pastor Jan — My ankle continues to be a problem, even after having surgery to remove a very large cyst in the bone in 2017. The specialists at UofM have advised additional surgery to correct the problem. In 2019, I will undergo surgery to fuse the foot and ankle; in 2020 he will have ankle replacement surgery.

These days I don't do much walking as it's still quite painful. Arthritis has set in with a vengeance. In 2012, I had knee replacement on my left knee. But the rest of the legs continues to deteriorate as the cartilage is nearly gone.

Fortunately my staff here in Kathmandu and Uganda take good care of me. Rather than walking, I end up using taxi more. It's an expense, so I try to limit my activities outside of the office and usually to teaching and preaching. Thankfully, the places I travel to today are easier to reach than when I would trek the high Himalayas.

The doctor has said that my trekking days are over, but with the surgery I should be able to do day hiking. I'm happy with that.

Please keep us in prayer. I am pleased with the new diagnosis for Barb and I. Definitely light at the end of the health tunnel.

Jesus Seminary running

These days, I am now president of the Jesus Seminary of the Himalayas. Founded by Rev. Dr. George Pierce in Kathmandu, Nepal, we are now teaching PhD and Master level students.

The new classes are beginning in early January. Our student orientation is Saturday, 29 December.

While students will pay a small tuition, we definitely need financial support. The cost of the seminary for expenses is just \$600 a month. This includes the monthly rent of \$200, plus a monthly salary of \$250 for Rev. Mahendra Gurau who will serve as Dean of Students. The remaining expenses for utilities and supplies.

Student tuitions will go to cover Nepali instructors who also serve as full time pastors. Thankfully we have a number of foreign professors coming to help. Their volunteer services makes it possible to run the seminary, providing the highest quality of training.

If we had just 30 people at \$20 a month, we would be able to cover our basic expenses. Please pray about supporting this ministry.

Welcome Jim Brindley

It's with great pleasure I welcome Jim Brindley to our staff. Jim is going to handle our web and social media, which we've sorely needed.

Jim and I go back probably about 20 years when he was living in Michigan. His family moved to Pikeville, Kentucky around nine years ago. We kind of lost track of each other, then through Facebook got re-acquainted. Last October, we got together where we discussed ways to help us.

Years ago, Jim was my webmaster for another project. Jim has always been one of those who really got excited about computers.

I use computers, but only because I have to. So it is good to find someone as well as a friend who likes computers and understands how they work.

Welcome aboard, Jim!

Medical Outposts for Uganda Ministry

Each year I spend about three months teaching and working in Uganda as part of the *Forward in Africa* mission. Part of my job there is being the chaplain of the Rwenzori School of Nursing & Midwifery in Kasese, Uganda.

It was here that I discovered in the highest mountains of Africa a severe lack of basic medical facilities. In conversation with the administration as well as the South Rwenzori Diocese of the Church of Uganda, we came up with a plan. We want to establish 10 medical outposts in rural villages.

Each of the medical outposts will be staffed by a nurse. All outposts are licensed by the Ugandan government, and will be supervised by the medical arm of the Diocese.

The outposts are very inexpensive to start. We will be using the local churches as the outposts, making better use of the buildings. What cannot be treated at these clinics will then be prepared for transportation to the hospitals run by the church in Kasese.

Cost? Just \$1500 each! The nurses will be supported from the sale of medicine and by a small fee charged to those who seek medical services.

Please pray for these clinics. Pray for the funding to come through. All donations are tax deductible.

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