

October 10, 2023

Dear Praying Friends,

Update On Candace

In our last update, we reported that our oldest daughter, Candace, had suffered a medical emergency and was in the hospital. We are so grateful to share the news that after 5 days in a coma and 20 days in the hospital, she is out of the hospital and well on her way to a full recovery! We had previously been told by the doctors that she would need several weeks in an in-patient rehab facility, but when it came time to release her from the hospital, her recovery had been so fast that she no longer needed the in-patient rehab. Instead, they discharged her from the hospital with instructions to begin outpatient physical therapy. She spent a couple of weeks with us at the house a church had so graciously provided for us in Harrisburg, PA, and when she had gained sufficient strength, she moved back into her own house for about the last 10 days we were there. She is not fully back to her normal routine yet with regards to work, ministry, playing the piano, etc. but she is making very good progress. She is also learning how to manage her type 1 diabetes. Please continue to pray for her full recovery. We have been absolutely humbled by the number of people who prayed for her (and our whole family) during this health crisis. To each of you who prayed, and to each individual and each church that so generously sent offerings to pay for airline tickets, medical bills, and other expenses, we appreciate you more than words can possibly convey.

Update On The Rest Of The Family

Once we determined that Candace was well on her way to recovery and no longer needed us to be there, we made plans to return to Cambodia. But rather than going directly back, we took 9 days and made a couple of stops on the West Coast. First of all, we were blessed to attend the Spiritual Leadership Conference in Lancaster, CA. This was a tremendous time of encouragement to us and we appreciate the invitation from Pastor Paul Chappell. All of the kindness showed to us, the phenomenal music, the challenging preaching, and the opportunity to see many friends as well as 2 of our daughters and our son-in-law were all such a blessing to us. Secondly, after the conference in Lancaster, we drove up to Visalia, CA, to spend the weekend at our home church, Sequoia Baptist. That weekend we had the opportunity to join our church and my siblings in honoring our parents for their 46 years of ministry at Sequoia. My 3 siblings and I hadn't all 4 been together in a number of years, so it was a very special time for us, our parents, and the church where we were all raised. Three days later we headed to Los Angeles airport at the crack of dawn, and now we are back in Cambodia. These past 2 months have been a roller coaster of emotions, locations, trials, and blessings, and our faithful God has met every need, every step of the way.

Update On Our Ministry In Cambodia

This past Sunday was our first Sunday back at our church in Phnom Penh since August 13th, and it was so good to be home! I believe that the Lord used our absence to really stretch and grow the faith of our people. In the days immediately preceding our unexpected departure in August, and in the days immediately after our departure, there were a number of difficult trials faced by our people. One dear lady's unsaved husband left her; one family had an attempted suicide in their family; 1 family had a major financial crisis; 3 families had hospitalizations and/or serious surgeries. But in all of the aforementioned cases, when we returned, we found the believers' faith was strengthened and their resolve to stay with Jesus was evident. The attendance while we were away not only stayed strong,

but actually grew, and there were numerous visitors in our services while we were away. This past Sunday, I was so happy to meet 3 new people who have begun attending in our absence: an elderly man named Ohm Yuen, a young man named Kaleen, and a young lady named Teeda. Please pray with us that we will see these folks (and other new people) come to faith in Christ in the coming weeks.

Upcoming Events

Two days from now is the 2nd Annual Virtuous Women Conference in Siem Reap. Early Thursday morning a 25-passenger bus full of ladies from our church will head out for this 2 day conference. Please pray for safety on the trip, and a fruitful time of spiritual refreshment, instruction, and growth for our ladies. I'll share a report and some pictures from the conference in our next letter. Please also pray for our 4th Annual Faithful Men Conference that our church hosts every year, which is now only about 5 weeks away. There is much to be done in preparation for that, and we are praying for another great year.

In conclusion, if you have written to us in the past couple of months and have not yet heard back, please forgive me for the delay. Not only have we had many unexpected issues to deal with, but we have also had far more incoming correspondence than normal. We have replied to many, and Lord willing, before too much longer will be completely caught up with answering all of our emails and messages. Thank you all so much for your concern during these past 2 months. We have been blessed with incredible friends and supporting churches, and we thank God for each one of you.

Sincerely,

Stephen Benefield

Phnom Penh

Cambodia



Candace's first day at church, 9 days after being discharged from the hospital.



With my siblings. (Though the weekend was in honor of our parents, I don't have any of the pictures yet, other than this one snapshot.)



Our last Sunday with Candace before flying out to California.



Our first Sunday back in Cambodia, with 3 new folks who have started coming since we left. Love coming back to new faces! These are the three that I named in the above email.