

March 31, 2026

Dear Praying Friends,

I'd like to begin this letter by sharing a pet peeve of mine. I hate it when people ask you for special prayer for a serious situation and then don't give you an update. Some of you have probably already seen where I'm going with this, but for those who haven't, I'll make it plain. I myself have been guilty of the very thing that annoys me in others. I asked you all several months ago for special prayer for the situation involving the border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia, and then I let 3 months pass without an update. That was wrong of me and I ask for your forgiveness.

Update On Border Conflict

Having said that, let me begin this letter with a brief update on the border situation. The short version is, the open hostilities ended a short time after my last update, and we are very thankful for that. However, it would be untrue to say that things are totally back to normal. Thailand continues to occupy some areas on Cambodia's side of the border and the Cambodian people are (understandably) not happy about that. All the border crossings remain closed, most trade between the nations has ceased, and a number of shops, stores, gas stations, etc which are Thai franchises have been totally closed down in Cambodia. Cambodians are largely moving on, but with a tremendous deal of animosity towards Thailand. The government is constantly imploring the international community to get involved and insist that Thailand respect the long-established border between the two nations.

Children's Christmas Pageant

We scaled back some of our Christmas plans, due to the fact that the border conflict was ongoing and there was a desire to limit festivities in solidarity with the soldiers and the displaced families. We did take up a food offering as we do every Christmas, but this time we donated it to the refugees instead of local poor families. But despite some scaling back, we presented a children's Christmas pageant for the first time ever, and it was a great success! 16 children participated in the pageant, and numerous adults jumped in to make costumes and props, help with practices, and help in a variety of other ways. After the pageant, people immediately began to talk about "next year."

Bible Institute

Right after the new year began, I started teaching a Bible Institute class on Personal Evangelism. Preparing, recording, editing, and posting these classes has been more time-consuming than I thought it would be, but I believe it is time well-spent. If we can pass some sound biblical teaching, a greater burden for souls, and perhaps some ideas and methods along to a new generation, then we have done a good thing. We have students from about 4 or 5 different Baptist churches attending this online class, and as this class comes to an end soon, I am praying that the instruction would bear fruit in the coming months and years.

New Missionaries

Speaking of the next generation, we have been blessed over the past 15 or 16 months to have a brand-new missionary family (the Scuphams from Kansas) serving with us in our church while they have been in language school. They have been such a blessing to our church! Bro. Scupham has been getting more and more opportunities to preach, teach, lead singing, etc, and Mrs. Scupham recently taught a couple of times in one of the children's Sunday School classes. We are down to just a couple of weeks left with them before they will be moving on and taking the next step towards starting their

own ministry. We're going to miss them, but we are thankful for the opportunity to have served with them for this brief time.

A few months ago, we also had a new missionary family from the Philippines (the Pansings) begin to attend our church while they learn the language and prepare to begin a new ministry. Bro. Pansing has recently been added into the rotation for leading singing and teaching in the children's ministry. We have enjoyed having both of these families laboring with us, and we are excited to see how the Lord will use each family in His harvest fields in the near future.

Baptism Sunday

A couple of weeks ago we baptized 6 people. One lady was the step-mother of a long-time church member. One girl was the granddaughter of an even longer-time church member. (In fact, this particular girl named Manna was mentioned in a previous letter and I included a photo of my mom holding her when she was first born). Another girl was the daughter of a couple who got saved in our church years ago when they were still single. They went on to get married and are now raising their two daughters in church. Whether parents, grandparents, children, or grandchildren, it is a tremendous joy to see additional members of a family trust Christ as Savior! It takes a while to build a heritage of multi-generational faith, but some of these dear people are well on their way. The other three young people who got baptized live in the area around the church and come without their parents (but with their parents' permission). All three of them were invited to church and recently made professions of faith due to the combined efforts, love, and investment of numerous of our church members.

Prayer Requests

In the past couple of months, we have made several good contacts while distributing tracts. Please pray especially for two men named Roat and San.

Roat is a friend of one of the faithful men in our church. In fact, they served in the military together a few years back. Roat attended church on Christmas Sunday to watch his friend's children in the Christmas play, and ever since then he has been asking them lots of questions about the Gospel. A couple of weeks ago, I was able to start teaching him the Gospel. Please pray for him to be saved soon.

The other man, San, was met by Bro. Pansing and myself while we were out soul winning several weeks ago. The first day we met him, I asked him if he has ever studied about Jesus. He said, "No, but I WANT to." Not the typical answer, to be sure! We've now taught him twice at his house, and two Sundays ago he attended church for the first time. Pray for San to be saved too!

Family News

Our youngest daughter, Gabby, reached two milestones recently: she turned 18 and she completed her high school studies. So now it's off to college! She is leaving Cambodia in one week, and no, my wife and I are not ready for that. For one thing, we're going to miss her terribly, but for another thing, we are inheriting her pet rabbit. Pray for us. Gabby will be spending a few weeks with her older sisters in Southern California, and then she'll spend the summer going on a Jewish outreach mission before beginning her studies at West Coast Baptist College in the fall. Our youngest son, Seth, will be accompanying Gabby on her trip to the US and he'll return for his final year of high school after spending some time with the sisters. Please pray for them to have safe travels and a wonderful time of reconnecting with our three older daughters. We're thankful for this opportunity for 5 of our 6 children to spend some time together (We wish our son, Stephen, could be with them too, but he's in Florida, wrapping up his Sophomore year at Pensacola Christian College).

Words could never adequately express how grateful we are for each of you who pray for us and/or financially support our ministry. So many of you have been faithful supporters for many years, and we do not take that lightly. May God bless each of you richly for your investment in the souls of Cambodia.

Sincerely,

Stephen Benefield

A few photos from the Children's Christmas pageant





One of our men, beginning our Christmas service with special prayer for the border conflict.



These are the people who were baptized recently. I'm sure most people will notice the lack of smiles in this photo. Most of these kids are laughing, smiling, and playing constantly, but it's a constant battle to get people to smile for photos here. When photographers take official photos (school ID, driver's license, etc), they often tell people not to smile. So if you don't joke around a bit when taking a photo, you are likely to get pictures that look like mugshots!



Our daughter has quite the little band of buddies at church, so with her impending departure from Cambodia in mind, Gabby planned a special craft time for all the girls last Sunday afternoon. It was a happy bunch! They are going to miss Gabby! (By the way, if you didn't catch on from the photo...the craft is on their heads!)



I know the men's conference was several months ago and I talked about it in my last letter, but I finally got photos back from our photographer so I wanted to share a couple of them with you.



This is the group of men who preached and taught sessions. They all did a terrific job! I so appreciate all of the missionaries and pastors who bring men to our conference both as delegates and as speakers. This is a great group of guys! This photo is missing our friend, Bro. Ruppel, who has had a huge influence on many of the men who attend our conference each year. He was ill and unable to attend the conference this year.