



**NASHVILLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

# **FIRST ADULTS F.A.I.T.H. WATCH**

**Faithful-Active-Involved-Trusting-Hoping**  
*Volume 1, Number 6* *August 2018*

## ***A Gospel Connection in Ukraine***

by **Billy Hoffman**

The year 2009 was a pivotal year for Ruth, and me. That year we agreed to be a “Friendship Family” to an international student from Ukraine during his year of post-graduate studies at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond, VA. He was part of the Hubert Humphrey Scholars program, sponsored by the U.S. State Department which allows internationals to reside in the U.S. for a year to pursue a project study that will benefit their country. Competition is intense as only 3% of applicants are selected each year.

We were matched to Valeriy Ryabukha from Chernihiv, Ukraine. We had a “get acquainted” breakfast meeting at the Jefferson Hotel in downtown Richmond. Valeriy’s wife Marina resigned her job and joined him for this extended time in America. She later described her time in the U.S. as a “fairy tale.” Though not skilled in English, she and Ruth managed to communicate effectively. Perhaps shopping is a universal language.

As much as possible, we attempted to be “Jesus” to Valeriy and Marina during their stay. Most of those experiences were just day-to-day



*Billy Hoffman on the left and Valeriy Ryabukha on the right in Chernihiv, Ukraine.*

happenings, but other things included enjoyable times at Sunday School class fellowships and worship. We also spent a day at an amusement park in nearby Williamsburg. I also introduced him to Christians I knew who might help him in his research to develop his drug abuse wrist in a bicycle accident, Ruth helped the couple through what seemed to be a health insurance filing nightmare.

Valeriy chose to follow Jesus after his return to Ukraine, and we have had Bible Study/Discipleship video conversations almost weekly since then. Ruth and I had the privilege of visiting

**“The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”  
Galatians 2:20NIV**



prevention program for middle-school-age children in Ukraine. Being available in the stressful times was very important. When Marina injured her

wrist in a bicycle accident, Ruth helped the couple through what seemed to be a health insurance filing nightmare. Valeriy and Marina in 2015, and God opened my heart to a strategy to make Christ known in Chernihiv. A strategic relationship between the Ukraine Partnership Foundation, Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary (UBTS), International Mission Board (IMB), and Valeriy has developed to place a church planter in Chernihiv to work with and assist Valeriy as he shares the gospel.

God is doing great things in Ukraine. The seminary has grown from 35 students in 2013 to over 600 in 2017. God has brought these relationships together for this moment. The city of Chernihiv, with only 2% evangelical Christians, now has a church planter from UBTS, a connection with

IMB missionaries, and Valeriy. All have come into alignment to make Christ known and worshipped.

The strategy plan calls for people who can (1) pray for strategic needs to be met, (2) serve on the advisory team to review monthly progress, (3) offer wise counsel, and (4) volunteer to live up to three months in Chernihiv to serve as “conversation partners” in the English as a Second Language ministry. The Ukrainians are very open to Americans. God may be calling you to participate in a church planting movement in Ukraine.

I am leading a vision trip for up to ten (maximum) people, September 23-October 1 (7 days in country). In addition to the fun of touring the area, we will visit the seminary in Lviv and see how God is using ESL effectively in Kiev. Finally, we'll visit and prayer walk in Chernihiv. If you are interested in taking the trip, please contact me soon for the full itinerary, cost, and to check on availability.

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or email [brhoffman42@msn.com](mailto:brhoffman42@msn.com)

## A Special Visit to Morning Pointe



by Lori Towns  
Annie Roberson and I had the honor of spending half an hour with residents of Morning Pointe in Brentwood. It seems silly to have to write about this

because it was just a sweet moment, something that just needs a “Thank you, God.” It wasn't about anything Annie or I did; it was the joy of worshipping with some senior saints in the presence of the Lord. Time with folks in transition, no matter what the transition, is valuable, meaningful, and special. Those moments do more for

your soul than you do in theirs.

When we moved my dad to the Tennessee State Veterans Home in Murfreesboro, my goal was to make memories. There was no knowing where dementia would take him. Sometimes those memories included telling jokes or watching *Lonesome Dove* multiple times. We went to movies or shared ice cream with the friends and team there. Those were very significant times in the journey with dad.

Being with the residents of Morning Pointe brought some of that back. It was the Friday prior to Father's Day after all. What a joy to serve with such a talented young lady such as Annie, whose grandfather Tillman Britt is a resident. Time with people is precious, and it was an honor to have been asked.

# NEVER ON MY BUCKET LIST!!

by Lisa Bergen Wilson

Many of you have heard about my trip to Uganda and were asked to pray for me because I was nervous about flying so far from home. I just couldn't imagine being halfway around the world from all those I love.



And now, I look forward to returning!

**What made the difference?** And why should we help in Africa when there are so many needs here in the U.S.?

I'll answer the second question first. Simply put, we should help in Africa because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ, or soon will be; we should help because they are so eager for a Bible of their own; we should help because they are loving and gracious and hospitable beyond anything I've seen before.

We should help because a small gift goes a VERY long way. In fact, \$50 buys a Bible in their language; a straw mat; a comfortable, durable mattress; a mosquito net; and a blanket and everything is made in Uganda to support their economy. Those same items would be well over \$150 in America. And unfortunately, in most places in the U.S., we aren't permitted to share Bibles through our partnerships.

Back to the first question: What made such a difference in my thinking? It actually happened the instant I met our four Ugandan staff members, whose warmth and care for their country and its people were contagious.

**Our first bed-distribution site.** We were



surrounded by singing, dancing, and rejoicing women as soon as we stepped off the van. As we shared the gospel with them, sang, and taught them to say, "Hey, y'all!" the fellowship grew. And when we began to walk with each child to select a mattress and bag, the joy was overwhelming.

None of us can imagine one of our own children or grandchildren sleeping outside on contaminated dirt. We cannot fathom watching our children suffer with malaria, unable to provide medicine they need. We cannot imagine our children not going to school because we cannot provide the funds.

Neither could Sweet Sleep. Three years ago, we began CO-Ops. Groups of 12 women from unimaginable background situations, are now working together to build businesses—raising goats, chickens, making and selling liquid soap, selling vegetables in roadside kiosks, making reusable sanitary napkins so girls don't have to miss a week of school every month. So far, more than 48 CO-Ops are supporting 70 people each!

**Life. Sweet Sleep. True Rest.** I can share much more in person, but for now, let these pictures prompt you to pray every day for the children and women in Uganda who are experiencing True Rest and those who are still waiting for our help.

# PAM'S Corner



Rest and relaxation. All of us benefit from a regular dose of both. I am working on the resting portion by sleeping seven to eight hours each night, and I'm making good progress in having checks and balances in place as I strive to rest emotionally. What better place to be this week than Cochrane, Alberta at the Canadian

Southern Baptist Seminary and College.

This morning, (July 21), I was touched as I read the daily devotion in *Jesus Calling*. Author Susan Young, shares: "Rest in My presence when you need refreshment. Resting is not necessarily idleness, as people often perceive it. When you relax in My Company, you are demonstrating trust in Me. Trust is a rich word, laden with meaning and direction for your life ... When you lean on Me for support, I delight in your trusting confidence.

"Many people turn away from Me when they are exhausted. They associate Me with duty and diligence, so they try to hide from My Presence when they need a break from work. How this saddens Me! As I spoke through My prophet Isaiah: 'In returning to Me and resting in Me you shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be your strength.'"

I encourage you to read Proverbs 3:5 and Isaiah 30:15. I look forward to resting and relaxing in God's work with seven other servants from NFBC. As we serve in another environment, we strive to enhance the beauty of the seminary and college campus, making it possible for their faculty and staff to carry out their motto, "training tough leaders for tough places." This is a real blessing for me!

From the foot of the Canadian Rockies, I share these blessings with you.

**Pam**

## YOUR FIRST ADULT COUNCIL

Chair: Tom Clark; Staff: Tom Crow and Pam Stockett; Newsletter: Rene Holt, Consultant and Lynne Wells, Graphic Designer; Members: Linda Burch, Carol Chambers, Bill Chaney, Curtis Freed, Fred Linkenhoker, Joe Nave, James Porch, Sharon Roberts, and Katherine Stewart, Sam Talley, Coordinator of Martha's Friends: Pat Haskins **Tom Crow** Tom Crow@firstbaptistnashville.org

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## *Anniversaries 50+*

### August

**Bruce and Bonnie Meriwether**

**8-2-58**

**Bill and Faye Coles**

**8-5-62**

**Bob and Lois Jones**

**8-8-59**

**Dick and Gaye Waggener**

**8-11-56**

**Tom and Darlene Clark**

**8-12-61**

**David and Polly Scutt**

**8-12-60**

**Sam and Melody Hirt**

**8-17-62**

**Doug and Eve Ellis**

**8-20-61**

**Don and Judith King**

**8-20-66**

**Harold and Betty Bergen**

**8-26-55**

## *In Memoriam*

**Frances Bass Smith**

**Ross Evans**

**Mary Lou Ramsey**

**Glenn Yarbrough**



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