

Mission Newsletter



FAITH MISSION

January-February 2024

Number 167

“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:” Genesis 12:2

South African missiologist David Bosch wrote, “Mission is more than and different from recruitment to our brand of religion; it is the alerting of people to the universal reign of God through Christ.” In other words, mission derives from the reign of God. In that respect, the ideas of our mission and God’s kingdom are irrevocably linked. Mission is both the announcement and the demonstration of the reign of God through Christ.

Mission is not primarily concerned with church growth. It is primarily concerned with the reign and rule of the Triune God. That is why those of us who are not gifted evangelists need to foster habits in our lives that draw us out into the lives of unbelievers and invite the kinds of questions that lead to evangelistic sharing. When our lives become questionable, our neighbors invite us to proclaim the reign of God. If the church grows as a result, so be it.

Missional habits aren’t just strategic, they’re consequential: Because of the universal reign of God through Christ, we bless, we open our tables, we listen for the Spirit, we learn Christ, and we are sent out on this evangelistic task. That being said, if our only habits as Christians are going to church and attending meetings, they’re not going to connect us with unbelievers nor invite their curiosity about our faith.

The first habit I want you to consider embracing is that of blessing others. In fact, I’d like you to bless three people each week—at least one of whom is a member of your church and at least one of whom is not. The third can be from either category.

I’ve heard that part of the etymology of the term “to bless” is “to add strength to another’s arm.” In this respect, to bless others is to build them up, to fill them with encouragement for them to increase in strength and prosperity. (Incidentally, I know Christians often talk about “blessing God,” and since it’s impossible for us to add strength to God’s arm, it seems an odd use of the term.

What does it mean to add strength to another’s arm? Anything that relieves their burden in life. Anything that helps them breathe more easily. Anything that lifts their spirit or alleviates their distress. It can be a small thing or large.

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Faith Mission was incorporated in May of 1994. As we enter into 2024, our 30th year, we want to take a moment and reflect on what the Lord has done. From the villages of the Eastern front-lines of the war to the farthest southwestern corner of Trans-Carpathia, Faith Mission has been blessed to be able to assist many Ukrainians over the last 30 years. This is the part of the newsletter where I would love to be able to post the number of people that have come to the knowledge of Christ through our work. But, I don’t have that number, only God knows. I could spend days collecting data and make colorful charts of how many people received clothing over the years, how many loaves of bread were made by the flour we have sent, or even how many gift boxes we have been able to put into children’s hands, but I won’t. I have thought that it would be interesting to see but is that really the important number to focus on at such a milestone as a 30 year anniversary? I feel at times like we focused too much on what we have done, rather than on what we can still do. There are still so many that don’t know God as their personal Lord and Saviour. So please, continue serving with us as we look ahead and seek to do what the Lord is asking of us to do. I have plans of reflecting of years gone by in the newsletters throughout the course of this year as we celebrate 30 years of Faith Mission, but I don’t want our focus to be behind us but rather looking ahead to more/other opportunities. The inside of this newsletter is a prime example of such an opportunity. ▼▷



December 2, 2023 a group of believers visited Trans-Carpathia Ukraine from Chernivtsi, to minister to a group of Gypsies. They brought them the Word of God as well as physical nourishment.



Citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh packed up whatever possessions they could and fled from their war-torn hometowns



A POWDER KEG THAT WILL NOT COME TO REST

The situation in Caucasus, a powder keg of sorts, has remained unchanged for centuries. In 1915/16 after the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman, a wave of refugees immigrated to Nagorno-Karabakh, where Armenians had already previously lived for many years. Since then, there have been many battles fought in this territory. In 1985 the conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis flared back up in the Soviet Union and as a result, over 800,000 Armenians and Azerbaijanis migrated to other parts of the Soviet Union. From 1992-1994 approximately 50,000 People died through the first Karabakh war. More than 1.1 million people also lost their homes on both sides. After that, the situation was secured for a while by Russian peacekeepers that controlled the instability and kept things calm for a time. It flared up again in July 2020, another war that led to another 9,000 dead and 100,000 refugees. Since December 2022 Nagorno-Karabakh was sealed off and systematically starved. When Azerbaijan then started the third War on September 19, 2023, the weakened residents of Nagorno-Karabakh were unable to fight back for long.

THE EXTRACTION FROM NAGORNO-KARABAKH

This was followed by the exodus of the Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh that began on September 24, 2023. Over 100,000 people lost everything. Long queues of vehicles formed for days. People tried to somehow take their few belongings and their livestock with them. Those who didn't have a vehicle walked for many kilometers on foot through the mountains, to save their

lives. So did the 73-year-old religious sister Nellie. She was already completely exhausted, when someone brought her to Armenia. There she went to a meeting house in a Christian community and told her story: "Our house was bombed and my daughter and my grandson were killed. Their bodies could not be found after the bombing -everything was simply gone! Can I stay here in the meeting house? I have no one and nothing left." Now this Christian community is her home and her family!

WHAT ARE THE CHRISTIANS DOING?

Until last year there were five Christian communities in Nagorno-Karabakh. The last Christian children's camp was held in August 2023. Now the Christians from Armenia are trying to help the refugees who came to their country. Asatur, one of the elders, reported: "It's easy to be a Christian when everything is good. But, it is difficult to be a Christian when there is war. Refugees have been coming to us again and again for 40 years, and no one knows how to help them anymore. For us, as Christians, this always gives us an opportunity to provide them with their daily bread, but before feeding them physical food, we provide them what's most important - we bring to them the bread of life." Christians have begun to convert twenty meeting houses in the Christian communities so that they can accommodate the refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh. Shower stalls, kitchenettes, washing machines, beds, etc., will help the people get out of the overcrowded gymnasiums. ▼▷



The final Christian children's camp that took place in Nagorno-Karabakh

A damaged church in Khankendi, the result of bombing in the area.



THE THIRD GENERATION LIVES IN LIVING CONTAINERS

People who are still suffering the consequences of the Spitak earthquake are experiencing an additional hardship. The earthquake with the magnitude of 6.9 on the Richter scale occurred on December 7th, 1988 and ruined the houses of about 1,000,000 people. In addition to this massive amount of property destroyed, 25,000 people also died because of the earthquake. 35 years have passed since then and hardly anyone in Europe remembers this



Especially the children, suffer lifelong fear instilled in them by the terrors of war

A traumatized grandmother escapes with her grandchild



the Heavenly Father also knows these people that nobody knows and seemingly no one cares about. God made sure that close to this camp a Christian Community was started that can bring this group of people the Good News.

THE MINISTRY OF CHRISTIANS COMMUNITY NEVER STOP!

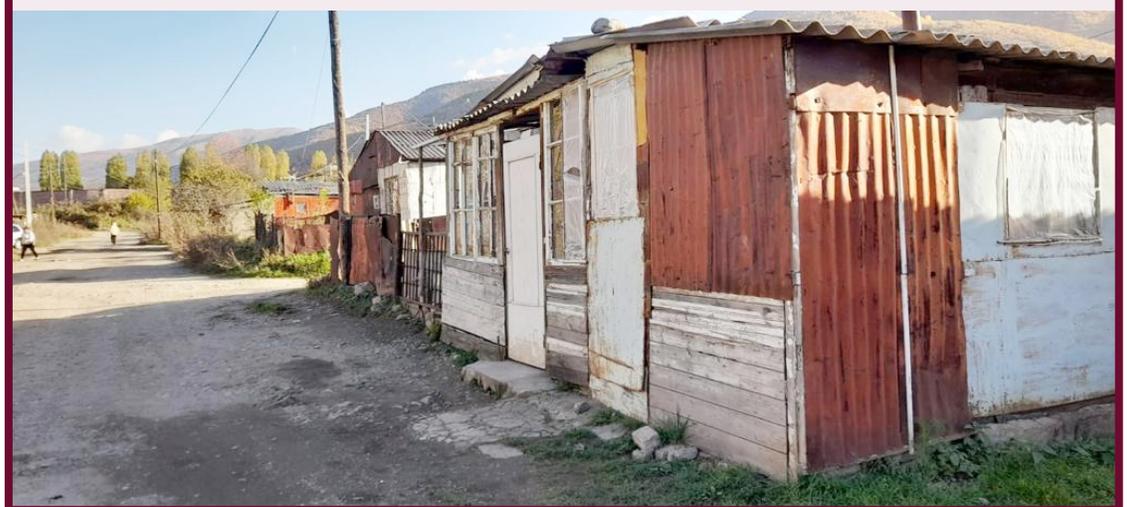
Every year in Armenia Christian children's camps are also held. Now in 2024 there will be the opportunity to bring the Gospel to many children from Nagorno-Karabakh and to comfort them. Christians in Armenia are also working on translating the Bible into the Eastern Armenian dialect and hope to finish the work in a year, so that many people who are currently on the run, can receive God's word in their native language. Dear missionary friends, please pray for the ministry of the Christian community in Armenia and for the many people who have lost their relatives and their homes. These people need our prayers and our help right now, so that they may find real, lasting peace through Jesus Christ.

"And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces..." (Isaiah 25:7-8a)

Alex Janzen and Willy Schneider recently went to visit Armenia and FM and FB have decided that there is a big need for prayer and resources to help the Christians in Armenia to do the work before them. If this is a project that you feel the Lord calling you to participate in please send your donations to Faith Mission and mark the Armenia box on the donor /mailing card. ▼▷

terrible event. However, to this day, near the city of Vanadzor more than 2,000 people live in makeshift shelters, huts and living containers. Many children who experienced and survived the 1988 earthquake came to "temporarily" live in these huts / containers at that time. They have grown up here over the last 35 years and many have gotten married and started families. Some of those children that were born in these containers are already adults and their children are being born in the same containers as their parents. But

A makeshift village built out of containers to temporarily house citizens fleeing the effects an earthquake that left more than 1 million people homeless in 1988.



As most of you, our readers and supporters know, in January 2022 we established a baling warehouse in a 26x28 garage south of Grassy Lake AB. By October of that year we had already outgrown that facility and moved into Grassy Lake into a 40x60 shop that we have been very blessed to be in since then. With the amount of clothing and volunteer support we have received in that area Faith Mission has decided to purchase that building in order to do some necessary renovations inside as well as add an addition to the back of it. These changes will allow for more clothing to be stored onsite there which has been a problem since we've moved in. This will also allow us to store enough bales and other items there that we will have the ability to ship containers directly from there instead of needing to haul all the bales from AB to Winkler before they can be loaded into the container destined overseas. With the added responsibilities of a larger building and different tasks associated with this project we are also expanding our committee that is in charge

of operations in Grassy Lake from 3 to 5 members. This is an exciting time of growth and we ask for your prayers that the right decisions can be made and that everything will continue to grow and that this facility can continue becoming a key part of Faith Mission.

Photo taken at a recent Open House that was held in Grassy Lake at our warehouse at 605 1st North. Although space is tight there now and it seems it is always time to haul a load of bales to Winkler we have plans in place to purchase and renovate this building to enable us to ship containers directly from AB.



Faith Mission (FriedensBote) Inc. solicits your gifts for the purpose identified in this appeal. However, if the project for which the gifts are received has been fully funded or cannot be completed for reasons beyond the control of the charity, the board reserves the right to use such funds for other similar projects.

Volunteers Welcome!
If your Youth Group, Bible Study group, or Ladies' Sewing Circle would like to volunteer for an afternoon or evening (Monday-Saturday), please contact the office to make arrangements.

Faith Mission (FriedensBote) Inc.

Mailing and Physical Address: 520 Circle K Drive
Winkler, Manitoba R6W 0K4
Phone (204) 325-4086
Email: info@faithmission.ca
www.faithmission.ca

Tuesday (Office only) 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Clothing sorting & baling:

Thursday 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. & 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Drop-Off locations

Bags or boxes of clothing and bicycles may be dropped off at the "DROP-OFF" door on the east side of the Faith Mission building in Winkler.

Faith Mission also has drop-off containers at

821 - 1st St North in GRASSY LAKE, AB.

325 Queen Street in WEYBURN, SK.

These drop-off locations are opened 24 hours a day and emptied on a regular basis. However, if you have more than a few bags or boxes, please call ahead to arrange your delivery.

-Winkler,MB Nathan Elias 204-647-7466
 +Grassy Lake,AB Dave Teichroeb 403-308-6523
 *Weyburn,SK Henry Goertzen 306-450-8871

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE CLOTHING DONATIONS OUTSIDE!

Board of Directors

Jake Elias	(204) 325-5446	Abe Unrau	(204) 685-2320
Andy Elias	(204) 325-6446	John Peters	(204) 325-1383
Philip Elias	(204) 750-8187	David Teichroeb	(403) 308-6523
Albert Kornelson	(204) 332-2109	Willy Thiessen	(204) 332-2035
Edward Penner	(204) 392-4229		

Faith Mission (FriedensBote) Inc. is a nonprofit, registered charitable organization based in Winkler, Manitoba.

Faith Mission was incorporated on May the 16th, 1994 in the Province of Manitoba

Purpose of Faith Mission

- to provide humanitarian and spiritual aid to the people of former Communist communities of the world.
- to call others to pray for the suffering people in the world.
- to provide information about the people of the former Communist communities to fellow Christians in North America.

-The **Faith Mission Newsletter** is printed bimonthly and mailed at no cost to those people who have supported us in the past or to those who request information about Faith Mission.

-Faith Mission can also be found on social media platforms for more regular updates

-Instagram @faithmission_winkler

-Facebook @faithmissioninc

-WhatsApp @ Friends of FM/FB

scan the QR code >>



For many years Faith Mission has been working with CanadaHelps a charity that distributes donations to many different organizations. CanadaHelps has recently partnered with Donate-A-Car, which adds a new feature to the donation options available to them (and us). Donate-A-Car is something that other organizations have utilized and we are very pleased to inform you that we are now able to receive funds from your donated cars, etc.. The following is the process as posted on the CanadaHelps website.

1. Donors can submit a donation form to see if their vehicle is eligible to donate through the Donate A Car program.
2. Within the donation form, donors can choose from any of Canada's 86,000 registered charities to support.
3. Schedule a towing appointment or drop your vehicle off at Donate A Car's selling agent, who will sell your car with integrity or recycle it in an environmentally friendly way.
4. Your chosen charity receives the net proceeds from your car sale and you receive a charitable tax receipt. All easily disbursed and receipted through CanadaHelps.
5. After that, there's just one thing left to do: celebrate your meaningful donation!

Whether it's a car, truck, boat, RV, vehicle with cosmetic damage or one that no longer works, Donate-A-Car accepts it all as long as the parts are intact. As a bonus, you don't have to worry about paying for your vehicle to be towed, Donate-A-Car will handle the logistics and coordinate the vehicle pickup at a time convenient for you within 48 hours of receiving your donation application!



the internal doors, pay for some professional labour especially for the ceiling work. At the moment, 200,000 UAH (\$7215 CAD), are needed. Prices for building materials are very high. If you have the opportunity to help us, we will be grateful to the Lord and to you.

**With Christian love, Jakob Shvetz.
Please check the "REBUILDING"
box on the donor card]**

The following is an excerpt out of a 12 page letter from Leonid Tkachov in December

There is a kind of clay-like slurry underfoot on the asphalt from military equipment. There are only a few villagers left. We pray with them. We ask for a blessing on the village and on each heart. While praying, I feel someone touching my cheek. Anxiously, I hear the request, "pray for me please, I could die at any moment" is whispered in my ear. My cheeks are wet as tears roll from my eyes. I pray. And mentally I try to make sense of everything at the thought that this is should be a normal Christmas. People so desire to make things right with God, that in front of everyone in sincerity, they passionately confess to God in prayer.

After prayer, we turn on a hymn on my phone that we recorded at the Advent service in Church. People listen and cry. They wipe away their tears. They begin to take out handkerchiefs. God, what an un-Christmas Christmas. I'm used to a pulpit, a suit, a white shirt, a microphone, but here is a half-baked, surviving store, with torn wallpaper, filled with all sorts of good things, boxes and the help that we brought. Everything is so uncomfortable, everything is somehow not like we think it should be...Or maybe this *is* how it should be. Simple, without pomp, noise, props, comedy, theatrics? As it was in the beginning, in the stable, in Bethlehem, in the manger.

The present circumstances throughout this war teach us a lot. It helps us to see the real Christmas, the one behind the garlands and Christmas trees, but with the Lord in His presence. However, let there be the beauty of the holiday, just so as not to lose sight of Him Who came into this world! Do not lose His character, His emotion. And it makes me very happy when I see that you, my friends, are not tired of donating, are not tired of praying, are not tired of working in Ukraine, although you may live in Canada, America, New Zealand, Germany. This is what makes this a true Christmas! It is He!

Certainly it was not a fake, but it was Him, the incarnate Son of God! Hence, it is not mine, but His thanks to you who are still walking our journey with us, you are witnesses of His real, genuine Christmas!

-Leonid...
Kharkiv, Ukraine



I greet you and your entire team of God's workers, with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ! May this Christmas have brought us all peace in our hearts and our families, may His love and holiness be reflected in us and may the people living with us and around us see this. His great mercy is that we are under the protection and love of Jesus Christ. We thank God for the attitude of your hearts towards us, for your prayers and support. We live in a difficult time for our country and we thank God that things here are relatively calm, with the exception of frequent air raids, missiles, and UAVs flying over us. We and our children do not see the most horrific scenes of this terrible war up close. Three of our brothers are forced to serve in the defense forces, one miraculously retired to the reserve, we worry and pray for the others.

Meanwhile, life goes on, many problems need to be resolved. After careful consideration, we have decided to contact you with our need. Our church is small, mostly composed of young people who are in college. Our need is to continue repairs to our house of worship. There have been no thorough renovations for more than 10 years and, accordingly, everything has fallen into disrepair. We are reminded of the story in scripture of the prophet Malachi about God's House in Jerusalem, which fell into desolation because everyone worked for his own house. We have started renovations, having already changed some doors, renovated the entrance, changed the heating, and purchased material for the entire ceiling. To date we have spent approximately 110,000 Ukrainian Hryvnias (UAH)(approx.\$4000 CAD) and we have done this on our own. Now, we still need to purchase material for the walls and floors, change

\$2000 \$1000

\$500 \$300

\$200 \$100

\$50 \$25

Other Amt \$ _____

(2024-#01) God loves a cheerful giver....."

Date: _____

Cheque # _____

Please use my donation for:

Shipping Costs

Ukraine - People in Need

Literature / Bibles

Food

Bicycles

Wherever Most Needed

Armenia

Heating / Firewood

Rebuilding

Other _____

When donating via e-Transfer, please make sure to provide us with your mailing address as well the specific need you want the donation used for in the memo portion of the e-transfer so that we are able to issue a Tax-Deductible receipt at the end of the year.

Please return this mailing card with your donation Cheque made payable to Faith Mission

Tax deductible receipts will be issued at the beginning of the following year.

Email: donations@faithmission.ca



For Office Use: Entered Deposit Mailing List XFer



Newsletter Sign-up

I would like to receive the Bi-monthly Faith Mission Newsletter regularly.

Please add my name to your mailing list.

Please change my address as indicated below.

Please send my Newsletter in PDF to my email: _____

Please check the correct box indicating you are

signing up for the newsletter

signing up for ADP

Faith Mission - Automatic Donation Plan

Worry free monthly payments - Your monthly payments to Faith Mission (FriedensBote), Inc. can now be made efficiently and economically by using this preauthorized chequing system we call the ADP. - Save Time - no monthly cheques to write. Save money - no postage or cheque expenses - You will receive an official tax-receipt for your total annual contribution at the beginning of the following year. By using the ADP we will be able to apply your gifts more quickly and more efficiently.

For your convenience, this service will continue until you notify us otherwise. Simply complete this form and return it to Faith Mission (FriedensBote), Inc. Your first automatic transfer will occur about four weeks after we receive your information.

****For ADP - Please enclose a blank cheque marked 'VOID'**

I hereby authorize automatic withdrawals from my account on the (1st) or (16th) day of each month.
(please circle your choice)

Total monthly donation amount \$ _____, commencing on _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Code _____

Signature : _____ Date: _____

Email: donations@faithmission.ca - (Provide mailing address for Receipts)

