

December
2021



GLOBAL TRAINING
NETWORK

Our Itinerary



- Jan 3-7: International Zoom Class
- Jan 9: Ponderosa Bible Church, Payson, AZ
- Jan 19–Feb 7: Nepal ministry
- Feb 18-21: GTN Leadership Gathering
- Feb 27: First Baptist Church, Nogales, AZ
- May 5-30: Rwanda ministry



The Comfort of Christmas

I've been thinking a lot about Simeon over the past year. His story flows from the events of Christmas. If you haven't read about him lately, let me refresh your memory. Simeon was an old and godly man in Jerusalem. He studied the Scriptures and knew that the time of the Messiah was near. God eventually revealed to him that he would not die before seeing the Lord's anointed. Then one day, moved by the Holy Spirit, Simeon went into the temple courts where he encountered Joseph, Mary, and the newborn Jesus. His parents had come to dedicate him to the Lord in keeping with the law of Moses. Simeon blessed Jesus and spoke prophetically about his ministry. So thrilled was he at this meeting that he felt that he was now ready to die. His last wish, to see the Messiah, had been met. Simeon would never live to see Jesus' ministry, but it was enough for him to



know that God had invaded this dark world with the light of His Son.

Simeon's example is highly relevant today. Like ours, his world was filled with things that were hard to understand. The people of God were flattened under the conquering heel of

Rome which occupied their land, ruling with iron-fisted injustice and crushing taxation. There had not been a word from any prophet for 400 years. Israel faced poverty, oppression, and, above all, uncertainty. It was enough for Simeon that now Certainty had stepped into uncertainty.

Justice had invaded injustice. Hope itself had come to dwell among the hopeless. It was comfort enough. It was more than enough.

At Christmas, like Simeon, we celebrate the light of God's only Son come to shine in the darkness. Like Simeon, this season can lend us all the comfort that we need in our uncertain

Thanksgiving in Kurdistan

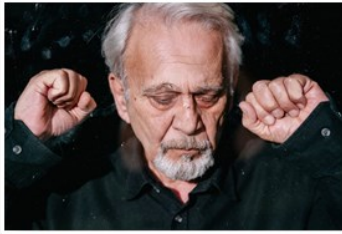
Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. There is no place like home on Thanksgiving. So it was with mixed feelings that I accepted an invitation to minister in Kurdistan during a week which included both Thanksgiving and my birthday, but I didn't want to miss the opportunity. To




make the trip even more unusual, my brother Bill accompanied me as an observer to learn more about Kurdistan and about my ministry there. Not only was it the first time we have ever worked together in ministry since...ever, but we had not seen each other in person for more than two years when we connected in Istanbul before flying on to Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan. I taught Pastoral Care. I led a larger group of leaders than last time. They were wonderfully engaged and a joy to teach. Bill got to know much of the class in individual conversations asking insightful questions by the score. However, the highlight of the trip, for Bill, was when I crashed with a Kurdish seasonal virus and he got to teach one day in my place. He said, "I'm thankful God made you sick." What is it with brothers? Bill's teaching style was super interactive and the class greatly enjoyed sharing some of their stories with him during the sessions.



The Comfort of Christmas *(Cont'd)*

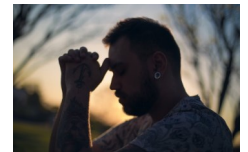


world. The story of the nativity is not just a sentimental tale that warms our hearts. **Never forget that the babe in the manger became the Savior on the cross.** When Jesus died, he sealed the fate of God's enemy, Satan. He guaranteed that God's creation will be redeemed from the terrible curse of sin. After His resurrection, He promised to return for us one day. Now, here we are, like Simeon, knowing that the time of Christ's return is near. Once again, God will invade the darkness with light, but this time He will be coming not as the infant son of a peasant woman in an obscure corner of the world, destined for a

criminal's death. This time, he will be coming in glory to receive His own and to initiate the cleansing of the world from the stains of sin. Our lives are full of uncertainty today, but at Christmas we remember that God hasn't abandoned us. Certainty will soon prevail over uncertainty, Justice over injustice, Righteousness over evil. We will see things made right. We will see the ultimate victory of Jesus Christ our Lord! It's comfort enough. It's more than enough. 




Our Praises and Prayer Requests



- Praise God for another successful class in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan!
- Praise God Nepal is now open and we are going!
- Praise God for the matchless gift of His Son!
- Please pray for strong giving at year's end and into 2022.
- Please pray for our students in Kurdistan.
- Please pray for our final (?) online international class January 3-7.
- Please pray for our upcoming ministry in Nepal, Jan 19 - Feb 7.

Thanksgiving in Kurdistan *(Cont'd)*

Our visit involved more than teaching Kurdish students. They also wanted us to understand something of Kurdish history and culture. We visited several places which taught us a great deal about recent Kurdish history including the terror visited upon the Kurds by Isis and, before that, by Saddam Hussein whose "Anfal" campaign killed more than 182,000 Kurds from 1986-88. We also visited refugee camps and met many families displaced by the advance of the Isis Caliphate. Though Isis has now retreated from their lands, the land mines remain, along with pervasive fear.

Our introduction to Kurdish history and culture wasn't all about war and genocide. We also enjoyed a four hour traditional Kurdish dinner with the family of one of our students. The Kurdish people are warm, humorous, hospitable, peaceful and in no way bitter. We had to postpone Thanksgiving with our families, but we came away with a full heart of thanksgiving to God that He has given us the opportunity for ongoing ministry in Kurdistan. 



Books for Kurdistan

Our Books for Kurdistan project is now underway. So far about \$1000 has been given toward our goal of \$10,000 in 2022. We hope to translate at least two books for our students this year dealing with a Christian approach to financial matters as well as healthy Christian family life. My own desire is that eventually we would be able to translate some solid Christian reference works such as a good systematic theology. The need is both great and immediate for good Christian literature to help shape an emerging Christian community in Kurdistan. We are thankful for our partners who recognized that need.

Ministry Partnership

Your financial partnership is essential as we carry out our God given ministry. Please follow the instructions below or on the enclosed response card (US mail version).

"Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account... And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:17, 19)

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