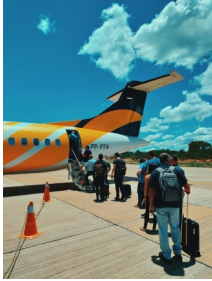


August, 2024



GLOBAL TRAINING NETWORK

Our Itinerary



- Aug 11:** Floris Baptist Church, Floris, Iowa
- Sept 8:** East Wenatchee First Baptist, Washington
- Sept 15:** Calvary Crossroads, Wenatchee, Washington
- Sept 26-Oct 20:** Rwanda Ministry
- Nov 28-Dec 15:** Nepal Ministry



Are You Paying Attention?

Matthew 17 contains a hard-to-explain story. It is the account of Jesus' journey with His disciples to a place now known as the "Mount of Transfiguration." There, Jesus appeared in His glorified state along with Moses and Elijah. Several "why" questions arise from this story. Why do this? Why take Peter James and John only? What was Jesus teaching them? Why keep it a secret, even from the other disciples? These are not easily answered, but I believe this account offers us three important lessons.

**God's glory is on display.** Peter knew that Jesus had a glorious plan. He just didn't know *how* glorious it is. He understood that Jesus was the Son of God (see 16:16), but he didn't yet understand the cross (16:22-24). Nor did he under-

stand that Jesus' kingdom would first be a worldwide kingdom in the hearts and souls of millions and only later become a physical earthly kingdom. None of the disciples understood this. Could we have done better? I doubt it.



If I were to show you a bottle full of salt water and explain to you the wonders of the sea, would you be able to fully appreciate the ocean based only on that bit of show and tell? Could you hear the surf or feel the rise of an ocean swell? Could you take in the sheer vastness of it or imagine all the life swimming beneath its waves? How much less do we understand God's glory! There are glimpses of it all around: a starlit sky, the face of a new-

*(Continued on page 2)*


Where in the World Was Bob in July?

Bob spent the greater part of July in the Philippines and in Kurdistan. As I wrote our July newsletter, I was just launching a class for masters students at the Conservative Baptist Seminary of Asia in Quezon City and for others joining online. From there, I traveled to the Island of Mindanao where I conducted a TLT class on overcoming harm and violence in families. In our area there are some slight risks due to the presence of insurgents, terrorists, and even a few drug lords. One night, as we were laying down to sleep there were loud explosions nearby. Fearing an attack, we (foolishly) rushed to the windows where we discovered that the explosions were fireworks at a nearby birthday party. How do YOU spell relief? My final week in the Philippines was spent in the Visayan Island of Negros Occidental at the Berean Bible Institute. I took my young students through a course on teaching methods in Christian education. Our students reported on action plans from our previous course on the development of sermons and other speeches. One student, more diligent than the rest, reported selecting 50 sections of Scripture from which she developed 50 Bible study outlines! Departing from the Philippines, I made my way to the



Middle East and Iraqi Kurdistan where I taught a new group of students a class on pastoral care. I learned a bit about Kurdish culture when I taught a lesson on reconciliation. I began to get pushback on the concept of limitless forgiveness between people. It seems that in this Islamic culture there is a strong value placed on revenge. As I have often observed, people tend to default to culturally normal behaviors until they consciously embrace a different biblical value. In this case, gracious forgiveness was such a new idea to these first-generation Christians that it disturbed them. It is fortunately an easy biblical case to make. There are many passages including 'case studies' on the subject. Forgiveness is an attractive idea when you are on the receiving end of it as are we all. We made good headway with many of the students shifting from murmuring to nodding in agreement. The shift was palpable, a work of the Holy Spirit.



Thus ended a very productive month of ministry in four cities and two countries. If anyone asks, in August I am visiting a really challenging people group: grandkids. 

**Are You Paying Attention?** (Cont'd)

born baby, the beauty of forests and flowers, *the vast ocean!* These things should drive a person to seek out the powerful and good God who created such wonders (Rom 1:18-23). However, these things are only small reflections of the glory of God. The fulness of His glory remains beyond our grasp. If we can't imagine an ocean based on a sample of ocean water, then it is impossible to grasp God's full glory based on what we see on one small planet in the vast universe. "No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2:9).

**We are inclined to underestimate God's glory.** Peter's response to Jesus' transfiguration was an offer to erect three tent/shrines: one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Then people could pilgrimage to that hillside and worship...all three of them? Possibly Peter didn't think



this all the way through. For their part, James and John were stuck wondering what the presence of Elijah in that shining trio meant. If Jesus is the Christ, wasn't Elijah supposed to precede him with powerful preaching? (They didn't understand that the predicted Elijah-like prophet was John the Baptist.) Not one of the three quite appreciated the unique blessing granted them. Like the future martyr Stephen, they were looking into heaven, but unlike Stephen, their minds were preoccupied by earthly things. Therein lies a second lesson. Though we cannot fully grasp God's glory, we would grasp a lot more if we weren't so distracted by...anything and everything. The Holy Spirit within us silently speaks offering comfort, conviction, and guidance. Have you noticed Him lately? As noted, creation continuously speaks of God's glory. Have you thought about that lately? What stops us from

pausing just to gaze into the sky? What keeps us from considering all that its vastness means? Often we simply don't take the time. There is just too much else to think about. Can you tell me what is more important than considering the nature and glory of God?

**God asks us to pay attention.** Before Peter could finish suggesting a brand spanking new holy site, he was interrupted by God Himself. God ignored Peter's idea and instead reminded the three disciples who it was standing in front of them. "This is MY beloved SON in whom I am

well pleased!" He didn't want them to DO anything, respond in any way, or even tell anyone! He said simply, "Listen to him." These profound words could profit us greatly. In a 'hurry-up' culture, we are always interested in the next steps, the desired outcomes, the take-away, the

bottom line. We tend to think that we can accomplish anything, solve any problem or overcome any obstacle with the right course of action. Action has its place; but for the wise, it is not the first place. Jesus says, in effect, "Stop doing stuff for a while and just pay attention!" Creation reminds us of God's power and attributes. Can we take time to notice? We have the very Word of God, the Bible! Can we stop for a bit and just listen? Can we recognize who it is standing before us in its pages? Can we just "be still and know that [He is] God?" (Ps 46:10)?

There is more to life than doing. To *know* that you stand accepted by the only living God, the author of the Holy Scriptures, the Creator of the oceans, the stars, and the tiny babies is the greatest glory I can imagine in this life. Maybe it's time to stop and just pay attention. ∞



**Our Praises & Prayer Requests**



- Praise God I enjoyed good health through a month of international travel.
- Praise God for successful training events in the Philippines and Kurdistan.
- Praise God for the resolution of a false accusation between two leaders in one of our countries.
- Please pray for my curriculum writing work.
- Please pray for productive planning and preparation for upcoming training events.
- Please pray for the ongoing health of our ministry finances.

**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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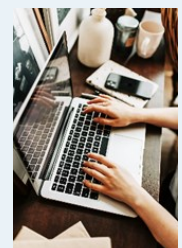
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