

THE ENGAGER

'For, Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the One in who they do not believe in? And how can believe in the One of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach without being sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.'"

Romans 10: 13-14

Serving
Praying
Giving



Vol. 3

Exhort His Name!

Merry Christmas! May we all experience the extra love and blessings with family and friends during this special season.

Christmas is personally my favorite holiday. I just love Christmas lights! So much so, I could just leave everything up all year round! It's not just because they are pretty, but the lights always remind me of Christ and how He is the Light of the world. We are also asked and commanded to be lights in the world as well. Just remember you may be the only light in this dark world that people see. So do be afraid to let it shine!

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders, and He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

In Christ's love,
Brittany Bingham
NMI President



Missionary Highlight- Casey Bloom

Casey currently serves as a missionary with the Church of the Nazarene in Sighisoara, Romania. As she grew up in the Nazarene church, Casey was exposed to missions at an early age. She graduated from Olivet Nazarene University in 2010 with a Bachelor of Social Work, and later received her Master of Social Work from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2011. Casey worked for 2.5 years as a school social worker near her hometown. After having served as a teen camp counselor for those two summers, Casey knew God was calling her to missions.

Casey is involved in several different ministries. In March 2015, Casey went to Romania for the first time. She currently serves the community of Sighisoara through social and educational programs, as well as children's ministries of the Church of the Nazarene. As a social worker, Casey has worked in two of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries' child development centers, at Veritas and in the nearby village of Tigmandru. Leading in anything from Bible stories to crafts. Casey also co-leads an educational program called It Takes Courage, which focuses on building positive character in local high school students. Yet another ministry Casey has is as a supervisor of American university students who come to Sighisoara through the Romanian Studies Program to do a social work practicum.

WOW, that's a lot! Let us pray for all the open doors our sister in Christ has to expand the Lord's kingdom!



Country Highlight- Tajikistan

Population= ~9.3 million

President= Emomali Rohman

State Religion= Islam

The main religion in Tajikistan is Islam at 98% (95% Sunni and 3% Shia muslims). Even though their constitution does state they have freedom of religion, the government is hindering all religious organizations and activities that are non-muslim. The other 2% represent about 17,000 Christians ranging from Roman Catholics to Baptists. There is currently no Nazarene Church presence.

According to Open Doors USA, Tajikistan is rated #31 on the World Watch list out of the top 50 most dangerous countries. Most times services and all Christian materials are confiscated along with many being imprisoned and pressured to return to the muslim faith. Despite Christian persecution, Tajikistan is otherwise a safe country for tourists. Tajikistan is the smallest landlocked middle eastern country. They were a part of the Soviet Union from 1929 until it's independence in 1991.



OCN Missions Highlights!

Fall Alabaster Offering= **\$261.63**



Missionary Love Offering= **\$75**

Operation Christmas Child=
We filled 14 boxes!



What fun playing Christmas missions charades and hanging bulbs representing different countries!



Reflecting With Our Brothers & Sisters In Christ

Christmas is a time of joy, hope, love, and peace for many. However, how often do we really ponder and think of those who, though they believe in all the love, joy, hope, and peace that Christ gives to them, face nothing but danger and are not able to celebrate Christ's birth freely?

Dr. Michelle Reyes wrote a blog on *Seeing Christmas Through The Eyes of the Persecuted Church* stating how sobering of a reminder and truly blessed so many of us in the world are who can live and serve Christ freely. She writes and explains how simple things like decorations are homing signals for Christians to be arrested or even killed in some of the world's highest persecuted countries. Dr. Reyes mentioned a girl named Hannah who testified:

"We will have some special prayers in church, but we don't have any decorations," said Hanna, a mother of two living in war-torn Syria. "Having Christmas decorations outside the church would provoke the terrorist to attack us. They already send the Christians a message: they have special 'Christmas gifts' prepared for us: three car bombs."

Dr. Reyes continues:

"Immediately, after reading Hanna's statement, I sat back in my chair, dumbfounded. Could I ever imagine or understand what it would be like to be in this mother's shoes? Hanna will never put up Christmas decorations at her church, or in her own home for that matter, because it would put her children in danger of being bombed by terrorists. I looked around my living room at all the bright and shining red and green lights and thought, 'If Syrian Christians decorated their homes like this at Christmas time, they would be dead.'

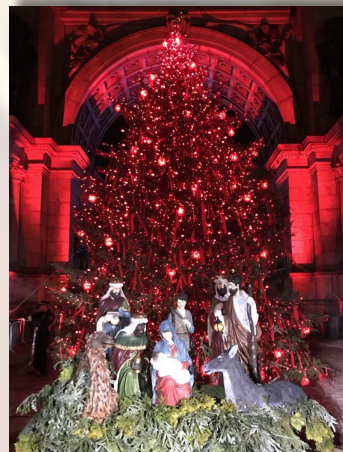
Decorations are certainly not what makes Christmas "merry", as the song goes. In fact, decorations have nothing to do with the real reason for celebrating this holiday. Nevertheless, they can still hold a special meaning for us, can't they? Having an advent candle or calendar, decorating a tree or playing with a nativity set can all play a role in our reflection and celebration of Jesus' birth, and I think that we, as American Christians, often take these items for granted.

In places around the world, Christmas can be a time of fear and isolation instead of a celebration."

It is in these times that we must all remember Christ's words in John 16:33, *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* This is the peace and hope so many of our persecuted brothers and sisters cling to.

You can read the full story at: http://www.theartofaleh.com/seeing-christmas-through-the-eyes-of-the-persecuted-church/?fbclid=IwAR2n3igGdGmy97io_vO8YqbjushPZ5JIST_4cqQ01HFtA8bq8G9-1VXtrps

Fun fact, did you know that putting up red lights at Christmas time represent and honor the persecuted church? Here is a picture of the Grand Army Plaza Christmas tree in Brooklyn lit up with over 17,000 red lights in honor of persecuted Christians in 2019. How beautiful! May we praise the Lord for our blessings and remember those who are not as free to worship and celebrate this special time as we are able to do.



Upcoming Events & Projects

- We are currently partnering with Changing Footprints to collect old, gently used, or new shoes from now through January.
- Starting in January we will be collecting Crisis Care kits, and will collect through the end of February. We also have an awesome donation of several beanie baby stuffed animals to be able to go into each kit!
- Then come February, it will be time for the first Alabaster collection of 2021!

Let us PRAY!

- ❖ For all missionaries' safeties, health, continued boldness, and their ministries in that God would open doors and continue to bring the lost back to Himself.
- ❖ For our persecuted and oppressed brothers and sisters in Christ who need daily an extra new found strength, boldness, and reminders of the hope we have in the Lord.
- ❖ For the revivals all around us that are happening during this time of uncertainty, calamity, and pandemics that they would continue to grow until Christ's return!
- ❖ For our Faith Promise drive we will be holding the end of Summer 2021. This will be the first ever Faith Promise we have ever done to raise money for all things concerning Nazarene missions and our missions program!
- ❖ For our own church family as many of our ministries are growing! Praise the Lord we have so much to be thankful For especially during this Christmas season!

