

Appreciating God's Beauty

The picture above was taken on our trip to Crested Butte, CO, in June. This is the first time we have been in this part of Colorado, and we were traveling down a gorge called The Devil's Punchbowl. As we crept along the steep, rocky road, the water roared beneath us (way beneath us) and steep rocky mountains towered above us. In the midst of those barren rock faces, there were these beautiful little wild flowers - not many mind you - just a couple here and there. I thought about those delicate little flowers that I have tried, without success, to grow in my pampered gardens. Why would they grow here in this rugged terrain? I don't have an answer to that question yet, but it made me think.

There are many times in our lives that life seems hard and rocky. We cry out to God, and it seems as though He doesn't hear. We think that there is no answer or no way out, and all of a sudden, there is a spark of life - a promise of hope - a reminder that no matter how desolate we may feel, God has sent His Son to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). The more I began to focus on those precious little wild flowers, the more I saw. They were there; I just wasn't looking hard enough. When we find ourselves in difficult situations, we need to stop looking at the rough jagged walls and start looking at the flowers. There is a purpose and a plan. God loves us, and two promises He has made to His children are that He will never leave us or forsake us, and He will never give us more than we can bear (Hebrews 13:5; I Corinthians 10:13). Focus on God's promises and keep your eyes fixed on Him.

Celebration 2018

We didn't have a graduation this year in May. Instead we had a celebration. We invited some of our past students back to celebrate their accomplishments along with our current students. With students leaving the PTC and heading to Middle College High School (MCHS), they had technically finished their high school education and had moved on to college work. So we, at the PTC, never had the opportunity to formally celebrate those accomplishments. Each student had the opportunity to share what is going on in their lives and plans they have for the future.

- Joshua and Sam left us about 2 1/2 years ago. Joshua continued at the MCHS and, at 17, just graduated with his high school diploma and an Associates degree in Liberal Arts, plus some extra college credits toward his Bachelor's degree. He is going to continue his work at UNM.
- Sam went to MCHS for 1 1/2 years, had more than enough credits to get his high school diploma and went on to be a full time college student at Grand Canyon University. We were going to give him his diploma last year, but he wanted to have us hand him his diploma officially at the celebration.
- Colin also transferred out to MCHS and spent his first year completing his high school math credits and taking all other classes at college level.

- Trey wasn't with us at the celebration. He was accepted at the MCHS along with Colin. A couple of weeks before the end of the 2016/2017 educational year, it was decided that since he had enough credits to graduate, he would go right into the nursing program at UNM. He has just finished his first year of college and has done well.
- Storme has completed all her high school credits except math, and we celebrated her achievement as she prepared for her first college classes.
- We also had two students, Erin and Aijah who were wrapping up 8th grade and heading into their secondary education.

When God Moves

Several years ago I started a book entitled "When God Moves." It was based on events that have happened in our lives as Jim and I have watched God open doors, move mountains, and shower down blessings from above that we couldn't even begin to imagine in our finite minds. Following God is always an adventure. Just when you think you know where He is leading, a sudden turn comes up that you didn't see. Our job is to move when God says move, stay when He says stay, and turn when He says turn. We don't have the luxury of being stuck in a rut and say, "We've always done it that way!"

We are in a place in our lives right now where God is nudging us and asking us to change. Change what you may be asking. Well, that's a really good question! The answer is we really don't know. We have shared our struggles and frustrations with what has been happening with the educational ministry. We both feel that we offer something that is different and beneficial to the students who come here. However, if we want to be effective in our teaching and training of the students, then we need to consider how to reach out to this new social media driven, electronics based, disconnected generation. That means change! Big change!

We have less students in the classroom for this coming year. We may have less than eight, and that's okay. Last year we started with 14 students either in the classroom or online. By the end of the year we ended up with seven. Most left do to their unwillingness to do the work they were required to do. Many would rather be in an environment where there is not much expected of them, and where if they decide to not complete work, no one makes a big deal out of it. Just give me a "C," "D," or the occasional "F," I don't care as long as I pass on to the next grade. Part of our change will be to try to instill reasons as to why they should care. One of the ways we hope to accomplish that is by exposing the students to career options. We want to explore careers, talk to career people in the classroom, through video, or even Skype sessions, have students participate in work projects, visit work places, and job shadowing. We want to shake them from their lethargy and get them thinking about and excited about their place in this world. We want them to see possibilities and purpose for their lives.

God's Light in a Dark World

We met together for two great Bible studies over the spring and summer. The first one was on the book of Proverbs. What a great way to strengthen your appreciation for what it means to walk in wisdom. We are coming to the end of a study on the book of Galatians. I have had students saying on numerous occasions that what we are studying is exactly what they are seeing all around them. It was like Paul was looking down through the ages of time to see what is going on in our world and in our churches today.

We continue to work with the church in Naschitti as Kevin ministers to his congregation. He has had his ups and downs this year as he has dealt with death and hardship in his church family and people leaving because of the Biblical stand that he is taking. On the positive side there are quite a few churches that are seeking for him to come to bring Biblical teaching into their churches. They are hungry for God's Word and seeking someone to teach them. Since we can't clone him, we would like to work with him to help establish a recording ministry, so he can be in more than one place at a time.

On the Road - Past and Present

Jim and I had a chance to go out into God's creation for a couple of days in June as we went 4-wheeling in Crested Butte, CO. We had never been there before, and we were greeted with some spectacular views. We were blessed to have a neighbor come and take care of the animals for five days while we ran away from home. We should do that more often!

We are planning another trip for October 6-17. We are heading to PA for eleven days. We are coming to visit with some family and friends and take a four-day trip with my mother to Kentucky to the Creation Science Museum and the Ark Encounter. Another highlight for us will be a trip to Sight and Sound and the Lancaster area for a day. Jim's sister, Beth and her husband Ken, will be coming up from North Carolina, and the details are still in the works as to where we will visit with them. Beth has been a big help and inspiration in our "Career Discovery" curriculum.

Family News

In the last letter we sent a picture of Sam and Storme playing with Hailey - our three grandchildren together. Sam is now 17. Storme will be 16 in September. Hailey will be two in August, and Hailey is waiting anxiously for her baby brothers in September. No, that wasn't a typo; I did mean brothers. Jeremy and Aubri are expecting twin boys in September. We think that they are still trying to wrap their head around the idea having three children, just like that. We will send pictures of the family in the next letter.

Rain at Last

Our land has been parched for so long. We got no snow to speak of over the winter, and since last September, we have only gotten a few drops of rain. We have had several large storms (monsoons) over the last week or so. We are not sure how long this may last, but we are truly thankful that our parched land has gotten a much needed drink!



Ark

Before our flood waters came, we had nasty winds (even for our springs). We had a wind storm that blew at 64 mph. It knocked the ark off its foundation. Jim and Ray Williams (Janice's husband) fixed the ark when the Williamses were here in May. While we were on vacation in CO, we started getting text messages - something happened to the ark. Apparently we had a small twister (probably bigger than a dust devil) that went through and moved the ark about four feet. It twisted it and broke it in places. We are going to have the students disassemble the ark in August. We will bring some of the "rooms" into the classroom and set them up on some of the shelves. It was so much work we hate to just throw it all away.

God's Answers to Prayer . . .

1. The peace and relaxation Jim and I could have as we traveled through the beautiful mountains of CO by day and relaxed in the pool and hot tub in the evening. It was refreshing and gave us time to enjoy each other and talk about future plans.
2. God's blessing of grandchildren and watching the miracle of life as we watch them grow.
3. We are grateful for the time that the ark was opened. We went through about 40 booklets which people took when they came to visit.
4. For the blessing that Janice and Ray Williams were to us during May. Ray helped Jim with the ark, Janice helped in the classroom, and they both pitched in to help with the Celebration 2018 plans and program. We had another friend, Gina, who also helped with preparation and decorations.
5. We have been blessed by Jim's sister, Beth, as she has been working with us and helping us to re-evaluate what we are doing to help our students adjust to the new world they are living in. We have shared struggles as she has seen the same problems with her students in the college classes that she teaches.
6. Jeremy has passed all the tests to become a real estate agent. This ushers him into a new realm of his life.

Please Pray For the Following . . .

1. A safe delivery for Aubri as she looks at giving birth to twins in September. Adjustment for the family as they learn to deal with the pressure of two more babies in the house.
2. Continued wisdom as we change focus in the classroom to help the students begin to see that there is a purpose for their life and what they need to do to achieve that. This means some changes in curriculum and flexibility as we learn how to implement the changes.
3. For the students that God wants in the classroom this year. Right now we have four with a possibility of seven students, and they are all boys.
4. Continued preparation for our trip to PA. There is much that needs to be taken care of on this end to free us up for the trip.
5. Kevin as he continues to reach out with the truth of the Word of God to his people at the church and churches across the reservation. Pray for strength and health for him to accomplish what God has placed before him.