
THE NOREAU FAMILY

Missionaries to Stewart, British Columbia

Dear Pastors, Family, and Friends,

The purpose of our prayer letter has always been and always will be to share with you what the Lord is doing in our lives and in our ministries. We have always endeavoured to utilize our update letters to share some of the blessings of our lives in ministry from the previous few months. We have always been careful to balance the highlights of the ministry with the burdens we are called to bear. It is always easy to share good news because God is always good and God is always busy doing something. In fact, it is often hard to choose which things to leave out of our letters. We wish you could be here to see some of the little victories that we see and to celebrate them with us.



We have never tried to be dishonest in our letters by whitewashing the often difficult circumstances of ministry. God is always faithful and we strive to count our blessings day by day. In this update, however, we want to draw your attention to some matters that are very heavy on our hearts simply because we need your prayers.

Our Church and Town

Charity Baptist Church is the church plant that we came to Stewart to minister to. From the beginning we knew that a church plant in such a small area would be a difficult work. When we started deputation, Stewart had about 600 people and the church was populated by a few very motivated believers. Upon our arrival we were still regularly having services with around 25 in attendance. Given the population, 25 in a service is a very good number!

Unfortunately, just before we arrived on the field one of the core families that was instrumental in the founding of the church and in the maintenance thereof moved away. This was the beginning of a steady decline in attendance. Many who were attending have moved away and a few others have ceased to attend each for their own reasons. At the same time the population of Stewart has been steadily in the decline. Recently we got the census numbers for this past year and Stewart now has a population of 401. This means that aside from our family the town is now in the 300's.

We have now reached a point where we are at times only having one person aside from our family present in some of our services. On Sunday mornings we are usually still having at least 12 but to say that we are not discouraged would be amiss.

We are regularly doing outreach activities here in the town and if there is something fun to draw a crowd we will occasionally receive a few visitors but that has been the extent of our success for many months now.

This past month we did a mailing and put a John and Romans, a Bible Study, a gospel tract, a kids flyer, a Bible colouring sheet, and a letter of invitation into every home. There was a significant cost and much prayer poured into this project and the results thus far have not been seen. We know without a doubt we are planting seeds and we know the promise that the Word of God will never return void.

Our Finances

In the midst of all of this we have also been met with some financial difficulties that we would like to share with you. First know that we are unbelievably thankful for the faithful support from so many wonderful churches and families. We are thankful for your prayers and for so many of you reaching out to us on a regular basis. Since we have arrived on the field we have been so blessed in seeing the Lord meet so many of our needs and then bless abundantly above what we could hope for or ask for.

We have seen the Lord provide for Shannon in having her eye surgeries! This past month the Lord provided me personally with a donated set of hearing aids (over a \$3,000 value) that have literally changed every conversation I have! Praise the Lord!! An amazing church sent us a \$2,000 gift to cover an expensive trip and necessary documentation that was required unexpectedly last month! Again, Praise the Lord!!

When I mention financial difficulties, I want to be sure that you know we do not take the Lord's goodness or faithfulness for granted but we do have some burdens that we would like to share. Over the last few years, like all missionary families, we have seen a decrease in the ability of some churches to faithfully give to missions. Currently, we average around 85% of our original support level on a monthly basis. Generally this is because a few original supporting churches have unfortunately closed their doors, yet, several other churches have unexpectedly raised our support! We are so thankful!! God is the great provider!

We praise the Lord when we get 85% because with that we are able to pay our bills and afford to modestly clothe and feed our family. With that said, we do not always receive the same amount every month. This month in particular we received less than 50% of our monthly support. This is the first time we have ever had such a difficult month financially. We only mention this to you because we need your prayers.

Along with our personal finances, we are simultaneously working with the finances of Charity Baptist Church. As you can imagine, with the decline in attendance our offerings have also declined dramatically. While we have enough saved to continue for some time we will not be able to financially sustain the ministry indefinitely. Please pray for the Lord to miraculously intervene in each of these circumstances.

Our Next Step

Although it seems like we just arrived in Stewart we have now been here on the field for a year and six months. With that said, we are just arriving at the point of needing to reapply for our next Visitor's Record. Much like a Visa, a Visitor's Record it what give us permission to remain in Canada. We must apply for our next period by June 10th and pay the associated fees. Again, we simply ask that you join us in prayer in this next step.

Other Prayer Requests

Along with these matters we would also request that you would continue to pray for Shannon's father, Harold, in Virginia. As many of you know he has been battling cancer for many years. His current state is quite serious and it is hard to be away from him. He is dealing with blood and bone cancer which has progressed to the point in which he is suffering fractures in his bones from the most minor activities. Please pray for his comfort as well as for Shannon's mom, Connie, as she is by his side through each difficult moment.

We also have other burdens which we can not share openly. Every missionary has burdens like these and that is why it is so important to have a ministry of prayer for the missionaries in your life.

I am regularly receiving and seeking counsel from a wonderful group of godly men and pastors in all of these matters and we are praying for the Lord's leading in our lives and ministry. While we can not possibly encompass the entire scope of what is happening in Stewart into one simple letter, we do humbly ask for your prayers.

In all of these things we turn to you, our Brothers and Sisters in Christ and ask for you to approach the throne of Heaven in prayer for us. Please pray for us to have wisdom and encouragement as we face each battle the Adversary engages us in. We are not so naive as to think that these battles are earthly and that they may be won in our own strength. We wait upon the Lord and we beg you to pray for us.

In His Vineyard,

The Noreau Family

But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31