

December 27, 2009 Temple Baptist Church, Jamestown, ND
TITLE: GOD AT WORK IN 2009

2009 will be remembered as a year of deep water and great blessing. Our region experienced flooding in the spring and summer, the community of Jamestown dealing with the effects of high water for a good three months.

But *deep water* is a metaphor for families experiencing the loss of a family member, people continuing to endure health hardships and job uncertainty due to the slower economy. We continue to grieve with the Nill family over Adam's death as well as support them in their search for answers to Abby's health struggles. Troy Gunderson gave one of his kidneys to his daughter Emily, but the same disease that attacked Emily's kidneys eventually destroyed the one her father gave her, too. Others have experienced the loss of family, neighbors, friends. Many people came to regard TBC as their family, but we also said *Good Bye* to others. **The water has been very deep for some.** And then there was the fire at Cavendish. No one was injured and praise God that the plant was operational inside a month. We hold to the LORD's promise through Isaiah. *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."* Isaiah 43:2, 3

2009 has also been a year of remarkable blessing. We witnessed God's work in us, through us, all around us. He invited us to be part of His work. We joined Him in many ways . . . and we are not the same. Even in and through the experiences of the Nills and Gundersons, for example, **God is changing lives.**

In the fall of 2008 our church shared in the *Experiencing God* series. So many things happened during that time, from personal change, to acting on God's promptings. Some TBC folk even provided a home for a family in need.

2009 is a continuation of joining God in what He is doing. These are some of the ways I've seen Him at work.

In late February we had an 18-hour day of prayer which, I believe, set the stage for what He did in our midst. But some things were underway even then. Earlier that month we hosted the Teen Challenge group from Mandan, women and men who are going through alcohol and other drug treatment with Christ's help. You responded with gifts to that ministry. At that time we were gearing up for the Passion Play. A couple of us were in communication with Larry Kitchel in Kenya, regarding a request for some from TBC to come and be part of a new work in a rural part of Uganda. Well . . .

We shared the **Passion Play** for the sixth time, this year at the Jamestown High School theater. Over 1,000 people attended three powerful performances. Several people prayed to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and many others rededicated their lives to Him.

In six-weeks time nine people raised over \$3,000 each to be part of the **mission trip to Kenya and Uganda** (Amy Johnson, Dean and Doris Giedt, Jeri Lynch, Pat Motschenbacher, Steph Nordgren, Mary Rachel, Dianne Satrom and myself). Pastor Kelvin helped prepare us. Larry and Debbie Kitchel, founders of Christian Mission Aid and TBC members, led our team when we got to Africa. We visited a deaf ministry, schools sponsored by CMA, a boarding school being built for young girls to escape the practice of female genital mutilation, slums in Nairobi, and the work among HIV/AIDs widows and orphans in western Kenya, **distributing shoes, literature, school supplies and prayers**. We visited the Units of Hope goat projects, supported previously by TBC Sunday School children. We shared Jesus in schools, a prison and through the rural church at Orisai, Uganda, **giving out over 400 Gideon Bibles and New Testaments** in English. On our last day in Kenya we worshipped with some Maasai people under a tree, part of a new church in the bush. We were welcomed to Kenya by a custom's official thrilled to receive a Bible and to a very dry Uganda by a rainstorm. As we departed Kenya God was showering the bush area in Maasailand we had just visited with some much-needed precipitation.

In July the TBC family voted to begin building a new facility. A few weeks earlier God provided over 450 chairs from Sioux Falls Seminary. Some of you will recall the time 11 years ago when we purchased the land God provided. It's been a long time coming. In August we broke ground and the site work began. God granted us great favor with many. The concrete work for footings and foundation walls is complete despite one of the wettest falls on record. Water, sewer and power are dug to the building site and a large storage garage is nearly complete for present and future ministry possibilities.

Meanwhile TBC experienced a **record number of people in worship**. Sunday School, AWANA and youth are growing. All of this despite very limited facilities. Giving will likely exceed budgeted expenses. Nearly \$160,000 over regular giving has come in to date just this year for the estimated \$2 million project.

But that's not all. People gave for a **home for a widow**. Ada and her family now have a new home, water collection system and beds. You honored Pastor Kelvin and me by giving funds to purchase **over 200 Bibles in Ateso** for the people at Orisai. You gave funds to purchase **63 food buckets** to help starving people in Maasailand, where we visited and worshiped under an acacia tree. This week we received a brief report of 847 children who attended a week-long Vacation Bible School at Orisai. We heard of the giving of the Bibles, the change happening at the prison visited by us Muzungus, us white people.

You sponsored **three TBC college students to short-term works** this summer (Kayla Rachel with Campus Crusade in Florida, Matesi Hess through Global Expeditions in Uganda and Tiffany Rudolph through New Hope Uganda). You **honored two of our NAB missionary families**, the Runduses, who serve in Cameroon, and Shan Reed, who serves in Japan, with generous love offerings. You are helping encourage another student, **Steph Nordgren**, to prepare for future ministry at **Sioux Falls Seminary**.

You gave generously to the **Salvation Army** through the food collected by the AWANA kids to nearly \$1,000 for other needs. A few TBCers served with the Salvation Army to provide relief for those fighting the flood waters.

You helped **move furniture and build sandbag walls**. You provided financial encouragement to college students who plan to attend **TCX**, a Campus Crusade conference in the Twin Cities.

A group of people concerned that young mothers keep their unplanned-for babies, began a ministry, **Friends for Life**. The grade 1 and 2 Sunday School class sold cook books so that **twenty children on the angel tree** will have Christmas gifts this year. You provided gifts for another fifty children in third world countries through **Operation Christmas Child**.

Some TBC ladies organized a **rummage sale**, which brought in enough funds to provide the surgery for a **child in need of cleft palate and lip surgery** in China. Two TBC families (the Langs and Patzers) **adopted international children** in need of families. The Motschenbachers anticipate welcoming two girls into their family through adoption sometime in 2010.

Each week you **opened your hearts to people in alcohol and drug treatment at the North Dakota State Hospital**. God moved in the hearts of **two dozen**, who prayed to receive Him as Savior or rededicate their lives to Him.

God is at work. Today we witness and celebrate with three who are sharing how God is at work in their lives. God has more for us in 2010. **He wants us to join Him each day in the word He gives us, the Bible. Our lives will be changed as we listen to Him, see Him and connect with Him through His word.**

I invite you to join me as we read God's word together, beginning with Genesis this Friday. Perhaps you would like to listen, too. Information is available in your bulletin. The church building is temporarily on hold as we work through difficulties with our steel supplier. **Please pray about this need because it will likely end up as another 2-month delay.** Much more money is needed to pay for the building. **Please pray that the God who led us to this point and, we believe, led us to build, will also move in our hearts and provide in ways beyond what we can even ask or imagine.**

Aaron Aziz continues to raise support for a year-long internship in Nairobi, Kenya, with AIM Air in aircraft mechanics as he seeks God's direction in mission aviation. He plans to leave in late March. You can be part of that work.

We face a **20% larger budget in 2010**, due mostly to the new building as we seek to be wise stewards of what God provides.

Conclusion. **God is at work. It's exciting as we see, hear and experience how He is changing our lives and the lives of others.** Read Ephesians 3:14-21. **How will you join God in His work in 2010?**