

Romans 15:21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.



### Upon Our Arrival

We arrived at Pleasant Heights Baptist Church in East Liverpool, Ohio on March 23rd to help start a new van ministry. Our main goal was to help reach as many kids and parents as possible with the Gospel and to help start building their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ. We've been in a few bus ministries throughout the years, but this is our first under this new ministry that God has called us to. As we pulled into our RV rental lot on the 23rd, we were so overwhelmed with excitement until we noticed that "someone" had packed our 36ft RV from front to back full of boxes, bags, toys, and everything in between. It was the craziest sight ever!!! I'll say it now just in case you're wondering, downsizing is not fun! We are now in phase 3 of the downsizing stage and things are finally working pretty good. The hardest part of living in a motor-home with 3 people is realizing that personal space is nothing more than a thing of the past...LOL. Now, I say this jokingly, but the truth is, we've all adapted well even through all the challenges. R 8:37...we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. We spent the next 3 weeks not only unpacking and throwing things away but working with the church planning the next steps. It had been many years since they've had more than a hand full of kids, so we had a lot of conditioning to do.

### Van Ministry Kickoff

April 16th was the official van ministry kickoff and we hit the ground running with a freshly painted van and lots of enthusiasm. We were in the highways and the byways 3-4 times a week compelling them to come in and asking God to give the increase as He sees fit. And God did just that! We've had over 30 kids to ride, 20 kids are still faithful, and 10 kids are now covered under the blood of Lamb!!! There are two major problems though: there's still thousands of kids that need to be reached with the Gospel in this area and not enough laborers to reach them. Luke 10:2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborer's are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborer's into his harvest.



Faithfulness is the key....  
*Braden and Alayna Hawkins*

On April 6th, we started spreading the Gospel and promoting the van ministry everywhere we went begging God to lead, guide and direct us. One of the first stops was the local elementary school. I would love to take credit for this idea, but I can't. Thank you, Ms Denia DeBord from Independent Missionary Baptist Church. Sure enough, the Lord opened that door, and we were able to drop off 350 flyers introducing our new van ministry. The school secretary agreed to put a flyer in each student's take home folder that week. What a true blessing!!!! The response rate was 2 out of 350 but praise the Lord for the two. These just so happen to be the first two kids we picked up and they rank the most faithful van riders still today.

**Please pray for these two precious souls!**

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The church has reached its full capability until God supplies more workers that are willing to give of themselves. It does take a lot of time, energy, effort, and self-denial, but it's truly worth it all. I would rather wear out for Christ's sake instead of rusting out for my own. Sometime in late June, the Lord spoke to my heart that it's time to reach more kids with the Gospel and that we needed to prepare the church for our departure. We were still visiting the kids on Saturday, running the van on Sunday morning, and teaching them in Sunday School, but now, it was time to get the church ready for take over. Just a side note, we don't just transport the kids to church, we have church on the van as we're headed to church! It's called "Faith Building to the Max!" We stayed faithful to the ministry while God was preparing the church, but this did open the door for us to visit other churches on Sunday evenings and Wednesdays. It gave us the ability to seek God's perfect will in finding the next church to help. A dear friend of mine, Bro Scott Coggins, has been a tremendous help in locating other churches that may be interested. I truly thank God for him and our friendship! By July 30th, God supplied all the workers needed for Pleasant Heights Baptist Church to run a successful van ministry while teaching them the Word of God and showing them the love of Jesus. On August 1st, the church took full control of the ministry. It was truly a sad day when we had to say our goodbyes, but there's more kids to be rescued. We must continue seeking those that haven't heard!

## Words of Wisdom...

Unfortunately from the world, but lets apply it spiritually:

Only if we understand, can we care. Only if we care, will we help. Only if we help, shall they be saved.

## A New Chapter...

As one chapter closed, another chapter opened in our journey in fulfilling the great commission through the bus ministry. We had the great privilege of visiting some very good churches, meeting some dear sweet saints, receiving lots of encouragement and some well needed fellowship. God is so faithful!!! Philemon 1:7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother. On Aug 9th, God answered our prayers yet again. Evansville Baptist Church in Niles, Ohio has asked us to help them to start a new work in the bus ministry and we have accepted. God had already given me peace about this church the first time we visited them, so it was a blessing to receive that call. Plans are to start the work as soon as possible. Before the bus ministry can start though, we have a lot of praying, preparing, planning, and purchasing the first bus. Pastor AJ Harris from Evansville Baptist is also working on a website for our ministry which will include newsletters, pictures, links and giving options. Lord willing, we also hope to have prayer cards soon.

## One Final Thought...

While on visitation, we met a 11 year old girl and her mom. The girl was very excited about church and the mom signed her up to come Sunday morning. I turned to the girl and asked if she had a Bible. Her response, "what is a Bible"? Oh dear friends, we ever so much need to reach them with the Gospel right NOW!!! How else will they be forgiven? Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?



John, Christina, and Gracie Bates

## Prayer Requests

Since "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much", please bathe the following in prayer daily:

- God's leading hand in the ministry
- Open doors with soft hearts for the Gospel
- Lives to be changed
- Favoritism with parents regarding bus ministry
- More laborers for the harvest

## Sending Church

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