

# the LISBON

focus

Volume 10: Issue 1

February 2017

## How has it been 10 years?!

I can't believe this prayer letter begins our 10<sup>th</sup> year of sending prayer letters! God has reminded us many times this month of His unfailing faithfulness and the many ways He has worked on our behalf in the recent and distant past. In our **midweek Bible study**, we have been studying "Encouragement" and in this week's lesson, it was interesting that in Acts 13, Paul was given the invitation to share a word of encouragement in the synagogue and his choice topic was a list of way after way God worked on behalf of Israel throughout their history. The culmination of his speech was how God faithfully completed His promise to their fathers, to them, and to their children through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We generally think of "encouragement" as a motivational or inspiration speech: "You can do it! Hard work and determination will get you there! Keep going. We're cheering you on. We're all supporting you. You're doing great!" These are the things I might expect to hear if someone were to share a "word of encouragement" but instead, Paul's words add up to **A HISTORY LESSON + THE GOSPEL = ENCOURAGEMENT**. How true this is in our own lives. As we look back and recount the many wonderful ways God has already worked, we encourage our faith and gain confidence that He will continue to work in the future. Our homework assignment was to list the ways in our "history" that we see God's hand. Next week, we will each share our "history" as an encouragement to one another.

*Carla, a faithful member and SS teacher, coincidentally matching Avery*



Unexpectedly, a common theme revealed itself through an assignment in choir this week. As I taught a lesson on the characteristics of "negro spirituals", which include many Old Testament stories with themes such as deliverance from bondage and going to heaven,

we discussed why the slaves identified with these stories and lyrics. I then asked the kids to find a song they identify with and explain why. As I considered what song I might share, so many came to mind that transported me back to places in my life where God faithfully carried me through, and many were places of hardship and pain, and what sweet recollections of drawing close to my Savior they are now. I recounted the story of Owen's precarious entry into this world and the lyrics, "Your mercy flows like a river wide, and healing comes in your name. Helpless children are safe in your arms: there is none like You." This is one of so many precious memories of His goodness to us.

Continuing this theme, Valentine's week at Avery's school was "Encouragement Week" where each child received a secret friend for whom they purchased small gifts like favorite candies or little trinkets and wrote encouraging notes and put them in the "mailbox" for anonymous delivery. It was a fun week of purposefully being an encouragement, and being encouraged by others' thoughtfulness and kind words.

For those who responded to our plea for prayers for encouragement in our last letter – thank you. This past month has been one of encouragement.

We are taking each month of the year to "target" a group in our church to minister to. This month, the teens have the holiday "carnaval" off from school, and we are taking the opportunity to organize a youth event with another Baptist church. *(These two besties, hanging out at the youth center, are already signed up for youth camp this summer).* Next month is Father's Day in Portugal and we will take the opportunity to organize, what I believe will be our first ever men-only event. In April is Easter, of course, but also spring break, which the kids have off of school, so we plan to focus on our kids' ministry and involve our church in an event just for them. Please pray that these events will be well attended and provide opportunity to invite some who would not normally come to a "church service." It is our desire to see souls saved and added to the church in 2017! Hope you have had a great start to your year!



**Beau and Valerie Moore**

P.O. Box 191 Springfield, MO 65801 beau2portugal@gmail.com