

THE EMBERS

Thoughts from the Revival Trail



PULPITAFLEAME
MINISTRIES

Pulpit Aflame Ministries

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Prayer Requests

- Full Schedule of Meetings
Many open dates for 2020
- Monthly Support
- Special support for Medical Expenses
- Special support for 2020 Missions Trip to PNG

Praises

- Rhonda's improving health
- Blessings on the meetings
- New video studio under construction (more details later)
- Safety in travel

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Ministry Report for 2019

It is hard to believe that the year 2019 is over and 2020 has begun. I can say with great confidence that 2019 was one most unusual years of our ministry and the one with the most challenges. As you know, the last quarter of the year has been spent at the hospital and skilled nursing and rehabilitation center with Rhonda. Her health has consumed most of what we have been able to do since September. I will give more details on her medical situation in the article below.

Overview of 2019 year of ministry

- Conducted "Setting Sail for Church Growth Conference"
- Preached a special day with the topic of "Stewardship of Your Life, Abilities, and Opportunities"
- Taught several Bus Worker Training Sessions
- Taught two Soulwinning Seminars
- Taught a one-on-one "Sunday School Seminar"
- Preached for a Veterans Day celebration
- Preached revival meetings
- Preached special "Teen" services
- Preached for a "steeple dedication" (That was a first!)
- Taught Bible Institute classes
- Taught Men's Leadership training classes
- Filled the pulpit for several pastors while they were out of town
- Counseled several pastors regarding ministry problems
- Counseled several pastors regarding ministry planning
- Worked with a church that is without a pastor (Preached for their services, met with and advised the pulpit committee regarding interim pastor, potential candidates, and procedures for calling a pastor.)
- Wrote "Interim Pastor Guidelines" & "Guidelines for Pulpit Committees"
- Met with Mission Board Director regarding missions projects
- Taught Pastor Berlin's Adult Sunday School at Faith Baptist Church in Warren, MI for many weeks when I was in town



Preaching in my Chaplain's Uniform at the Veterans Day service at Parker Memorial Baptist in Lansing, MI

Ministry Report Continued on page 3

Update on Rhonda's Health

The following is an overview of the journey our family has been on regarding Rhonda's health since September 2019. It is a "little" long, but really is the "abbreviated" version.

Rhonda has had a very "challenging" few months. This portion of our journey began on Tuesday, September 24 when she was hospitalized. I had come home on the evening of Monday, September 23, from preaching in Ontonagon, Michigan and found that she was struggling physically. She was very weak, fatigued, and had retained a lot of fluid. The fluid was a by-product of her chronic lymphedema.

She was somewhat confused. By 3:00 am we had to call for an ambulance. When she arrived at the hospital, she had extremely low blood pressure, very low oxygen levels, and was even more confused. Raising her blood pressure was the primary goal at that time. Normally, they use some specific medications to "push" the blood pressure, but they were not able to do that due to Rhonda being on blood thinners. They pushed LOTS of fluids to bring the BP up as well as three units of plasma to bring down the INR level (amount of blood thinners) so they could use the "presser meds." She ended up in MICU (medical intensive care unit) for seven days. She was placed on a ventilator and found to have three infections, one of which was a strep infection that had gotten into her blood. During the week due to the cellulitis, Rhonda developed multiple wounds on her leg, from her calf to her hip. She was being treated with multiple



Rhonda's Heath continued...

antibiotics. Once her blood was free of the blood thinners, they were able to use the "presser" meds to stabilize her blood pressure. They also began a treatment to remove the excess fluid from her body. This would help her heart, blood pressure, and the swelling in her legs.

After she was moved to a "step down" unit she began to show real improvement with her blood pressure. They continued to treat the blood pressure and infections. She began physical therapy to regain her mobility. Things looked really good for six days. They were even discussing her being discharged to a rehab facility soon. On Sunday, October 6, Rhonda began to complain about severe pain in her back. They thought that it was due to all of the PT from the day before. They gave her strong pain meds (Norco), but it did nothing. They gave her a second dose of the pain meds, but nothing changed. Her blood pressure began dropping very quickly. The BP numbers became so low that a Rapid Response Team was called in and they began doing many different tests. By late that night they began to give her units of blood to get her BP up. She developed a large "bulge" on her stomach which grew to the size of a volleyball. The doctors determined that she had a major bleed in her abdomen. She was moved back to Medical ICU so that she could be monitored more closely and was put back on a ventilator.

Early in the morning of Monday, October 7 they took her to the operating room to stop a spontaneous bleed in her abdomen. Following the procedure, they did a CT Scan to see if there was anything else going on. She had had a major bleed and there was a significant amount of blood collected in her abdomen. The blood was creating tremendous pressure on her organs. It was causing the low blood pressure and the difficulty breathing. The pressure did damage to her kidneys and liver and also caused a spike in her INR level. They gave her over 13 units of blood products. By that afternoon the trauma surgeon determined that it was too dangerous to allow the pressures to remain that high in her



abdomen. If they did not relieve the pressure she would not survive, yet the surgery was risky in itself. When relieving the pressure, it could cause an "explosive" event, which would damage her organs. They would not give us a percentage of a chance for her survival from surgery, only

that she would not live if they did not do the surgery. We elected to proceed with the surgery. The surgery went better than they had expected. It immediately reduced the pressure in her abdomen. They left the incision open and placed a wound vacuum in the opening to continue to drain the blood from the area. During the surgery they removed 10 liters of blood from her abdomen. She had another procedure on Wednesday, October 9 to examine the area to check for additional bleeds, then on Friday, October 11 they closed the incision and placed two drains in the area. During this week she was on and off the ventilator several times.

For the next week Rhonda made slow, but steady progress.

They treated the open wounds on her legs and treated her to remove the excess fluid. She was able to again sit on the edge of the bed. She was getting stronger. We were discussing what rehab facility to which we would have her transferred. Things seemed to be really improving and then, on Thursday, October 17 she began to struggle to breathe. On Friday, October 18, she continued to decline. She was much weaker and lethargic and by the afternoon she was somewhat confused. We noticed the redness had returned to her legs where she had had the open wounds. We pressed the medical team to do some tests. The Infectious Disease team came in and examined her. They started doing tests and determined she did have another infection. I also pressed them to check the CO2 levels in her blood.

They brought in the Rapid Response Team and they began to run many other tests. Then the MICU team came in. Her blood gases revealed that her CO2 levels were REALLY high. She had been moved to a Progressive Care Unit, which is one step below Medical ICU, and was placed on a Bi-Pap machine to help her breath and to lower the CO2 levels. They did an x-ray on her lungs and found that her left lung was all whited out. That could indicate pneumonia or full of mucus. They also determined that her left lung had partially collapsed. This brought on a lot of breathing treatments and respiratory therapy. Again, she began to make slow progress. The left lung began to clear, and it appeared that the lung had begun to re-inflate. With the treatments the mucus also traveled to her right lung. For many days they struggled to get her lungs to clear and remain so. One of the main focuses besides the lung issues was to remove the incredible amount of fluid Rhonda's body had retained. The fluid retention had made her breathing, mobility, and overall health very difficult. During this time, she was on a Bi-PAP machine to aid her breathing. It is basically an external respirator.



It is used when they do not want to place the patient on a ventilator.

The next few days were very tense as Rhonda continued to struggle with her breathing, blood pressure, and mobility. They continued to work with her to get stronger. The surgical drains continued to produce a considerable amount of fluid. She continued to struggle with cellulitis and the resulting lesions. Wound care therapists worked with her several times a day to clean and dress the wounds. These are the major source for the infections that she deals with on a continuing basis.

The medical staff called in many specialists and they tested for more conditions than I can explain. Many things were ruled out and eventually they were able to identify several underlying conditions that they believe have been the source of many of her health struggles for many years. Some of these issues are with her adrenal glands and her thyroid. The adrenal glands are on top of the kidneys and may have been damaged by the hematoma she suffered and the resulting pressure on her organs. The adrenal glands are not producing the hormones that they should and that is a factor in her chronic low blood pressure. These issues are now being treated and we have seen improvement and her blood pressure is more consistent. This allowed them to begin physical and occupational therapy.

By the end of October, they were able to pull the surgical drains and allow the incisions to completely close. Her overall health was improving considerably, and she was beginning to feel more like herself. Her kidneys and liver were functioning normally. They were continuing treatment with diuretics to remove more fluid from her body. She made tremendous improvement in this area. For the next two weeks she continued to get stronger, her lungs continued to improve, and they were able to stop the breathing treatments. PT and OT continued to work with her to help her get stronger and be able to sit in a chair and stand.

On November 12 Rhonda was transferred to Regency at Shelby Village Rehabilitation Center. While at Regency Rhonda was able to begin to walk and worked with the OT and PT therapists to regain her mobility and strength. She was able to begin to walk with a walker and began exercises to strengthen her legs and arms. She began working with weights, leg and arm machines. While at the rehabilitation hospital she was also able to get back to eating normal food.

On December 11 Rhonda was finally able to come home! When she first came home there



we were several weeks of in-home care by nurses and physical and

occupational therapists to gain strength and mobility and is making great progress. That has now ended. We made some modifications at the house to make things easier for her to get around and to function in our home. Our pastor, Tim Berlin, built a ramp off our deck so that Rhonda doesn't have to struggle climbing the steps into



the house. It is wonderful to have her home and to return to a more "normal" life. There are still many doctor's office visits and physical and occupational therapy that must be arranged and attended. She has come from death's door to being home and able to work in the kitchen some and to do things at the house. She is able to get out some and has been able to attend some of the evening services at church. She is not able to sit through both Sunday School and Church at one time yet. Please pray for her recovery to continue without any setbacks.



This major ordeal has been very challenging for Rhonda. She spent seven weeks in the hospital and four at the rehabilitation hospital. There were many times during the long hospital stay that she did not think she would ever come home. She has asked a few times, "What happened?" or "How did I get here?" Thankfully she does not remember all of the details of the most difficult events.

My first ministry is my family. I was able to be at the hospital every day that she was hospitalized. On many days I spent the night and only went home to shower and change clothes. Our children also spent time at the hospital on their days off from work and weekends. I was also at the Rehab with her nearly every day.

Special Prayer Requests:

Rhonda's Recovery Needs:

- Lymphadema Rehabilitation
- Strength and mobility (walking, moving and being able to do normal routines)
- Avoiding infections

For the Work of the Ministry

I love the ministry! I love preaching, I love teaching, I love training Christian workers, I love being a part of services and events when God steps into the middle of it and displays His Power. There is nothing to be compared to being used by God to fulfill His Work and Will in the ministries of a local church.

The Apostle Paul describes the ministry of a man of God in Ephesians 4...

Ephesians 4:12 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

The Scriptures are very clear that the role of the preachers that God has given to local churches is for:

1. **Perfecting of the Saints** - *That means to help Believers to become mature.*
2. **The Work of the Ministry** - *This means to teach church members and leaders HOW to do the work of the ministry.*
3. **Edifying of the Body of Christ** - *Edifying means to build up. That refers to both numeric and spiritual growth.*

These verses describe much of the work that we do in the ministry. We endeavor to assist pastors in the training of workers and in the organization of their ministries. I would be honored to come to your church to present our ministry and explain the opportunities set before us.

We have scheduled a Sunday School Teacher seminar at First Baptist Church in Morley, MI with Pastor Steve Finn for March 14-15. Watch our website, Facebook, and Twitter for more details. We are working with two other churches regarding planning "Setting Sail for Church Growth Conferences."

We are available for:

- Revival Meetings
- Evangelistic Meetings
- One Day / Special Day Meetings
- Missions Conferences
- Setting Sail for Church Growth Conferences
- Soulwinning Workshops
- Vacation Bible Schools
- Missions Trips

I will be in Western Michigan in Mid March - looking to add meetings in the area.

I will be in South Carolina in late February - looking to add meetings in the area.

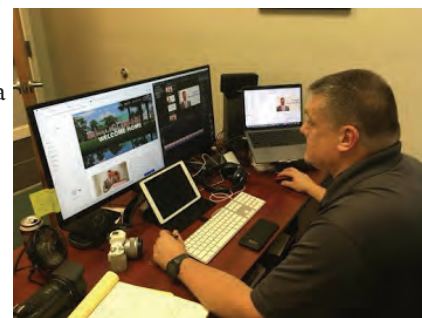
Looking to go to Papua New Guinea and Western Australia in June-July (support needed).

To schedule us for a meeting, please contact us at pulpitaflame@gmail.com or 586-350-6021.

Ministry Update continued...

- Helped three churches with graphics, photos, and videos for their websites and social media
- Authored, printed and delivered one new church soulwinning tract
- Assisted churches with graphics and printing needs

Much of our ministry involves counseling and mentoring pastors and ministry leaders. This is often done by phone and outside of a regular preaching meeting. This type of ministry helps to build stability and longevity in ministry. We would be honored to come and assist you in your church and help to train your workers. Contact us to schedule at meeting at your church.



Ministry Limitations & Urgent Needs

Being at the hospital every day to care for Rhonda greatly limited my ability to travel and preach meetings. I have had a few preaching meetings in the area and was able to leave to go preach and then return to the hospital to be with Rhonda. Going any great distance was a little more difficult. An evangelist lives on the love offerings from the churches where he holds meetings and the monthly support from churches and individuals. Not being able to schedule and conduct meetings as well as the many additional expenses has created great financial hardship. We are thankful for those who support us on a monthly basis as well as those who have sent special gifts at this time to help us financially.

Special Prayer Requests:

- Financial Needs:
 - *Medical bills
 - *Medical Supplies (wound dressings, lymphedema wraps for Rhonda's Legs)
- Regular Monthly Expenses:
 - Health, Ministry, and property insurance
 - Utilities
 - Travel expenses
- Printing and postage expenses
- Yearly property taxes
- Monthly Supporters Needed
- Full Schedule of Meetings

Would you pray about helping us with monthly financial support or one-time gift? Thank you in advance for your help!

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

PRAYER LETTER FOR

Doug & Rhonda Brandenburg
**Update on Rhonda's Health
Ministry Report 2019**

Publications Available

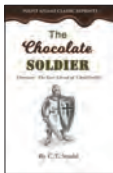
These, and many more helpful resources are available from Pulpit Aflame Publications. You may contact us online at www.pulpitaflame.com/store



Classic Reprints Helpful booklets from preachers of the past that MUST be known by this generation of Believers.



Will a Saved Person Ever Be Lost? By Dr. Thomas F. Duff **\$2.00**
Many Believers wonder, and even worry, if their faith in Jesus Christ was enough to get them to Heaven, surely there must to it than that! Don't I have to do something to keep my salvation? Can I lose it? Can I do something to have it taken away? This study is to help those who struggle with their eternal security.



The Chocolate Soldier By Missionary C.T. Studd **\$2.00**
This booklet was written in 1912 as an appeal to Christians to go to the mission field. This great missionary was concerned about the laziness of Believers and their lack of tenacity in serving the Lord and challenged them to not "melt" in battle. This booklet will challenge you!

Ministry Helps



Setting Sail for Church Growth **\$25.00**
The revised edition of our book, "Setting Sail for Church Growth," is off the press and is available for purchase in our online bookstore. This book is the manual used during our "Setting Sail for Church Growth Conferences." It contains 130 pages of material to better equip your Sunday School teachers, Children's Church & Bus Ministry workers. Sections include:

1. Charting the Course
2. Enlisting & Equipping the Crew
3. Loading the Passengers
4. Setting Sail
5. The Captain's Log
6. Ship Security

Fifteen different forms are included to help your ministry run more efficiently and to assist you in follow-up and discipleship.

Helps for your Christian Walk



Moments With the Master **\$8.00**
This book is a practical guide for your personal walk with God and includes the Bible study on "The Purpose of Bible Study," a one year Bible reading schedule, places to record your Bible study thoughts, a simple journal for your prayer list, and recommended verses to memorize.



My Weekly Checklist **\$2.00**
We do not walk with God because we want to, we walk with God because we plan to! This practical guide will help to keep you on track in your walk with God. It is an accountability record to monitor and motivate your church attendance, Bible reading, prayer time, worship time, witnessing, and ministry involvement. Get one today!

Audio CD sets

Be a Man (3 cd set in album) **\$10.00**
Be a Man! is a series of 3 messages for men and their sons.

Repentance and Faith (3 cd set in album) **\$10.00**
Three strong and clear messages on the Doctrine of Repentance and its association to saving faith and soulwinning.

What Baptists Believe (Overview) (3 cd set in album) **\$10.00**
Three messages that are an overview of the 54 lesson series on Baptist Distinctives.

Decisions and Divine Appointments (5 cd set in album) **\$15.00**
A five sermon series from the Book of Ruth.