



buffalodreamcenter Making A Difference

One Act of Courage Can Change Everything

Pastor Eric T. Johns

Second Samuel tells a story about a man named Benaiah who did many great deeds. In 2 Samuel 23:20 we read that he killed two lion-like heroes of Moab and that he went down into a pit and killed a lion on a snowy day.

He did what?

He chased a lion. I have heard of lion tamers, lion trainers, and even lion hunters. However, I have never heard of a lion chaser. But that is exactly what Benaiah did.

Can you imagine taking a walk, hearing some rustling in the bushes, and then coming face to face with a lion? Most of us would take off running! If you are ever running away from a lion, all you really have to do is run faster than the guy that is with you. You could never outrun a lion. They weigh approximately five hundred pounds and can run thirty miles per hour. They can jump thirty feet in one jump!

When Benaiah was walking he saw some movement in the distance and realized a lion was watching him. There was probably a moment when they locked eyes. At that moment, Benaiah did the unthinkable. He took off running after the lion! There was no way that Benaiah would ever catch the lion, but the lion made a misstep and fell into a pit.

Benaiah walked to the edge of the pit, looked down into the darkness, and saw two yellow eyes looking back at him. Obviously the lion, in an enclosed space, had the advantage. He was created for survival. Benaiah, instead of walking away from the pit, jumped into it!

The Bible tells us that it was a snowy day. That means that one set of lion footprints and one set of human footprints went into the pit. A few minutes later, one set of human footprints came out of the pit.

Why is this story in the Bible?

A few verses later, in 2 Samuel 23:23, we read that David chose Benaiah to be his personal bodyguard. Think about it. One day David was sitting at his desk. He was going through applications of the men who wanted the position of his personal bodyguard. One application told David that the man graduated from the

Jerusalem School of Bodyguards. Another boasted about protecting an important government official. Then David picked up Benaiah's application and read, "Chased a lion, jumped into a pit, and killed it on a snowy day." David shouted, "Hired!"

When Benaiah jumped into to the pit with the lion he did something more than just a great feat. Without knowing it, Benaiah was preparing himself for his future. He did not know that David would eventually hire him. But he may not have aquired the position if he did not conquer the lion.

One act of courage can change everything.

How you react, as you encounter

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as you encounter
lions, will determine
your future.

lions, will determine your future. God wants you to chase lions!

If Benaiah had run away from the lion, he would have missed what God wanted to do with his life.

Maybe your lion is a big dream that God has given you and it overwhelms you. It could be a bad habit or a poor choice you made that keeps nagging you. Maybe your lion is self-doubt that continues to rob your joy and your future.

Benaiah faced his fears. He did not focus on his disadvantages. He did not make excuses. But in each case he did what lion chasers do – he defied the odds. He believed in a bigger God!

God wants you to live a fearless life! No matter how long that fear has been with you; no matter what shape and form it comes in; no matter how many generations it has been hanging around your family – God wants you to be free from it.

One act of courage can not only change your life, it can impact the lives of others.

I think about the first time we ran our big school bus and brought children to the Dream Center. For months we had fights. We had people ask us, "What are you doing? Nobody wants those kids." I remember my father-in-law, a pastor at the Dream Center, had to wrestle a knife out of teenager's hand on the bus! The lion was looking right at us. We decided to chase it! It took courage to reach out to those kids. That one act of courage has changed the lives of hundreds of children.

I was so frightened the first time I crawled into my sleeping bag to spend the night on the street with the homeless. Little did I know when I chased that lion what would happen in my city. Boxes of Love was born.

I remember going into a certain neighborhood to hold an outreach. The police stopped by and asked us if we had a cell phone. "If you have trouble, call 9-1-1. But we may not come right away. It is better for you just to run." It took courage that day to stay and reach people with the love of Jesus.

At the Buffalo Dream Center we are not taking "nice" mission trips. It takes courage to go to Pakistan. But that act of courage can change the nation.

Queen Esther's one act of courage saved the Jewish people. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's act of courage changed the heart of a king and the direction of an empire. Jesus' act of courage saved the world.

Don't miss what God has for you. You have no idea what your future holds. But what you do today, when that lion is looking into your eyes, determines your future. Live a fearless life. Be a lion chaser! One act of courage can change your life. One act of courage could change the world.

Inside

- Boxes of Love
- Pakistan: 8 Year Plan
- India: Center of Hope
- Honduras Mission Trip
- Get Involved at the BDC!

Boxes of Love Touches Thousands of People

For the fourteenth consecutive year, Boxes of Love impacted families in Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and the surrounding area.

One thousand volunteers wrapped gifts, packed food, and helped distribute Boxes of Love to families in need. Volunteers came from seven states and Canada. Seventeen distribution sites throughout Western New York and Canada helped nearly three thousand families with food and toys.

A young girl from Somalia showed up at one of the distribution sites. She was hiding from her abusive husband. She arrived in the Buffalo area with no baggage. She did not speak English and had no identification except for immigration papers. She was so happy to receive a turkey and some groceries that she grabbed the hand of one of the volunteers and kissed it!

The story about the woman from Somalia was the case for many families at sites located on the west side of Buffalo. At one distribution site there were more than ten languages spoken as the line of refugee families wrapped around the block.

Pastor John and Shirley Tasch brought a team from across America to assist with the project. Shirley Tasch said, "As usual being a part of Boxes of Love was a joy. Giving food to families and toys to children is a heart-warming and fulfilling experience. Looking into the faces of the people who are so grateful is like looking

into the face of Jesus for He said that 'when we do it unto the least of these we

do it unto Him.' We love Boxes of Love and look forward to Boxes of Love 2013."

Right in the middle of Boxes of Love Pastor Eric received a phone call about a family whose house had burned down. The father, mother, and three children found themselves living in a hotel for Christmas. Not only were food and toys given to the family, they also moved into a house which was provided by a church in Buffalo that heard the terrible news. The church also gave them money to furnish their new home!

In Niagara Falls a woman found a flyer about Boxes of Love on her doorstep. She had just moved to Niagara Falls and lived three doors away from the church. She had no money for Christmas gifts for her children. As she walked down the street to the distribution, she was happy to think that she would be getting toys for her children, but wondered how she was going to cook Christmas dinner. When she received her Box of Love she found out that a special Christmas dinner was being served at the church in a couple of days. She was so excited. Her last words to the volunteers were, "I'm so happy you are here!"

An eleven-year-old boy waited in the long line at the Belle Center for his Christmas gift. As a refugee from Africa, Junior was used to making his way around the neighborhood, doing things

for his family at a young age. Junior and Pastor Eric talked the previous week. Junior told him that all he wanted for Christmas was a Nerf gun. Pastor Eric told him that he knew Santa Clause personally. He would see what he could do.

As Junior waited in line, Santa Clause approached him. He said, "Junior, I have a special gift for you." Santa handed him a gift. With dozens of people in line watching Junior, he tore the wrapping paper off of a brand new Nerf gun. He couldn't believe it! Tears welled up in his eyes, followed by a huge smile as he posed for a couple of pictures with Santa.

There are many stories of people who were impacted through Boxes of Love. The simple act of giving toys and food truly made a difference in the lives of many.



Pakistan: Eight Years to Reach an Entire Nation

The Buffalo Dream Center has become partners with pastors in Pakistan who have a desire to see their nation come to Christ.

As you read this newsletter, Michelle Johns is getting ready to take her third journey to Pakistan. Like her previous trips, she will train church leaders how to reach children with the Gospel and conduct children's festivals.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan was established in 1947 as an independent nation for Muslims. Currently, Pakistan is the second largest Muslim nation in the world. Unless the nation is reached with the Gospel of Jesus

Christ, it will be the largest Muslim nation by 2030.

Many people are anxious for the return of Jesus. However, the Bible is clear that Jesus will not return until every ethnic group is reached with the Gospel. More than 7,000 ethnic groups have never heard the name of Jesus. Pakistan has 453 ethnic groups that have still not heard the Gospel.

Indigenous leaders have implemented an eight-year plan to reach every ethnic group in the entire nation of Pakistan

with the Gospel. One goal includes training and equipping 12,000 leaders in child evangelism and children's ministry. These leaders will establish 5,000 children's outreaches throughout the country. In eight years, it is estimated that 250,000 Muslim children will give their lives to Jesus Christ.

Reaching the children of Pakistan is critical. 53% of the population of Pakistan is under the age of nineteen. The direction of Pakistan can change by reaching its children with the message of hope found only in Jesus.



India: Center of Hope

For the past fifteen years, Pastor Eric and Michelle Johns have been working alongside Pastor Sagar and his family in Guntur, India.

"I remember the day Pastor Sagar brought me to a large plot of land about ten miles outside of Guntur," said Pastor Eric. "It had a well and an old storage shack on it. At that time, Pastor Sagar had twenty orphans living with him and his family in their small house. He began to tell me of his vision to build an orphanage and Bible training center for new pastors."

The congregation at the Buffalo Dream Center raised the money for the first building. Michelle Johns went to India for the ribbon-cutting ceremony and named the new place the Center of Hope.

Today the Center of Hope has forty-two orphans and several widows. Ten children have recently joined the Center of Hope family. Mahesh and Nani's father murdered their mother. He went to

prison and they moved into the Center of Hope where they have received love and comfort. Several other children were found living in the streets. Koti's father was a drug addict who did nothing to take care of him. He was found surviving on the streets of Guntur. Three girls were abandoned by their parents who were not able to feed them.

Four buildings have been erected and a wall surrounding the entire property has just been completed. It took several years to build the wall which now prevents people from walking through the property.

As the city of Guntur expands, the once remote plot of land is now surrounded by apartment buildings and thousands of poor families living in tents. The Center of

Hope has become an outreach to the community by providing clean water and a free school for children which now has ninety-seven students.

The Center of Hope also has a ten-month training program for young men and women that want to go into full time ministry. Pastor Sagar now oversees one hundred fifty churches. There are sixty-two pastors who take care of these congregations in the surrounding villages of Guntur.

The next phase of the building project is to build interior walkways throughout the Center of Hope complex. An apartment for foreign missionaries has also been planned. This will enable teams from North America and Europe to stay on the property of the Center of Hope while they train pastors and evangelize villages.



Honduras: Dream Center Joins Tasch Ministries

A team of nine people from the Buffalo Dream Center will join Shirley Tasch from Tasch Ministries International for a

second trip to Honduras this March.

The team will be working with leaders in Honduras on

several ministries and projects. They will travel throughout Honduras in a large bus conducting children's outreaches. Some of these outreaches will be in the slum areas in the mountain region.

One full day of their trip will be spent building a house for a homeless family. They will also conduct a women's conference and a children's conference.

For some members of the team, this will be their first mission trip.



Get Involved in Outreach at the Buffalo Dream Center!

Tuesdays

Kidz Club After School Program
2:30 pm – 4:30 pm
1910 Falls Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14303

Wednesdays

10:00 am
Project Prevention
701 Seneca Street
Buffalo, NY 14210

Thursdays

Kidz Club After School Program
4:30 pm – 6:30 pm
512 Pearl Street
Buffalo, NY 14202

Fridays

Joseph Project Mobile Food Pantry
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm
Locations vary weekly.
Contact the Buffalo Dream Center for locations.

Youth Ministry
Saints Columba-Brigid Teen Center
9:00 pm - 10:00 pm
418 North Division Street
Buffalo, NY 14204

Saturdays

Adopt-A-Block
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
104 Maryland Street
Buffalo, NY 14201

Adopt-A-Block does not take place every week.
Contact the Buffalo Dream Center for specific dates.

Magdalene Project Outreaches
1910 Falls Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14303

Times vary. Contact the Buffalo Dream Center
for more information.



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Dream Center Information
Worship Service
Sundays at 11:00 AM

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