

THE BARLOW FAMILY

MISSIONARIES to SLOVENIA



MONTE ✦ KRISTA ✦ NICHOLAS ✦ MICAH ✦ PHILIP

November/December 2018

Dear Pastor and Church,

Wrapping up this year and looking forward to 2019, it has been a very eventful year full of highs and lows, both physically and spiritually.

As you may remember, back in February we organized New Life Independent Baptist Church. That was a spiritual high which fulfilled a vision that began when we arrived in Slovenia nine years ago. Immediately after that time we experienced excitement and the members of this baby church and even those who were not members began to reach out to those around them and invite them to come and join us. We saw new people become faithful and the hope and promise of growth was infectious to all. We still praise God for what He is doing in this work.

Along with that spiritual high came a personal high of finally accomplishing a dream that I have had since we arrived here. The saying around here is this – You are not really a true Slovene until you have climbed Mt. Triglav, the highest point in the Slovenian Alps. After some training hikes with church members, on a late summer morning, I stood on the top of that mountain, 6500 feet above where I started the previous evening. It was awesome to look down on such beauty that God had created simply for our enjoyment. But life is not always lived in the mountains. Sometimes to appreciate those mountaintop experiences we have to go through valleys.

One of those physical valleys happened in the beginning of November. I was playing basketball with some church members and I hyperextended my knee, in the process tearing my lateral collateral ligament. An MRI revealed that it would require surgery. That surgery was performed in the first week of December. This was a valley that I did not anticipate taking such a long time to overcome, but it has. I still cannot walk without the aid of crutches and a brace. Thankfully, I have only missed one service because of it but it has been incredibly discouraging as we had just begun to have concrete plans as a church on how to effectively reach our community for Christ.

Harder still, was a spiritual valley that happened at approximately the same time. For those of you who follow our updates, you know how valuable and precious each visitor who comes to our services are to us. There are not multitudes who are interested in spiritual things here in post-Christian, atheistic Europe. Seeing one walk away from the Truth and fellowship has shaken some of the most faithful people in our church. They do not doubt the Truth or the stand which we have taken but the hurt is still there. As I have said to the people and to myself many times, This may be a time of discouragement, but God...

Psalm 3:3 comes to my mind, *“But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.”*

This is our hope. This is our expectation. **Would you pray with us and for us; that God would get glory for Himself in this situation and in this beautiful yet spiritually dark country?**

Until next time, May the Lord richly bless you as you serve Him,

The Barlows