

RUF Berkeley | March 2016

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## The Saddest Place Ever



Last week was our annual Spring Break Mission Trip to the Yakama Indian Reservation in Washington state. It's a life-changing week for students. We rebuild homes in the community and run a Kids' Club every afternoon in a housing project.

Yakama is the saddest and darkest place I've ever seen: the average life span is only 39 years old, 70% of the teenagers are homeless, most young children are orphaned and bear the facial signs of fetal alcohol syndrome, 100% of the population is effected by substance abuse. Like Narnia under the spell of the White Witch, "it's always winter but never Christmas."

At one point during the week, I had to take our 15 passenger van for some repair work. There are no auto shops on the reservation so I drove into a nearby town. I ended up in a lengthy conversation with one of the mechanics, a non-Indian. We got to talking about the reservation and he said to me, "I *avoid* that place at all costs."

I can't stop thinking about *that* sentence. Our impulse is to avoid the darkness. Our desire is to evade hard places and hard people. Our default in the face of brokenness is to move away. The problem is that the darkness isn't simply "out there" it's "in here" - in us.

And that's why Easter felt like such fresh, good news for me this year. It shouts to us that the God of the universe stands in stark contrast to us. He doesn't avoid the darkness; he moves into the darkness. The darkness of places like Yakama. The darkness of hearts like ours'. The darkness of a cross and judgement and death and a tomb and separation from the One he had always loved most. To heal. To bring hope. To offer resurrection life.

I saw that in new ways last week in Yakama. We continue to see that on campus and in the lives of students. Praise be to God! Check out the video below...





One of the highlights of this trip has become taking my 13 year old son, William. This marks his 3rd time to Yakama. He loves it! He's formed lasting bonds with several kids on the reservation. As a father, it brings me such joy to watch the way he loves the children on the reservation. It's been a great reminder to me of the way that God loves and delights in me.

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### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

- For Students who are exploring Christianity: Phyllis, Victoria, Zshenna, Michael, Jerry, Daniel. Some of you have been praying for these

students and others. Several of them seem so close to embracing Jesus. Please continue to pray.

- For William, my son: Many of you have been praying for him. Specifically, that God would provide 1 Christian friend. We are still praying for that. Please keep praying for that. Additionally, he's been invited to serve as an intern for 3 weeks in Yakama this summer. Please pray that this works out. I think it could be a formative experience for his relationship with Christ.
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We are so grateful for your prayers and financial support. What an encouragement! This ministry would not be possible without you. The gospel of grace is being proclaimed. Jesus is being embraced. Hope is sinking in. Lives are being changed. Thank you for your partnership with us.

Many Thanks,  
Brent and Katie Webster

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