DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"THE WITNESS CONTINUES" |ACTS 28: 30-31 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- **What motivates people to sacrifice for a cause?**

"A Faith That Stands Develops Conviction Before the Crisis" Acts 28: 30

As Paul was under Roman surveillance in a rented house. Yet he welcomed all who came to see him.

- **Why is important for most missionaries to live among the people they are seeking to reach?**
- **How can other Christ followers help missionaries live among the people they are seeking to reach?**

"A Faith That Stands Chooses Courage Instead Of Compromise" Acts 28: 31

Paul proclaimed the gospel and taught about Jesus even while he was awaiting trial.

- **Why doesn't Paul take a break from his ministry to focus on his trial and the personal stress involved?**

"A Faith That Stands Trusts God During The Trial" Acts 28: 31

Paul shared the gospel with boldness and without hindrance.

- **What are ways Christ followers today can enable missionaries to be bold and unhindered?**

"Unfinished Work" Acts 29?

Acts ends abruptly, suggesting that all Christ followers today are part of the next chapter of reaching the world with the gospel.

- **What do you sense God wants to do through Calvary Murrieta and its efforts for unreached people groups?**

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Pastor Brian shared about the unfinished work of reaching the world with gospel. He challenged Calvary Murrieta to continue to partner with the efforts to share Jesus' Truth and Love with unreached people groups in tangible ways like Paul did in Rome.

- **Have you been letting busyness and stress get in the way of sharing God's love and truth with others?**
- **What is a way you can commit to supporting missions in the next year?**
- **Pray that Jesus would give you a focus and heart for seeing the gospel shared in genuine ways.**

The Book of Acts 11-08-26

The Witness Continues

I. Announce:

A. Welcome to those watching online.

B. Slide1-3 AP: At Risk. CFLC. Veterans Day.

C. Slide4 Read *"Orphan Sunday ~ Nat Adoption Sun ~ Foster Care Sun."*

D. Slide5 Greece Trip Info Meeting: Next Thurs, Nov.12, 6:30pm in Agape Room.

E. Prayer:

II. Slide6a Intro: The Book of Acts - The Witness Continues

A. I would like to start the book of **Acts** by looking at the end of the book.

1. Instead of a Prequel - I'm doing more of *a Sequel, a Follow-up, a Continuation of the story … **first**.*

B. Acts 28:30-31 is an unusual way to end a book.

1. Paul is in Rome - under house arrest, awaiting trial - and Luke simply tells us: **Slide6b** *He welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.* … And then the book ends!

   a) What happened to Paul? What happened next? Where is the final chapter?

2. Acts ends almost like a cliffhanger - but perhaps that is the point. Luke finishes **his book**, but **the mission** Jesus began, **is not finished**!

C. Acts began with Jesus saying: *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, **and to the end of the earth**.*

1. By Acts 28, the gospel has traveled from Jerusalem all the way to Rome. But Rome was not *the end of the earth*. The risen Jesus was only beginning to gather worshipers from *every tribe, language, people, and nation.*

D. The last word of Acts is essentially "unhindered."

1. Paul may be chained, but **the gospel** is not.
   a) Governments cannot stop it. Persecution cannot silence it. Prison doors cannot contain it. Oceans, borders, languages, and cultures cannot keep King Jesus from *building His Church*!
2. The Holy Spirit was **Unleashed**. The Gospel remained **Unhindered**. And the Mission was still **Unfinished**.

E. Now, there is no *inspired* 29th chapter of Acts. Scripture is complete.
But the work described in Acts continues - and **we** have been invited into it.

1. In that sense, *our lives are being lived in* **Acts 29**.
2. Every time the gospel crosses another barrier, the mission continues.
3. Every time a church is planted, a Bible is translated, a global worker is sent, or someone speaks the name of Jesus to a neighbor, the witness continues!

F. That is what **our church** has been **participating in** among our **2 unreached people groups**. **My trip** to 4 countries in 4 weeks, was not an isolated adventure.
It was **one small part** of ***the same mission*** **Jesus** announced in Acts 1:8.

1. We are not merely going to be studying the history of Acts. **We have** entered **its mission**. - We are not spectators looking backward at what the apostles accomplished. **We are** witnesses looking outward toward the people *who still have not heard*.
2. The story will continue until the risen King returns and places the final period: *"Surely I am coming soon." "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen." Until then* the **Mission** continues.

G. I'm praying this is ***a strong bridge*** from **my Trip Report** into the book of Acts.

1. I also want to connect everyone who gives to CM financially (10% goes to missions each week). If you give, you're involved!
2. I also want to remind us - coming to Christ can sometimes be spontaneous, but it is often a journey.

a) I like asking: If a Muslim or Hindu or Buddhist invited you to follow their religion, would you change from Christianity on the spot? (and often, neither would they). Yes they need to **hear it**. But often they also need to **see it** lived out.

H. *Please no taking pictures. (Sorry 2nd service - no pics).

III. Slide7 **ROHINGYA.** (I've been living out (& Lar, AL, Dan, Jeff T) being *a follower of Jesus* for 7 yrs now w/our Rohingya friends in Nepal - on your behalf)

A. Where Things Stand Today. The Rohingya refugees in Nepal are currently living in 5 small communities, all located within the same valley, north of Kathmandu.

B. Leadership. Recently, we have seen a **fracturing** within their leadership. What was once **2 groups** living side by side, has become ***a more divided community***, making cooperation and decision-making more difficult.

C. Changes I've Seen Over the Last 7 Years. Their outlook has changed. In the early years, there was a lot of conversation about **returning home** to Myanmar. While I believe that remains the dream of many Roh, *I rarely hear them talk about it anymore*.

D. They've adapted to life in Nepal. Despite the challenges, they've learned how to navigate local systems, and have found ways to build a life there.

E. Most importantly, we're beginning to see **Spiritual Fruit.** We now have our 1st Muslim-background believer (MBB), who is being discipled through regular meetings at a coffee shop. [his story: "Raf" the fighter/angry. *"I think you're a Christian!"*]

1. Now Lar & I found out **6 young men** are *seeking*. They are seriously exploring the Christian faith, listening to Scripture translated into Rohingya by our friends, and watching the short 5-minute Bible videos. These are small beginnings, but incredibly significant ones.

F. Opportunities We're Seeing. Even though the Rohingya have no formal legal status in Nepal, some important doors remain open:

1. **Employment:** They are able to find work, although opportunities are often inconsistent. **Education:** Every child is attending school, and 2 young men are attending university. That's a significant step forward for

this community. **Spiritual openness:** Relationships built over the years are creating opportunities for honest conversations about Jesus.

G. Obstacles They Continue to Face. Finding and keeping work. Stable employment remains one of their greatest challenges. Many families struggle to provide consistently for their basic needs.

1. Declining outside assistance. Support from the **UN** has decreased, leaving families with fewer resources.
2. Loss of community support. A local mosque that previously provided occasional assistance has pulled back its support because of the Rohingya community's relationships with Christians (us).
3. Divided leadership. Internal disagreements make it more difficult for their leaders to work together for the good of the community.

H. *Just heard: Our 1st MBB successful chicken/duck farm was sabotaged last week by other Roh who placed sick chickens next to there's.

I. Where I Believe the Shepherd Is Leading Us. This year, I sense Jesus leading us toward a greater emphasis on helping Rohingya families provide for themselves. We are exploring more ways to help families develop *more sustainable sources* of income.

1. The goal isn't simply to help them survive another month, but to help them gain greater *stability, dignity, and the ability to provide for their own families*. And as we do this, we want to continue building genuine relationships, loving them well, & faithfully sharing the hope we have in Christ.

J. Slide8 5 day Dental Outreach: 4 dental clinicians treated 250+ people (Roh & Nepali) (led by Inga-Lill Guzik). 3 young lady interpreters from Dental College.

K. Slide9 Lar & I had the important task of **balloon animals**. He was the pumper, I was the twister. I was wondering, what were we going to do for 5 days standing on a porch? How am I gonna meet with my leaders? Why am I doing this? How will this help?

L. Explain: every time I'd walk into the Roh settlement - women would hide themselves inside their homes, bringing their kids with them. So I've pretty much only gotten to know the men.

M. Slide10 What happened was: as Larry and I were playing around with the kids. Pretty soon the Muslim women were dropping ***their facial hijabs***, revealing their smiles and laughing with us, as we played with their children. They allow me to take their pictures. The little boys came up and hugged me. Larry got to spend time with 1 of the 6 seekers, learning about him.

N. Slide11 Local **Nepali** new friends. (Jaya)

O. Slide12a/b Tell Shafique story (video/jump on my bike. And *you're my brother*).

1. Slide13 8 years of relationship building. [circled: 1 of the Roh settlements]

IV. Slide14a **THAILAND** (dropped in to see the fam) Slide14b What it really looks like!

V. Slide15 **MALAYSIA** (can't show our conf w/workers w/the Roh)

VI. Slide16 **VIETNAM** (1st time to VN - fav pic)

VII. Slide17 **H- PEOPLE** (H-People. Tribal. *Hanang* is their Language - pseudonym)

A. While I was visiting Vietnam where some of our H-people live, I had the incredible privilege of meeting, **the overall leader Pastor S**, and **6** H-people **church leaders**, who traveled **17 hours** by bus & motorbike down the mountain, just to meet w/me.

B. Sitting in a simple Airbnb living room, I listened to their testimonies. I asked them, ***"How does an Animist become a follower of Jesus?"***

1. **Animism is** the belief that objects, places, and creatures (such as: *animals, trees, rivers, mountains, and places*) can all posses a distinct spiritual essence. These spirits may be honored, feared, or appeased because they are believed to affect everyday life (decisions about sickness, farming, travel, marriage, and even where to build a home may be shaped by fear of those spirits) thus, they often visit witch doctors or shamans.

2. **One example closer to home is:** The **Black Hills Mnt Range** in So Dakota, are sacred to the Lakota Sioux and other Native American tribes.

C. With the 6 H-leaders, all of them were former drug addicts. Their leader shared, *"that nearly **80%** of their young people struggle with **opium addictions** or **alcoholism**."* Imagine the hopelessness this creates in these remote mountain communities in VN.

1. One pastor shared that even his own father, who was sitting in the room with us, had even given up hope on him. His father had also struggled with addiction, but today, **both** are followers of Jesus!

D. Their leader said something that deeply moved me: *"I stand on the shoulders of Mike* (from our church), *and John* (a friend from O.C. serving in this country)*."*

1. You see, Mike & Lorie, John, and CM invested in these men through *a Christian Rehabilitation Ministry*. - Again and again, they credited 2 things for their transformation: **prayer** and the genuine love shown by those who served them.

E. Here's something beautiful about their program. After **6 months** of rehabilitation, participants spend another **6 months** helping the next group through the same journey. Simply **loving** and **serving** them as they were once recipients. **Genius!**

F. For years, I've wondered, ***"Lord, how will we ever reach these unreached mountain people, when we, as foreigners, aren't even allowed to visit them?"***

G. This trip, God gave me a glimpse of His answer. Sitting in that room were pastors and overseers representing 2 government-recognized churches and two additional meeting places. God is already at work through these remarkable men, and **we** have the privilege of ***partnering*** with them. It's simple. It' raw. It's new bold believers.

1. 1 of the H-pastors asked, *"When I preach, **pray** I use the right words. With no bible translation in the Hanang language, I have to rely on the VN translation or my Hmong translation. Please especially pray for my Xmas message. This is the first time I will preach on the Xmas story in Hanang."*

H. It reminds me of the early days of Calvary Chapel, when God began transforming the lives of so many **former drug addicts.** Jesus is still reaching *tax collectors and*

sinners. And how does He do it? Much the same way He always has ... through His followers - who **pray**, **love**, **serve** and **bring hope** to *the hurting and hopeless*. So, don't count anyone out of the Kingdom of God. Jesus still saves the most *unlikely* people.

I. **Push back for the community:** Jesus is a foreign god. You're disowning your Ancestry! (ancestry worship is treating deceased ancestors as spiritual beings who should be *honored or appeased,* because they can affect everyday life). Living ancestors often cut them off and won't talk to them.

1. They also said, H-people worship everything (but it was never beneficial for us, only for the witch doctors. They would only care about your payment method, do you want to pay in chicken or $?).
   They each would conclude w/ *I want the whole Hani people to know Him*!

J. **Upcoming Needs and Opportunities, How we can help:** *Not asking now* (Larry and I need to coordinate this. And get real numbers). [but answers how we can partner w/them]

K. **Pstr S support:** $200 month. Personal support to take the gospel to "start" in the next H-people village 50k away.

L. **Raising funds** for the Hanang language **MP3 players**. They lost their sponsor for mp3 players (I think around $9 for each player).

M. **Finances** to check their Oral translation they've been working on.

N. **Raise support for guys who need Rehab.** Very successful.

O. **Written Translation for Hani needed:** *"I want to give them the Word. Something concrete to hold onto."* Almost finished NT Oral. Next step is to Romanize it (put text into Roman alphabet/type). Working with pastor S in south. Pray for this. Resources.

P. Slide18 Thank you CM for **allowing me** to go to represent **you**, and for **your participation** in helping prayerfully, and financially.

1. Please continue to pray for our 2 unreached groups.

Q. We are stepping into the Book of Acts for the next aprox 24 weeks.
Let's be reminded: The Holy Spirit is still **Unleashed**. The Gospel remains

Unhindered. And our Mission is still **Unfinished**. (I'm looking forward to it).

R. Keywords: