



Rick Barton Ministries

February 2024
"Love is a Verb"

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). As you may know, the original Greek word for love in this passage is "agape". "Agape love involves faithfulness, commitment, and an act of the *will*. It is distinguished from the other types of love by its lofty moral nature and strong character... Agape love is always shown by what it does" (Gotquestions.org, emphasis mine). Let's take a moment to look a little closer.

First, "God demonstrates His own love toward us...". What does it mean to "demonstrate" love. The Greek word here means God actively exhibits or shows us His love. Love isn't Agape love unless it is accompanied by action. Note, the phrase, "God demonstrates", is in the present tense. He is *still* actively showing His love toward us, moment by moment!

Second, God "*willed*" to love us while we were "yet sinners", rebelling against Him, trying to be our own god, living self-centered lives controlled by sin.

Third, the action. God demonstrated agape love by sending His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross, paying the death penalty we deserve for our sin, and rising again! He further demonstrates His love by opening His arms, offering us forgiveness of sin, and calling us to live in His love.

This isn't a love that changes with circumstances or emotions, it is a love that is founded and maintained by God's very character. He *wills* to love us, even though we aren't deserving! It makes us realize that we owe God more than a Valentine, we owe Him our lives!

Ski Area Ministry: On New Years Eve I was blessed to pray with 50 of our Ski and Ride School staff before our annual torchlight parade. This year, due to my knee replacement, I prayed with them at the bottom of the lift. I am sooo grateful to have had this privilege for over 40 winters. Please pray the Lord uses it to open hearts. Every Sunday afternoon I hold a chapel service on top of the Painter Boy chairlift. Between 12 and 40 attend. On Monday afternoons we have a Bible study for ski instructors and guests. I taught my first ski lessons on my new knee in mid-January. I sensed your prayers as I taught 5 out of 6 days with little pain! Thank you for your prayers!

Family and Health: We were blessed to have our son Steve, his wife Annie, and grandchildren Samuel and Abigail spend two weeks with us over Christmas. Sadly, we all came down with the "crud". Please pray, we still have some lingering coughs and fatigue. Otherwise, all are doing well!

January Blessings: In addition to the ministry at the ski area, we had the privilege of conducting a “Celebration of Life” for two residents as well as weekly Friday night theology classes and Saturday Night Worship Services. The Lord has blessed these with His anointing in a wonderful way!

Upcoming: Lord willing, we will be sharing in the following places. Please pray for these services!

February 20	Gunnison CO	Evangelical Pastors and Wives Dinner
February 28-March 1	Beaver Creek CO:	I help lead worship for the High Ground Men’s Bible/ski retreat.
April 21-24	Guthrie OK	Revival Services @ Abell Community Church
May 26	Pitkin CO	Worship Service @ Pitkin Community Church
June 2	Tin Cup CO	Worship Service @ Tin Cup Community Church
July 11-14	Gunnison CO	Cattlemen’s Day Chaplain and Rodeo Service
August 1-3	Colorado Springs	Rick Barton Ministries Board Meeting
September 1	Tin Cup CO	Worship Service @ Tin Cup Community Church
September 29	Pitkin CO	Worship Service @ Pitkin Community Church
October 20-23	Guthrie OK	Bible Conference @ Abell Community Church

Other opportunities are being added, so stay tuned! Again, please pray for these services!

Sadly, our trip to Bentonina, MS had to be postponed again due to a conflict in dates.

1st Responder New Testaments and Devotionals:

In January, we sent over 500 Firefighter New Testaments and Devotionals to the Africa Fire Mission to be distributed in Malawi, Nigeria, and Kenya. We sent copies to MI where firefighter/chaplain Larry Green sends them to fire and police chaplains around the country. A Fire Marshal in WY reports that he has been able to distribute the Testaments and Devotionals to fire departments in several cities throughout the state! Ann (95 yr. old fire chief widow) reports that her Christian care facility gave away all the New Testaments and Devotionals we sent and needed more. Please pray the Lord will use each copy.

Finances: We continue to receive reports from the 20 missionaries, small church pastors, and missionary widows on how the year-end gifts blessed them. One couple told us that it met financial needs for bills. Another couple used it to take their first anniversary trip since they were married over 10 years ago. Lord willing, we will send another gift soon, this time to help them establish or maintain their retirement or emergency saving account. We started doing this a few years ago when we discovered many small churches and mission agencies can’t fund these, sadly leaving the workers in need during emergencies or when they must retire.

Prayer Requests: Please pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit as we share the wonderful gospel. Please pray for continued healing of Melva and I and our family. Please pray for the Lord to open the hearts of those I share with at the ski area. Thank You!!

Finally: Melva and I are grateful for each of you! We pray over every letter that comes in, asking the Lord to bless you and yours. Thank you for being part of our “family”.

God bless you all! Rick and Melva

Rick + Melva

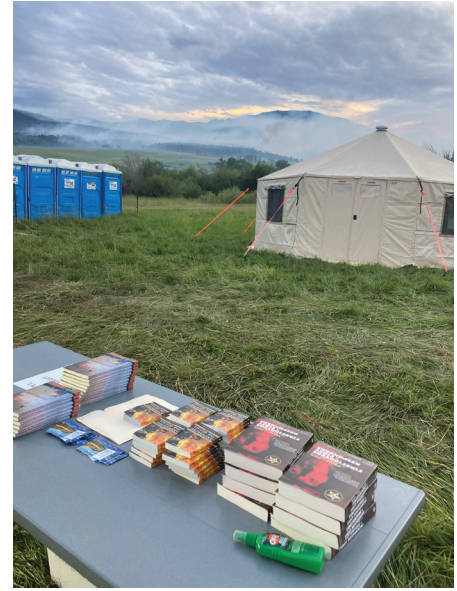
Some Highlights of God's Grace in 2023



Evangelical Pastors and Wives Dinner



Texas A&M students attending Ski Area Bible study



Getting Ready for Firefighter Chapel Service



Our Systematic Theology Class



Livermore Community Church



Operation Christmas Child, Packing Crew



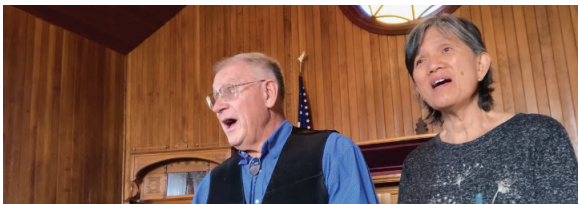
Packing Clothes for the Navajo Children's Home



Mountaintop Chapel Service



Mountaintop Chapel Service



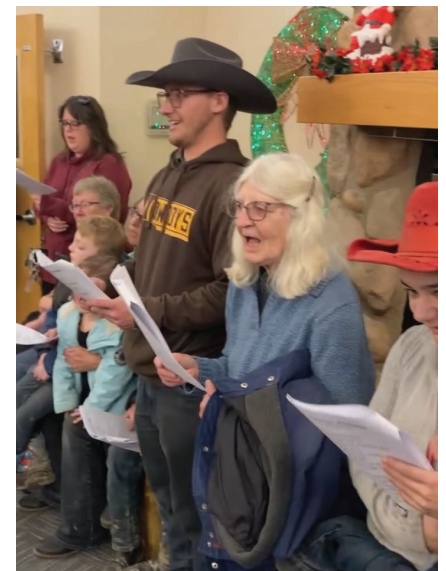
At Pitkin Community Church



Mountaintop Chapel site before the service!



Our board of directors meeting at Glen Eyrie



Singing at the assisted-living center