

Braman Foundation of Charities REVIVE MAGAZINE

The Magazine of The Braman Foundation of Charities

Vol. 4 Issue 4

January 2020



The BFC Editorial

Welcome to 2020! Are you excited about a new decade?

We at BFC are so grateful for where we feel the Holy Spirit is leading us and we hope this continues in 2020.

One way to insure this is to walk in forgiveness. This issue features two fantastic articles on the subject. We thank Pastor Steve Van Dix Horn and Eve Otieno. Both of their bio's are below. Both Pastor Steve and Eve, unbeknowst to each other have decided to write on Forgiveness. No one at BFC knew this. Within five minutes both articles were submitted to our office. This was a sign from the Holy Spirit, that we should walk in forgiveness as we get into the New Year. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth concerning any matter, what so ever it may be that they shall ask, it shall come to them from my Father who is in the heaven." - Matt 18:19

Forgiveness it is! Thy will be done.

We open 2020 with forgiveness. We encourage you to examine your thoughts and ask God to search your heart. Where are you bitter? Where are you resentfull? Who comes to your mind?

Forgive! Forgive! Forgive! God Bless you and have a great decade!

We at BFC are excited about our new woman's facility, our new online business Homeland Natural Products, and our new Retreat to Kenya and Ahmedabad, India.

We need your prayers as we press into our higher calling. We exercise our faith and as that thy will be done. Enjoy this issue and know we love you and need your support.

Steve VanDixhorn

Steve is ordained in The Christian and Missionary Alliance where he has served for 25 years as a pastor. His passion is helping Christ-followers relate to God in ways that fully integrate their experiences, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and decisions- something possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit and a deep awareness of God's grace.

Steve and AnneMarie have been married for 35 years. They have been blessed with three children and three granddaughters.



Eve Otieno

Prayer Department Leader

Born in Kenya, currently residing in the Northeast Region of New York State. Eve serves as the Payer Department Leader of BFC. She is a spiritual mentor , who uses the Word of God to build the disciples faith in order to bring healing, deliverance and restoration.

We hope you are blessed by the article. Please feel free to communicate with Eve via email at eve@bramanfoundation.org.



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Email: info@bramanfoundation.org

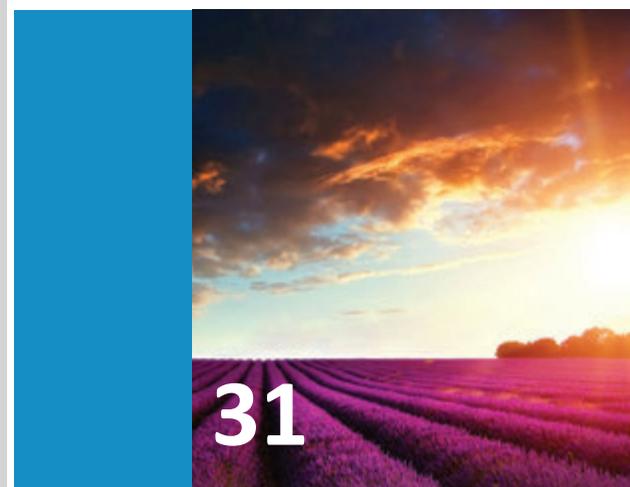
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“Your faithfulness endures
through all generations”
Psalms 119:90

Asapalli 75th Year Jubilee

As stated by Rev. Lalhuoplien, Chairman of Asapalli Christian Hostel & School Trust; “The possibility to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee is because of the dedication and tireless work of Miss Julia Ann Rose.” Julia Rose was from Troy, NY and heard the Lord’s calling in her heart to bring His word and love to the people of Asapalli in 1934.

This local support continues today through the Braman Foundation and the Lord’s work through them. BFC has supported Asapalli since 1985.

Rev. L. Timothy Phaonci’s remarks; “Thank you God’s Servant, Miss Rose for your relentless work of building people of God.” So many of

her students (faithful lieutenants) have continued the work of God at Asapalli. Mr. Charles Rymbai (current superintendent) is just one of the many recipients of Asapalli as a young boy who continues as a dedicated servant of the Lord. Charles facilitates the work of growing young minds and filling hearts with the Lord’s word and blessings.

“And whatever you do in words and deeds do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks and a grateful heart to God”

Colossians 6:17





November 2019



July 2019

Asapalli School Building Update

Amazing progress has been made in just since our last trip to Asapalli back in July 2019. Currently the first three floors of the new school building are completed and ready to be used by students. This will allow another 500 students per day to be educated.

Charles Rymbai and George Gideon are working on an itemized list of products that are needed for the school. BFC is going to work with them to find financial sponsors for each of these items.



Asapalli School Building II

A local village near Silchar has lost its funding for its school. They have asked Asapalli to take on the responsibility. During our visit to Asapalli, BFC traveled to review this project. No decisions or promises were made. We continue to pray on this decision.



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After prayerful consideration, I/we have decided to support the Braman Foundation of Charities.

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Forgiveness Re-examined

by Steve VanDixhorn

On October 2, 2019 a short video of a young man dressed in a suit coat speaking in a solemn, deliberate manner went viral. The man's name was Brandt Jean. He was addressing the woman, Amber Guyger, an off duty police officer, who had shot and killed his older brother, Botham Jean. The case had received plenty of media attention because it showcased longstanding emotionally charged issues: inequality of justice for people of color, disparity of treatment for police officers v "average" citizens, perceptions associated with gender. But on Oct 2, for a few minutes, these troubling social issues were forgotten as Brandt Jean spoke directly to Amber Guyger and told her he forgave her. He went on to say he didn't want to see her punished but, instead, wanted her to come to know the God his brother worshiped and loved. He closed by asking the judge if he could give Amber Guyger a hug. Do you understand why the video of his words went viral? When we see forgiveness, it is stunning.

The issue of forgiveness raises lots of questions. Would it encourage you to know that Jesus' disciples had some questions about forgiveness? They asked Jesus how many times they were required to forgive a "brother" who had wronged them. They wanted to know what a passing grade was; what will get me an "A" in the class of Forgiveness? Jesus answered them in a way that made it clear that their basic understanding of forgiveness was flawed. (1) During His time with the disciples, Jesus often wove the theme of forgiveness into the parables He told and the words He spoke. It was vital to Jesus that His disciples develop a new perspective of just what forgiveness is . . . and what it isn't. (2), (3), (4).

Forgiveness is not excusing the wrong.

One of the reasons people are reluctant to forgive those who wrong them is because it can seem to diminish the significance of the wrong. In response to a confession from a friend who has wronged us, we say, "It's no big deal, I forgive you." In other words, "What you did wasn't that hurtful so I can forgive you." When we approach forgiveness from this angle we miss the significance of forgiveness. Forgiveness isn't only for the small stuff, it's for the BIG wrongs.

It's because spouses commit adultery that forgiveness is needed. It's because people in positions of power take

advantage of others that forgiveness is necessary. It's because people ruin the reputations of others through malicious words that forgiveness is required. No shrug of the shoulders, simple "It was no big deal", will do for these wrongs. Only forgiveness can break the cycle of vengeance, hurt and bitterness.

Forgiveness is a choice.

We often associate the act of forgiveness with the feeling of compassion. I feel compassionate toward the person who has wronged me, so I forgive them. But did you know you can forgive without feeling kindness or compassion for the wrong doer? Forgiveness is choosing to release the wrongdoer from the debt they owe you. Forgiveness is taking your hands from around the throat of your wrongdoer and saying, "I release you. I will not seek to harm you. I will not try balance the scales of justice; God will do that."

You might ask, "If I forgive them, won't they just hurt me again?"

Forgiving isn't forgetting.

Your child uses your credit card without your permission. They run up a big bill and they can't pay it. You choose to forgive their debt. A month later they ask to use your credit card. You say, "No" and they respond, "I thought you had forgiven me." Your child has confused forgiveness and trust.

Forgiving someone (releasing them from a debt) doesn't mean we are obliged, or wise, to put ourselves in a position where they can wrong us again. Forgiveness and trust are two different things. Sometimes we are reluctant to forgive someone because we aren't convinced they aren't trustworthy. But being trustworthy isn't a prerequisite for forgiveness. Forgiveness is given. Trust is earned. We distort the nature of forgiveness when we expect others (or ourselves) to earn forgiveness. (5)

In this world we associate life-change with the carrot or the stick. The carrot represents the good things we will be rewarded with if we do right. The stick represents the bad things we will experience if we do wrong. There is power behind the fear of punishment and positive reinforcement; they can be effective. But the power of forgiveness is different. Forgiveness unleashes a power that is greater than fear, greater than reward. True forgiveness enlarges the hearts of those who experience it. Forgiveness transforms the Giver and the Recipient.

Forgiveness enlarges the hearts of those who receive it.

At one point Jesus told the disciples the story of a man who had been forgiven a large debt. However, when he had the chance to cancel the small debt of someone who owed him money, he refused. Jesus' point was clear. You'd have to be blind to have a million dollar debt forgiven and, at the same time, sue someone who owed you \$100. (6)

On another occasion, He contrasted humility of a man whose prayer was a plea for mercy with the pride of a religious leader who was satisfied with himself because he was "better off" than the sinner around him. (7)

Jesus was teaching the disciples how to "see" the impact of forgiveness that has been truly received. When forgiveness has been received, truly received, it changes the recipient. The recipient of forgiveness is released from a life of earning and owing (this is life according to the Law) and ushered into a life of grace. (8) This person is freed from having to prove they are a good person. The pride of being better than their neighbor is gone. In its place there is humble gratitude and a common bond with the people around them – no matter how good or bad they may be.

It's possible you know a lot about forgiveness but your perspective on people is still shaped by the Law – who is measuring up and who is falling short. I want to encourage you to meditate on what it means to be forgiven. If you find yourself focusing primarily on your new standing as "righteous and spotless", take a step back and remember why you needed forgiveness in the first place. Let the sober awareness of your undeniable and desperate need for God fill you with a newfound gratitude for the forgiveness God extended to you through the death of Jesus. Let this gratitude empower you to identify with the people in your world; just as some of them are far from God, you were far from God but through His mercy, He has brought you near.

In this article we've touched on what forgiveness is and what it isn't. As we close, let's pull back from the mechanics and definitions of forgiveness and consider its core – Where does it come from? and How does it square with an equally important longing, our desire for justice? To even shape these sentences in the context of a short article feels presumptuous. These questions require more space than they will receive here. My hope is that you will use what is written as a catalyst for study, prayer, conversation and meditation.

As the video of Brandt Jean's words went viral, it struck me that forgiveness is uniquely Christian. By this, I do not mean that only Christians forgive or that people of other belief systems can't forgive. By "uniquely Chris-

tian" I am asserting that forgiveness flows from the beliefs that are central to the Christian faith.

We believe God is merciful AND we believe God is just.

There is a river called God's Mercy. We have all enjoyed the waters of God's mercy. (8) We have all experienced life and love and laughter. We have received time and touch. These experiences, and many others, have been given to us apart from anything we have done to earn them. They flowed from the river of God's mercy.

There is another river called God's Justice. While river of God's Mercy is attractive, the river of God's Justice is frightening. It washes away pretense and exposes the ugliness of the human heart. Greed, lust, deceit, corrupt desires, pride and hate have their masks and disguises removed. For the most part, we keep our distance from the river of God's Justice. Until we are forced to wrestle with injustice. A drunk driver hits and kills a young man and gets off on a technicality. A woman confronts someone who stole her innocence but nothing can be done – the statute of limitations has expired. A company profits through unethical practices but when the fine is levied, they declare bankruptcy. When confronted by injustice, we cry out, "Where, God, is Your river of Justice?"

While we are drawn to God's Mercy and frightened by God's Justice, deep within we long to experience a place where they meet. There is such a place. It is at the cross of Jesus.

We believe the cross of Jesus is the clearest expression of God's mercy and justice.

At the cross God made a way for us to be released from the Law. (9) The Law revealed the character of God to mankind. It laid out a way of doing life that would please God. Only one problem; the Law could not be kept perfectly. So, while the Law was a blessing in that it revealed a beautiful way of life, it made it clear that we all fall short. (10) We stand condemned. But on the cross Jesus received God's punishment for every sin ever committed. God's Justice was satisfied; God's Mercy flows to every man, woman and child who asks for, and receives, His forgiveness. The forgiveness God extends to us flows from the cross just as every word or act of forgiveness we extend to those who have wronged us traces its origin to the cross. Apart from Jesus' blood there is no forgiveness.

Our world is desperate for forgiveness. Our hearts long to be reconciled to God but in our own strength and goodness we fall short. We long to see justice prevail and even take steps toward it by acknowledging wrongs

have been done but then find ourselves stuck trying to determine What was your part in the wrong? How bad was it? How much of a punishment is enough? How long should you be punished? Only forgiveness has the power to cycle of vengeance. Only forgiveness affords the opportunity for a new start.

This land between the rivers of God’s Justice and God’s Mercy is a wonderful place. In this land we experience Peace because we no longer have to strive to earn His favor. It’s a place of Joy; we are able to see His beauty more frequently and with greater clarity. It’s a place of Depth; this world is preoccupied with the trivial but we are called to the Eternal. We experience this world knowing that as wonderful as it is, it is just a foretaste of the world to come. An eternal world where God’s Mercy and Justice will be expressed perfectly, in all things, forever.

End Notes:

- 1 – Matthew 18:21-22
- 2 – Luke 15:11-32
- 3 – Luke 11:2-4
- 4 – Matthew 5:21-24
- 5 – Matthew 10:8
- 6 – Matthew 18:23-35
- 7 – Luke 18:9-14
- 8 – Matthew 5:45
- 9 – Romans 8:1-3
- 10 – Romans 3:23

Two other helpful resources:

Forgive and Forget, Lewis Smedes.

A Grace Disguised, Jerry Sittser.

Child Sponsorship Program

We are expanding our program heading into the new year. Children will have their own individual pic that will be sent to their sponsor.

In addition to this, we are encouraging sponsors to write to their children via email. Children will be able to respond via email. Sponsors are encouraged to send letters to the children through USPS. An address can be made available through Charmaine.



Asapalli Sponsorship Program

Village of Hope
Asapalli Christian
Hostel & School

 <p>Jewel Pohra S/O: Gideon Soichang Father's occupation: Cultivator Vill: Ngabhal PO: Mowmohal Dist: Cachar, Assam</p>	 <p>Rahul Sadap Class: IV Church: Deo, Address: Cachar</p>
 <p>Lalthien Manghang D/O: Lairemang Hmar Father's occupation: Cultivator Vill: Ngamphung PO: Dist: Charachadpui, Manipur</p>	 <p>Florisha Rongpharphi Class: VIII Church: Church of God Address: Cachar</p>
 <p>Sharon Gonmei D/O: Malthinai Gonmei Father's occupation: Farmer Vill: Luangko PO: Guithai Dist: Tamenglong, Manipu</p>	 <p>Gaisinthui Class: I Church: Baptist Address:</p>
 <p>Emonlang Kymbai Class: III Church: Pres, Address: Cachar</p>	 <p>Latjanthai Rongmei Class: VI Church: Church of God Address: Nagalet</p>
 <p>Sarsan Hanse Class: IV Church: Church of God Address: Cachar</p>	<p>Your contribution of \$30 per month will allow a student to attend The Asapalli School and Hostel. Donations may be made through our website or you may mail a check to the address below. You may pay annually at \$360 per year.</p> <p>Prayerfully consider how you can support the Mission of Asapalli.</p>

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Asapalli Dental Clinic (A.D.C.)

A.D.C is the official name for the new clinic and Dr. Gina Canale will be heading this up.

Many things still need to happen before the clinic is up and running but we are off to a great start. Improvements to the space such as adding outlets, a compressor for vacuum and improving the water supply in the office still need to happen.

BFC is going to work with Gina to determine the best way to furnish A.D.C.

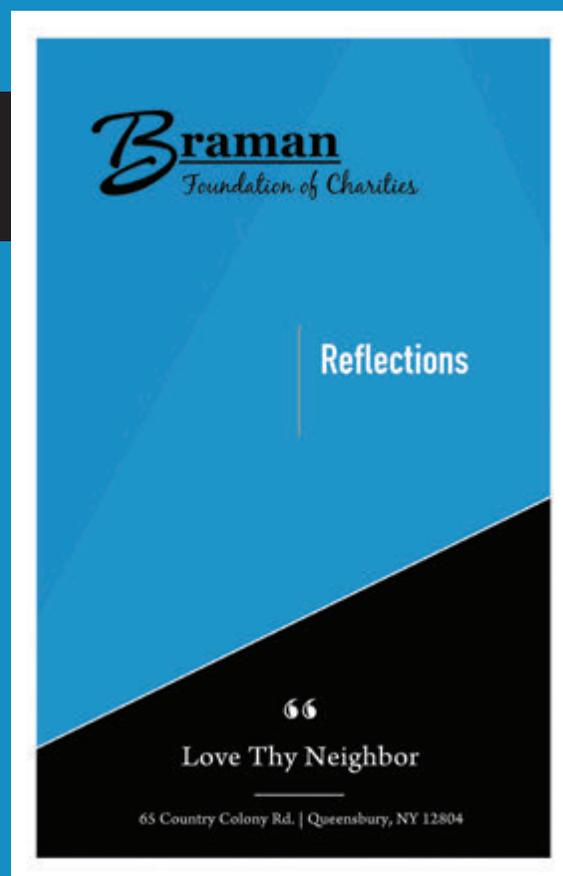
Still working on how often the clinic will be open during the year as well as how many visiting dentists will come.



*Dr. Gina Canale
Founder of Baybrook Dental Group
Located in Queensbury, NY*

Now Available!

BFC is pleased to offer to you a “Daily Reflection” for every day of the year. It is vital to use a strong, spiritual based, Christ centered reading to help start your devotion or to end your devotion.



365 days in a year. Use Reflections to help start your day:

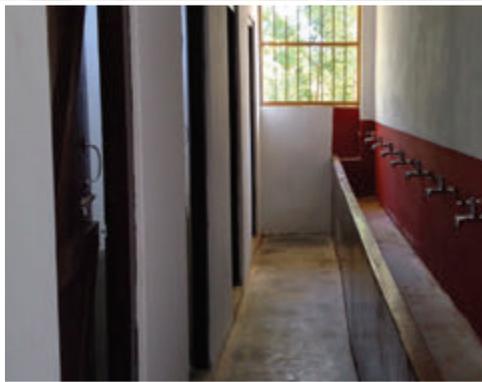
“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God”
- Matt 6:33

In Addition, we offer pics of our 2017 and 2018 mission trips.

Interested in ordering your copy of Reflections?

These are available to purchase on our website, bramanfoundation.org. You may also send a check for \$25 to:

The Braman Foundation, 65 Country Colony Rd., Queensbury, NY 12804



Asapalli Girls Dorm Project

Prayerfully consider how you can support the Mission of Asapalli. The goal for the new dorm project will help the children with improved hygiene, privacy and cleanliness.

Braman
Foundation of Charities

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After prayerful consideration, I/we have decided to support the Braman Foundation of Charities.

monthly _____ one time _____ \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Email: _____



Mission Travel Program

Welcome to the BFC Mission Travel Program bringing friends and church members to India and Africa. In addition, this program will help organize to travel to USA from India and Africa. The initiative facilitates change to the modern church goes heart and mind. Additionally it fulfills Christ commandments in Matthew 28: "Go therefore and make discipleship of all nations..."

Also through the BFC Mission Travel Program we can use its platform to bring the directors and pastors from some missions we support to travel to the US and share their work in our supporting churches. This program continues to develop to God's Glory. Let us pray!

Looking to participate and work with children in the orphanage and school?

You may travel or retreat to Asapalli and stay in the BFC Bungalow or to Kenya and stay at the Village Resort.



CEF Conference in Ahmedabad

This conference took place in the city of Ahmedabad at the C&MA of India Gujarat Synod.

Over 20 churches participated to learn how to evangelise children in the Children’s Sunday School Program.

“The Christian is not obedient unless he is doing all in his power to send the Gospel to the heathen world.”

— A. B. Simpson



Community Programs

Now Completed Braman Institute of Higher Learning

The last of BFC to complete its work. The Braman Institute of Higher Learning will be a facility in which an individual can reside for ten years. A strict “monastic” type of environment allows BFC to be “all in” with these types. An individual that qualifies for BIHL could be a parolee from Behind The Walls or just a homeless person ready to commit to change. Whatever the case, BIHL runs a complete recovery center, Christ focused, military style facility. BIHL will work all aspects of its client’s life to help bring them back to society through its Christ centered programs. BIHL may be ready by the 2nd or 3rd of quarter 2020.

Secondly, BFC DBA Braman Institute of Higher Learning will be an accredited course in Theology of Christianity. BIHL will offer: Certificate of Theology course, Bachelor of Theology and finally a Diploma of Theology. Currently, we are reviewing the credentials to be a legitimate university. Through this organization we will offer a scholarship program. This program will be offered to children in India and Africa to train them up in a degree in Biblical Studies.

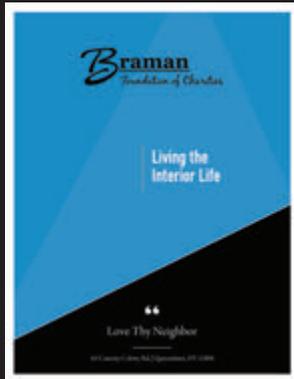


“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”

Woman’s Shelter Coming in 2020.

BFC is working on securing a facility to house a limited number of woman.

BIHL Curriculum

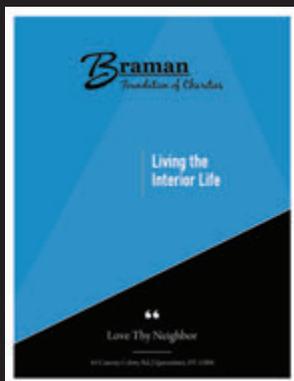


Living the Interior Life

BFC programs will also be utilized to work with women's issues stemming from abortion, depression, substance abuse, and domestic violence. The program, Living the Interior Life will be used. Other programs will be announced as we move forward in serving together.

What is Discipleship?

A disciple is a follower of Jesus. He has committed to Christ, to walking Christ's way to living Christ's life and to sharing Christ's love, suffering and truth with others.

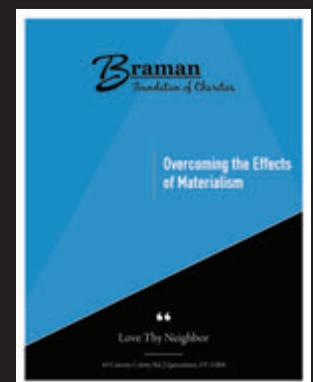


Healing & Restoration

Millions of us suffer needlessly from addiction and depression. The reasons for this are many. In this program we emphasize the 12 Step Method of Recovery, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Meditation techniques to overcome difficulties. We also rely on God's grace to help you be lifted from your dilemma.

Overcoming the Effects of Materialism

In this program we look how materialism in America has effected our lives, our finances, and how it has separated us from God. We explore the effects of pride. The idea of Covenanting our Neighbor and several other debilitating consequences of materialism in America.

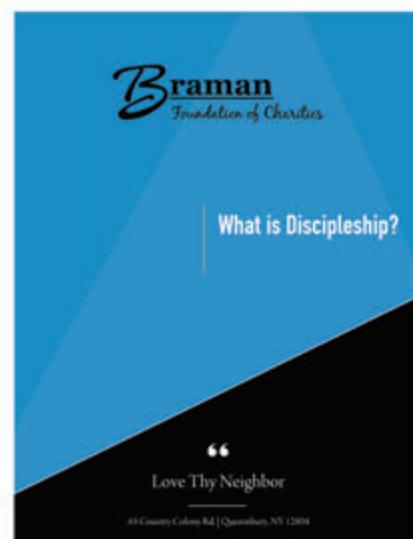


What is Discipleship?

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20

A disciple is a follower of Jesus. He has committed to Christ, to walking Christ’s way to living Christ life and to sharing Christ’s love, suffering and truth with others.



Prayer Requests

By requesting prayer, others have committed to pray with you, and God has already heard your prayer. When submitting a prayer please only use first names, DO NOT give last names or other identifying information.

Submitting your request is easy!

1. You may call our Prayer Line at 518-636-5930
2. Email your prayer request to pray@bramanfoundation.org
3. Submit your prayer request online at bramanfoundation.org/prayer-line



Prayer Points

Please pray for us...

Adding Rwanda, Africa conference

Adding Kartoon, Sudan conference

Woman’s Facility and BIHL



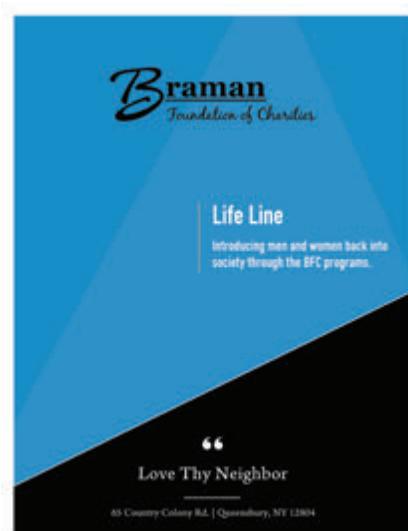
**TRAVEL DATES
COMING SOON!**

Braman
Foundation of Charities

African Retreat

Ruma National Park

BFC Corrections / Prison Behind the Walls Program

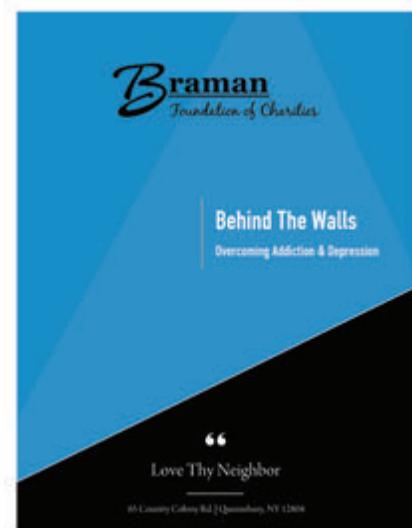


Life Line

An inmate's most vulnerable time, whether they know this or not, is when they are released from incarceration. Months and years, depending on one's sentencing of forced incarceration are now dissolved. An individual is now "FREE", or at least they may think they are free; however, New York state statistics show that out of approximately every 100 inmates that are released, 78 come back into the prison system in some form. What can be done for the individual who wishes to change? The individual must truly have a change of heart. We can extend our hand!

Behind the Walls

In 1985, Braman began to witness his recovery from addiction in the New York State Correctional Facilities. Braman has presented programs since that time in many facilities including: Greenhaven, Fishkill, Downstate, Summit, and several local and county jails. It is a thorough program using the 12 step method of recovery, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Meditation techniques as well as a program for dealing with violent behavior. In addition, our program helps to provide clarification concerning the negative learned behavior that unfortunately comes out of some families.



Forgiveness

by Eve Otieno

It's not unusual to hear the phrase "I will never forgive so and so" These expressions are sometimes made even by Christians and sometimes even by people of high societal standing. It's something many people have struggled and continue to struggle with. Saying that may sound very natural and appropriate, but is it right?

As I am writing this piece, there is an ongoing court proceeding in Dallas Texas, of a cop Amber Guyger who walked into an apartment that is one floor above hers, and fatally shot a young man who was busy mind-ing his business, eating ice cream as he watched T.V

The jury have reached their verdict and sentences have been read. Then comes the moment that created a lot of mixed reactions on social media. people social media, when the victim's brother gave his impact statement; which I quote verbatim. "I don't want to say twice or for the hundredth time what you've or how much you have taken from us, I think you know that, but I just.. I hope you go to God with all the guilt, all the bad things you may have done in the past, each and every one of us may have done something that were not supposed to do. If you truly are sorry, I know.... I can speak for myself, I, I forgive you, and I know if you go to God and ask Him, He will forgive you, and I don't think anyone could say.. and again, am speaking for myself, not even on behalf of my family, but I love you just like anyone else, and am not gonna say I hope you rot and die just like my brother did but I personally want the best the best for you. And I wasn't ever going to say this in front of my family or anyone, , but I don't even want you to go to jail, I want the best for you, because I know that's exactly what Botham would want you to do , and the best would be give your life to Christ, am not gonna say anything else, I think giving your life to Christ is the best thing that Botham would want you to do, again I love you as a person, and I don't wish anything bad of you.. I don't know if it's possible, but can I give her a hug please?... (pause) please?" and the judge said yes; and amidst tears, they hugged, and the cop sobbed uncontrollably.

Wow! This is the best modern-day sermon I have ever heard on forgiveness, preached in less than five minutes. Accompanied by a message of salvation and real actions. Forgiveness means that you understand that people are not perfect and that you will overlook their imperfections. The world does not rotate the way we believe that it should or even could. No one thinks just like we do. Often times when a person lets us down, they are not

even aware because they don't perceive things the same way. I've found out more than once that there was something I've said, or did, or haven't done that totally turned a person's world upside down or at least lead them to have certain feelings about me, whereas I never even knew it because my mind set or focus was different than theirs. We all wish for others to understand where we are coming from, why we've done what we've done, and we all wish for others to treat us well according to OUR expectations, when in their world everything looks and feels differently. This is why Jesus said, "forgive them, for they know not what they do". He knew that He was being wronged, but He also saw past himself and understood that from that person's perspective, they had done no wrong; if Jesus used this method to forgive then we can also do so, right? You hear that forgiveness is a choice, and maybe that is true, however we need to be able to get a perspective on it so that we can truly know how to do it.

The bottom line is that forgiveness is about love. It is said that the opposite of love is not hate, rather it is selfishness. Unforgiveness, no matter how justified it may be, is not thinking of the other person as more important than ourselves...

It is this selfish sin that causes so much pain and devastation in life. It is my own cry that many people are just selfish, they really don't care about me... when we only care about our own needs, we end up hurting someone else. I have been unforgiving and I have also been selfish. The two go hand in hand. If I want to make a difference in this world, then it starts with being unselfish. Lord please give me strength and please forgive me for I too don't know what I do. None of us do when we sin, most of the time we are blind to it.

When we forgive others, then.

Part of the teachings of Jesus on prayer, when His disciples asked Him, "teach us how to pray" was, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." This statement may sound simple but it carries a lot of weight and can be a thin line between our prayers and breakthrough. From this teaching, forgiving and asking for forgiveness is a daily discipline.

A good example of this principle is seen in the parable Jesus told in Matthew 18:23-35. This servant had been forgiven a debt by his master, but later, when he met his debtor, who owed him much, much less, he threw the poor man in prison. Later when his master heard what he'd done, he was very angry, and delivered him to be tortured. Just like he had been forgiven, the other man also deserves his forgiveness. It's very easy to relate to

this servant. often times it's easy to call out for other peoples' faults, but be a little soft on ourselves.

As Jesus stated, forgiveness should be symbiotic in. It should be received and also given. We forgive and are also forgiven.

Jesus taught about forgiveness through His words and actions, His most powerful act was of forgiveness occurred while He was hanging on the cross, He held no bitterness or resentment against them.

Why Forgive.

Forgiving someone who has hurt us is not easy, but we are commanded to forgive, it's not an option, there are no caveats attached, gravity of the offense notwithstanding. Big or small, we are supposed to forgive, period! Peter knew how forgiving someone could be very hard. So, he came to Jesus, with a rhetorical question followed by an answer suggesting how many times we should forgive a brother; the magic number seven. I don't know why Peter had that number in mind, probably he had given someone seven chances and was looking for blessings from Jesus to go carry out his revenge mission, but Christ stretched the challenge and multiplied Peter's number by seventy.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32).

Most of the ground that Satan gains in the lives of Christians is due to unforgiveness. We are warned to forgive others so that Satan cannot take advantage of us (2 Corinthians 2:10, 11). God requires us to forgive others from our hearts or He will turn us over to the tormentors (Matthew 18:34, 35). Why is forgiveness so critical to our freedom? Because of the cross. God didn't give us what we deserve; He gave us what we needed according to His mercy. We are to be merciful just as our heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36). We are to forgive as we have been forgiven (Ephesians 4:31,32).

Why is forgiveness difficult? A person may feel that it's unjust to forgive someone whom they think is undeserving because of the magnitude of the consequences. The desire for revenge is also usually very strong. Often times, one may feel overwhelmed by their hurts and may not feel able or strong enough to forgive. The biggest hindrance to forgiveness is pride. One may believe that forgiving is a sign of weakness. The truth is the opposite, forgiveness is a sign of strength.

The need to forget the pain and hurts- with hopes that

they will go away, may also make one not to forgive. Some people also make the experiences become part of their identity. They want to own these experiences. This is a false type of identity.

Forgiveness is not forgetting. People who try to forget find that they cannot. God says He will "remember no more" our sins (Hebrews 10:17), but God, being omniscient, cannot forget. "Remember no more" means that God will never use the past against us (Psalm 103:12). Forgetting may be a result of forgiveness, but it is never the means of forgiveness. When we bring up the past and use it against others, we haven't forgiven them.

Forgiveness is a choice, a crisis of the will. We choose to face and acknowledge the hurt and the hate in order to forgive from the heart. Since God requires us to forgive, it is something we can do. (He would never require us to do something we cannot do.) But forgiveness is difficult for us because it pulls against our concept of justice. We want revenge for offences suffered. But we are told never to take our own revenge (Romans 12:19). "Why should I let them off the hook?" we protest. You let them off your hook, but they are never off God's hook. He will deal with them fairly - something we cannot do. He is the righteous judge.

Never wish your enemies evil, they too are God's children and deserving of the same mercy and grace given to you.

If you don't let offenders off your hook, you are hooked to them and the past, and that just means continued pain for you. Stop the pain; let it go. You don't forgive someone merely for his or her sake; you do it for your sake so you can be free. Your need to forgive isn't an issue between you and the offender; it's between you and God.

Let's look at the example of Jacob. When returning home after years in exile from his brother Esau, he was greatly disturbed because of the feud between them. He was ready to pay for his deceit in exchange for Esau's favor and offered Esau cattle, oxen and donkeys. And when he heard that Esau was coming to meet him, he was greatly distressed. In Genesis 32:9-12, Jacob is in a lot of distress, he doesn't know what awaits him when he gets home and meet his brother Esau. Jacob prays to God for deliverance. He brings the issue to God, reminding God of His promises; and that's the night that Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed. Genesis 32: 30 so Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" Forgiveness removes any barriers that hinder us from having a close relationship with God. When struggling and are not able to forgive,

Because Jacob had brought this issue to God, his meeting with Esau was a very peaceful one. Esau was more than glad to meet his long lost with his new family. In Genesis 33:4 we see a very emotional reunion between the brothers; hugs, kisses, and tears. The tension, speeches and gifts that Jacob had prepared were nothing compared to and were superseded with the brotherly love. And it's all because Jacob had brought the issue to God.

And it's after this incident (Seeking reconciliation) that Jacob begins the walk of a blessed and covenant relationship with God.

Is there a relationship that you think is too damaged to be repaired but you still value it? Bring it to the Lord in prayer like Jacob did, there is nothing too difficult for Him.

Another story that teaches on how powerful forgiveness is Stephen's, At the point of death, he prayed for his murders and ask God to take it against them. Stephen purposed to forgive his murderer, and in Acts 7:55 he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, he saw the heavens open. What a privilege to pass on to eternity!. He did not a bitter man, his was a free passing on. Imagine if he had held on to unforgiveness?

Common factors in Jacob and Stephen's stories is that they both prayed to God, they both chose forgiveness and reconciliation and both of them "Saw God"; Jacob at night when He wrestled with God, and Stephen when He was about to die, and said that he saw he saw the heavens open, and the son of man standing on the right hand of God. These two also had a very close walk with God.

If we are born again and are walking according to God's will, then we may not have as much difficulty in forgiving .

Other powerful examples of men who forgave under very unfair circumstances were Joseph, David and Moses, and as we read their stories, we learn how they walked in obedience to God's word.

When we forgive, We get to experience a new level of relationship with God, just as the example stated above about Jacob. Unforgiveness interferes with our relationship with God. When we harbor resentment, bitterness, and past hurts and regrets, we cannot have a healthy Christian life

We do it so it to fulfill righteousness, as it's a command from our Lord.

We gain the right to be forgiven by God. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us"

We get to enjoy God's blessings. Unforgiveness hinders God's blessings.

Forgiveness helps us to experience divine healing and deliverance. Some physical healing starts from within us, within our hearts. The moment our hearts are free and healed, then our healing and deliverance starts to manifests on the outside. Whenever Jesus healed people, he hardly ever said "I heal you or you're healed" He mostly said, "your sins are forgiven, pick up your mat and walk" so when we forgive and are forgiven, we experience his divine healing. There are many testimonies of people who suffered from bad afflictions but after forgiving, being forgiven and reconciliation, they received their healing.

Forgiveness helps us to enjoy healthy relationships with our loved ones, friends and relatives. Jacob told Esau, "Seeing you is like seeing the face of God," The prodigal son and his father's relations were restored, after the son asking for forgiveness, we no longer the burden of guilt and sin with us.

In case you are struggling with or have a history of unresolved issues, that have led to harboring of bitterness, resentment, hatred or anger, you may want the following simple steps. How to forgive.

1. First take stock of your life, go as far back in your life as you can remember. Then think about those people who did or said things that hurt you. Also note down the people you have offended, go as far back as you can remember.

2. Prayerfully think and write down all the unresolved issues; do not ignore the ones that seem to be too small ember, especially habitual sins or habits that have become strongholds in your life.

3. The next step is a very difficult one, but if you have set your mind to do it, then the results will be very rewarding. Pray and call out the names of the people you offended who are in the list you created. Declare that you have forgiven them for the wrong they did to you. Establish if the person had made attempts to seek your forgiveness in the past but you declined, you may want to speak with them and let them know that you have forgiven them. After forgiving, then pray for them. A good strategy that I use to help me forgive is the advice of our Lord Jesus "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully hate you and persecute you, Matt 5:44. Pray for the person, if you know of any affliction they're suffering from, then genuinely pray for God to heal and deliver them, if they're not born again,

then pray for the salvation of their soul. This prayer must be genuine, just like you would be praying for yourself. To help put this in perspective, imagine this person is the child God (no way! not after how badly they treated me) God loves them and is seeking to reconcile with them, so by you forgiving them, you are fulfilling righteousness. Whenever I have prayed for those who hurt me, I found it easy to let go of the hurt and bitterness.

4. Now let's flip the paper; just as we seek to forgive those who have hurt us, we should also seek to ask for forgiveness from those we have hurt. It is common to human nature to keep records and details of people who have hurt us, but most of us are guilty of ignoring the fact that we also have done wrong to others. I have had countless stories of unimaginable things that were done to people that I know, I have also given accounts of very mean, nasty, inhumane, coldhearted and all the words that can be used to describe acts that were/have been done to me. Let us take five minutes and reflect, are we one hundred percent not guilty of afflicting others? It's not easy to see the logs in our eyes, in fact, we often times justify our actions – but you know what? Even those who have wronged us, have reasons to justify themselves. For us to enjoy total freedom in Christ, we need to ask for forgiveness from those we have hurt. There may be people you may have to reach out to, especially recent incidents. Again, pray to be guided by the Holy Spirit, and use discretion and wisdom. Often times you will find yourself in that awkward position where the other party's response is very indifferent, or they are not willing or ready to forgive you; worry not, for you have done your part, continue to pray for the person and let God handle the rest.

5. Some incidents may not require speaking with the person. Some acts may seem too hurtful to forgive, but remember Jesus on dying cross, and Stephen when he was being stoned to death. He prayed for God to forgive

them. Now what could possibly be worse than murder? and these people forgave.

6. After dealing with fellow men, we should seek God's forgiveness, when we pray and repent, we repent to God, we ask Him to forgive us our sins. We should approach him in humility and remorse, but with boldness, because we are assured of being forgiven. Hebrews 4:16 urges us to 'come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need' In psalms 51, when David was repenting, after he had committed adultery and murder, He prayed to God, a very personal prayer, it was between him and God. David took full responsibility for his actions, and pleaded with God. David understood and acknowledged God's mercy and love. He knew how powerful they were. Mercy and love are God's nature and that's why we are forgiven when we repent. We have to admit that we're wrong, when seeking God's forgiveness, there are no 'buts', we can't say, 'God I sinned but it's because of...'. We have to strip ourselves in front of God, admit that we're wrong and be very intentional and deliberate about our repentance. In psalms 139:23-24, David prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." It's important to ask the Holy Spirit to search you, and remind you of hidden sins, or sins you may have forgotten, and He sure will. Remember we can lie and hide our sins to men but god knows us to the last more than we even know ourselves.

7. Believe that you're forgiven. As you destroy your list, ask the Holy Spirit to help you live a victorious life in Christ, free from the stronghold of sin. Ask Him to help you never to go back to your vomit. Remember Jesus told the woman who had been caught committing adultery, (and other people he healed) "Go and sin no more." We should believe in and accept God's forgiveness. No matter how bad our sin may seem, we should under-



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stand that God's forgiveness is unlimited. In Isaiah 1:18, God says, "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And in Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" God also promises to forgive us without any reservations. Thank God for forgiving your sins. You are now free! The devil may try to make you feel like your sins are too much, too many or too evil to be forgiven, but remember the promise of God in Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. My brother, my sister – There is no condemnation. You are free from the guilt of sin.

2ND Cor: 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.

One of the tactics that the devil like using is to go back and regroup and come back to counter attack. Jesus always told those whom He healed and freed from bondages to "go and sin no more". It's not possible to live a sin free life, however, we should cultivate a culture of prayer and reading the word of God, this will help us overcome

most of our daily struggles with sin.

It's my prayer that we will seek to forgive more, as we also enjoy the limitless mercy and grace of God daily.

“Why should I let them off the hook?” we protest.

You let them off your hook, but they are never off God's hook.

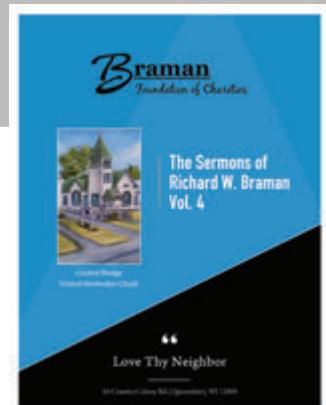
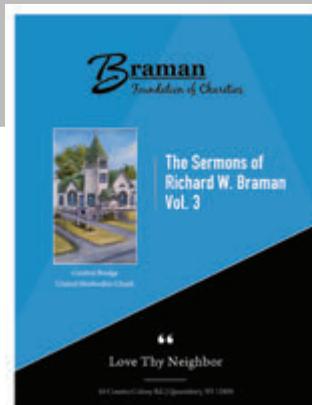
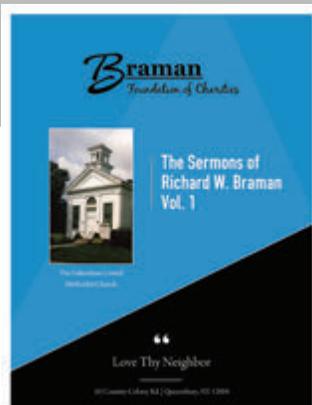
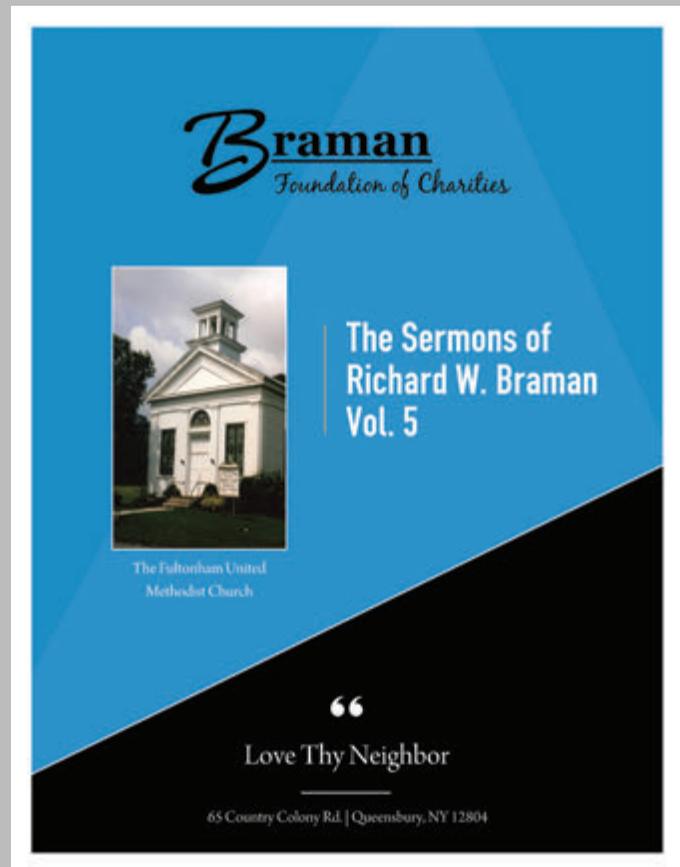


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The screenshot shows the 'Inspire' newsletter header with the Braman Foundation of Charities logo. The main content includes a Thanksgiving greeting, a quote from 2 Corinthians 8:9, a section on gratitude with a quote from Matthew 6:31-33, a section on thankfulness with a quote from Psalm 92, and a section on an inspirational quotation from Colossians 3:17. The footer contains social media icons and a 'Visit Our Website' button.



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Upcoming Events 2020

January NAFI Meeting - Ahmedabad, India

January 11, 2020 - COGIC Albany

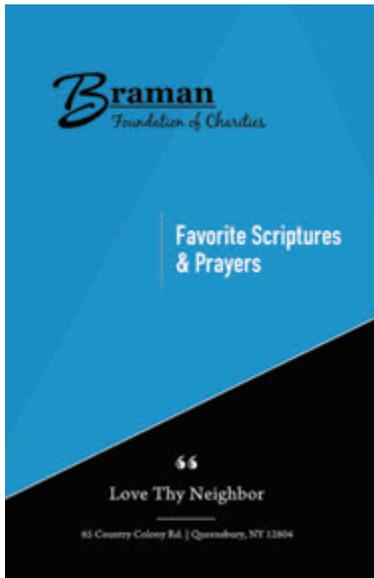
January Board Meeting - Queensbury Hotel

February Retreat - Uganda Pastoral Conference

South Sudan March Conference - LRI Pastoral Conference

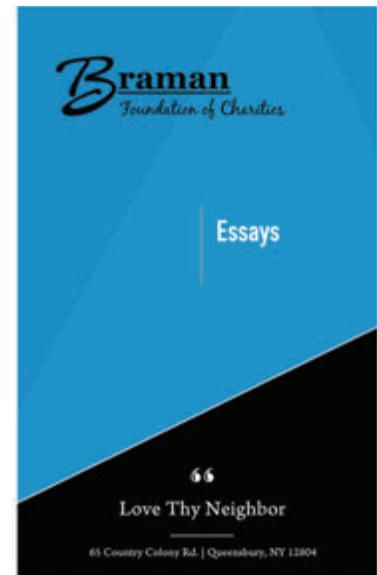
April - Kenya Retreat

2020 Book Releases



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