**A Waterford/BBI Psalm (ala Ps. 136)**

**July 31, 2016**

Section 1

**1**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**2**Give thanks to God Almighty, as he is worshiped at Waterford.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**3**Give thanks to l’Eternel, as he is worshiped in churches in Benin.
*His faithful love endures forever.*

**4**Give thanks to him who in 1969 led Edwin Weaver and Harry Henry to explore how Mennonites might work together with African churches in holistic mission.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**5**Give thanks to him who inspired African Initiated Churches in Benin to risk collaborating with a Western mission agency.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**6**Give thanks to God who led David and Wilma Shank to minister in West Africa in the 1980’s, including in Benin.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**7**Give thanks to him whose Spirit inspired culturally sensitive and non-colonial ways of teaching the Bible and respecting local churches.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**8**whose Spirit prompted Mennonite Mission Network to resource churches in Benin, without planting new Mennonite churches.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**9**whose Spirit in 1987 called forth Rod & Lynda Hollinger-Janzen and Daniel & Marianne Goldschmidt-Nussbaumer, to minister in Benin.
*His faithful love endures forever.*

Section 2

**10**Give thanks to God for Papa Michel Dossou, who introduced and mentored the Western mission workers among dozens of African Initiated Churches.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**11**God nourished the seeds of holistic mission, to establish Bethesda Health Center in Cotonou during a time of national medical crisis.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**12**God helped the missionaries and Beninese churches persevere through turmoil over how the churches should relate to each other and minister together.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**13**Give thanks to him who prompted the vision for a three-year curriculum of biblical training for Beninese church leaders, starting in 1994.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+136&version=NLT#fen-NLT-16186a)]
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**14**God provided West African professors to teach most of the biblical training courses,
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**15**and he led Augustin Ahoga to a position of leadership to help reorganize this training program into a partnership for a sustainable future.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**16**Give thanks to God for the formation in 1996 of Benin Bible Institute.
*His faithful love endures forever.*

Section 3

**17**Give thanks to God for the cooperation that allows students from 60 to 70 different denominations to come together to learn to study the Bible.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**18**For the building teams with Waterford members, who helped in construction of the BBI building, in 1997 & 2000,
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**19**For the partnership of BBI and Waterford, begun in 2003 as a long-term relationship focusing on mutual relationships through exchange visits and prayer requests,
*His faithful love endures forever.*

**20** For Waterford’s growing awareness of the reality of spiritual powers at work in the world, brought to us by Beninese brothers and sisters,

*His faithful love endures forever.*

**21**For the BBI representatives who visited us here in the first 6 years: Augustin Ahoga, Theodore Houngbedji, Matthieu and Christel Gnonhossou, Celestin Djimadja, Germain Noukpakou, Alphonse Godonou, Francois Bangbade, Bonaventure Akowanou,
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**22**For the BBI guests we have hosted in the past 7 years: Frederic Djodjouhouin, Mathilde Attiogbe, Bonaventure Akowanou, Antoine Codjo, Theophane Boko, and Bruno Gansa
*His faithful love endures forever.*

Section 4

**23**Give thanks to God for the Waterford members who represented us in Benin in those first 6 years of the partnership: Joe Miller, Rod Hollinger-Janzen, Femi Hollinger-Janzen, Dave & Julia Leatherman, Melanie Brown, Neil & Janette Amstutz, Mimi Hollinger-Janzen, Kristy Bowman, and Merrill & Lola Gingerich.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**24**In the last 8 years God has also represented Waterford in Benin through Gilberto, Denise, Ariana, Felix & Camila Perez-Diener; Luke & Becky Gascho, & Dale Hess; Vance & Karen Weaver, Bill & Karla Minter, Len Harms and Rod & Lynda Hollinger-Janzen.
*His faithful love endures forever.*

25 For the open doors of La Casa Grande, providing shelter, training and loving open arms to orphaned or abandoned children since 2000,

*His faithful love endures forever.*
**26**Since 2011, God has blessed BBI with the vision and strong growth of its agricultural training center in Oumako, providing practical skills for students, crops and animals for the local community, and income for BBI.
*His faithful love endures forever.*
**27**During the BBI visits to Goshen, God expanded our views of the meaning of Bible passages through intercultural Bible studies
*His faithful love endures forever.*

28 Over the course of more than 13 years, God has shown Christians from Waterford and from Benin that in partnership, we are all givers and we are all receivers

*His faithful love endures forever.*  (pause)

29 Above all else, we declare our thanks to the God of the Bible, who alone carries power over life and death, and is Lord of the universal church of Jesus Christ,

*His faithful love endures forever.*