



Son-rise in Africa Newsletter

ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS FOR WORLD EVANGELISM
CHURCH PLANTING THROUGH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Report by EARL & KATHI COOPER

January 2006

Here's a Word in Season from Earl

The continual reference over the past years concerning freedom and liberty has caused these terms to lose much of their original meaning, especially as they relate to Christianity. The common definition of liberty, "the freedom to do what you want to please yourself", may fit into the attitudes of today's society; however, this concept has no place among those who have personally accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord.

To the believer, God cries "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Through Christ's death and resurrection, the believer is potentially freed from the power of sin. The Bible says, "Our old self was crucified with Him that our body of sin might be made powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." (Romans 6:6). We are told "He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." (Romans 8:11). Upon receiving Christ as Saviour, each believer has the Spirit of God within him and by the Holy Spirit's power, he has the freedom to do what he should do to please God. This true Christian liberty is expressed in practical Godliness and Christian love.

It is sad to see so many Christians return to bondage by turning liberty into legalism by trying to become 'spiritual' through fulfilling certain rules, or worse yet, by turning their liberty into license and pursuing ungodly pleasures. Dear Christian friend, don't be persuaded by the world's idea of liberty. "Walk by the Spirit and you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16).

God intends for the expression of liberty among His own to be the showing of love which always puts the other person's best interests first. To this cause Paul challenged the believers in Rome with these words, "But if thy brother be grieved with [thy] meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died...[It is] good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor [any thing] whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Romans 14:15,21).

Amy Carmichael in "If" captures the sense of Christian liberty with these thoughts "If I hold on to choices of any kind, just because they are my choices; if I give any room to my private likes and dislikes ... if I put my own happiness before the well-being of the work entrusted to me, I know nothing of Calvary love. Imagine the impact Christians would have if each lived this truly liberated way!

Ministry Update...

The anticipated surgery for December which prompted cancellation of December ministry at Bethel Baptist in Orillia was not actually scheduled until February. The break in December was probably good for me according to Kathi's assessment. Nevertheless, I was asked to minister at Bethel for a couple of Sundays in January. Apart from the time spent with family during Christmas and New Years, December was spent working on a method of evaluating national churches as they go through the transition of missionary leadership to national leadership. The format for evaluation must include the church and the missionaries in a process that measures the maturity level of a church and its respective understanding and ability for self-government and continued ministry. Lord willing, I will be taking this evaluation back with me for missionary input in January. A reformatting of a bible institute course to enable the leaders in Africa to edit and "tweek" it suitably for personal instruction was also completed. This represents the first study of a three-year curriculum for the Mathetes Bible Institute that was determined in November of 2005. A part of mission responsibility includes year-end reports and goal planning for 2006. These were also completed since our last newsletter.

Kathi's Notes... As I have been working at memorizing the next portion of scripture from Colossians 3 for our school's Principal's Challenge, I have been impressed with the list of things we should 'put on'—tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, and above all, love. I am challenged to let the peace of God rule in my heart and let the word of Christ dwell in me richly. What a great goal for this new year! Looking back at the blessings of last year, I can see how God was working His tender mercies, love and care into our lives. I choose to trust Him with the days ahead as they unfold. The words of the hymn "*Day By Day*" have long been among my favourites for encouragement and reassurance—"strength I find to meet my trials here".

Please pray with us...

1. *For wisdom in preparing studies and designing curriculum as the West African Baptist Bible College and Seminary is in the process of being founded.* In late January Earl is joining a strategy team in Ghana to develop a plan for establishing this needed school to address training in 5 West African countries. Please pray that the team is united in thought, passion, wisdom and God's strength.
2. *For good health.* Earl has been diagnosed with prostate cancer and will undergo surgery on February 16. Please pray for wisdom as the surgery options are reviewed and for success toward complete cure and for a speedy recovery from surgery.
3. *For new church contacts.*
4. *For the remainder of our support.* We are presently at 84% of committed support. Please pray that the Lord would raise up the additional prayer and financial partners for this ministry.
5. *For West Africa.* Pray for God to raise up national church leaders. Pray that the churches will understand the principles of stewardship and that the mission team will establish a suitable means to help churches and pastors during the transition from missionary led to pastoral led congregations.
6. *For the home front.* When Earl is away in the winter, there are often challenges with snowfall and power failure—all the things that make living in Ontario so great!

Present Itinerary:

January 1,15 – Bethel Baptist, Orillia.

January 19 – Feb 8 – WABS meeting and teaching in Africa.

February 16 – surgery for Earl.

March 25 – Grace Baptist Mission Conference, Simcoe (tentative).

March 26 – Springfield Baptist (tentative).

April 23 – Riverside Baptist, Huntsville.

April 30 – Fenelon Falls Baptist.

May 25 – June 26 – teaching & stewardship seminars in Africa.

Summer Date tba – Lyndock Baptist, Eganville.

July 16 – Pinegrove Baptist, Bracebridge, (tentative).

July 23 – 27 – Triple C Bible Conference, Simcoe.

Oct 22 – Central Baptist, Brantford.

Oct 29 – Otterville Baptist – a.m., First Baptist, Waterloo – p.m.

Nov. 3 – Dec. 4 – teaching in Africa

Air Miles Assistance

Thanks to air miles assistance we are very close to gaining a free trip to West Africa.

For those who have passed on your earned air miles to us, we thank you.

If Air Miles have not interested you and yet you have occasion to receive Air Miles by shopping at such places as A&P Grocers, Shell Gas Stations, etc., you can help our travel costs by giving the attendant our Air Miles No. This is a completely legitimate way of supporting our ministry travel costs. We thank you for your consideration.

**Cooper Air Miles
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