



Son-rise in Africa Newsletter
CHURCH PLANTING THROUGH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
Report by EARL & KATHI COOPER
(for Newsletter Archives go to <http://www.discipleshipministries.ca/>)
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Ministry Update...

This past month seems to have flown by at the speed of light. Our efforts in developing Bible courses have continued and our mission conference and pulpit ministries have kept us on the road every weekend. God has blessed us with safety and encouraged us with seeing others respond to mission needs. We have also been blessed with the news that our daughter and son-in-law, Michele and Minne Bouma, have applied to ABWE Canada as career missionaries. As well, I [Earl] am also excited about our son David's planned short term teaching trip with me in January. At home, Teresa & Adam have begun teaching a teen SS class and are using their talents to support and enrich ministries at Pinegrove Baptist. Nothing thrills our hearts more than to know our children desire to be where God wants them, whether at seminary, ministering in the local churches in Canada, or following God's leading into career missions. We are indeed a blessed family. Thank you for your prayers.

For those who may not receive Dave Smith's ABWE Canada update, Dave recently gave this report: "Last year, ABWE missionaries, working with our partners, operated 111 Bible training programs for 18,267 students. About 50% of our Canadians are involved in theological education ministries. One of the crying needs of new believers in the world is solid Biblical education. Even the membership of our North American churches is, in general, becoming Biblically illiterate. Where is the army of believers that know their Bibles well and are able to teach others also? Is that not the Biblical plan according to 2 Timothy 2:2?" It seems that Canadians have a special ability to adjust teaching methods and to work with peoples of other cultures. As a result of the concentrated effort toward theological education by Canadian missionaries, the Canadian board has appointed Kathi and I as Theological Education representatives of ABWE Canada. This opportunity will broaden our focus in Canada/U.S. as we seek to recruit teachers, build educational resources, and rally Canadian churches and schools to consider the great need of theological education throughout the world. Please be assured that this appointment does not interfere with our commitment to continue to prepare and teach Bible college courses for Africa, nor does it affect our planned teaching tours in West Africa. Please pray that the Lord will bless the opportunities the new appointment affords and that He will raise up qualified teachers from Canada to train our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world.

Here is a Word in Season from Earl (see our website for daily devotionals)

For most families the Christmas season involves not only the busy schedule of shopping for gifts but the careful planning of visits to all those family members and friends that mean so much to us. How interesting that both gifts and visitation were a part of that first Christmas. The theme of gift giving at Christmas time is easily related to the first Christmas when God sent his Son into the world as a gift of His love. The Bible also speaks of this coming of Christ as a matter of visitation: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Hebrews 2:6) It is important to realize, however, that the word here translated 'visit' means far more than dropping in to say hello. This word visit (episkeptomai) means to look upon in order to help. God's gift of love was more than an expression of identity with humanity as God became flesh; it was the action of a loving God in dealing with man's problem of sin. God helped man by doing what man could not do himself, namely, pay the penalty of sin through the sacrificial death of Jesus. Scripture boldly declares: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8).

As much as the real meaning of Christmas Visitation is incomplete without the Cross of Easter, so is the Christian life (which begins by appropriating the finished work of the cross through faith - Ephesians 2:8) incomplete without visitation. James stated this truth this way: "this a pure and undefiled religious in the sight of God our Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world." (James 1:27) Visitation in the same sense of "looking upon to help" is part of what defines the Christian life. True saving faith results in the inward change of heart that drives a believer to deny self for the benefit and spiritual welfare of others. The transforming power of the gospel manifests itself in the believer's social and personal ethics. Here is seen as "Sympathy with suffering" and "separation from sin".

As the rush of gift buying and visit planning comes upon us this year, may I encourage each reader to take a moment and reflect upon the real "Visitation of Christmas". Has the Son of God "visited" you personally in dealing with sin? Is your faith in the cross where Christ met that need through His death? Having come to know Christ as Saviour, are you involved in true visitation? Why not take time this season and truly "visit" by helping a family in need through contributing to a local Food Bank, or by some other meaningful expression of sacrifice to demonstrate your life changing faith? Wouldn't our world be a different place if every confessing Christian made the Christmas themes of gifts and visitation a year round expression of their original meaning?

Please pray with us...

1. For effective teaching while in Africa. Our prayer is to labour in the Spirit's power to bring understanding to the pastors and equip them to teach their own people.
2. For travel safety –for winter ministry.
3. For wisdom as Earl works with a team to put together a curriculum for the newly established African Baptist Schools of Theology (ABST) with a goal to deliver theological education in the African countries of Ghana, Togo, Benin, The Gambia, Cameroon and Liberia.
4. For our support deficit of approximately \$470/month.
5. For financial support for David as he undergoes his first mission experience in January.
5. For the winter trip to West Africa with both Earl & David going to team-teach. Who do you suppose is more excited—Earl or Dave?

Present Itinerary for 2007:

Dec. 2 – Courtland Bible Fellowship, Courtland, ON.
Dec. 9 – Pinegrove Fellowship Baptist, Bracebridge, ON.
Dec. 30 – Jan. 28 2008: West Africa

Kathi's Notes... Does your kitchen smell of cinnamon, ginger, chocolate and other tempting scents these days? I love walking through the door to those inviting odours. They trigger many happy memories of Christmas past when our children were young and we had cookie baking marathons. We are encouraged in Ephesians 5:2 to 'walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour'. It is a challenge to walk through our days, loving as Christ loved, giving as He gave. When my JK/SK class makes a gingerbread house this week and bakes cookies next week, the spices will remind me to speak and act in a sweet manner. As I look forward to having our children and grandsons at home during Christmas week, I'm thinking that maybe we should bake some cookies! We wish you happiness and lots of 'sweet' times with your family and friends as you celebrate the miracle of the first Christmas.

Air Miles Assistance - Cooper Air Miles No. 8006 178 1930

Thanks to air miles assistance we have traded for grocery vouchers. For those who have passed on your earned air miles to us, we thank you. You can help our monthly costs by using our Air Miles number. This is a practical way of supporting our ministry travel costs. We thank you for your consideration.



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