



Son-rise in Africa Newsletter
CHURCH PLANTING THROUGH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
Report by EARL & KATHI COOPER
(for Newsletter Archives go to <http://www.discipleshipministries.ca/>)
January 2008

Ministry Update...

January ministry brought the great blessing of team-teaching with our son, David. He used his winter break time from Pensacola Seminary to join me in teaching "Youth Ministries" at the Mathetes Baptist Bible Institute and College in Ghana. I presented a Biblical view of youth and Youth Ministry Philosophy as it is applied to Africa; David presented a Christian approach and shared his personal experiences in ministering to youth in Pensacola during his previous 4 years of school. We took the students to a church youth ministry night at Emmanuel Baptist church in Kodzobi where David led in games and presented a devotional, all translated into the Ewe language. David and I also shared a teaching ministry at Hasu Baptist church on the first Sunday of January where we enjoyed a "Thanksgiving Church Family Meal" together (African style) and shared in the communion service. We had 2 weeks of fellowship and ministry together and even squeezed in a trip to a monkey sanctuary and a trek through the bush. After the 2 weeks David returned home to continue studies at seminary and I travelled to Togo to teach 2 studies and present a stewardship seminar. The time spent sharing "Pastoral Ministry" with the 9 students in the Kpalime Pastor Institute class was especially blessed of the Lord. I was dumbfounded when at the end of the class the men presented Kathi (in absentia) and I with African shirts as an expression of their appreciation. Yet it was I who received the greater blessings as I evidenced God moving hearts to truly embrace a servant's spirit in ministry.

The schedule was so busy that the time seemed to fly by; however, it ended on a sad note. On the Sunday of my departure I received word that Pastor George's wife had died. This news broke my heart! Pastor George (a Mathetes Bible College student in Ho), and I have become very close. The churches of Canada rallied together to repair his crumbling home and several folks have sent gifts directly to George from Canada. He is a faithful labourer of the Lord. He joined David and I on our monkey sanctuary outing which enabled us to truly appreciate his godly character. Please pray for the Lord to strengthen him in these days of trial.

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

"Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again. Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land." (Ecclesiastes 11:1-2). In Bible lands there is a unique way of sowing seed. The farmer floods a small field then scatters his seed on the water, as the soil absorbs the water, the seed settles into the soil awaiting the sun and time to germinate. For the poor, the grain in the home used for making bread is the very source of seed for the field. The farmer literally takes the bread (grain for bread) from the table and by faith sows it on the water in hope of an abundant harvest.

There are two ways of treating the seed. The botanist splits it up and discourses on its curious characteristics. The simple farmer eats and sows, sows and eats. Similarly there are two ways of treating the gospel. A critic dissects it, raises a mountain of debate about the structure of the whole, and relation of its parts, and when he is done with his argument, he is done. To him the letter is dead. He neither lives on it himself, nor spreads it for the good of his neighbours; he neither eats nor sows. The disciple of Jesus, hungering for righteousness, takes the seed whole; it is bread for today's hunger, and seed for tomorrow's supply.

Both the sowing of the seed of the gospel (the message of free salvation through the death, burial and resurrection of God's perfect sacrifice - His own Son) and the receiving of the seed of the gospel, is a matter of faith. For those privileged to experience new birth by faith in Christ, the sowing is a matter of duty as the salt and light of the earth (Matt. 5), and a matter of joy because God has promised an increase; "He that goes forth with weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Psalm 126:6). For those receiving the seed, it is a matter of wonder and joy in new found life, hope and purpose: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Cor. 5:17).

God's passion in this great work of sowing and reaping was clearly stated by Jesus: "Therefore said he

unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2). It's almost impossible to see a rainbow and not point it out to someone else. It's the kind of thing that just must be shared. You see one and you want to tell someone about it. If you are by yourself and see one, it's frustrating. The gospel is such a beautiful expression of God's love that it just must be shared.

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 during winter ministry at home.
3. For wisdom as Earl works with a team to put together a curriculum for the newly established Baptist Theological Education in Africa Schools (formally 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 \$300 month. We praise God that some supporting churches have increased support for us.
5. For ministry opportunities in Canada and U.S. as we commence filling our 2008 schedule.
6. For the safe arrival of baby grandson #5, scheduled to be delivered Feb. 11, for mom Teresa & dad Adam.

Present Itinerary for Feb.-Mar./08:

Feb. 03 – Pinegrove Baptist, Bracebridge, ON

Feb. 17 – Bethel Baptist, Orillia, ON

Mar. 2 – Riverside Baptist, Huntsville, ON

Mar. 16 a.m. – Courtland Bible Fellowship, ON

Mar 16 p.m. – Grace Baptist, Simcoe, ON

Mar 30 – Calvary Baptist, Espanola, ON

Kathi's Notes... The December refresher course on the operation of our snowblower was timely—haven't we had a lot of snow this month? One morning it was up over my knees after an overnight snowfall—so much snow that I needed extra weight on the back of the tractor for traction. Who was available that day? I had 2 possible choices, neither ideal. Teresa, our 8 ½ month pregnant daughter, or my 85-year old mother-in-law? Teresa was game for the adventure, nonetheless, and climbed on board. What a sight we must have made! Two snow covered ladies lost in a spray of white, chugging down the laneway, with pregnant Teresa standing on the hitch, holding on for dear life as I 'gunned' it to get over the hump where the snowplow had left a deposit. We managed to clear a wide enough path to get out. In any case, I managed to run both the tractor and the generator when our power was out for 2 days with help from our son-in-law, Adam. What a blessing he is! A blessing of another sort was experienced this past week at school when a mother conveyed a conversation at their family supper table. When asked what she had learned at school, the daughter paused thoughtfully, then answered, "I learned we are all lost and the reason Jesus came was to save us". Wow! The lessons on the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin had hit the mark. The often repeated role-playing of the good shepherd, the lost lamb, the 99 safe sheep, the lady who lost a coin, the search, and the neighbours who rejoiced had an impact on a young life. She had memorized Matthew 18:11 and had heard Romans 10:9 explained many times this month. It is such an encouragement to hear how God is working His truth into the lives of the children I teach. I am humbled to know He is able to use my labours in Kindergarten to reach His little ones.

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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