



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

Ministry Update...

As the snow continues to blow and winter stretches on, my mind goes to my dear friend, Pastor George, in Hasu, Ghana. I reported last month that George's wife died the day I was leaving Africa. Correspondence with the mission team informed me of the prolonged trial of funeral preparation which the family encountered. Rose's parents insisted that she be buried in her home village in Togo. Because of certain cultural practices, George was obliged to accommodate their wishes which took weeks to arrange, and cost more than George could ever afford. It was only a week ago that the funeral did take place. Although the month was truly a trial of faith for George, the great blessing was that the very village in Togo where Rose was buried is a center of spiritism – the gospel, foreign to the people. These arrangements did provide the opportunity for missionary Jim Junge to accompany George and his family and share the gospel. Many of the villagers heard for the first time the message of God's saving grace. Although I have not contacted Pastor George, knowing his heart for God, I am sure that he rejoices in the fact that his wife's funeral allowed for the gospel to be shared and God to be glorified. I stand in awe of the sacrificial love so many of our African brothers have for the Lord.

Although some weekends were spent in ministry in local churches, I spent the majority of February "plugging away day to day" at developing courses for Africa in accordance with ABWE's new curriculum design parameters. The new approach takes much more preparation but I am convinced the additional focus on "doing study" as well as "knowing the material" will benefit the pastoral students greatly in their responsibilities of feeding their own flocks the Word. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. I often sense the Lord's special grace as a result of your faithful prayers. Kathi and I cannot thank you - our supporters, enough for the wonderful opportunity afforded to us to carry on this ministry. May God bless your sacrifice.

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

Hope for many is nothing more than wishful thinking that will never be realized. Benjamin Franklin said, "He that lives upon hope will die fasting." Omar Khayyam said, "It is like snow in the desert." It has also been said that "hope is a quivering, nervous creature trying to be bright and cheerful but, alas, frequently sick with nervous prostration and heart failure". On the other hand, the Bible speaks of hope as an anchor. God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised; he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, "firm and secure." (Heb. 6:16-19).

Unlike wishful thinking, Biblical hope is founded upon the promises of Almighty God who sent His Son to provide reconciliation for man through faith in the Son's sacrifice for sin. Biblical hope, therefore, is viewed as Jesus Himself, God's Son raised from the dead and sitting at the right hand of the Father. As a living anchor who is God Himself, He is sure (unbreakable) and steadfast (unmovable) because He is our risen, eternal High Priest. . Raymond MacKendree explains: "The resurrection of Jesus Christ is our hope today. It is our assurance that we have a living Saviour to help us live as we should now, and that when, in the end, we set forth on that last great journey, we shall not travel an uncharted course, but rather we shall go on a planned voyage-life to death to eternal living."

In northern Scotland there is a mountain called Ben Hope. In the Gaelic language of Scotland "Ben" means "a mountain peak". Certainly, hope towers above all the other intangibles of life. We can live without love. We can live without faith. We can live without friends. But we cannot live without hope. Clare Booth wrote, "There are no hopeless situations; there are only men who have grown hopeless about them." In a world where hopelessness breeds in every political theatre, abounds on every street corner, and breaks the spirit of man in most homes, Christ offers a true and lasting hope.

And how, you might ask, is this hope gained? God has made His Hope simple enough for a child to find: "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live [have everlasting life]. (John 11:25). "Hope is the "inseparable companion" of faith. ... Without faith's knowledge of Christ, hope becomes a utopia and remains hanging in the air. But without hope, faith falls to pieces, becomes a faint-hearted and ultimately a dead faith. It is through faith that man finds the path of true life, but it is only hope that keeps him on that path. (Jurgen Moltmann). And that hope is Christ.

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.

Present Itinerary for March & April:

Mar. 2: Riverside Baptist, Huntsville, ON
Mar. 16 a.m.: Courtland Bible Fellowship, ON
Mar 16 p.m.: Grace Baptist, Simcoe, ON
Mar 21, 23: Pinegrove Baptist, Bracebridge, ON
Mar 30: Calvary Baptist, Espanola, ON

April 12-13: Central Baptist, Brantford – Son-in-law, Minne Bouma's ordination council
April 27-30: Quebec City- Church & Quebec theological school visits.
May/June: Teaching tour in West Africa

Kathi's Notes... I'm so thankful for your care and love in our lives. Just yesterday we found some grocery gift cards in our church mailbox—what an encouragement and blessing! February was full of excitement for us. Our fifth grandson, Nathan David, arrived on Feb. 11. Although 'Nate' tried to come a week earlier, and had to spend a few days in an ICU for observation, he and his mom, Teresa, were safely home on Valentine's Day. The family rallied around, our other daughter took time off teaching, and we had quite the time looking after Malakai and Izaak in Teresa's absence. It is such a blessing to have them live so close, just 10 minutes away. I can pop in on my way home for a cup of tea and a chance to see 'my boys'. Babies are such precious bundles; don't you love to hold them? Now that March is here, I'm looking forward to my school break—a full 2 weeks this year! I have had another wonderful term with my class of KinderKids, but am ready for a rest. We will have the Bouma's here for a few days, so I'd better hunt out the favourite storybooks for bedtime reading. Later on, Earl & I are flying to Pensacola, FL for a quick 4 day visit with David & Aleece. Without a doubt, there will be a couple of packages of Dad's oatmeal cookies and maple teabags travelling with us. Mid-terms will be done and they will enjoy some time off-campus, I'm sure. I'm eager to see them and discuss plans for their wedding on August 24 in Gig Harbor, WA.

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.

**Dr. & Mrs. Earl Cooper, 1248 Healey Lake Rd., Bracebridge, ON. P1L 1X3
Ph: 705-645-6371 Email: ekcooper@sympatico.ca Website: DiscipleshipMinistries.ca
ABWE CANADA, 980 Adelaide Street South, Suite 34, London, ON. N6E 1R3**