



Son-rise in Africa Newsletter

CHURCH PLANTING THROUGH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Report by EARL & KATHI COOPER

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March 2009

Ministry Update...

The "March Winds" have favourably filled our sails (I must be getting anxious for some fishing time on our presently frozen lake!!) with steady direction toward our monthly goals of church reports, annual tax paperwork, continued course writing and an additional ministry at our home church at Riverside Baptist in Huntsville with opportunities to share God's Word at the "Fresh Encounters" mid week prayer time as well as share a Sunday's ministry focussed on what Scripture says about depression. These were rewarding times of fellowship in which the Lord blessed us with special fellowship and interaction. The 2009 schedule is getting filled up as indicated by our expanding itinerary and April is unfolding as a busy month of teaching preparation and local church ministries as well as ABWE Canada's annual meeting where Kathi and I report our "Theological Education Representatives" responsibilities. Please pray for the Lord's confirmation on our proposals for expanding ABWE Canada's "Theological Education" ministry impact among churches in Canada. If the board endorses these proposals, we will be sharing these with local churches in the months to come. We are excited that four Bible college students and a pastor have indicated interest in joining with ABWE Canada as theological education teachers. Please pray that the Lord will confirm His leading in their lives by opening the door of opportunity and support. These are exciting times. The world financial crisis has presented struggling societies around the globe with the privilege of seeing, firsthand, how the Lord provides for His people when they, by faith, *put Him first in their stewardship* (see Word in Season below). Pray that we, God's children, will rise to the occasion with bold faith to trust in Him.

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

For those in God's family who have been hit hard with the current economic crisis, who have lost jobs, lost financial resources, and perhaps even lost a sense of security, take heart – God is in control and has a promise that His children can take advantage of. Consider this: In days gone by a child's first words were expected to be "Momma" or "Dada". Today I'm inclined to think that the first words spoken will be "MINE!" It would seem that getting past the 'me-first' mindset is an obstacle right from birth. Perhaps that is why God has set forth the "Principle of Firstfruits" as a basic life pattern for His people of all ages. This principle calls the people of God to: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5-6 NIV), and to do so in the most practical of ways: giving to Him before we take for ourselves!

Although this approach to finances may at first appear risky, in reality, such living by faith secures the promise of God's provision for personal and family needs. This promise is given in the Old Testament and repeated in the New Testament: "Honour the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9-10 NIV). "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33 NIV).

The Christian who trusts in the provision of God is free to return to the Lord the very first of income. In so doing, that act of faith is rewarded not only with the security of God's promised care, but with two added blessings. First, true social security is found because God obligates himself to meet the needs of those who live by the principle of firstfruits (provided that sound stewardship is also practiced). This is a social security that will not run out when the government accounts are empty. Second, there is the blessing of turning temporal wealth into eternal value. As one pastor said, the returns are out of this world!

Living by this principle of firstfruits must begin with giving our love first to God. Many Christians have turned from God-first to me-first because they have followed the poor example of the church of Ephesus: "You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love." (Revelation 2 NIV). To such the Lord sends this message: "Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the first works" (Revelation 2:5 NIV).

There is no greater security in life than to "Live by Faith" and experience the loving care of our Father in heaven. This is not reducing salvation to the "prosperity gospel" for God promises to meet our needs not to give us earthly wealth. Putting God first in our wages, salaries, endowments, or in whatever way we have received, is the Christian way of saying "I put no trust in wealth, my trust lies in you O Lord." In so doing, God obligates himself to our provision. It is here that David's experience is passed on to God's own: "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread" Ps 37:25.

Please pray with us...

1. For effective teaching where God leads, while BATA is organized 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 Earl & Kathi's continued travels in 2009.
3. For preparation of the studies for Cameroon, Trinidad and India scheduled for 2009.
4. For our monthly support. **We praise God that He has supplied all our needs; however, with the Canadian dollar dropping and flight costs increasing, we anticipate a review of our support will result in a necessary increase for 2009. Please pray that the Lord will meet the need.**
5. For ministry opportunities in Canada and U.S. as we continue filling our 2009 schedule.

Present Itinerary:

We are presently making contact with churches to complete our 2009 schedule. This is more difficult this year because Earl's "overseas" schedule is still not finalized.

Please pray for opportunities to share the ABWE Canada needs throughout Canada as these dates are finalized.

ABWE Canada Annual Meeting: April 4
Springfield Baptist: April 5
Word of Life Institute, Owen Sound: April 9
Pinegrove Baptist, Bracebridge: April 26
Fenelon Falls Baptist: May 3
Consultation for International Theological Education, Harrisburg, PA: May 24 - May 27
Cameroon: Jun. 5-14
Riverside Baptist, Huntsville: June 28

Parry Sound Baptist: Aug. 9
Trinidad: Aug. 29 - Sept. 14
Calvary Baptist, Espanola: Sept. 26-27
First Baptist, Cochrane: Oct. 18
Otterville Baptist: Nov. 1
Central Baptist, Brantford: Nov. 8
Bethel Baptist, Orillia: Nov. 15
India: Nov. 20 - Dec. 8

Kathi's Notes... I have terrific memories of my March Break. It may have been the best ever! We had all our children and grandboys here. The Lord provided superb spring-like weather and we literally had a blast!! The whole family was out on the frozen lake counting down "10, 9, 8, ... blast-off!", someone would push the button and a rocket would come to life, fizzing up into the blue sky overhead until it was just a dot. Then the race was on to see who could come closest to the descending rocket as it sailed back to earth on its parachute. That weekend Poppa & I got whomped playing Monopoly with the boys and Aleece taught us how to play "Speed Scrabble". How wonderful it was to have everyone 'home' for awhile! Please pray for Dave & Aleece as they make decisions about their place of ministry following Dave's graduation on May 6. Continue to pray for Michele & Minne as they are involved in pre-field ministry meetings to raise support as well as teaching full-time; their goal is to be in Portugal next summer. Teresa & Adam are involved in ministry with children and teens, as well as busy with their 3 little guys. Pray for me as I teach through the third term of school; it has been necessary to add responsibilities to our staff. Our principal's challenge to memorize Matthew 6: 25-34 has been a blessing to me in light of these changes—"Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Sufficient for the day is the trouble thereof."

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A practical way of supporting our ministry travel costs is by using our Air Miles number at participating merchants. For those who have passed on your earned air miles to us, we thank you.

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