

October 8, 2008

Dear Friends,

For those of us living in northern latitudes, days are getting shorter, nights are getting cooler, and fall is in the air. After so many years of living overseas without much change between seasons, we really enjoy the chance to sit in front of the fire, drink hot chocolate, and put on an extra sweater. Our Hong Kong born cats Monty & Mimi, on the other hand, are not happy that it's getting cold again, especially in their "old age." They love "baking" in the hot summer sun.

You may be experiencing the "chill" of the economic uncertainties these days. Today I read two very encouraging things I'd like to share with you. The first was Charles Colson's BreakPoint article for today, "A Sign of Hope." You'll want to read the whole thing on-line at http://www.informz.net/pfm/archives/archive_666898.html, but here are the lines that jumped out at me:

"It's easy to be a believer when everything is going well. The real test is when things fall apart. ... Sure, it hurts to see your life's savings or your job threatened. It's part and parcel of being human in a fallen world. But this is a time when Christians must be different and show it to the world. Maybe that's what God intends to do with this crisis. Maybe He'll use it to banish the "health and wealth gospel" and let the world see how the genuine faith of God's people shines all the brighter in the darkness."

Then, in Dennis Kinlaw's meditation for today in his book, "This Day with the Master," he writes:

"What do you believe is the opposite of wickedness? Until recently, I would have said righteousness. But according to Psalm 32, the opposite of wickedness is trust. Scripture contrasts the people without God - the wicked - with the people who trust in God. On occasion these trusting ones are called righteous, but their righteousness does not come from anything they have done; it comes from God himself. ... Are you trusting God to provide for your every need? For your loved ones, your future, your finances? In order to be surrounded by God's unfailing love, you must trust him in all areas of life, all the days of your life. The opposite of trust is not simply anxiety; it is wickedness."

I pray that you will be able to put your complete trust in our loving, powerful Lord. He is the one who is in control of our lives, not the banks, or the government, or the stock market! We really need to know that He is in control in these days when the rest of the world is a *lot* worse off than we are. He can give us the faith to keep on giving in prayer and financially, even when it seems foolhardy from the world's

viewpoint to do so.

Bishop Joab Lohara has just returned to India, after being in the US for a month or so, and plans to visit the area of Orissa State where our Free Methodist brothers and sisters have been suffering at the hands of Hindu radicals. Please continue to be in prayer for both the Bishop and those who have lost so much. If you would like to give toward India relief, contact us for details on how to give.

The only other overseas news we have this month is that 6 new high school graduates in Cambodia have qualified for our Free Methodist college scholarship program. For them to receive a scholarship, we need to find sponsors willing to give US\$75 a month for 4 years to cover their tuition and dorm costs. The students and their families are responsible for covering food, books and transportation costs. If the Lord nudges you to have the faith to sponsor one of these students, let us know.

Thanks for praying for our travels in September. We enjoyed a few days with Jim's relatives when 2 cousins from Sweden came for a visit. The night before we were headed back to Scotts Valley, I woke up in the middle of the night with a toothache. Since we were scheduled to leave for Indianapolis early the following Monday, my dentist worked through his lunch hour to put a crown on the tooth causing the problem. Unfortunately, the crown didn't solve the pain, so the dentist came in on Sunday morning and started a root canal for me! He finished it up after we got back. I was extremely thankful for his willingness to come in after hours!

Our week in Indianapolis was very productive. The executive committees of both Global Chinese Ministries and the Global Asian Ministries Network met during that time, and we felt the Lord guided in the discussions and planning times. We heard lots of exciting stories of how the Lord is working through the new First Chinese Free Methodist Church of Indianapolis, and opening doors to connect with underground church groups in Vietnam.

Jim was also able to work over budgets for next year with David Yardy, and I spent a day helping out in the Finance Office, posting contributions to Missions Connect. It was a real eye opener as to the amount of work necessary to record each check sent in to Free Methodist World Missions, compared to the ease of donations given online (which show up automatically on Missions Connect).

We stayed over Sunday and went to church with David & Sherrill Yardy at the First Free Methodist Church in downtown Indianapolis. It was

exciting to see and hear about the ways in which the church is reaching out to the surrounding neighborhood and making a difference in people's lives.

After traveling half the time in the first nine months of the year, we are really looking forward to staying home the last 3 months! "Home" in this case means not leaving the state, since we're schedule to speak in two churches in November (San Jose-Willow Vale on Nov. 2 and Modesto on Nov. 9), and plan to go camping for a few days the week of October 20. And we won't have to vote by absentee ballot on November 4! If you're an American, I hope you will take seriously your responsibility and privilege of voting for our next president. Don't be swayed by the polls, but do some research, pray, and then vote!

We still don't know when my sister Nancy will start her radiation therapy. She's had some complications following her surgeries, and the doctor is waiting until everything calms down before making plans. Thanks for continuing to pray for her.

We appreciate your faithful support for our ministry - in prayer, in finances, and in friendship. Let's keep trusting our faithful Lord and sharing His love with those around us!

Love & prayers, Margaret & Jim Nelson