

## NEWSLETTER 41 April 2016 Victoria, Canada

Time passes so quickly these days. It seems like only yesterday we were anticipating the colder, darker months of winter – but now spring is here with all its beauty and warmth!

One has to recognize that when one gets older, the body doesn't quite want to do what the mind tells it to do! That is why I feel the "aches in my bones" much more now and have little inclination to do the traveling – including sleeping on airport floors! – as once I did. I am "in transition" from being an active traveler to a sedentary pilgrim. Don't get me wrong! - my mind and heart are still passionate for the Lord and His work, especially among the young adults of university, with whom opportunities still come for discipleship. Indeed, I have often told my wife that the last thing I want to do before I die is to speak a word of encouragement to a young believer. I intend to "die well" – though I hope that is still a few years away!!

My next travel is at the beginning of June when I shall speak at a men's retreat in Lumby, north of the Okanagan Valley in central BC. I anticipate teaching on *Soar Like the Eagle* – coming into the fullness of what God designed you to be. You can read the gist of my teaching on this webpage – My Books.

The prayer times at the local university continue each week and other times of prayer are precious with some few brethren each Friday and Monday evenings. Sadly, few others seem to have any burden for such prayer times though I'm sure there are some others praying. To me, *prayer is a gift from God to enable us to develop intimacy with Him.*

In February my Muslim friend R came to stay with us for a few days. He arrived on the Friday and the next morning I invited him to accompany me to a men's 'discussion group' where he shared with us the differences between Sunnis and Shiites and his take on the conflicts presently in the Middle East. He was very well received by our men and we all truly enjoyed the experience. He was impressed with the praying as we concluded the meeting and again with the warmth he experienced the next morning at our church service. Earlier this month, R and his precious wife N came to spend the weekend with us. On Saturday evening, she asked if they might come to church with us – the first time ever for her to attend a Christian service. We were so blessed, especially when the Lord orchestrated that service beyond our wildest anticipations. They are a very precious couple to us and we covet your prayers as they seek to set up permanent residency in Canada. As I look at the current refugee crisis in Europe I am reminded of the report of the Cape Town Conference of 2011 when church leaders and members were encouraged to recognize such peoples movements as a sovereign work of God, bringing people out to where they can be exposed to the Christian gospel. Now is the time when "the church really needs to be the church" and shine its light into the world's darkness. We need to have open homes and open hearts to peoples of other faiths and cultural identities.

As the summer program starts at the local university I have been invited to speak at the small groups of University Christian Ministry (UCM). These meet weekly and are for those students who do not leave for a summer vacation or work experience – I did the same thing last year. This morning I received an email from them asking me to join them at a beach BBQ and singalong. I feel so privileged.

Our men's **music group** are having some good times – we have now sung 6 times at the offering time in church.

Thank you for reading my newsletter – I trust this webpage is a blessing to you.

Still rejoicing in His mercies,

Gareth