

NEWSLETTER 42 October 2016

I am amazed to realize that it is 6 months since my last newsletter! I have not gone into hibernation nor been 'promoted' – it's just that time passes so quickly these days.

Since my last letter I have been in **Lumby**, mid BC., speaking at a men's retreat. My theme was on 'Soaring Like the Eagle – a popular theme of mine. I believe the Lord wants us all to learn how to minister in our gifting, which He is able to anoint with His Spirit, releasing us into a ministry wherein we learn to 'fly like the eagle'. I find it so sad – and mind-boggling – that so many people (including pastors) get so weary in ministry, not realizing that the reason may be that they are working in their own strength and not the anointing of the Spirit. I continue to mentor the pastor of that church by weekly Skype and shall be returning there in February to conduct a winter retreat for their young people. My heart remains young and I enjoy nothing more than encouraging young men and women in their walk with the Lord. I meet with some each week on the local university campus for prayer and am very encouraged as I see their enthusiasm and desire for holiness. I also have others who call to visit me for a word of encouragement. Let me encourage any older readers of this newsletter to consider how you might mentor a younger believer – it is such a blessing – to them and to you.

Another ministry opportunity came this summer as I, with 6 others, spent a week at **Esperanza**, a retreat centre some distance north of us on this island. Esperanza was founded as a missions hospital to local indigenous peoples but has become a retreat centre still ministering to the local people and visitors. We were there just to do 'odd jobs' – mine was to help build some shower and toilet units – a log cabin in reality – and to mow the extensive lawns. I loved being rocked on a sit-on mower! It really loosened up some of my joints! Lord willing, I intend returning next year.

In August I went to **Wales**. A dear friend was going through some struggles and had written emails telling of his situation. It was easy to say "we are praying for you"; I could have sent him some book (or chocolates) to cheer him up, but Anne suggested I should go over, so on short notice I flew over to spend 2+ weeks with him. It was a blessed time and both he and I were encouraged. I spoke at an Apostolic church near my home there and also took the opportunity to visit Andrea and her husband Rob, ministering effectively in Cardigan, west Wales. The only downside was that I caught a severe cold and had to visit my doctor on returning. He prescribed high potency antibiotics and an inhaler which seem to have 'done the trick'. I am back to my usual self – enthusiastic but easily weary.

In my daily quiet times I often sit and **reminisce of the amazing things** the Lord has done in my life – the many ministry opportunities He has given me. I have tried to sow 'the seed' faithfully but realize that it is His seed. Sometimes I have sowed it 'well'; other times not so well, but it is His and He has declared it shall not return 'without accomplishing its purpose'. As I think of Ghurka soldiers among whom I taught some Bible studies (1967-9); the youth of Glamorgan, Wales among whom God did such an amazing work (1973-5); the Hebrew School in Canada where I was given freedom to share the gospel with senior students and a rabbi (1977-79); my first church in Kitchener, Ontario (1979-83); being chaplain to Malaysian students in Canada (1979-83); the church in Victoria (1983-90); our time as chaplain on the Mercy Ship, M/V Anastasis, serving the needy of west Africa (1990-95); the many places I have been privileged to minister in my itinerant years up to now, I have expressed my amazement at God's goodness to me. I always ask that "today" – somewhere in the world, someone will remember something I said or wrote and be drawn closer to the Savior because of it. They might not

remember me or from whom they heard it, but the living seed brings forth its fruit to the praise of the Lord. I am then often so blessed when someone writes or calls to say that some past ministry of mine has recently had an impact on their lives. Just recently, a precious sister from Brazil has reconnected after 20 years – what an encouragement that is to me.

(If you are interested to read more of the experiences recorded above, you can read of them in my book on this web – my books/stepping stones.)

Though I do not travel so much these days, I am very active in a weekly Bible study (currently the Book of Romans) and the ministry of prayer which I enjoy so much. It enables me to experience the presence of the Lord in my quiet times and to enjoy the fellowship of like-minded believers when we meet together. Of course my greatest prayer burden is for revival to come to my church and land – the only answer to the wilderness experience which seems to be the lot of most believers I know. It saddens me when I hear believers, including pastors, speak as though the Lord is pleased with us though we are living lives so far short of the abundant life He promised. See my latest 'soapbox' article).

Thank you again for taking the time to read this rambling – I pray the Lord's richest blessing on you,

Rejoicing in His mercies,

Gareth