

Newsletter 13 August 2009

Our trip to Wales

My visit to the urologist on April 15th was pleasing as he declared me without cancer, but added I must see him again “in three months time”. I asked, “Does that mean I can go to UK for three months?” He replied, “Go wherever you like but be back here in three months”. That afternoon Anne booked our tickets to UK!

We have just spent the most wonderful time of resting, fellowship, ministry and visitations in our home land. I also made an effort to speak Welsh and am smugly pleased with all I achieved! It has always been major regrets of mine that I never learned to play the piano (my mother was a brilliant pianist) nor to speak Welsh. This was my opportunity to, at least, do the latter. I so enjoyed my ‘lessons’ with the local pastor, Steve Evans and his wife Sulwen, and also with a class held in another local church.

We were hosted in Cardigan, West Wales, by Pr Steve and his congregation at Mt Zion Baptist church. They gave us the loan of a car, fully insured for the whole time we were in UK (15 weeks). We house-sat various homes while their owners were on vacation so had the great blessing of having the comfort of these homes to ourselves for all our time on the west coast. Several of our friends came long distances across South Wales to visit us and it was always so nice to host them in our ‘homes’.



View from our living room

I spoke several times at Mt Zion, both on Sundays and at their weekly prayer meetings and coffee mornings. There were also other ministry opportunities at local churches. The first weekend of ministry was to share the pulpit with David James Morse for a conference on Revival (my favourite topic!). David is a former missionary in Peru who still travels back there though over the age of 80! I spoke on “Why I long for Revival.” [I need it; my church needs it; my country needs it; He is worthy of it – meaning He deserves the praises of people for whom He died!].

The next day a bus full of people went to see the places famous for the ministries of Howell Harris, William Williams, Pantycelyn (one of Wales’ finest hymn writers) and Daniel Rowlands. These three ministered in the Welsh revival of mid C18th and were contemporaries of the Wesley brothers and George Whitfield.



Howell Harris memorial at Trefecca

On Saturday, May 9th Anne and I drove north to Ysbyty Ystwyth (‘us butty ust with’), home of the Rev Dafydd Morgan, used of God in the 1859 revival. It was his granddaughter Netta we stayed with in November 2008 as we traveled to the conference in Greenock, Scotland. “One night he went to bed as a lamb but arose as a lion; at the end he went to bed as a lion but arose as a lamb!” He knew the mighty anointing of God for a season only – but with what results! (You can read all about these men and their ministries on the web). At Ysbyty Ystwyth I met again with Dr Steve Price whose wife Stella is the author of “Chosen for Choson” – the life of Robert Jermain Thomas, the apostle to Korea in 1863-86.

At the end of May I sat on a Q&A panel with Mary Campbell, leader of Pembrokeshire Baptist Women, and Rev Stuart Bell, canon of St Michael’s, Aberystwyth. That was an interesting evening and very encouraging. Mary reported that in the 70’s there were hardly any Bible believing ministers in the Baptist churches of that county. Today, every one in an appointed ministry is a Bible believer. Stuart declared that when he began his ministry in the Anglican Church in Wales, there were only 6 true evangelicals among the 700 clergy. The number of clergy has fallen greatly (as reported by the secular press) but of the 400+ Anglican clergy in Wales today, 70 are true evangelicals. God is surely moving in the churches of Wales!

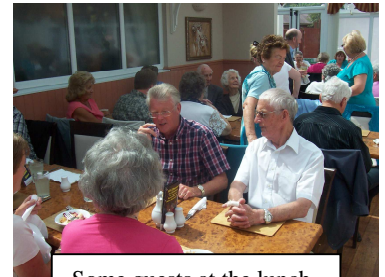
We took the opportunity to walk often as there are so many wonderful treks one can make – along coastal paths, through the nature reserve, alongside the river Teifi and through the quaint villages of Cilgerran, St Doegmals and Llangrannog.

We left Cardigan on July 13th, traveling to Anne's home in Loughor (Welsh revival of 1904) and then across the country to visit my cousin Christopher (wife Elsbeth) in Cambridgeshire. We spent a lovely few days there before driving on see Marion (husband John), a school friend of Anne's, near Ipswich, calling in to see old friends, Ivor & May Sherwood 'en route'. They served as missionaries to the British Army and we met them while I was a teacher with the army in 1963-7. On the return journey, we visited with another of my cousins, Cynthia (husband Bill) near Malvern. We then visited Anne's cousin Gwilym (wife Sue) in Bristol – a very enjoyable week's travel.

For the last two weeks much of my time was spent in Bridgend, my old haunt, where seeing so many friends again was a great blessing. Anne spent much of her time with her niece Karys until our last weekend when we enjoyed two parties for Karys' 50th birthday.

One major surprise came the week before we left Wales – we were to meet 'a few friends' for lunch but when we turned up we found over 30 people had come to greet us – some seen but rarely since my university days! They presented us with a lovely painting.

Finally, on Monday our dear friend Rob Ash drove us to Heathrow, very early in the morning, for our flight back home.



Some guests at the lunch

I return home to Canada encouraged at what the Lord is doing in Wales, even though there are still some 'dry pockets'. Also, we had such a wonderful holiday – one we shall never forget! Lots of new friends, good fellowship and ministry, lots of dining out and lots of laughter. And now made even better by my latest good report from the urologist!