



Confirming the Churches

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October Report

October 31, 2012

Dear brethren, family and friends,

May you be as blessed by the Lord in November as this good work has been in October. We closed last month's report with a reference to waiting. Waiting is almost never comforting, regardless the goal, but we have all heard the old proverb, "Good things come to those who wait." Some of those "good things" have comforted and encouraged me during these past four weeks, and I am pleased to have this opportunity tell you about them.

The "Round House" gathering of Christians who support or engage in home-schooling of the children continued into the beginning of October. By the end of that week I had, directly or indirectly, promoted this work to members of over 50 churches from North Carolina to Oklahoma and from Michigan to Florida. Several took my printed package back to the church leadership, and at least three said they believe this work worthy of support, and would try to procure some. More importantly (though not more needed), two said that they know of churches that need our help right now. They promised that upon their return home they would help to arrange my contact with them. Several families invited me to stay with them when I travel in their areas and need lodging. Some of these, such as Manlif and Maxine Barnes and Jeff and Cindy Madaris, have provided such hospitality for my family and me in past mission trips.

The total number of churches contacted for support of this work now exceeds 300. Nearly 200 printed packages have been mailed, and I have spoken directly with preachers, elders and others in over 100 churches. I have no idea how many churches have been contacted by others on behalf of this work, but I do know that the number is not insignificant. Please pray that, as churches plan their 2013 budgets, brethren will include this work until it is fully funded.

Back in the spring, before I committed to this work, I promised Will that I would take some vacation time with him in Texas. The commitment to the work, and the then the urgency of having to move sooner than expected, changed the date of the vacation trip twice, but I finally promised him that I would firmly schedule the time around his birthday in late October. We enjoyed a day at the state fair and another with my foster brother Fred in the pleasant surroundings of Jefferson, Texas: a place that Chris and I often visited for its "old-time" shopping and dining atmosphere. Will and I also visited another favorite place: Canton, Texas on its "First Monday Trade Days" weekend.

I have been asked on a few occasions to list specific works in my general plan so that people with particular interests might consider sending support to that. Here is that list:

Sister Chris Parr Home for Orphans and Widows. The elders of the church in Ibrahimpatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India originated the plan to honor my wife after her passing. Knowing little about her - and never having met her - they suggested naming in her honor their local work of caring for those whose care James enjoins upon us all (James 1:27). In India there is a disproportionate number of widows and orphans, and a great many of the churches are diligent to provide for their care. Many of their homes are named for people who exemplified the hospitality of Christ. Chris was a great and godly care-giver to her own grandchildren, but also to neighborhood children, and to children and widows in the church. A building is being constructed next to the church building so that those now cared for piece-meal all over town can be cared for more fully.

Bibles. Bibles are readily available in India - in all the languages needed - but few of the churches or preachers can afford them in the quantities they could easily distribute. A large percentage of Christians do not have a personal copy of the Bible, but would study it seriously if they could obtain one. Even my work in America will meet the occasional need for Bibles as we work among immigrants and others who were reared without any interest in the Bible, and do not have or cannot afford their own.

Bicycles. Preachers especially in rural India travel mostly by foot and by bicycle. A sturdy bicycle costs about \$60 and will last several years, even as the preacher rides dozens of miles each day in preaching.

Songbooks. Many churches I have visited outside the U.S. have no songbooks - or maybe only one for the song leader. They are available, but are a low item in the church budget and are seldom purchased for lack of funds. As a result, most churches sing only the few songs that people have memorized. In addition, especially in India, where a new church is planted every day songbooks are needed for teaching and worship of the new Christians.

Evangelist N. Vijaya Rao. I do not plan to include in my own work budget the regular support of preachers, but when I meet those who need the support and are actually doing the work worthy of support I will gladly bring their needs to your attention. Brother Vijaya Rao is the preacher for the Ibrahimpatnam church, and has recently lost more than half of his support as the provider of that support, now at age 99, resides in a care home for the aged. Call or write me for personal details.

My health insurance plan. I have been an exceptionally healthy person all my life – and I daily thank God for this rare blessing – but anything is possible. I use the Veterans' Health Care system when in the U.S., and pay as I use it, but I am not always in the U.S.

I can't give names right now, because I didn't ask their permission to do so, and none of the following acted at my request. Knowing me, and having some awareness of the need for this work, they spoke and acted from the convictions of their own faith. They aren't looking for publicity for themselves, but are passionate for Christ and the propagation of His word everywhere. I thank God for the glory they give to Him.

A preacher from Memphis visiting in Jonesboro, though he also depends upon the support of others, promised to promote this work in his circle of influence (which is quite wide), and later the same day a preacher in another Arkansas church spoke to the assembled saints of the need for this work and my qualifications for it, then made a passionate plea for the church to pray sincerely about supporting liberally.

While I was traveling from North Carolina to Arkansas on Saturday, October 6, I received word that my brochures had been distributed that day to leadership in two Michigan churches, and elders in two others had been approached in person, by a sister in Christ dedicated to seeing this work get the funding it needs. Earlier that same day I answered a phone call from the missions committee of a Texas church, the result of their having been given a brochure by a brother with the same spirit.

During October the 2013 calendar has begun to fill up. I have firm or tentative commitments for all of February, the last half of March, the first half of April, all of July and all of August. Whom do you know that we might help?

No work of this nature can be done effectively by one person or family alone. It takes the prayers and support (moral, material and financial) of very many. "(H)ow shall they preach, except they be sent?," the apostle Paul wrote (Romans 10:15), and David legislated that "as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike" (I Samuel 30:24). God knows that not everyone can go – and even among those who go, not all go into the same work – but He will reward all those who do their part in preaching His word to the world. Are you doing what you can – what God has enabled you to do? May His blessings comfort you in that now and forever.

In His service,

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Contributions: New Summerfield church \$100

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