

Words from the Woodward's

September, 2023

"The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;
He shall preserve your soul.
The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore." Psalm 121:7-8

Dear ministry partners,

Family matters

I trust you had a good summer. Ours concluded with a two week visit with our daughter, Laura's, family. Our grandsons are growing up. Luke is 15, Ethan is 13 and David is 11. In Ontario, their school year starts in September, so August works well for our family vacation. Our son Steve and his wife were with us the first week; they are expecting twins in November! We had been praying for them to have children and this double blessing is a welcome surprise. Our other twin son, Jared, has been living at home again this year and, like Linda, has a good job at Dollywood. Our son, Brad, has been unemployed, but, thankfully, he has now returned to work as an electrician with a new company.

Africa adventures

I mentioned in my previous letter how God blessed our time on South Africa and Cameroon. There were travel challenges along the way. Due to east coast storms my first two flights to South Africa were cancelled, then I was re-routed through Germany. Another trial occurred when my flight from Johannesburg was delayed and I missed the connecting flight in Nairobi. Eventually the airline gave several of us a day pass to a local hotel, since the next flight was that evening. Thankfully, I was able to contact our GFI associate in Kenya, pastor Charles Ambaka. As providence would have it, he was only a 15 minute taxi ride from the Nairobi hotel! We met there and enjoyed a couple of hours of encouraging fellowship. From Nairobi, I flew to Kigali, which is a hub for Rwanda Air. After a night in the airport, the next flight got me to Douala, Cameroon (one day later than expected). Thankfully, the conference organizers were able to adjust the schedule. Instead of my sermons being Wednesday and Friday morning, they were shifted to Thursday and Friday mornings. I presented two workshops on Thursday afternoon. Although I prepared for three workshop sessions, I needed to combine the first two. They were delighted to receive the 50 page notebook that included the sermon notes, workshop notes and additional GFI content such as the Wheel and Line tract.

John Singinie of Malawi joined us in Cameroon and inspired us all with testimonies and a Dynamic Churches workshop on multiplying disciples. See DCImalawi.com

I am so thankful for health, strength and safety during the travel to, in and from Africa. May God water all the seeds of truth sown in South Africa and Cameroon.

Tennessee and Florida adventures

As the GFI letter mentions, Mark and I are to attend the American Association of Christian counselors Conference in Nashville Sept. 13-16. We hope to experience some good networking there. Sept. 22-24 is our trip to Lakeland, Florida (near Tampa). We are to present our Finding Joy seminar to the Parkway Baptist Church & Parkway Christian Academy. We hear they have a good number of teachers and church members that have registered. We will also consult with them about how to use Exchanged Life Counseling in their church and school ministries.

Ministry adventures

"But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:29). May God grant that assurance. We give thanks for ministry developments: the podcast, seminars, books to be published, counseling, and training. Our Monday night Deeper Life Discipleship study (on zoom) will be going through the book *Keys to Health, Wellness and Fruitfulness* (FICM.org)—an exchanged life, body/soul/spirit book and videos project. For details visit our main web site: gracefellowshipinternational.com/ Resources.

Whether or not we travel, abiding in Christ is an adventure. "For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us]" (Eph. 2:10, Amplified Bible).

Thank you for your prayers and financial support. God bless and guide you in this fall season.

Yours in Christ,

John

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Bible Land adventures

Linda and I have not had the blessing of visiting Israel. Visiting Bible lands has been on our "bucket list." A mega trip is approaching for us. September 29-October 16 that will be inspirational, recreational and educational. Destinations include Rome and Naples (Italy), Athens (Greece)

Ephesus (Turkey), Mykonos and Santorini (Greece), Haifa and Jerusalem (Israel), and Chania (Crete). We will be traveling with our GFI friends, Rob and Nancy Semco. May we embrace the apostle's attitude: "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound... I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:12,13). We are so grateful for these plans.