

BREAKING THE SILENCE - A WORD FROM THE SENGS

These past few months have not been easy - mostly because they have been defined by waiting ... waiting ... waiting. No doubt you have felt the same as you have waited ... waited ... waited for news! Please know we regret our silence and the frustration this must cause you who pray. I chose (perhaps wrongly so) to be silent rather than try to fabricate a nice letter that would not reflect the truth of God's goodness.

Let me explain: we had so hoped that by now, regular classes would have been started. Wes has been working hard with Alceris on a contextualized curriculum for the new school, and *that has been a joy*. There have also been group meetings with others involved in the project. Yet Alceris' wider agenda and responsibilities with CONPLEI prevent him from an exclusive focus on the school and of course, interrupt the continuity of planning meetings. We continue to WAIT on the Lord for a concrete beginning with more indigenous participation. Only God can give a vision and a passion.

Meanwhile, God has given us a ministry to several individuals. Our sweet neighbor who accepted the Lord in recent months continues to grow through Bible study. Another neighbor asked for a Bible study confessing he understood very little of what Christianity is all about. Sometimes friends join him in the session and that is a joy. We are both privileged to be involved in the fledgling church begun by Koreans just down the street. Wes often preaches on Sunday evening, and I have often given the children's story in the morning. We are slowly becoming a part of our neighborhood here ... while keeping in touch with the old "hood".

But our silence was also due to broken hearts. Again, let me explain: Our very dear friend, brother and main encourager, Mr. Tony McCarver (MRI's director) answered a higher calling when angels took him home after a grueling three month hospital ordeal. Tony was still in his fifties ... and God knows we were not ready or willing to let him go. We prayed fervently, faithfully, believing God would restore him to his lovely wife and to us. We could not imagine continuing on without his godly encouragement. Yet God thought differently. We know His ways and plans are so much higher than ours. We know He is utterly good, wise and omnipotent. Yet this does not eliminate the huge empty spot he left nor the pain of his absence.

An added heartache has been the trial God has allowed for Placido and Toni in Bolivia. This arose from a law suit on false charges against Placido who cared for a patient carefully and completely without charge. Those who pray for the Mercados

will know the details, so I will not repeat them here. We have spent many hours on our knees - and we believe that God is at work behind the scenes to cause all things to work together for good. But wow! What a time of stretching!

How grateful we are for God's Word! We could not have made it through these days without it. In the midst of gloom, God graced us with a beautiful happy healthy baby grandson (Elias Kuomaro Janzen) and Anna was ecstatic over her brother! I have been reading to her from the Chronicles of Narnia. What a joy to see her excitement at Aslan's appearance, and to hear her exclaim in awe (after a lion wounded a princess): "That was Aslan all along ... and He wasn't just trying to be mean! Nana! The lion was Aslan all along!" A lump arose in my throat and reminded me that in our own wounds, the sweet Lion from the tribe of Judah has been there all along. He is NOT just trying to be mean! Thank You, Lord for this reminder.

It is good to have Andrew and Aimee near - though they have had their own dramas and traumas to cope with: an onslaught of thousands of ticks invaded their house, mattresses, hammocks and walls. One of Anna's puppies died after biting a poisonous toad, and the other almost succumbed to tick fever. Along with that, they discovered hundreds of cockroaches with serious plans to move in as well. Bugs, heat, increased crime in the neighborhood - all of these have sometimes made us wish we could pack our bags. But softly and surely the same word that came to Amy Carmichael comes to us: "This thing is from me!" And someday we will laugh at our silly fears and preoccupations and will sing with joy when our Lord Jesus is glorified in a way we could not even fathom.

How can you pray? Specifically: that God would iron out our rather ruffled souls and continue to heal our hearts - and that Marci McCarver would also be inundated by love and grace as she deals with her tremendous loss. Pray for the Mercados - that darkness would be made to flee before the light. Pray for Alceris - for a clear vision and a passion for the ministry God has placed before him. Pray that as we wait patiently on the Lord, we also will have a clear vision and a renewed passion to do that for which He has called us. Just a note re Sunny and Jonatan: Sunny is extremely busy but doing very well in her residency in Family Medicine. Jonatan needs prayer in his Portuguese as he prepares for his transference exam into the Brazilian medical system.

We love you - and think of you with deep gratitude as we write. Thank you for patiently waiting with us. In His love, Trudy for both Wes and me