The Smith Family Record

December, 2007 *Serving in the Caribbean Islands with Mission To the World* *Palmetto, Florida*

Merry Christmas To All

From Ron & Peg
Benjamin & Allison

How Great God's Love!

The birth of our Savior is the most remarkable, most important event in all of human history – an event worthy of changing calendars. More than 2,000 years have passed and we still remember, retell and celebrate the natal story.

Did you know that the "story" was told – prophesied in the Old Testament for longer than 2,000 years? The first promise was spoken in the hearing of Adam and Eve, and is found in the third chapter of Genesis!

Moses, too, spoke of the promise. David wrote of the promise. The Old Testament Prophets added numerous details to the promise – details which were fulfilled in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The most numerous and most significant details were given by Isaiah, writing 700 years before the birth of Christ, including these unforgettable lines:

> "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,
> And the government will be on his shoulders.
> And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

For those of us who have experienced difficult times, hardship or heartbreak this year, Christmas truly brings us "tidings of comfort and joy." The birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is the guarantee of God, written into history, that all His promises will come to pass, just as He has said.

Our Call to Caribbean Ministry
An MTW "Urgent Need"

We are currently raising support for our latest call through Mission To The World to minister in the English-speaking islands of the Caribbean. This is a new field of opportunity for MTW, and is listed as an "urgent need" for recruitment and support.

A Critical Need The The Christian church in the Caribbean islands has been weakened by decades of liberal theology and a lack of biblically trained leaders. Two of the major needs of the English speaking Caribbean church today are leadership development (theological training, ministry and mentoring of national church planters and pastors) and church renewal.

A Plan For Ministry We hope to recruit and develop a team with a variety of gifts and experiences – one that will be flexible, responsive and motivated. Most probably, the team would live on one of the islands and travel to other locations.

We would work on numerous islands, coming alongside of leaders and churches to encourage their growth and development. We would seek to motivate national leadership to create church planting movements throughout the Caribbean islands.

-- see "Urgent Need" on page two

Can't Argue With God's Providence!

As much as we may wish to have been "on the field" this year, we really can't argue with God about how He has arranged situations for our good and His glory. In fact, we praise the Lord for our circumstances, for He has done GOOD to us! We'd like you to rejoice with us as we recount a few major events that came to us this year by God's hand of providence.

In January, abdominal pain sent Ron to the doctor. Several procedures ruled out any major problems, and Ron has been able to stay healthy with minor changes to his diet.

In April, Peg went to the doctor with "swelling in the neck." A series of tests showed doctors that the swelling was due to cancer of the thyroid. She underwent successful surgery in August, followed by radiation in October, and doctors are confident that they "got it all." We are thankful that God had us here in Southwest Florida, where Peg could be treated by the best surgeons and oncologists in the States.

It's always a stressful time for parents when their children begin to transition from high school to college and careers. Peg, especially, is thankful to have been in the States to help Benjamin and Allison prepare for their futures. I'm experiencing the warm satisfaction of a father's heart as I see mature attitudes, responsible behaviors and internal motivations in Benjamin and Allison. We are truly blessed!

Prayer Requests

- Please pray that the Lord will provide our remaining support need through additional churches and individuals.
- Please pray for our ministry among church leaders, equipping and encouraging them to church growth and revitalization in the Caribbean.
- Please ask the Lord for more missionaries to join the work.
- Please pray for the Lord's guidance and provision for the needs of Benjamin and Allison. The Smith children will be "left behind" when Ron and Peg go to the Caribbean.
- Please pray that the Lord will work out all the related details in such a way that we will have peace and confidence as we leave the children behind.

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A Testimony From Peg

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trouble, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves received from God."

I want to thank you all for this comfort through your prayers and e-mails during these past months as I went through testing and treatment for thyroid cancer. And for you "sisters of the scar" thanks for answering all my questions! I am now feeling much better, although still a little tired at times.

This cancer is my Ebenezer stone, my spiritual memorial. I am seeing that God has ordained this just for me because He wants to teach me some very special lessons. And, in a way, I had been praying for this, too.

Things have been difficult for me spiritually ever since returning from Ecuador. About six months ago, maybe longer, I started praying for a spiritual revival, a spiritual renewal within me. This medical diagnosis, I believe, is the beginning of God answering my request. I truly do want to know Him and trust Him totally and completely. I do want to live a life "worthy of the Lord." I truly want nothing else to matter except Him. I want to love Him with all my heart and to share Him with others and not worry about what they may think of me. I truly want to say as the title of a book by Max Lucado says, "It's Not About Me." I don't want to get to the end of my life and wonder if God will be able to say to me "well done, thou good and faithful servant."

An MTW "Urgent Need" Caribbean Ministry

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A Plea For Additional Support The Smiths will be the first MTW couple to relocate to the English-speaking Caribbean. There is work already waiting for us, and we are anxious to get started. If the remaining support comes in quickly, we think we can be ready to leave in or around next September. But before we can move to the field, we need to reach 100% support. We need an additional $1735 in monthly pledges to reach 100%!

c/o MTW
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