



Ferguson Report



Vol. 4 No. 10

“Go ye unto all the world”

October 2007

To Worry or to Dream?

You have probably heard of these saying as I have: “Ninety percent of the things we tend to worry about we have no control over, so why worry about them?” or “Over 90 percent of what you worry about never come to pass.” As I thought of those quotes I realized that worry is the very opposite of dreams. Consider these reasons why:

1. Worry drains your ambitions; dreams fuel them.
2. Worry creates self-doubts; dreams produce successful-thinking and a winning spirit.
3. Worry produces mediocrity; dreams multiply your efforts.
4. Worry causes fright; dreams inspire flight!
5. Worry takes away your spark; dreams engender excitement.
6. Worry stifles creativity; dreams are the “stuff” of inventiveness.

The above contrasts are relevant to nearly every endeavor in life. But I can think of few undertakings where this is more vital to success than in world missions. This is obvious just by virtue of the innumerable host of people in the world and the colossal cost of just one lost soul in the eyes of God! Yet, there are seemingly endless obstacles:

1. A “consumerist” mindset accustomed to “instant” conversions which becomes impatient with long-term efforts.
2. The “out-of-sight-out-of-mind” mentality that hinders both the tenacity and the financial constancy required of successful mission works.
3. Unprepared and untrained mission personnel.
4. Committed personnel who lack spiritual, logistical, and economical assurance in the mission field.
5. Weak mission congregations who are either unable or unwilling to provide local leadership and evangelistic assistance.
6. Uncooperative—even hostile government bodies either nationally or locally.
7. The all-inclusive “cultural baggage” that is inherent in working in a country other than one’s own.

Instead of “wringing” our hands and worrying about the enormity of the task of world missions, it is always appropriate to lift our eyes back up again and to

dream again. And remember that God lives in the realms of “Can-Do!” and “Will-Do!” All things that we can dream of are, I believe, potential realities. If you can dream of taking the gospel to the world, then it CAN be done! If you can dream of talking to your neighbor about Christ, then it CAN be done! If you can dream of obeying Christ in faith, repentance, and baptism and living a faithful Christian life, it CAN be done! If there is sin in your life, or you are unfaithful as God’s child and you can dream of being back in a rightful relationship with God, you CAN repent and be restored back to that blessed fellowship. If you can dream of working in a foreign country as a missionary, it CAN be done! Don’t worry about the obstacles. If God is willing, and you are willing, it CAN be done.

When we are tempted to think God’s work cannot be done and begin to worry about how we can accomplish His will, think on the psalmist’s words:

Psalm 121

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
From whence comes my help?
My help *comes* from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to be moved;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, He who keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD *is* your keeper;
The LORD *is* your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
Nor the moon by night.
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.

This psalm is both personally comforting to the Christian and motivating to the church. Jesus said, “Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature” (Matthew 6:27)? James wrote, “Yet you do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:2). Saving of souls is God’s dream. Rather than worry, let’s fulfill God’s dream with our hands and feet! Howell

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Tanzania and Nigeria Ahead

In a week or two from the time you receive this newsletter, Timothy Roland (preacher for the Humboldt church of Christ, Humboldt, TN) and I will be on our way to the African continent (Nov. 15 – Dec. 6). I always have mixed emotions about such trips as most of you know from reading my former newsletters. It's always a joyous occasion to be reunited with my African brethren as well as the local American missionaries. But it is never easy to leave my precious Mary and our wonderful kids behind. I pray the day comes *soon* that Mary can accompany me on every one of my trips overseas. She is always such a great blessing to me and my work. I absolutely positively believe she is a vital core to any success I might have in this work. I ask you to please remember her and our kids—as well as Tim's family in your prayers while we are away. FYI our daughter Sarah—a junior, and older son Seth—a sophomore, are missions majors at Freed-Hardeman University. Our younger son Nathan is a junior at Crockett County High School and is president of Future Business Leaders of America. Naturally, we are very proud of all of them.

As this article title states, this trip will involve two countries. Our first and longest segment consists of nearly 2 weeks at Chimala, Tanzania where Tim and I will be teaching 2 classes each in the Chimala Bible College. Lord willing, we will have our first set of

CBC graduates by spring of 2008 with a graduation exercise probably in May. Once Tim and I arrive at Chimala the classes that will be taught by Tim will be Scheme of Redemption and Paul's prison epistles; whereas, I will teach Church History and Church Growth. This will be Tim's 1st trip to the African continent and my 7th trip to Tanzania since my family returned home from Africa in 2003. One additional goal of this trip will be to look into increasing our teaching staff at CBC by looking at our upcoming graduates as well as some new arrivals to the Chimala Mission.

After we leave Chimala, Tim and I will fly on Saturday (Dec 1) on a very early flight from Dar to Lagos, with a very short layover in Nairobi. We will then remain the rest of the day in Lagos waiting for Keith Kasarjian's 10:30 p.m. KLM flight to arrive. The next Sunday afternoon, we catch a local 4:00 p.m. flight from Lagos to Enugu where we will then take a 45 min. truck ride to Abakaliki, the city of CSMT School of Biblical Studies. Our purpose for the trip is basically two-fold: one, to become familiar with the logistics required for ensuring safe and efficient transportation for future teachers and travelers; and two, to become familiar with the operations, personnel and facilities of CSMT. Keith will be working with me as a “co-coordinator” in this program. Again, we ask that you keep us and our families in your prayers and that we accomplish each of our goals. Howell