

Link Letter No.3 March 2014

Dear friends,

Celebrate, surrender and prayer

It is almost 3am, as I sit here at my desk eagerly desiring to write this letter to you. Normally, I agonise for days over writing letters. Unlike the great New Testament writer Paul, I am not a natural orator. Today, I have a Holy Spirit inspired letter and I know what I believe God wants me to communicate to you. As you read this letter, please ask yourself...

... *“What am I doing to build God’s Kingdom here on earth and what legacy am I leaving behind?”*

I began this year with a time of fasting and prayer because I just did not know where to turn except to God about the situation.

Today, I received a further email to inform me that one of the strategies that CMS had tried to put in place to help raise support was not going to be possible for reasons beyond their control. The person who communicated this information spoke of their own feelings of frustration about this outcome. Two years ago, I too would have been so frustrated with what has happened.

“Are we not called to go into every nation and tell of the Hope that we have found in our Saviour Jesus Christ?” Here I am ready and waiting to answer that call and only one thing hinders me from going. What makes it harder is when a church leader in Brazil and people in my supporting churches ask me why I am not in Brazil yet, or welcome me back after my time in Brazil. Meanwhile, the greatest work I can do for my brothers and sisters there and around the world is to pray that God will raise one of you who has sufficient funds to help me go and serve.

My reaction today to the news of a further setback was to “celebrate, surrender and praise”. As a child I struggled with my name. I guess that at some point when I understood its biblical definition I began to embrace it. This week in my morning devotion, I was reminded of what the bible says about faith: Hebrews 11:1: *“Now faith is the assurance that what we hope for will come about and the certainty that what we cannot see exists.”* Hebrews 11:6: *“Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who diligently search for him.”* So it is time to celebrate. Later in the same passage it goes on to say: *“All these people won approval for their faith but they did not receive what was promised...since God had planned something better for us, so that they would not be perfected without us”.*

I celebrate having been supported by my church and CMS, and having been able to contact almost 200 churches, in the UK and elsewhere, and to speak to pastors and leaders about Brazil and the plight of its people; over this last two years, I celebrate that around 10 churches and individuals have agreed to partner with us to raise almost half of what is required for the first year to send us to serve in Recife; I celebrate that God has given me a child and that has changed what I ever could have imagined for my life; I celebrate that God has permitted me to visit Brazil twice and meet some wonderful people, so that I could start to understand what I really needed to plan, prepare and pray for. I have already been able to contribute in small ways.



Faith Gordon

CMS mission partner

Brazil

Faith Gordon is a CMS mission partner in training, preparing to work in Recife in Brazil. She is hoping to work with local churches developing business and training programmes that meet the spiritual, social, educational and employment needs of the various slum communities in a holistic and sustainable way.

It is also time to surrender. Hebrews 11 says: *“Abraham was as good as dead, yet from this one man came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore... All these people died having faith. They did not receive the things that were promised, yet they saw them in the distant future and welcomed them, acknowledging that they were strangers and foreigners on earth... For people who say such things make it clear that they are looking for a country of their own... If they had been thinking about what they had left behind, they would have had an opportunity to go back... Instead, they were longing for a better country, that is, a heavenly one. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, because he has prepared a city for them.”*

For 30 years now, I have pursued this vision God gave me as a teenager – to serve in Brazil. It has shaped the course of my life. As I reflect, I believe it is the reason why I could never settle in one place or country for too long. I always felt this was not where I am supposed to be and I would not fulfil my life’s purpose if I did not fulfil my calling. Even in China, another country I hold dear to my heart, I could not find my complete purpose. In Brazil I initially wanted to go to Sao Paulo because it was the first place I learned about the plight of the children in Brazil. However, I believe that God has clearly redirected my focus to Recife in the poverty stricken north east of the country where I am needed now to take up my position in the House of Hope project.

I have not given up on Brazil. For the last four years since I returned to the UK, I have tried to find the right mission agency and then location to work in Brazil, and raise support. Perhaps, if I were alone I would have tried to find a way of working my way there so that I would be obedient to my call. But now I have to be more practical and I have thus come to a place of surrender. Like Jabez, my prayer for blessing and increase of my territory has been answered to some extent, as hundreds more people know about Brazil and I have seen a few want to take up the call and also desire to serve there. I have worked since being in the UK and dedicated my time to visiting churches but have not been able to settle into a permanent role because of the uncertainty of when it would be possible to go to Recife. I now have to take up my responsibilities as a parent, and find a job so that I can provide for the child that God has given me.

Prayer has always been one of the most important activities in my life. Now again, I ask you to join me in praising God and praying for clarity in discerning what I am to do next, as I need to live a less nomadic life. Terah, Abraham’s father, settled in Haran (Genesis 11:31); I have not been able to find out whether he was given the same call as his son and gave up and settled with his family in Haran. However, in Genesis 12:1, Abram is given the call by God to go and he gets up with the promise of success in the new land God is giving him and his family.

Caleb, as you know from previous letters, is my favourite bible character. He never lost sight of his belief that if God was with him, all things were possible and at 85 years of age, he was ready and willing to climb mountains and fight giants to obtain what God had promised. I know that “one word” from God can change this situation and I will be ready to go and claim the promise when that door is open or be like the saints in Hebrews 11:13.

At the start of this letter, I asked you to reflect on what you were doing to build the Kingdom of God and what legacy you were leaving behind. We know that with the Body of Christ, as with our physical bodies, if one part is not functioning as it should our entire body feels the pain. As I reflected on the 30 years that I have invested in and devoted to pursuing my call and preparing to go to Recife, I was reminded of Colossians 3:23-24: *“Whatever you do, work at it wholeheartedly as though you were doing it for the Lord and not merely for people... You know that it is from the Lord that you will receive the inheritance as a reward. It is the Lord Messiah whom you are serving!”*

One of my roles was to make you aware of the plight of the children and people of Recife and Brazil. It is now your turn to participate in the next stage of the assignment to see the millions of people of Brazil reached for Jesus in whatever way God directs you.

God bless you.

Faith and Vanessa

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