
Cross Cultural Discipling Mission

Benjamin & Karen Rees

January 2009

IF YOU RECEIVED THIS VIA E-MAIL: We value your prayers, but we also value your good will. If anyone who receives this would rather not receive it in future, please let us know and we will remove your address from our list.

IF YOU READ THIS ON THE INTERNET and would like to receive this letter regularly (roughly once a month), please send your request to <reesmission@gmail.com> and we will add you to the mailing list.

Written on 21 January 2009.

Weather (3:20 p.m.), sunny and clear. Temperature, 23°C (73°F). Relative humidity, 61%. Air pollution index, (general) 50-70, (roadside) 75-100.

DECEMBER AND JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS

November, December and January are often the busiest months in our ministry here. This year was not an exception. I have already told about November in our last letter. Here are some highlights of December and January so far. (Most of this section of our letter is taken from a letter I wrote at the beginning of the month for those who have sent contributions this month. If you received that letter, please feel to skip down to near the end of this section, where we hope you will rejoin us for the most recent news and a look ahead at the coming year.)

Wednesday, Dec. 10: We and a few other missionary families got together for our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas potluck and prayer meeting. Most of us in this group meet together roughly once a month throughout the year to share prayer needs and pray for each other's ministries.

Sunday, Dec. 14: I preached my third Advent/Christmas sermon of the season, and the Bible study was cancelled for the Faith Circle group (which plans fellowship activities) to hold a Christmas party.

Sunday, Dec. 21: Instead of a sermon, we had a special programme of music and Scripture readings, arranged by one of the church deaconesses, with the theme of "Light." In the abbreviated Bible study time after the main service Karen taught part one of a special Christmas lesson.

Christmas Day, Thursday, Dec. 25: The Faith Circle sponsored a barbecue in a park in Tuen Mun, one of the "New Towns" developed in the "New Territories" in the 1970s. Thanks to God's providence, we had perfect weather for the barbecue, and everyone who went seemed to enjoy the day.

Sunday, Dec. 28: In the sermon time we had a short play, which I directed, followed by a challenge to action. I particularly enjoyed doing the play. When I was in high school, I used to write and direct a short Christmas play every year for the church, and I was involved in drama through almost the whole of my studies at Ozark Bible college, but I have not had the opportunity to do much with drama for many years. In the Bible study time, Karen taught part two of her special Christmas lesson.

Wednesday, Dec. 31: Since we had church activities on Dec. 25, Karen and I celebrated our family "Christmas" on New Year's Eve.

Thursday, January 1: We had an "Open House" at our apartment for those in the church who didn't have to work and didn't have other New Year's day plans of their own. Besides the Filipinas, the Sri Lankan family we are

helping came, as did one of our newest members, a young businessman from Zambia. We ate together, played games, and had a good time of fellowship and getting better acquainted than is possible just on Sunday.

Saturday morning, Jan. 3 (the evening of Friday the 2nd in the States), we made our annual Christmas telephone calls to both our children, who are both currently in Joplin, MO.



Chinese New Year this year falls on January 26. As always, there are three days of public holiday, Jan. 26-28. Together with Sunday the 25th people *should* have 4 days off work. In actuality, most employers do not allow their maids to have that much time off, and many of our church members will be lucky if they get 2 days off. On one day (probably the 26th) the Faith Circle will hold a drama competition. On the 28th, the church officers will hold a retreat/seminar on evangelism.

* Thank God that most of the December and January church activities went reasonably well. Pray for those that still remain, especially the seminar on evangelism on the 28th.

LOOKING AHEAD

This year we will continue the project we began with the church last year, of trying to clarify priorities and sharpen the focus of the church. The aim is to better fulfill God's purposes for this congregation in this place and time. We believe that the efforts so far have helped bring a degree of renewal in the church. We hope that this year we can build on that and carry things further forward.

* Please pray for God's guidance in this project. We see many "good" things we could do, but we know that sometimes "the good" can be the enemy of "the best." Pray that God will help us to discover His "best" for us and the church this year.

We hope to make a reporting trip to the U.S. later this year – probably around July to September. Since it has been several years since we last visited our supporters in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, we will try to give them priority. We also want to attend the “School of Missions” in early August at the Lake James Christian Assembly in Indiana. We will probably also spend some time in the “Four State” area around the corners of MO, AR, OK and KS, since that's where most of our supporters are and where our closest relatives are currently living, including Karen's parents and both of our kids. We would *like* to visit one or more of the places in Canada where members of the Hong Kong church have settled, but we don't know if this will be feasible or not.

If you are in any of these areas and would like us to make a report to your church, please e-mail us ASAP so we can begin making our itinerary.

* Please pray for this trip. Pray that we will be able to get the itinerary arranged quickly and efficiently. Pray that we will be chosen to be on the programme at Lake James. Pray for our transport needs while we are in the U.S. Pray for the needs of the church (and for someone to keep an eye on our apartment) while we are away.

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