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Confirming the Churches

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October-December Report, 2015

Dear brothers, sisters, family and friends,

May the peace of God and the hope of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ comfort and guide you every day. This work of confirming the churches reached some very encouraging milestones in the last quarter of 2015. In order to understand the significance of these, it might be helpful to review the purpose and plan of the mission. In Acts 15:41 Luke, by inspiration of God, wrote, “And he (Paul) went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.” In chapter 16, verse 4 Luke detailed what Paul and Silas were doing on that journey: “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.” The word translated “confirming” is defined, “establish besides, strengthen more.” Thus, Paul and Silas were traveling among established churches to establish them more firmly and strengthen their faith by preaching and teaching the words taught from the beginning by the apostles of Jesus Christ. In our day of shrinking churches, increasing false teaching and growing discouragement, our full-time mission is to encourage as many as we can by getting back to preaching the simple, basic gospel preached from the beginning by the apostles and prophets. Over the years many have lost the focus on the basics and the purpose of the church. Preachers – myself included – have been persuaded to preach what the church wants to hear, and have forgotten the admonition to guard against that (II Timothy 4:1,4).

Other factors, of course, discourage Christians. Worldliness lures youth away, leaving an aging church. Distance from other Christians in remote locations tends toward loneliness. Spiritual distance from brethren when neighboring churches drift from the faith can have the same effect. All these and more are answered by preaching the ancient truth in love with confidence and conviction. We have often seen disappointment and weariness – even doubt – dissolve into renewed joy at the hearing of “the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11). In this last quarter of 2015 we have seen some big steps taken toward the goals that have driven this work from the beginning.



The wedding announced in the previous report occurred as scheduled on the 3rd of October. Even on our honeymoon we were able to encourage a church in Illinois that typically has fewer than 15 in Sunday assemblies. The preacher and every one of the 9 others present expressed appreciation for our visit and our encouraging words – and lingered long in doing so. We have specific plans to visit with this church again, and in the mean time to supply them with books, tracts and continued correspondence. One shipment of tracts was sent two days after our return home.

Back home in Saline we heard reports that encouraged us: that in my 2-week absence the men of the church filled the preaching and teaching responsibilities with faith, truth and confidence. The attendance here is still small – averaging 25 – but the enthusiasm and zeal are markedly increased compared to my arrival here in March, 2013.

October 24th was the day of my monthly Skype visit with the StraitGate Preacher Training School in

Ambijapeta, Andhra Pradesh, India. The one-hour class was on the subject of singing. Churches in India hear many conflicting doctrines, and local preachers often have completed less than a year of formal study and training. Most of the students in this school are already preaching in surrounding towns and cities, and are coming together for further grounding and mutual encouragement. We talked about how to understand the authority of God in the Bible.

The preceding report gave the account of the marvelous results when we visited brother Lukaiah Jutike in Immadicheruvu. I have continued to correspond with him, answering his questions and sending him tracts, study guides and lesson outlines. He is a good student, and abundantly grateful for the support. He is strengthening the new saints and evangelizing the village further.



On the 30th of October Sybil and I began a 2-ay road trip to Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. The French-Acadian preacher, Stephane Maillet, lives there; the church meets in the twin city of Riverview. This was my second consecutive November mission with this group of about 30 Christians. I preached on Wednesday, and a 3-day weekend gospel meeting. We also had private studies with individuals and families in the church building and several homes. In one home we visited with a couple who had been divided from other area Christians for years, but had begun to seek the way to unity. I heard after our visit that they became regular in attendance with the Riverview church.

Some of you may be concerned about my health; my September report told of a disrupted mission and slow recovery. Since that recovery I have had no further health concerns. I have visited the doctor again, and he is impressed with the strength of my health; all of my numbers are far better than average for my age.


Sybil and I are combining our efforts in expanding the reach of Confirming the Churches. In addition to that, Christians who know of our work are promoting it to various states. Tract orders and gospel meeting requests have begun to come in every month. Specific plans are supposed to be finalized in February for several missions during the new year. If the Lord wills, we shall be able to report the schedule in our next report.

Confirming the Churches Bible Class, of course, still streams live on YouTube every Tuesday at 7:00 PM Eastern time. You can watch it also on our web site at acts1541.org. Watch it yourself, and encourage others to watch also. One regular viewer invites friends to her house to watch with her every week. Many who are not free to watch on Tuesday evening watch the recording later in the week. If you make the 30-minute class part of your Bible study program at least one day of the week it will encourage us in our work, and it may strengthen you in yours.

Thank you for your support and prayers, and may God bless you.

In His service,

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the
Churches
Bible Class**

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