

Dr. Ralph D. and Roberta H. Winter

1469 Bresee Ave. Pasadena CA 91104
626-794-5544 Fax: 626-794-6655
Email: rdw112233@aol.com

December 8, 1998

Ralph's birthday

Dear Prayer Partners,

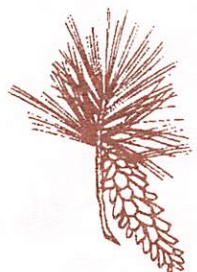
We feel very guilty at how long it has been since we have written up and sent out a general letter. Many of the last 24 months since I, Roberta, was diagnosed with cancer have been difficult, to say the least. We've wanted to write you and actually prepared something last year but then did not find the time to check our mailing list for out-of-date addresses. So it was never sent. Ralph has given tiny updates in *Mission Frontiers*, but you who know us well deserve much more than that, even in order to pray.

However, I don't want to take up this valuable space with just details about all that has happened, but if you really want to know more of the blow-by-blow just check off that option on the enclosed postcard (which we need you to send back if you have the slightest change of address or email).

Let me start by saying just how very much I have appreciated the cards, letters, flowers, books on cancer and nutrition, Barley Green, Essiac tea, Mannatec products, MGN and all the other trial products for cancer that you have generously sent as well as money to try out non-traditional medical treatment in Mexico (which though it didn't cure did help me get strength back after almost dying twice). Just as important has been the healing of my soul through generous gifts of a portable CD player and CDs of classical music, Christmas songs, hymns—both choirs and instrumental—the Tyndale Press gift of the *Living Bible* on tape, books or tapes on healing, phone calls, meals, etc. You have all been so very, very good to me, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart even though I just didn't have the emotional or physical energy to write individual thank-you notes when I should have.

Love You!

Multiple myeloma is "an incurable cancer" of the immune system. Rarely is it fast growing, generally just rather slowly eats away all the bone marrow, eventually causing the bones to hurt and crumble! The latest research suggests that it might be trig-

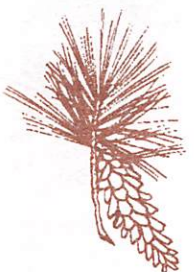
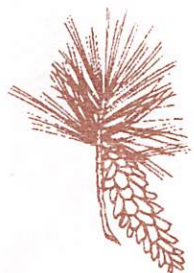
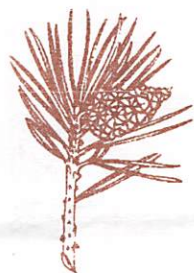


gered by a "stealth" virus which invades the chromosome corrupting the DNA itself, making the cell replicate itself perversely, gradually destroying the entire immune system.

My mother(now deceased) was a great believer in divine healing, and Ralph and I have prayed continuously and with faith about my illness. I've felt led to ask God for 15 years (and later heard that two others also felt led to pray that way for me). I've heard of only three myeloma patients who were divinely healed. Many more have survived 5, 10 and even 15 years by having repeated stem-cell transplants and/or chemotherapy and radiation. Through an Internet forum we are in touch with almost 900 myeloma patients from 26 countries, receiving about 35 short comments from them per day, all waiting for "the cure!" (Gene therapy offers great hope—in a few years.) Often a death is reported, and we all grieve. Yet I've been amazed at the comments of prayer and comfort and belief in God from almost everyone on this forum, it seems. Doctors often don't realize how important it is just to give hope and for patients to have a strong backing of prayer. It can make all the difference in the world. Also, local patient support groups in a Stanford study showed that those participating lived 50% longer than those going it alone.

Jesus sent his disciples out to preach *and to heal*, telling those healed, "The kingdom of God is very near you now" (Luke 10:1-2 Matt. 10:7). Missionaries have always known that missions involves "divine" healing through prayer but also through people trained in medical science and research on causes and cures of disease. Because of the crush of people needing help, few medical missionaries do basic research. But as the followers of Jesus in a suffering world, some of us must! It is part of our command from our Captain. When missionaries, especially to the unreached, can't do anything about people's suffering, or when we Evangelicals in general apparently don't *really try to eliminate the disease itself*, we may eventually discover that we are preaching a Gospel that is something less than the full span of God's love, and, as my husband thinks, "misrepresenting Him."

Speaking of **Ralph**: He is still going strong, although my cancer puts an additional emotional burden on him. On December 28, this year, we will celebrate our 47th year of marriage. He is today 74 and I will shortly be 69. When I was too young and unwise to know just how to choose the best husband for me, God gave me one of His choicest jewels, for which I will be eternally grateful. In this season of sometimes agony, sometimes tears, he has held and comforted me, and rubbed my back without complaint. He says, "I have nothing more important to do," which I don't really be-



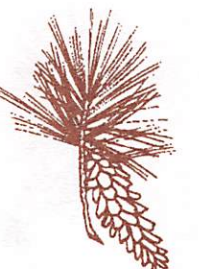
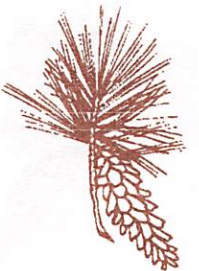
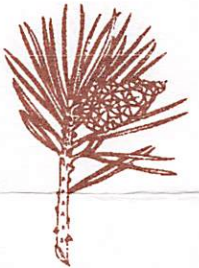
lieve, but which I have to count on from time to time and love him for it.

We are so grateful that we both can still be of service to the Lord as well as to rest in Him. When we first went to teach at Fuller (at ages 36 and 41 respectively), I used to be amazed how many leaders from overseas came to counsel with Dr. McGavran. Now Ralph's schedule is loaded much the same way. He also tries to keep track of all sorts of things here for which he has no direct responsibility and (if asked) to offer our capable younger leaders advice learned from his 40+ years of experience. He has done a great deal of creative writing (for our Center's bulletin, *Mission Frontiers*, for an upcoming *Evangelical Dictionary of Missions*, for the new edition of the *Perspectives* book, etc.). And he keeps his eyes on the world of missions. This is heavy responsibility. The bulletin goes to more than 100,000 each time. The *Perspectives* book is far beyond 100,000.

Just two days ago at the Fuller faculty luncheon (to which he is regularly invited as a "Distinguished Missiologist in Residence") he learned that although the *L.A. Times* reported that Christians in Indonesia had burned four Muslim mosques; the larger picture (unreported) is that Muslims have burned 450 churches, 20 in the last ten days alone. Where and when will it all end? Not until Jesus comes? How do we reach out to the unreached in such situations? In many places although they want nothing to do with Christians, but they want to know Jesus. What can and should we do to help make this possible?

Besides fighting to live, what can I personally do? Well, I stay away from crowds because chemo brings my already damaged immune system down so low that I am susceptible to viral and bacterial infection like pneumonia, flu, shingles, etc., which are usually the killers for people with myeloma. At present I can't stand for more than 15 or 20 minutes without pain, nor sit for very long. But I edit, train others in manuscript preparation for publishing, work a bit on the update of my book, *I Will Do a New Thing* and a smaller version for our upcoming "Million Person Campaign," read my Bible, do research for Ralph (lying down perhaps), read my e-mail, etc. I don't have the energy to do all I would like to do, unfortunately. Quite often I am good for nothing at all!

This wonderful mission community here has been a Godsend for both of us. One dear lady each Monday cleans my kitchen and bath and vacuums; another juices carrots once a week; another three mornings a week helps us both with office work, errands,



making a meal if I can't, and even stays overnight if Ralph has to speak somewhere at a distance. (He rarely goes because of my condition.) Last June a chest catheter inadvertently produced a walnut-size blood clot in the main vein (superior vena cava) just above my heart, which causes my head to feel like it will split if I bend over. Blood thinners are not dissolving it, even after 6 months. So I have had to learn dependency.

I especially thank the Lord for the phone, which helps me keep informed so I can pray (and maybe give advice) to others in need, or receive comfort from them. It has meant so much to me to be able to call our wonderful four daughters, all missionary wives.

The enclosed picture shows who they are: **Tricia, our youngest**, (lower right) was tentatively diagnosed with multiple sclerosis last year. But so far she is doing fine, no symptoms at present, and we're praying the diagnosis will not turn out to be correct. For several years she has coordinated the classes called "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement" in Richmond, VA and has been on the missions committee of St. Giles Presbyterian church. This last June she gave birth to beautiful, sweet baby girl—her 3rd—whose picture in itself brings joy to my heart. Her husband, Todd Johnson (under Youth With a Mission), works with David Barrett on the massive up-coming three-volume Oxford *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Second Edition.

Our 3rd daughter, Linda, (upper middle) continues to be one of the mainstays in "helps" to the Frontiers (mission agency) team in London. At the yearly international field council meeting, she helps their far-flung missionaries to Muslims get needed home-schooling resources and sells all sorts of other books they can't get elsewhere. Besides that and her regular wifely chores, she hunts for houses and furniture for missionaries coming to London to work for Frontiers and ends up selling a lot of their stuff when they need to go back to the field or home. Pray for her; she sometimes gets very exhausted. Her husband, Darrell Dorr, right now is carrying two or more jobs in the international office and is experiencing heart palpitations and high blood pressure. Both of them are working too hard. Pray for them.

Then there is **Becky, our #2 daughter who lives near by** (upper right). She and her husband (Tim Lewis) are also with Frontiers—probably the first to join the mission. Speaking Spanish fluently, he trains Latin Americans going overseas with Frontiers on how to minister to Muslims. Or he helps raise funds for the agency, etc. Becky is also very busy. She spends a great deal of time planning curriculum for our K-8 missionary kids school on campus, as well as homeschooling part-time three of her own four children. Ask William Carey Library Press here for her great little book *The Night Cometh* (on the social impact on America of the revivals in the 1800s. Also her booklet *Unto the Least of These* on infant care is widely in demand. (or I can pass on your order to her.) She's quite a good writer. It is a blessing to have her near, sever-

al times really essential for us.

Last of all there is Beth, our oldest (upper left). Because of their 17-year-old autistic son's special needs for adequate schooling, she and her family have had to return from the field to the States. Michigan seems to have the best system for kids with "Ausberger Syndrome"—bright, but autistic children. The state has a special program which trains them at state expense until they are 26 years old. Moreover, the largest concentration of Muslims in America are in the Detroit area, where they have just now relocated. Having served in Morocco for 12 years, both Brad and Beth speak Arabic fluently and are eager to be in ministry with Muslims again. Their four children are adjusting to the move quite well. Brad, along with another former missionary to Morocco, will be setting up a special training institute to prepare people going abroad and local churches on how to minister to Muslims—a much needed new project.

Forty-seven years ago we were headed for **Afghanistan**. Ralph as a student at Princeton Seminary after the first InterVarsity Missionary Conference in Toronto actually recruited the first few couples to go there, including Dr. J. Christy Wilson—near death at this very moment from cancer-related complications. But Ralph's Ph.D. and seminary studies delayed our own going. We finally ended up working for two terms with Mayan Indians in Guatemala, another 10 years as a professor on the newly established School of World Mission faculty at Fuller Seminary, and now the last 22 years founding and establishing the U.S. Center for World Mission and the William Carey International University. Apparently, to ask the Lord, "What will you have me do?" can be dangerous, but oh so exciting and fulfilling, we have found.

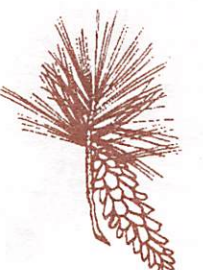
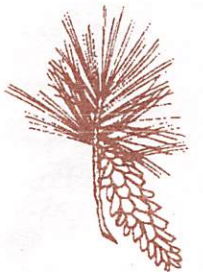
I've left little space for Ralph, and I'm sorry. For various reasons including our inability to be more faithful in writing letters our financial support has really dropped. For the first time since the beginning of the Center in 1976-77, we need to ask for your financial help for our personal support. Medical expenses not covered by Medicare, an old car, and even the financial distress or death of former supporters our own age have all taken their toll on our income. Beyond what Medicare and supplemental health insurance have covered we have run up additional expenses—\$15 thousand last year and \$5 thousand so far this year. Can you pray about this with us, if the Lord so guides? He has promised to provide, and we believe Him. It may be, however, that since we have not asked for personal help across the years, you might have assumed we didn't need it. But we do! So please pray. God bless you all. We'll try to write again much sooner next time, especially if you have an email address. Much love, in His service,

Roberta
Roberta

RALPH:

Dear Friends,

I am so glad that Roberta has been able to write as much as she has. These two years "not knowing what a day may bring forth" have been a rather special experience. Roberta and I have been both thrown together and drawn to-



gether as never before. She is really something.

Thus, I am glad for this letter to be mainly *her letter*.

My job is to get it in the mail! Please understand that by sending this letter out at 32¢ we may be able to get it to you, but that won't automatically return to us your new address nor an address correction, no e-mail address, etc. For that you need to return the enclosed postcard—or e-mail that information to our e-mail address on the first page.

Although her type of cancer Roberta has increases only gradually, all peace and quiet, all presence of mind, all outlook and capacity for useful work is constantly compromised by the ravages of chemo and (earlier) radiation. To suffer physically is bad enough. To suffer mood swings and emotional upheavals makes things considerably more difficult for her.

But don't just pray for us. I have come to some new points of view. While it is clear that at certain times and places in the Bible and history God has demonstrated His miraculous healing power—for which we are humbly praying almost constantly—it is also obvious that God does not expect us to try to gang up on Him and try to force Him to do all healing by miracle.

What does God want us to do? Suffer in silence, "knowing He has our best interests in mind?" What if He *doesn't* or simply *isn't* working that way? What if we fall far short of understanding what He is up to? Yes, I think that is the case. You, too, are very likely to get cancer—about half of all Americans will. Does God expect us simply to wait around while a relatively tiny research force is at work to prevent it?

Down through history I think God has held firm to His original purpose to create beings who could fellowship with Him in a measure of freedom of the will. (How else could Satan rebel? How else would suffering and distortion pervade creation?) He has created us for fellowship. He wants us to "think His thoughts after Him." He apparently is allowing human beings to see inside the very cell and behold His wondrous works, AND ALSO to participate with Him in fighting the perversions we readily find there?

What mysterious evil person is out to mar or distort the beauty and good purposes of what people can see as a mostly "good" creation? Note that in I John 3:8, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose: that He might destroy the works of the devil." Isn't this a task in which we are expected to participate?

Don't ask me why there is a Satan, or why there is evil. But don't try to tell me (now) that we ought not to fight back against all demonic efforts to discredit the goodness of God and to distort the beauty of His creation. I am even wondering if the fall of Satan explains the sudden appearance for the first time of *predatory* forms of life (in the Ediacaran period). I believe it is pagan for us to act as though we are not to fight back against evil right down to the level of the virus.

In fact, I feel sure Roberta would not be dying of cancer if we had upheld our obligations in the laboratories both to glory in the wonders of His "intelligent design" and also do our part in opposing all distortions we see there as vigorously as we fought the Viet Nam war. But, today 150 times as many Americans die of cancer daily as died daily in that ten-year war—and yet we are fighting back with about one hundredth of the effort we put into that war! (The billions cancer costs are 99% the costs of *treatments*, not the basic research, such as gene therapy, which holds great promise to *eliminate* cancer.) Note: the collapse of the cancer *treatment* industry would be a greater financial shock than the collapse of the stock market.

Blessings on all of you. Sorry for the fine print. All our times are in His hands.
Much love, Ralph

Ralph