

Keeping on FOCUS

Newsletter of Carmen and Don Bryant
Campus Ambassadors, a division of Missions Door

January 27, 2014

Pray for ACMI

These are personal / work prayer requests as well. As the Executive Director of ACMI, I have to head up the efforts to see that our mission and vision are filled.

- * A new Director. The search is still on. *Important!*
- * Volunteers within ACMI to take responsibility for various sections of our Internet activity.
- * A Web developer.
- * A prayer coordinator.
- * A team for the 2015 ACMI conference (we have talks in progress but no commitment yet)
- * Increased financial commitments to ACMI

Support needed

I am looking for additional partners in this ministry to international students that is reaching unbelievers from multiple countries right here in the US and Canada. Both one-time gifts and monthly commitments would be greatly appreciated. To give online, go to

<http://www.campusambassadors.com/contact.html>

and click on "Make a Donation." For further information, write me at carmenhills@comcast.net. (More contact information on next page.)

Famous last words...

Our Christmas letter mentioned our relief at Don's health being stable since August of last year. As of three days after Christmas, that reprieve officially ended. In a space of seven days he was in the ER three times and admitted twice, with all seven nights in the hospital with pneumonia and related problems. Some of you were following the saga on Facebook.

When he came home, he was very weak and needed to be on oxygen. He has greatly improved, and the oxygen compressor is sitting off to the side, unplugged. He has been back to church for the last two weeks.

This last round of ER trips and hospitalizations, though, has made it abundantly clear that we can no longer stay in the home where we have lived since 1996, ever since our return from the Philippines. We cannot keep up the yard, and with my own physical limitations due to rheumatoid arthritis, I can no longer handle the housework. So...we have made the decision to move to senior living.

Where? We don't know yet. We're still investigating the options. We'd like to stay in the Hillsboro area where our church and friends are. I would still commute to Portland to work in my office at the WorldView Center.

Pray for us in the changes that must come

- Downsizing. One advantage of serving overseas for so long was that we had to clean out everything every 4-5 years. Now we have almost 18 years worth of accumulation, most of which will have to go.
- Finding a facility that will have the features needed at a cost we can afford.
- Adapting to a very different setting—but not an unattractive one by any means!

Cross-cultural seminar, part 2

The second half of our basic cross-cultural training seminar at the WorldView Graduate Center begins this week. Much of my teaching will focus on how our own cultural mindsets, or worldviews, affect both the way we read Scripture and the way we understand the gospel.

We in the West tend to view the gospel from a worldview of Law vs. Inno-

4 CULTURAL PARADIGMS

cence. Adam and Eve broke God's law, throwing the entire world into confusion. They had to be punished, as does all the rest of sinful mankind. Jesus paid the penalty demanded by the Law, setting us free from the bondage of sin.

Although these truths are valid for all of humanity, some cultures do not have the same concept of sin and guilt. A gospel presentation that stresses only the breaking of God's law doesn't get through their cultural mindset.

Much of the world's population interprets life from the viewpoint of Shame vs. Honor. They are concerned about maintaining personal and family honor. Many international students from Asia work for good grades because they would be ashamed to go back home and report to their parents that they only got Bs in their courses. That would be shameful for the family.

In this case, showing that honor rightly belongs to God is important. Adam and Eve's shame in the Garden is a consequence that they would be more likely to understand. God's removal of our shame and disgrace by clothing us with clean garments shows that he is honoring us, a potent message.

A third worldview is a variation of the shame vs. honor concept, one that we are familiar with

in the scriptural description of Judaism: Clean vs. Unclean. Remember all the ritualistic washings the Jews had to go through? If they were unclean, they couldn't go to the Temple or participate in the feasts. Leviticus describes the ceremonies they had to go through to become "clean" again.

Even today, in our work on campuses, we have to be aware of what kinds of foods students from the Middle East are not permitted to eat lest they become ritually unclean. Combined with their culture that emphasizes shame and honor, stressing how they can become clean before God and gain honor in his sight is something that is more likely to make sense.

One of the major differences between the two types of shame vs. honor cultures is what happens if the shame becomes too great. In Asia, a shamed person is more likely to commit suicide. In the Middle East, the relatives of the person who has caused the shame may commit murder, thus getting rid of the source of the shame. This is why new believers from that part of the world may find that there is a death warrant out on them. They have shamed their families by leaving the family religion.



Traditional suicide in Japan

The fourth worldview is Fear vs. Power, that which is prevalent in animistic societies, such as those we lived among in Indonesia and the Philippines. A powerful message to them is that God is greater and more powerful than any of the spirits that they have feared since birth.

Carmen J. Bryant

Contact information

Home: 1285 SE Maple St., Hillsboro, OR 97123

Home phone: 503-648-4088; **Cell :** 503-750-7888 (also the ACMI office number)

Email: carmenhills@comcast.net; donroy@comcast.net

Missions Door: 2530 Washington St., Denver, CO 80205 | <http://www.missionsdoor.org>

Check out our ACMI
website at
www.acmi-ism.org