

Keeping on FOCUS

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

May 10, 2014

Too much too fast!
That's the way these last two months have felt.

When I last wrote on March 29, Don was in the hospital for the second time that month, again with pneumonia and low blood pressure, following which he spent two weeks in rehab. I wish that had solved the problem, but it didn't. Three days later he was back in the hospital.

By that time, our daughter Brenda and her family had arrived from Oklahoma. They were a great help in giving me a much-needed break from hospital duty and helping with the process of downsizing. Don came back from the hospital the day before they left. He was only here six days when he once again was taken to the emergency room, losing consciousness when he tried to walk a few steps with his walker while the physical therapist was here.

Four hospitalizations in two months! We had moved into Cornell Estates, a retirement center in Hillsboro, both for his safety and because I could no longer handle the demands for his care. But this arrangement wasn't really working because of his declining health. I had assumed that he could move to the assisted living side of this facility. Even if there had been room, though, he is beyond "assisted living" and in need of a higher level of care.

So after 50 years together, we are now in separate residences. As a family member remarked, "I wish there were some other way." Don is in an adult foster care home just a few blocks from our apartment. It was—and will continue to be—a huge undertaking for both of us. His balance and blood pressure are precarious, but the hospital and his doctors can no longer help him and offer no hope. He is on oxygen 24/7.

Hope isn't entirely out of reach, however. We will give one more try to see if his blood pressure can be stabilized so he won't be at such high risk of falling. We have an appointment this coming Wednesday with a different cardiologist. We realize that the congestive heart failure—or one of the many other diseases he's fighting—will win eventually, and we are prepared for that. But we're praying that his BP can be regulated, preventing drastic fluctuations that have caused the falls and passing out.

A week ago today, the day after moving Don to the foster care home, I finally went to the urgent care clinic and was diagnosed with pneumonia. At the same time, my RA rebelled and painfully confirmed what I have known all along—I'm not capable of providing the physical care that Don needs. With antibiotics and rest, I've started to improve, but I'm still very weak.

So here are our addresses. Don doesn't have a phone yet but should get one soon.



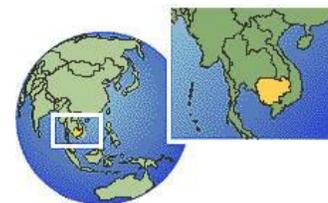
Julia, me, and Brenda in a mother-daughter meeting in April to discuss "Next steps."

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Prayer items

Pray for the health and living concerns in the above paragraphs. In addition:

1. The ACMI conference is coming up at the end of this month in Atlanta. Lord willing, I will leave May 27 and return June 2.
 - a. *Pray* for the conference itself—the team that is putting it on, the speakers, the workshop leaders, and the attendees.
 - b. I will arrive early to meet with the Board chair and others to discuss matters important to ACMI. *Pray* for these strategic discussions.
 - c. Our Board meetings immediately follow the conference. We have many important issues to discuss related to the ACMI network and to international student ministry in general. *Pray* that we will know God's will in the decisions that we must make.
2. *Pray* for ReEntry and the collaborative efforts in process for training international students and scholars to be leaders. ReEntry focuses on “impacting the world through international leaders” and is a specific branch of international student ministry. (Check their web page: <http://www.re-entry.us/>) In April, while Don was safely being taken care of in rehab, I joined ReEntry and others in Atlanta to go over the training materials that are being developed. I am grateful to be included with this group, although my involvement is indirect.
3. Our Portland international student ministry, FOCUS, is in need of a coordinator for the homestay program. This is one of the services that we have provided Portland State University for many years. Our director has had to step down, and we have no one yet to take her place. *Pray* that a replacement will be found in time for the 2014 fall term. Through the years, students from around the world have been exposed to the love of God by living with Christian families.
4. *Pray* that I'll gradually be able to get back into teaching at the WorldView Graduate Center. I withdrew from this month's seminar in Cambodia because of the health issues. Okay—I wasn't really going to Cambodia, but my colleagues are. My sessions were going to be done live over the Internet from Portland. I'll have more news about WorldView another time.



Carmen J. Bryant