



# Musings from the Masons



The Good News of Christmas – God loves us, God is with us, God is for us!

## Family Focus ...

**A New Gratitude for Health:** After decades of amazingly good health, this year has brought numerous health challenges to Dad. He eagerly awaited his knee replacement surgery in early May, not knowing what challenges would follow in the ensuing months. Post-surgery, Dad had much trouble sleeping. We also wondered about infection of the knee for a while, and when that eased, he became increasingly tired, and eventually began having trouble breathing. The third week of July he was diagnosed with extensive blood clots in both lungs with some heart failure to boot! Another hospital stay followed and he was put on strong blood thinners, heart meds and diuretics. After further tests on his heart, the reason for the heart failure was identified – ‘leaky’ heart valves. These problems existed before his knee surgery but were not bad enough then to raise any red flags. His challenging knee surgery recovery, with the added complication of blood clots developing in the lungs, put a lot of extra stress on his heart which began to ‘fail’. We are all so grateful that the root of his issues was finally identified, and the specialists thought he was a good candidate for open heart surgery to fix things. This took place at St Mary’s Hospital, Kitchener, on November 20<sup>th</sup> where both the mitral and tricuspid valves were repaired. He spent 8 days in hospital, another 10 with us and now is happy to be back in his apartment. He’s moving slower than normal but gradually gaining strength and increased mobility. We are all so deeply grateful for the excellent medical care he’s received, and that we live in a country with a national health service! We are also grateful, in particular, for a special friend, Dianne, who is



Dad - 3 days after open heart surgery!

checking in on Dad often and being his ‘chauffeur’ until he can drive again! Dad holds onto the hope he’s been given by many, that within a few months he should have a ‘new lease on life’ after a rather bumpy year!

**Glenn** has just been appointed as the Assistant Deputy Minister of Canada’s Lands & Minerals Sector (moving from the Forest Service) so his work life will continue to bring many challenges – and hopefully much fulfillment too. **Alex** will be incredibly busy over the next few months in the run-up to Canada’s hosting of the next G7 summit in mid-2018. **Mattias** (14yrs) is adjusting to a new school and continues to keep busy with hockey and many friends. **Elysia** (12yrs) now has her brother riding on the school bus with her as they both attend the same school. In September she started in the International Baccalaureate program which keeps her extra busy with studies – and volunteering. She continues with her synchro swimming and also now volunteers as a junior synchro coach which she is enjoying!

**John** continues busy with various environmental projects in Ghana & Ethiopia. In November, he was particularly pleased that the Government of Ghana signed a no deforestation supply chain agreement with 35 of the largest cocoa / chocolate companies in the world which has been over a decade in the making. **Daphne** keeps the ‘home fires burning’ and never has a dull moment with her two busy little boys! **Karl** (nearly 20yrs) is settling into his first year at York University in Toronto – majoring in environmental science. He will be spending Christmas with Glenn & Alex. **Kris** (17yrs) is completing Grade 12 at Rosewood College of Arts in Toronto and we look forward to having her join us over Christmas. **Kieran** (4yrs) and **Kalum** (nearly 3yrs) are both loving nursery together these days and are the sweetest loving brothers to each other!



Kris, Heather, John, Dad & Karl – Oct 2017

**Hannah** (24yrs) has been teaching in Melbourne, Australia since last Easter. Currently she is having adventures doing 3 months of farm work in Mildura, Victoria State - which is required in order to extend her Australian visa by another year. We miss her much, and look forward to her proposed visit in the spring. **Geoff & my** lives are full – looking out for our parents, with real estate, condo corporation board work, volunteering and many other involvements.

Huge thank yous for your enduring friendship, encouragement and support to Dad – and to our family. May your Christmas celebrations be heartwarming and meaningful – and your New Year blessed with hope.

*“God of love, Father of all, the darkness that covered the earth has given way to the bright dawn of your Word made flesh. Make us a people of this Light. Make us faithful to your Word that we may bring your life to the waiting world ...”*  
(ICEL)

*Heather*  
December 12th, 2017



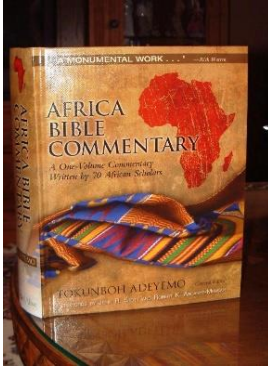
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## Jim's Jottings ...

### Africa Bible Commentary (ABC):



Begun in January 2000 in Kenya, and published in Nairobi in July 2006, the ABC has become the catalyst for 18 other editions. Translations from the English ABC include French, Portuguese, Swahili, Malagasy (Madagascar), & Amharic (Ethiopia). The Hausa (Northern Nigeria) edition is anticipated in 2018. The remaining editions are new writing and include the Latin America Commentary in Spanish and

Portuguese; and the Slavic Bible Commentary that is being translated in Ukrainian and English. The surprising thing is the English translation of the Slavic Bible Commentary is for 10 East European countries where over 50% of the population understand English. The Arabic Bible Commentary should be published by mid-2018. The South Asia Bible Commentary, already translated into Hindi, is also anticipated in mid-2018. The sickness of two translators has delayed the work on the Urdu Commentary. We are likely looking at a 2019 publishing date. The Tamil Commentary is about half way through translation and likely it will be 2020 before publication. Negotiations on Malayalam and Bangla commentaries are proceeding by putting a leader and team in each place.

### Africa Study Bible (ASB):



The following information comes from Matthew Elliott, the President of Oasis International Ltd., the publisher of the ASB and West African distributor for the ABC.

One of the greatest joys of launching the ASB has been seeing the

enthusiasm among pastors and leaders. In Ghana, we are now equipping our third training seminar for pastors with a total of almost 1,000 pastors equipped. In Nigeria, we just had a conference with 350 pastors from one denomination, with an overflow crowd of 100 additional pastors that could not afford the fee to receive a Bible. In Kenya, FOCUS Kenya (InterVarsity) is working to equip 4,500 student leaders for their 45,000 students. A ministry in Sudan believes they have need for over 10,000 copies. The demand and response is

overwhelming. But most of these leaders cannot afford a twenty-five-dollar Bible (\$40 US Retail), so we are struggling to understand how to equip those with the greatest need.

Here are the words of one pastor: "I wanted to appreciate you for the Bibles. They're wonderful. Did you know that more than 80% of the churches in Africa are led by pastors with little or no training? This means without the help of a tool like the Africa Study Bible, these dedicated pastors struggle so much to understand the Bible let alone preach its message well. We thank you for making this possible. I personally have used it a lot and I can tell you it needs to get into the hands of every pastor in the continent. Oasis International Ltd. has a scheme whereby people can donate through them to provide the Africa Study Bible to pastors who cannot afford one in Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Sudan." See <http://oasisint.net/africa-study-bible/asb-for-pastors/>

### Challenge Enterprises Ghana (CEG):

And following is a message from Kofi Agamah, the Managing Director of CEG.

"Next year, 2018, will see a focus on moving the building project forward now that we have the approval and support from the Board of CEG. Scripture Union (SU) is currently implementing the development of a multi-storey property which should be ready December 2018 through a joint venture arrangement. The SU director has offered to walk alongside CEG as we plan, seek partners and implement. We trust God that this will be a turning point in the long term financial sustainability of the ministry of CEG as we double our efforts in engaging communities and the country with the scriptures in various media in partnership with others. I am particularly grateful for the mutually beneficial partnership we share with SIM and the churches in Ghana through our various ministries. We look forward to many more years of this."

Grateful thanks for your continued interest in, and your prayers and other support for, literature-related work around the world.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15.13 – NIV)

*Jim Mason*

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