

DECEMBER 2008

The Smith Soundings Merry Christmas!

A Year of Growth!

Dear friends,

This year has been a year of growth and change for us, both in our ministry with Continental Baptist Missions (CBM) and in our personal lives as well. The Lord has allowed several things to take place in order to prompt us on, further down the road of pre-field ministry. He continues to bless us on our path toward becoming missionaries fulltime on the mission field as builders.

Personally, we have been given incredible opportunities to serve the Lord in new ways which has brought new growth to our relationships with the Lord. We have also seen the Lord work in the lives of those close to us, as well as those we have met only briefly on the road. The growth in their lives is encouraging to us as we are blessed to see the Lord actively work in the hearts of His children.

One incredible way that the Lord allowed us to be used as His hands and feet was through the death of our niece, Grace Elizabeth Demarest, this last January. After the death of our son through premature birth, we were able to minister to Elizabeth's twin sister and her husband through their difficult time of grief after the death of their daughter. It was not an experience we wanted, or ever thought we would have, but we know that the Lord is sovereign over both deaths and specifically prepared us to be an encouragement to our sister and brother-in-law. This experience brought growth to our lives as we considered how God has a purpose for everything that we go through.

We also had the wonderful privilege to be the missionary speakers at two Christian camps and one vacation Bible school (VBS) this summer. Both camps took place in Iowa and the VBS was in Nebraska. Each week we saw the Lord draw so many young ones to Himself. Some came to know Him as their Lord and Savior, and others made life-changing decisions to follow the Lord more closely. We saw incredible growth in the lives of these kids!



Of course we have continued with our normal pre-field ministry schedule in traveling to churches on the weekends to present our ministry and tell them of partnership opportunities. This year we were in 38 different churches in 11 states. These meetings have gone very well! Our year started off slow because of winter weather and also because we were expecting our son's arrival at that time, so we had reserved some extra time at home. However, in spite of having a slow start, the Lord granted us with even more meetings than last year, so we praise Him for being sovereign over our schedule.

We have also taken a major step forward in our ministry! This last spring we were able to lay aside our fulltime secular jobs and pursue pre-field ministry with 100% of our time and energy. In April, Andy was able to start full-time on missionary work, and Elizabeth officially transitioned in July. This was an important step because we were out of vacation time at work and it was either quit work, or cut back on traveling for missions. So we thank the Lord for making that decision easy for us as He provided enough financial support for us to be able to lay aside our jobs. We recently returned from a 10-week trip that started and ended in Illinois. In between, we visited many states on the East coast. That trip would not have been possible if we still had our jobs. Thank the Lord for helping us progress even farther in our missionary endeavors.

Since going fulltime on pre-field ministry we have also been able to develop a ministry website: www.andyandelizabethsmith.com. Please feel free to visit this website to view our ministry schedule as well as learn more about us personally or our mission agency. You can also read our monthly updates, view our pictures in the photo gallery, or read our blog that we try to update weekly!

Our family has grown in number this year too! Of course, we met our beautiful niece Grace in January, whom we look forward to seeing again in heaven. We also welcomed two nephews in September. Justyn Alva Ottenbreit was born on September 21st in Alberta, Canada, and Calvin Douglas Brant was born on September 27th in Marshalltown, Iowa.

Tell of His blessings:

This year the Lord has increased our support by almost 25%, **bringing us up to 62% of our need!** Praise the Lord for His provision and bringing growth to our finances! We have gained many individual supporters and some new churches too. We now have a total of 35 individuals and 14 churches supporting us each year! We again praise the Lord for all the partners He has called to support us and partner with us in this ministry! Each gift enables us to minister to people's lives all over North America! This ministry has the purpose and goal of seeing lives effected and changed for eternity. As we will (one day) physically build church buildings, we will also continue to build into people's lives as we participate in the ministries of the church and have opportunities to tell the Good News of the gift of Christ! **Please continue to pray** that the Lord would increase our financial support in His timing. Specifically, you can pray these next few months as we know of at least three churches that are praying about supporting us financially. Our next goal is 85%; we pray that the Lord will supply that by this next summer.

This year of meetings has been a blessing to us as we were able to have many meetings in Iowa, keeping us near home so that we could attend a couple conferences. In June we were able to attend the National GARBC conference and in July we enjoyed attending our first CBM family conference. Although we have been able to sit in on a few sessions in the past, this was the first year that we were able to participate fully in our mission agency's annual family conference. It was fun and encouraging. This summer we were also able to make some needed improvements on our 5th-wheel trailer. All the tires needed to be replaced and we were also able to get some new parts that were needed. **Please pray with us** about getting the flooring replaced in our trailer. We have already purchased the needed supplies and have had quite a time trying to find a trailer repair shop near us who is able to do the job. The only difficulty has been getting an appointment time with them as the shop tends to be very busy during the summer months, and wide open during the winter months when it is difficult for us to have access to our trailer because it is in storage. Pray that the Lord would work out schedules so that we can get this project done!

New Life:

The Lord has given us a wonderful gift this year! We are looking forward to the arrival of baby #2 in May! We were so blessed to learn of this new life! We found out we were pregnant on August 25th, just three days before we remembered what would have been our son Collin's first birthday. The news of this baby has been an encouragement to us and also a lesson in faith and trust in our Lord. **Please pray with us** for this baby. We look forward to its arrival and pray that the Lord would allow us the privilege to love and cherish this baby here on earth. We will hopefully find out the gender of the baby on December 19th, so next time we write we will hopefully have some exciting news to share with you!

As we see the growth in our spiritual lives, in our ministry needs, and in the people around us, we praise the Lord for allowing us to see His blessings! Thank you for your prayer and financial support this year! We pray the Lord will bless you as you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas,

Andy & Elizabeth Smith

*Every good gift and every
perfect gift is from above,
and cometh down from the
Father of lights, with whom
is no variableness, neither
shadow of turning.*

James 1:17

