What is God calling us to do? Daily we may be trying to figure out what God is calling us to do (Phil 3:14, I Pet 2:21), what race has He selected for us to run (Heb 12:1-2) or what are the ways He is asking us to walk in (Isa 30:21). All these thoughts tend to have us looking forward to the future. This is a great way to look at life as God says, “put your hand to the plow and don’t look back.” If you have ever tried to look back while plowing or driving a car you know how crooked your path becomes. However, as I write this letter I am thinking about looking back and celebrating some of the things God has done.

February 2020 we will have served with Christian Veterinary Mission for 25 years of ministry. You may have walked with us that entire journey. I can still picture in my mind sitting with our pastor and mission committee as we discerned God’s call. I remember Rayni taking her first steps in the airport as we waited to depart for Uganda and now, she and her sister Hosanna, who was born in Uganda, are ER nurses. I remember the struggle of trying to discern if it was God’s calling to leave Uganda and go to Seattle to help lead the International Ministry of CVM. Wow! Has time flown! Now we have been 21 years challenging Veterinary professionals to reach the world for Christ. This includes fulltime staff in 13 countries, nearly 600 Short Term Volunteers serving in 28 countries, veterinary Bible study groups in 35 veterinary schools and CVM presence at 70 meetings. This has to lead to 892 commitments to Christ during our last fiscal year.

CVM is one of seven ministries in the family of CRISTA. On November 16, 2019, CRISTA celebrated its 70th Anniversary. How many ministries last for 70 years? CRISTA started with a man named Mike Martin who had a calling to find a place for his growing youth ministry to meet. So in 1944, he leased an abandoned TB sanitarium on the 5 acre campus for a dollar a year. From that time CRISTA has grown to 7 large ministries that include:

- K-12 Christian School serving 1346 students
- 4 Christian Radio Stations, reaching an estimated 800,000 people with the gospel daily
- 2 Christian youth camps that host over 26,000 campers yearly
- Seattle Urban Academy helping 37 high-risk students
- Senior Community serving 1658 residents from retirement living to skilled nursing
- World Concern serving over 7 million beneficiaries in 15 countries through disaster relief
- Christian Veterinary Mission (in ministry for 44 years)
It is amazing to think about all the lives that have been touched and how the world is impacted through an old TB sanitarium over the last 70 years.

Another great milestone is on February 7, of 2020 Angela and I will celebrate 35 Years of Marriage. We are looking forward to celebrating that event on a Family Life Cruise in February. Actually, I am looking forward to growing our relationship as the boat is full of Christian marriage speakers and performers. When we celebrated 30 years of marriage we reflected back on our marriage and realized that we cannot live our life on memories and commitments from the past but need to always be growing, learning and committing our ways to the Lord. As Angela and I continue in the pre-marital counseling ministry with our church, we are continually reminded about putting Christ first in our lives and marriage so that we can continue to grow in those areas that God needs to remodel. In Philippians 1: 6, Paul says “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Christmas is a great time to remember and celebrate God’s love for us. He loved us so much that he sent his son to live among us and to die for us. This event happened about 2000 years ago and is celebrated around the world. As we look back and celebrate Christmas and God’s love for us, let’s also be committed to asking Him, “What is your calling for me this year Lord? How can I use the gift of salvation you have given me to bring others into your kingdom?” in the coming new year.

2 Cor 5:18-20 - All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Brad

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