Mom recently passed to glory, as Vicki’s mom had a few months before. They are together in heaven, no more sorrow or suffering—probably swapping stories about how they prayed Vicki and me together from different sides of the world… of course, that was the Lord.

In Mom’s final moments, by God’s grace, we gathered around her bed, sang hymns, and prayed. She left behind a smile on her earthly face—we’re pretty sure she saw Jesus calling her home. Outside, God painted the sky with a beautiful sunset. Then darkness fell. It gives you pause, a sober sense of loss, loading her body into a hearse and watching it drive away into the night.

I have dealt with plenty of death in Ethiopia, so I was surprised at how this affected me: scatter-brained (more than usual!), angry—but not at anyone, not even at God. I guess I was angry at death and suffering. Angry at feeling helpless—to not be able to put in a nasogastric tube for feeding when she stopped eating, or hook-up an IV for hydration when she stopped drinking—because those things simply could not help. Just to watch and wait. And know.

It helped when my sisters told me that people near death who stop eating and drinking have told them that they actually don’t feel hungry or thirsty. What a mercy! My anger made me just want to work. Hard. It helped that Dad was moving into our basement, so we did some remodeling to prepare, late nights and early mornings. It helped to work hard. Life, even Mom’s 95 years, is so fragile, so short. Leonard Ravenhill once asked, “Are the things you are living for, worth Christ dying for?” Mom lived for Christ.

We are to be His ambassadors wherever He has us; but strategically, consider the difference between the lost here, literate, with the Bible in their own language and plenty of believers around to ask—compared to the lost elsewhere who have none of this access! About 40% of the world’s population has no Gospel witness. At all. Joshua Project says that 83% of all Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists don’t even know a believer! Yet 98% of mission people and finances are spent on places most reached with the Gospel. Go figure. No, even better: just go.

This world is not our home. (I should write a song!) God’s people are citizens of another country, a “better country” (Hebrews 11:16). We are in this foreign land on diplomatic assignment until He calls us home. “Go into all the world…” Are you His diplomat or just an inhabitant of earth? Where does the knowledge of God need to be spread? Where can you go?
Recently, I visited friends and projects in Chad. Very undeveloped. And after India and Pakistan, this part of Africa has the highest number of unreached people groups (UPG) in the world. Of the 130 people groups in Chad, 70 are UPG—that is, less than 2% believers; and about half of those are unengaged — nobody is even available to reach them with the Gospel. Many of these UPG are nomadic, prizing and depending on their horses, goats, cattle, and camels for nomadic movement, food, status, bride price, sport and much more. Veterinary missions is very strategic in reaching them, in helping them survive!

I visited a nomadic camp. While the Muslim leaders consulted over roasted goat under a large shade tree, they sent a young man to show me a heifer. She was healthy but could use de-worming. I showed them how to do a simple physical exam, and a few things to look for. Apparently, they were sufficiently impressed to show me one of their horses. They love their horses in this tribe! I explained the disease and how to treat it. Now they were getting excited.

They brought me a tattered cloth bag rattling with glass vials of veterinary medicines and asked how to use them. They can’t read the English labels. What a friendship builder—so fun, so valuable for their physical and spiritual health! Now they sent a delegation with me, hiking out to see their camel and cattle herds. From what I saw, I’m pretty sure they have bovine TB, brucellosis and other zoonotic diseases. Wish we could go or send someone.

Pray the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers into His harvest—a harvest that’s already there—just waiting for someone to go. Yeah, some places are very hot and dusty; but when you watch the Lord changing whole people groups from darkness to light—living in peace, not beating their wives, changing to healthy life-styles… “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the glory to come.” (Romans 8:18)

“Here am I, Lord. Send me.” Fred and Vicki

From the CVM Home Office: 2019 Prayer Cards have been mailed! This year we changed our approach to a postcard-style piece. Due to post office processing, you may have received a blemished item that we feel does not represent our best efforts. If you would like to view an unblemished version of the prayer card, you can view it here https://cvm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/VanGorkom-20019-PC.pdf

If you prefer to receive an unblemished prayer card to post or display, we would love to send another to you! Please make that note on the back of the detachable portion of the return slip, place it in the enclosed envelope and place it in the mail. Thank you for your support for the work and ministry of Fred and Vicki.

Fred and Vicki Van Gorkom
19303 Fremont Ave N
Seattle, WA 98133
fvangorkom@cvmusa.org
vvangorkom@cvmusa.org

Contributions are solicited with the understanding that the donee organization has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.