

January 23 ushered in the Year of the Dragon for Chinese people all over the world. We know that references to the dragon or serpent in the Bible are referring to Satan. China's dragons always have a serpent look to them, and yet this is by far the favorite of their 12 year animal cycle, and to them the best year to marry or have babies. They can guess your approximate age by asking your animal year of birth.

New Year's celebrations are never a good time to be in China, since the Chinese invented fireworks and develop and produce most of them; so even though they are illegal in China, tons of them are set off at all times of the day and night for days on end to chase away evil spirits. Many Mandarin oranges are given out because their color reminds people of gold, and red is the predominant color because the color of red signifies prosperity. The lion dance with a long dragon snaking around the street has the same meaning. Much has been said about the Mayan calendar and the significance it gives to this year, but we continue to plan ahead for years and work like there is no tomorrow.

We have just returned from a six week road trip; and other than two short visits to our home for six days once and 17 hours on another occasion, we have been on the road since January 4. We have survived a lot of winter weather, but we have not encountered any tornados in our travels, like many people have in recent weeks. In past days we have been through the areas where tornados, which show God's amazing power, have wracked havoc on properties and people's lives earlier this month. We also know people who have had other kinds of tornados devastate their lives.

The Bible tells us to fear the Lord and certainly nothing exemplifies God's awesome power more than a tornado, which comes in different forms like a thief in the night. Joel's prophecy in both Joel 2 and Acts 2 tells us how in the last days God will show signs and wonders in the sky, before that great and coming day of the Lord that will also come when we least expect it. It's been said that we should plan like we have all year and work like it is our last day.

Eleven months ago we visited missionary friends in the interior of Papua, Indonesia. PNG (Papua New Guinea) on the eastern half of the island is home to over 10% of the known living languages on our planet, which is roughly 860 languages. Less surveyed Papua has another half that many. English is the official language in PNG and Indonesian in Papua, but few people speak either one. As recruiters or missionary mobilizers, the most exciting person we can recruit is a church planter who is also qualified and has the training and heart to be a Bible translator. We are excited to say that we have had some success in that area, but we are praying for more.

October 17-19 some 5000 Papuans from across the Eastern Indonesian province of Papua gathered in Jayapura, where we stayed last April, for the third Papuan Congress. The Congress opened with prayers and included several church leaders amongst the speakers. The streets were lined with some 3100 military and police officers wearing full combat gear and holding assault rifles. Armored vehicles and police trucks were also out in force. As in past Papuan Congresses (1961 & 2000), a declaration of independence was read and the Morning Star flag was raised. The police responded by storming the Congress ostensibly to put down what they said was a 'coup'. More than 300 Papuans were arrested, dozens wounded and six killed. The Melanesian Christian Papuans seek an end to the racial-religious discrimination and persecution they suffer at the hands of Javanese Muslims and the Indonesian government.

We are pleased to say that earlier this month a couple we are very proud of left for PNG with visas in hand. When we lived in Indonesia we could only communicate with home by letters which took 14-17 days one way, but these folks have a satellite phone and will be able, on their laptop computer that can be run by solar panels, to skype friends and relatives where they can see the person they are talking to. We had no financial provision for returning home in an emergency, but they have evacuation insurance and credit cards that could get them home within days.

They still experience the same painful separation from friends and family. They still need to buy two months of groceries ahead of time. They still need to get their shipped supplies from the States out of customs and do lots of paperwork in the capital city of Port Moresby. They still need to get immunization shots, they still need to hike two hours from the closest mission airstrip. They still need to hire native carriers to tote their 50 pound (maximum allowed by airlines) suitcases over the mountains, while still adjusting to a 12 hour time zone difference, extremely humid hot weather on the coast, and altitude sickness in the mountains, to say nothing of shocking immersion into strange languages and cultures. They still need to enlist the permission and help of the village people to build a bush house and are still subject to tropical mosquito carried diseases.

Ah, and then the years of painstakingly getting such a good command of their tribal language so they can present the Gospel in a meaningful way and be able to win some souls who can develop into a local church. They still have to develop a new alphabet with the sounds of that language and eventually translate God's precious Word into that language where those people God loves and sent His Son to die for can for the first time understand God's Word in their heart language. Cherith was tested when she first went to China with us, but nothing like she and her family are being tested during these days of March, 2012. Please pray for Jason, Cherith, and baby Grace during these very critical days in their lives. And pray for our tens of other friends who are ministering in Papua and PNG.

In Indonesia we do not have tornados, and even volcanos or earthquakes that cause tsunamis are rare, but we daily feared and experienced yellow fever, dengue fever, and very common malaria. So before, during, and after we spent those ten weeks in Indonesia this time last year we had to take prophylactics since the areas we went to in Papua were infested with mosquitos which carried all of these awful diseases that Cherith and her family are now facing.

While we were there one of our fellow missionary's adult son contacted dengue fever for which there is no treatment. You just treat the symptoms which include but are not limited to horrible headaches with intense pain in the forehead and behind the eyes and in the eyes which hurts to move the eyes. Neuralgia type pain. Swelling and achiness in all the joints of the body known as "break bone" fever, which is worse than all achy flu symptoms put together. It hurts to move, with back ache in the lumbar region and chills caused by abrupt fever that can go to 104 degrees and last for 5-6 days then abate for 3-4 days but come back for 5-6 more days with profuse sweating and extremely sore and aching muscles. A red rash (capillary hemorrhaging in the skin which is sometimes misdiagnosed as measles) may break out 6-12 hrs. before the onset of the fever and the lymph glands become enlarged. Accompanying us in the mission guest house those days we passed through, there was a couple who had just come close to losing their four year old boy to dengue fever, and numerous people were struggling with malaria.

So please pray for Jason, Cherith, and baby Grace. Pray too for the 20 people headed to China this summer, who like hundreds of others we have challenged before them, will hopefully like Cherith begin their missionary journey in life with this five week internship in China as a first step to a lifetime of service. Hopefully some of them will eventually be lead of the Lord to do translation work which goes hand in hand with church planting or just work for an overseas company which can provide a way for them to start a Bible study in their home which can eventually develop into a local church. Church planting does not require the gifts needed to be a pastor. Church planting is nothing more than soul winning and discipling faithful men and women who can join their hearts together in a local body of believers. Success in such an endeavor starts with obeying the Lord in smaller opportunities like going to China for the summer.

Pray for us as we later this month once again head out on another seven week road trip which will take us to numerous Christian colleges in Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Kansas, as well as churches in additional States like West Virginia, Illinois, and Tennessee. Pray that we will be able to enlist more Jasons and Cheriths. And pray that as tornados, volcanos, tsunamis and things like dengue fever wrack havoc on the lives of dear people who are doing their best to serve the Lord, these afflicted people will like Job never deny the name of their Lord and will persevere in that which God has called them to do until He returns or calls them home. May we all plan like we have another year ahead of us but work like there is no tomorrow. Even so come quickly Lord Jesus.

- Please pray for Jason, Cherith, and baby Grace.
- Please pray for our traveling mercies.
- Please pray for the interns who are preparing for their initiation to the foreign field this summer.
- Please pray for more recruits with whom we can work during these coming months and years.

Tom & Selva Kweder, 2603 Edgewood Ave. Anderson, SC 29625 Phone: 864-225-4449
TSKweder@aol.com

This picture was found in a camera during cleanup.

This is a fantastic photo!! Amazing that the film was still good - or memory stick. Either one, this really tells the story. Look at how high that wall of water is!!



This picture was taken on the banks of Sumatra Island (the height of waves was of approx. 32 m = 105 ft).

It was found saved in a digital camera, after the disaster.

We cannot know for sure, but very likely the one who took the picture is not alive any more (it was just a matter of seconds).

Today we can see the last image he/she saw before ending life on Earth!

Makes your problems seem kinda small, huh?