

Wishing You a Blessed 2019!



Students

Mike and Karen Livingstone

Ministering to International Students

December, 2018

This has been a busy season of many changes for me (Mike). This Christmas I have taken comfort in thinking on God's faithfulness and presence when times seem crazy or chaotic.

Mary and Joseph found themselves in chaotic times, along with the entire nation of Israel, as all kinds, young and old, pregnant and infirm were uprooted by royal decree to move back to their ancestral homes. Wearied by journeys, eating cold unsatisfying food, uncomfortable, they would have struggled with negative attitudes, anger and irritability towards the foreign governing power

Encamped on the streets of a strange town, needing the help of strangers a young Mary gave birth to her first child. Meanwhile, Joseph anxiously worked hard to help, so much weighing on him as Mary went into labor. He may have felt helpless, like a failure, unable to provide something better.

Yet God was there, faithful through it all and before the night was through they would have been awestruck by the messages they would hear.

Likewise, the message of good news of great joy for all people is for us today. It is meant for us when the world around us is far from peaceful and serene for it is the means of peace; peace with God and peace within ourselves, so we can extend peace to others. May you experience such peace!

This year has stretched me. Our field ministries have restructured over the summer and the field ministry team which I was on no longer exists. I'm no longer leading staff teams nationally and I'm back in a local team context on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan.

It was quite an adjustment to jettison plans and ideas that I was working on or planning for the 2019 school year as well as to shrink my scope. I didn't start on campus right away as I first sought direction for my next steps.

However, I believe the compelling call to greet international students and share the gospel with them, as well as mobilizing Christian students -- inspiring and training them -- remains strong and true in my heart.

It is hard to ignore the swelling numbers of international students that are coming in from countries where most unreached people live. These students are very approachable and open, but sometimes only for a short time before negative influences sidetrack them.

ACMI Global Campus Toronto Conference:

This conference put on by the Association of Christians Ministering Among Internationals (ACMI) provides an amazing opportunity to equip ministries, lay-workers and the church while seeing volunteers raised up in Toronto and Canada to help meet and minister to international students. I am on the steering committee for this conference along with 4 others. Please pray as there are few ministries and few full-time ministers to international

students in Canada and Toronto, yet God is rapidly increasing the numbers of international students.

At the University of Saskatchewan:

International students have responded strongly to our social events this year. The welcome party saw about 170 students attend and we routinely saw over 50 come out to our weekly suppers. More Christian students have come out to attend and befriend the internationals and this has been encouraging! The cultural make-up of students coming out is more diverse with students not only from China, but Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, as well as from Africa, South America and Europe. I have developed some significant relationships with Mid-East and East Asian students.

Many students we work with are married graduate students. To build into them, Karen and I, along with another staff couple, prepared to go through Family Life one day marriage seminar series called **Together For Good**. Unfortunately Joseph fell sick the night before the talks and I had to proceed without Karen. However, the students that came felt very encouraged and at least one couple from Peru signed up for mentoring. **Pray that these students will be open to discovering Jesus.**

The international student ministry joined with the general campus ministry for a **Christmas Party** with well over 100 students attending. Usually the international student side has a separate party centered on knowing God and the meaning of the birth of Christ, whereas the

general campus movement, due to exams has more of a Christian focused celebratory party. This was a new step and I was invited to speak on the meaning of Christmas to make it encouraging for believers while sharing the Christmas story and the difference Jesus makes with the non-Christians. **Pray for students to engage in conversations about Jesus from this event.**



Mike Sporting a Christmas Beard with 3 Mid-East Friends. The goofy glasses are to protect their identity

After Christmas our ministry hosted a retreat at a nearby camp to go deeper into exploring Christ with students. We call this **The Great Canadian Adventure**. 24 students attended and had a great time exploring more about God. One girl took a step of faith to follow Jesus!

Please pray that we will be able to go deeper in relationships with students in the New Year and that these students will hear the gospel and believe! Also pray for the Christian students to soberly examine how they want to invest their lives while at university and would seek to grow in faith and in making a mark for Jesus while they are here. A student from Bangladesh committed suicide in December. Pray that students will experience belonging with us and will invite their friends.

Happy New Year from the Livingstones!

Jan 2019



Warmest greeting from our house to yours!
Hope this update finds you well.

We have had an interesting and full fall and winter so far.

You know, back before we had kids I didn't think of myself as someone who would homeschool, but somehow, here we are in December in Saskatchewan out in the snow, looking for lichen. And, enjoying it. (Notice I resisted the obvious pun?) -Karen



Joseph continues to be everybody's little sweetheart. He is almost two years old but we are all clinging to his babyhood.

His favourite activities include: reading his three favoured Thomas the Train books, playing with the Thomas train set, and walking around with things he is not supposed to have.



Zachary just turned 5. He is enjoying new experiences like going to gymnastics, and practicing writing letters.

He really enjoys playing make believe with Lego and painting.

His emphatic preferences and tender heart are a gift to us.

Isaak is seven. We really enjoy his fun-loving personality. He catches on to things very quickly.

Isaak likes mazes and puzzles, and people.

He is full of good questions.

The kids are taking a couple sessions of gymnastics this winter and it is really up Isaak's alley, as he loves to climb, swing and jump.



Elijah is nine years old. He is a great blessing to our family.

He loves reading, doing science experiments, and playing with friends.

He is a fan of healthy competition and especially loves if he can beat Mom and Dad at something.

We are thankful that he is usually a really great big brother.



- **Ministry Prayer Requests at a glance:**
- For hearts full of vision as Mike gets used to a new role.
- For the building of good friendships with people.
- For follow up from the marriage conference.
- For good conversations with our new friends that lead to a greater understanding of God's heart for them and a discovery of who Jesus really is.
- For Follow up from the Great Canadian Adventure.
- For International student ministry to flourish on campuses across Canada.

Family Prayer Requests:

- That God would give us (Mike and Karen) wisdom as we seek to be good parents.
- That each of our boys would have their own experience of the love, power and sacrifice of God for them.
- Good health and God's protection over our family.



We are so thankful for all of you! May you sense the depth of God's love and the brightness of His hope through these dark winter days.

With love,

Mike and Karen

Elijah, Isaak, Zachary and

Joseph

How silently, how silently
 The wondrous gift is given!
 So God imparts to human hearts
 The blessings of His heaven.
 No ear may hear His coming,
 But in this world of sin,
 Where meek souls will receive him still,
 The dear Christ enters in.

- Phillips Brooks

(We are a little late with this verse, but it remains so gloriously true.)

