



Williamson Wonderings - Christmas '08

Dear Friends,

We're glad this time of year affords the chance to catch up with folks across the country and around the world. Our 2008 seemed to zoom by faster than ever – just like yours probably did – chock full as always. As we look back over the months we are reminded of how much we have to be thankful for.



When the New Year's fireworks made our neighborhood sound like a "war zone" we were grateful that we could sleep safe and sound in our beds and weren't really ducking "incoming" as some of our soldiers and many others around the world are doing when they hear sounds like bomb blasts and small arms fire! Actually, we did duck down to Portland on January 1st for some fun in the Clackamas Wave Pool!



A couple of weeks later we were dodging missiles in the form of snowballs that flew fast and furious at "Snow Camp" in the northern Cascades. (Snow is just very cold, fluffy rain, you know – it was about 6 feet deep where we were, and stayed through June!)



Our worries that we were using up too much of our "annual quota" of sunshine when we had two glorious weeks of it in February were well founded – we didn't have "summer" until August! There was some flooding in several areas of our State on more than one occasion this year, but not as bad as last year, and we are thankful that the levies on the Cowlitz and Columbia Rivers (near us) held firm. Like I've said before, send us your empty water bottles (and money for shipping – ha!) and we'll send them back to you, full!!! ☺

The end of March found us in our well-worn "on the road again" mode. We enjoyed a brisk Easter sunrise service at the future building site of the Hammett Community Church in Idaho. From there we traveled to Colorado Springs for quick visits with Dave's parents and sisters, and of course Seth and his family (below).



Nicholas and Samara



Claire and Seth



Shiloh and Tiffany

Traveling further east we spent a night with friends from TEAM Nepal days, and joined Hard Hats missionaries Tim and Laura Cupp for a ministry event in Kansas City. Then we headed south to Arkansas to see Rachel and Justin, and Dave's brother and his family.

Caleb played "T-ball" this Spring for the first time, and will move up into the machine-pitch league next year. It was a *cold* spring season. Caleb asked me the other day what year it would be when he could start driving. I told him he



I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart; I will tell of all Thy wonders.

Psalm 9:1 & 2

could get his *learner's permit* in 2017. He replied, "Oh good! I already have my library card!" 😊

The end of April/first of May found us at 777 Ranch in Ferron, UT, for the Hard Hats for Christ Staff Rendezvous. This was the first time our entire staff had been together since 2003, and 28 of the 32 we count as "staff" attended. We had a great time of fellowship, encouragement, and working on projects for the ranch. Ann was able to join Dave in Utah for the last three days of the conference, and then we got away for one day to celebrate our 32nd Honeymoon. If you say that fast, it comes out "thirty-second honeymoon". (Try not to think about it.)



Ann left early in July for Arkansas when Rachel's little "Peanut" seemed anxious to show up well before his due date. As it turned out, Elijah Hale Bondietti didn't debut until Monday the 21st, at 8 pounds 1 ounce, 20 inches long, and screaming his head off! Caleb and I met him on August 1st. In the meantime we had a great campout on the beach, but it was still a long month without Mama for us "merry bachelors"! On the way back home we spent a couple of days with friends in Oklahoma, visited relatives and hugged kids and grandkids in Colorado, and generally had a quick but good vacation! I didn't even take my laptop. Horrors!



Back in the saddle again by mid-August, we had a Board meeting to prepare for and missionary assignments to catch up on. On the heels of that, we had a Board retreat at Camp Shiloh that went very well. We interviewed two potential Board members and a potential new missionary family. The Hard Hats Board is maturing in its governance role, and we expanded the maximum size of the Board to 11 members. We presently have only five. Any volunteers? We meet three or four times a year and I almost always buy lunch!

In our last letter we mentioned that Ann has limped through the past couple of years with serious pain in her hips and abdomen, and we asked you to pray. Thankfully, the doctors ruled out any cancer, but couldn't find a cause for the pain. An MRI done in September located a cyst in her pelvic bone. But short of very serious surgery, we did not find any good options for the cyst. An elder at our church had been urging us for months to ask the elders to pray for her, and finally we found a time when they were all together in one place, and they did. Ann has been pain free in her hips since the morning after that prayer meeting! She is also recovering well from the removal of a bone spur from her foot, **PTL!**

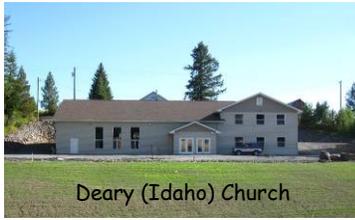
In October Ann was re-hired for a half-time position in the Longview public schools. It's ironic that her job enables us to put Caleb in the Christian school (and also provides health insurance for her – another answer to prayer). Dave was privileged to spend time with friends and supporters in South Carolina and Georgia while attending the "People Need the Lord" Mission Conference. It had been three years since we were in the area.



On Halloween "Grandpa Dave" got a terrific deal on last minute tickets and flew to Colorado the night before Cole Simon Williamson was born to Seth and Tiffany in Colorado Springs on November 1st at 12:38 p.m., weighing in at 7 lbs. 7 oz. and 19" long. Dave spent

the next five days being nanny to Claire and Shiloh while Dad, Mom and Baby adjusted to the new arrangement. Ann was so *jealous!!!* It was fun and he was able to spoil them rotten 😊!





Deary (Idaho) Church

This Fall we were pleased to attend two dedications of buildings Hard Hats helped to build: the Deary Community Bible Church, in Idaho, where we spent two summers, and the Moreland Bible Church in southeast Portland, where we've been involved for about three years. Trinity Baptist Church in Walla Walla, WA, also dedicated their new multi-purpose building. All three projects turned out beautifully and are a real testimony to God's provision.

This year we had (or *have*) Hard Hats missionaries on projects in Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, North Dakota, Louisiana, and Tennessee. If you (or your church) are interested in the on-going effort to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina (and her late cousins), let us know – we can plug you in! We are truly grateful for the decline in fuel prices which is a tremendous help to our missionaries and volunteers. Tim and Laura Cupp, who have a desire to be full-time construction jobsite evangelists and disciple makers in Kansas City, have launched a jobsite catering business as a way to gain access to construction sites and build relationships. In this economy, they will need a miracle to stay afloat – so please pray! Our Founders, Jim and Jean Hodges have represented the mission at several functions. We hope they can do more of this in the coming year. Pray for them as they care for Jeans 103-year-old father, and deal with a cluster of family concerns.



Moreland Bible Church

We've experienced a mysterious failure apparently involving the Postal Service: a number of Hard Hats donors have not been receiving their monthly receipts. We haven't been able to pinpoint the source of this problem, but it has been disruptive, to say the least. If you are a contributor and are missing any receipts for 2008, or if you don't receive your annual giving summary in January, please contact us.

Well, the election is behind us, but what lies ahead of us is not at all certain. The economy has our nation in turmoil. Perhaps we will learn (but probably not without pain) that the term "Almighty" truly applies to only One Person, **not** to pieces of paper with the likenesses of dead presidents (and others) printed on them. Hard times may be looming at the door, but let us hold onto Him Who "stands at the door and knocks", and Who alone is worthy to be praised! There is no security apart from Him.

Our possessions, our health, our freedoms, and even our identities (to some extent) can be taken from us. Our economic system cannot save us; our political system cannot save us; and even our religious systems cannot save us. Only **Jesus** promises to never leave us and never forsake us. God became flesh, and dwelt among us. The first time He came as a baby, born in a lowly manger, and ended up on a wooden cross, in order to save us from our sins, and to reconcile us to God. He will soon return as King of kings, bringing peace on Earth to all people of good will. Are you ready to greet Him? His love and grace still change the world, one heart at a time. Let Him change yours, too!



Thank you for your part in prayer and financial support in enabling us to continue to "Promote Christ in Construction – Home and Abroad."

And **MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!**

Dave and Ann