

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables,"

2 Timothy 4:1-4.

Dear Covenant Family,

January Ministry Letter – your January letter from us was not lost in the Christmas mail. It became snowbound (*delayed*) in our office in December when our staff was hit with sicknesses. December is always a short month for us anyway as the staff takes their vacation time over the holiday season so they can be with their families. It is also a scrambling month for us as we rush around to print and ship all of the Gospel Tract orders in time for Christmas card mailings and New Year's celebrations. However, this December was more hectic because our staff was plagued with the sickness.

I had full intentions of writing a late December letter the first of January while on a short ministry trip to Florida during the second week of January. However, the best laid plans of mice and men often don't make it off of the drawing board and into production.

Florida Trip - The trip to central Florida was scheduled back in October when we were invited to be a guest on the **Christian Television Network's** (CTN) show "**Come Home**" with host Jen Mallan, which is broadcasted out of Tampa, FL. This was a great opportunity to share the outreach ministry of Gospel Tract Society. We are not in the business of seeking TV or radio time to put our personal image in front of the public. However, it behooves us as vessels of the Most High, to promote the Kingdom of God whenever and wherever we can, lifting up our Heavenly Father in Glory and Honor and challenging the Church Body to be about our Father's Business of winning souls.

To make the most of the expense, experience, and opportunities of the trip, we were also scheduled to speak at two local churches which have effective Gospel Tract ministries, another live radio station interview with WCNO's "**Wednesday Live**" with host Reverend Jonathan McClain, visit with some dear friends of the ministry, and a third outreach ministry located in the City of Cape Canaveral.

My jobs over the years have always required extensive traveling. Whether as an Electronic Field Service Engineer, Airline Pilot, or Chief Pilot for a major corporation, my traveling was from weeks to months at a time away

from my family and home. That is until the LORD called me back to the Gospel Tract Society almost 10 years ago. I have been spoiled by being home every night (with rare exceptions), although I seem to be spending longer days at the office. This last trip to Florida was probably the fastest and hardest trip I have ever made. In order to meet the high demands and tight schedules of TV and radio interviews and meetings with various local ministries, we were on the go all of the time and had to travel back and forth – from the East Coast to West Coast and back – several times. I was blessed to have my son, Christopher, traveling with me, acting as my chauffeur, guide, bodyguard, navigator, confidant, companion, and all-around nice guy. He was a true blessing, we only got lost once when I told him to turn right on the turnpike, instead of going straight. That one turn cost us over one hour's late night drive and an 80 mile detour. My excuse is the poor signage on the turnpike :).

To be totally transparent with you this morning, I was less than excited to make this trip. In fact, the closer we got to departure time, the more reluctant I became to leaving, even though there was no doubt that God had opened the doors for the ministry to receive new exposure. The reluctance was in part because I have been sick for a year. Well, not exactly sick - just dealing with sickness symptoms which the doctors could not find a reason for as every test over a six month period returned as **NEGATIVE!** (Thank you Father!) For lack of better words or description, there was just this **cloak of heaviness** over me – not of the LORD – but of the enemy. However, God had opened the doors and we were going, **PERIOD!** Looking back at it now as I type this letter to you, it felt almost like we were leaving the comforts and safety of home for the uncertainty and dangers of the front lines of the battle. We were however, traveling in the **goodness, protection, and blessings** of our LORD. What we did not know is just how much Goodness He had in store for us and the ministry of publishing God's Word in printed form.

We flew out **Saturday** from **Kansas City, MO** to **Orlando** in central Florida, picked up a rental car and drove to our motel in **Titusville** on the East Coast. **Sunday**, we drove



south to the *City of Cape Canaveral* to minister in a small church for the morning service. The elderly pastor had only been there 2 years. He took the assignment with less than 5 attending members, basically the church was dead. This Sunday morning's service was packed with over 60 attending members (OK, it was really a small building but it was still packed). They were not there for me. They were there because their pastor had a love for people and he loved his flock. We were invited to speak on behalf of GTS



because the pastor had found the LORD through a Gospel Tract, and there was a love in his heart to reach more people using Gospel Tracts. We were blessed as there was a great interest in the tract publishing ministry as people sought out more information concerning Gospel Tracts. We left many

sample packs with them. Late that afternoon we returned to our motel.

Monday, we drove back to the *City of Cape Canaveral* to make a 9:00 AM appointment with the Director of *The Canaveral Port Ministry*. The Director had to make an unexpected town trip and was not there when we arrived, so we were given the nickel tour. As we waited 45 – 60 minutes for the Director to return,

I thought that perhaps our visit was less than notable as they had their act together with many staff and voluntaries ministering daily. This ministry is a multifaceted outreach to the deckhands – sailors – seafarers – wayfarers - crews of cruise and cargo ships. As we waited, we saw hundreds of pieces of printed material in 60+ lan-

guages for the sea-going visitors. To tell you the truth, my balloon was deflated as we came prepared only with our *Amazing Gospel Comic* (AGC), which is currently printed in six languages. More about this ministry a little bit later.

After meeting with their staff, Christopher and I headed west from the Cape to just north of *Tampa* (on the West Coast) where we met up with some dear friends of the



ministry, a brother and sister in Jesus Christ, Jim and Anne Ryun. During the drive to Tampa, the production manager of CTN's "*Come Home*" program called and we spent two hours on the phone covering the history and mission of the Gospel Tract Society. The phone conversation ended just as we pulled into the restaurant's parking lot. We spent the remaining afternoon with the Ryuns sharing the blessing and goodness of our LORD. Isn't it just amazing when strangers



in the world, but family in-Jesus, get together and fellowship in oneness like loving family members long separated, but united once again.

From that fellowship meeting we tracked down our night's lodging and made plans for the next day. **Tuesday**, we arrived at the studios of CTN in Tampa, ready for the unscripted live taping of "*Come Home*." After we arrive at the TV station's studio, we were informed that the host, Jen Mallan, was sick with a virus and taping would be a little different, but would go on as scheduled.

As you know I do not claim to be a preacher, teacher, prophet, evangelist, or anything special. I am just a vessel that strives to hear the Voice of God and willingly act upon



His Word. That being said, if I am to speak to a church or group of people, I will need plenty of time to put my thoughts in order so that the message is from God and not from Phil.



However, if you want to talk about my Father, I can talk for hours because He has blessed us so many times in so many ways. **The Apostle Paul said that we are to be ready (to minister) in season and out of season, and not to give thought for our words but rely upon and listen to the Holy Spirit for He will give us His Words to speak.** We must be ready to answer His call at any time and any place to be His witness to the world. The only way we can do that is to stay before the Throne of God and stand righteous in His presence.

Sidebar: Let's set the record straight. I am no more Holy or righteous than you. I face and deal with the same trials and temptations that you do. I seek His Face and Grace daily. Any goodness or righteousness that I have is from my Heavenly Father through the shed blood of my Savior, Jesus Christ, PERIOD!

The program taping lasted an hour and was blessed as the conversation was directed by the LORD as we shared the Grace and Goodness of our Heavenly Father's work of publishing His Word. So much so that they told us that we would be invited back for more interviews. It is not important to me whether or not we are invited back, it matters only that God's message reaches the ears of those intended to hear His Words. Again, it is not about me, my family, or this ministry, it is all about my Heavenly Father



and His Son Jesus!

My son and I left Tampa after the show's taping and drove back to the *East Coast* where we again met with some family friends, to renew friendships that dates back to my teenage years. It is so refreshing to see people that have lived an active and productive life for the Kingdom

of God and are still in love with Jesus in their senior years. Far too often many people will coast during the last years of their lives and put down the Sword of Salvation for someone younger to pick up and join in the fight. It was encouraging to spend the rest of the day with Bill and Nancy Sharp as we shared the goodness and blessings of our Father, both the battles and the victories.

We will not – cannot – know the lives that we have touched here on Earth until we stand before Jesus and receive our reward for faithfully serving Him in this world. If we would just stop and think about the spiritual impact we have in this world the next time we have a cross thought, moment, or word with someone, and how that moment is captured in time, in Heaven, then maybe – just maybe, we would be a little more Christ like in our words and actions.

Late Tuesday evening we drove to *Stuart, FL* for the night. **Wednesday** we drove to WCNO's radio station located in *Palm City, FL*. There we met Reverend Jonathan McClain and the station's staff. WCNO's radio signal reaches 30% of Florida's entire population. It is a Christian station that plays Christian music, national programs, and live talk shows. The program lasted almost a full hour, talking about the ministry of Gospel Tract Society's outreach and effectiveness in today's fast paced electronic society. Many people think and say the day of the printed page is long past and outdated. **NOT SO!** It is more alive and relevant today in many ways than ever before. You can leave a Gospel Tract that will stay in the hands of a person long after you have left them. Many times a tract is handed out to a person when no words were spoken. It is our job to plant the seed of the Word of God. It is the job of the Holy Spirit to work with that seed, causing it to grow until it reaches full harvest. Sometimes, God will use another Christian in the process, but always with the urging and drawing of the Holy Spirit on the lost soul. We have many testimonies of a people coming to know the LORD days, weeks, months, and longer after receiving God's message on a printed page. It may not be our job to plant the seed and reap the fruit, we are just called to be faithful to His Word and act when He tells us to move. Yes, we should always - but always pray before - during - and after working in the Harvest Field.

This was the message given in the radio interview on WCNO (which can be heard on the Internet - just search WCNO - January 11, 2023). the interview was just short of 60 minutes.

Later that evening, Christopher and I traveled south to *Stuart, FL* and attended the Wednesday evening service at a historic church in downtown Stuart where the pastor is involved in a Gospel Tract street ministry. The gathering was small but alive to the Gospel of Jesus and eager to use our Gospel Tracts to share their testimonies in that histor-

ic town that sees thousands of visitors yearly. We left our remaining inventory of Tracts and Comics with them.

To state that God had opened the hearts of His Children to receive His Gospel Seeds for ministry would be an understatement.



The Canaveral Port Ministry - Now, back to the The Canaveral Port Ministry. Their small building is just a few blocks from the port in the City of Cape Canaveral and they will service between 200-300 seafaring visitors a day. They provide several needed services for these worldwide travelers at no cost; meals, money transfers, transportation to local shops and stores, counseling, Internet service, friendship, and ministry. My deflated balloon feeling and dismay were quickly set aside when the Director of the ministry, Mark Wodka, walked through the door. His smile was from ear to ear when he saw us waiting for him. We shared the different languages of the Amazing Gospel Comics (AGC) and tracts with him and several of his staff. Their excitement for the AGC was more than I was expecting. They wanted to order the AGC soon and asked if we could also translate the comic into the Filipino language as they have a large number of seafarers from the Philippines that pass through their doors. Our answer, YES! We are working on that translation now. It will take a lot of work to translate the comic and change all of the artwork. It is no small task, but the goal is to reach the lost with the Gospel of Jesus!

The Port of Cape Canaveral is one of the largest cruise ship ports on the Eastern Seaboard. My mind's eye can see



this Gospel Comic seed going worldwide on the ships that leave this port and are taken into homes that we would never have had an opportunity to reach with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As always, to God be all of the Glory! Our hopes and prayers are that this is just the start of something that is bigger than what we can imagine.

So, as you can see, this trip turned out to be more than anticipated. GTS has an open door to return to [WCNO](#) and the "Come Home" broadcast, an open door to other broadcasts and ministries not mentioned here, and an open door to the world that only God knows what is ahead.

Prayer Request – please hold this ministry up with your prayers. Our cost for almost everything has risen this past year and more expenses increased 1-1-23. Our staff still faces health issues and my body has been under physical attack for the past 12 months, more than I can share with you here. I will mention that we arrived back late Thursday night and by Friday night I came under a virus attack that has lasted over two weeks, which is still another reason that this letter is later than usual. But *we serve the Risen Lord of lords and the King of kings*. As we walk in His Grace, Power, Anointing, and Healing, we give all Praise – Honor – and Glory to the LORD, now and forever more! Praise His Wonderful Name!!!

Your Covenant Brother In Jesus Christ,

Phillip Buttram



"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," John 14:1-4.