

Chris & Lucinda Radebaugh



Missionaries to the Deaf - South Africa

Dear Friends in Christ,

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

This year marks a milestone for Lucinda and me. We were working on staff of Trinity Baptist Church in Findlay, Ohio when a missionary came to preach. His name was Dr. Richard Vick and he brought with him a blind pastor from Ethiopia. The blind man spoke and Dr. Vick shared his burden for reaching the lost. After the service, I (Chris) waited for an opportunity to talk to Dr. Vick. Finally, after most people had gone, I saw my opportunity. I thanked him for coming and then asked him if he had met any Deaf people in Ethiopia? He explained how his wife had started a school for the Deaf and there was now a church for the Deaf in Ethiopia. Then, he looked me in the eye and pointed his finger at me and said, "And YOU need to go to Africa!" Those words, "YOU need to go to Africa!" have stayed with me ever since. That was 1986. We had been married only two years and had one little girl and another child on the way. We went home that night and I shared with Lucinda what Dr. Vick had told me. I asked Lucinda why couldn't we go to Africa as missionaries? Who will share the Gospel with the Deaf in Africa if not us? This is what my parents had trained me for, to be a servant of the Lord. I accepted Jesus as my Saviour at a young age and grew up in church. We spent more time at church than anywhere else. We didn't occupy our time with computers, Xboxes, or the internet – there weren't any of those things. There was church and the preachers we heard growing up brought a surrender to the Lord for whatever He would want at age 12: RG Lee, BR Lakin, GB Vick, Howard Sears, Lee Roberson and a host of others. And then, there were the missionaries. My parents were always having them stay at our house. Unknown to me at the time, my parents were training me in the way God would want me to go. Not many parents are training their children for service to the Lord nowadays. Such a shame. As I daily explained the need of Africa and all that Dr. Vick had shared with me, Lucinda could take no more. She calmly told me, "If you want to go to Africa then go. I'm not going." Perhaps I didn't explain it properly or maybe she just didn't realize the need. Whatever the reason, I couldn't talk to her about it because she didn't want to hear. Serving the Lord in the USA was fine, just not in Africa. All I could do was pray. As I prayed, my heart became surer of God's call. I stopped talking to Lucinda about it, but in my heart, I knew where God wanted us.

Our church had their annual Valentine Banquet in February of 1987. The speaker preached on the topic "To whom does your heart belong?" I knew God's will, but I needed a willing wife to join me in fulfilling that will. A few days after the banquet I began talking about going to Africa again. This time Lucinda didn't tell me to change the subject or to be quiet. She listened and was interested. I asked her what had changed? She answered, "My heart was convicted at the Valentine Banquet. I surrendered to the Lord to be a missionary and go to Africa." Praise the Lord for answered prayer! And thirty years ago, we began the deputation trail that has taken us to Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa, and Lesotho. The Lord has let us see the salvation of countless Deaf and hearing. We have had the honour of teaching and training Deaf men and women for ministry and have had the joy of seeing them enter the work of the Lord. It has been my great joy to see the growth in Lucinda, the young lady who didn't want to go, but surrendered her will to God's will. I rejoice that she recognized the need of young women who find themselves in the most desperate of situations and studied, took classes, and became a crisis counsellor to the Deaf. We have both been blessed by saying "Yes" to God's call.

The need is still great. There are still millions of Deaf across Africa who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ and still so few who realize the need and are willing to surrender to the Lord. I am grateful for my parents and Lucinda's parents who trained us to follow Christ. The road hasn't been easy and we have had many difficulties and trials. But through it all, Jesus has kept His promise to us, "Lo, I am with you always..." We continue to look to Him for guidance, strength, and wisdom and He continues to supply. Praise the Lord! It has been a wonderful thirty years.

Perhaps families would be better off without the technology and spend their time at church. Perhaps churches should not shorten the revivals and mission conferences and should not stop services. Perhaps they need to increase the amount of services in the week. From our experience growing up, going to church all the time and hearing the Word of God preached from the pulpit by impassioned men of God made us who we are today. Technology is not the answer. The power and preaching of the Word of God is what we need.

Pray for our upcoming college trip to Cape Town to present the Final Judgment drama. Pray that souls will be saved and hearts challenged to the need of the Lost. Pray for my mother who will have hip replacement surgery on 30 March. Pray for Munya serving in Zimbabwe and those who are in ministry here in South Africa. Pray that parents will train their children in the way they need to go – we need them here, to help us in ministry! Thank you for standing with us these many years. As long as the Lord is willing to use us, we are willing to continue serving Him. So worthy a Saviour of our total surrender and dedication.

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