

CLEMENTE NEWSLETTER

December 2021

Merry Christmas, everyone !!!

We are enjoying a mild winter here in Macomb, Illinois. We are celebrating Christmas 2021 with Grandma, Grandpa, and Susan, Sarah's sister. We are grateful this year that we are able to be together as a family. One highlight for this year is the Clemente Remote Celebration 2021, an online gathering. The Clemente Clan is meeting virtually on Christmas Day with games, stories, songs, and other fun stuff. God is good!!!

Report:

My new role as an Assistant Director brings me closer to our Free Methodist work in the countries of the Philippines and Indonesia, and in the region of Oceania, which includes the countries of Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji. These past few weeks, I have been connecting with FM Superintendents and several leaders through Zoom, Teams, FaceTime, and other virtual platforms. It is exciting to see what God is doing in these different places, even in the midst of this global pandemic. God is working mightily in our world.

My time of Partnership Building and traveling to FM churches officially ended last month (November 21st). I am slowly transitioning into remote work from Illinois. In the next few months, I will be making plans for travel to Australia and some other places in Asia. It will be challenging considering the unpredictable spread of the virus and its variants.

This January (2022), I will be visiting California for a few days and meet up with Free Methodist pastors who are working with people from Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and the other South Pacific nations. It will be good for me to see first hand what God is doing among these various cultures located in Northern California and Nevada. These churches are under the care of the Sierra Pacific Conference.

While I am there, I will also get to visit the God's Family Christian Fellowship, a Filipino FM congregation located in Sacramento, CA. What a joy to have the opportunity to hear God's work among His people, and to make new friends along the way.

Review:

Pastora Emma is our church planter in Australia. She is originally from the Philippines and is currently residing in Darwin, AU, with her family. She has two adult children who live in Sydney (Australia). In the next few years, she intends to move to Sydney with her daughter's family and plant a new Free Methodist (FM) congregation in this metropolis of Sydney. Our FM work in Australia is registered with the name, Light and Life in Jesus Christ Church, Free Methodist, Inc. Ministry. Please visit our FMWM web page for more information.

(Next church planter for review is Pastora Helen, from Country-VN. Please read my upcoming January Clemente Newsletter.)

Requests:

Pray for Pastora Emma and her team of church leaders as they lead the work in Darwin and Sydney. Pray for a smooth transition to Sydney. Pray for new contacts and new converts that the Lord will bring to our new work in this city of Sydney.

Pray for different migrants from the regions of Africa and the Middle East, who come to Australia as refugees, migrant workers, students, and immigrants. Pray that they will come back to Jesus. Pray for open doors for our workers to connect with these people of the world.

Pray for my trip to California this January 21-25, 2022. Pray for a great connection with our FM leaders from Fiji and other Asian countries. Pray that God will soften my heart so that I can learn from Him and what He is doing among these cultural groups scattered in the West Coast.

Reflection: “An Angel’s Story”

At one time, the angels were gathered right before the moment of the first Christmas. They were all discussing ways of announcing the Messiah’s birth. One veteran angel said: “Let us gather the heavenly host, an army of our kind, and appear to the people in the heavens right above them. Let us display our power and shine a heavenly light around them. Let us sing of God’s glory and announce our presence with loud trumpet sounds. Let us declare the coming of the Messiah, the Savior of the world.” Everyone seemed to agree, except one young angel.

This young angel suggested something different. She said: “Why don’t we tone it down a little bit so that we do not scare away these earthlings. Let us use a gentle twinkling star instead. We can use a star from the east to encourage the people to search their sacred writings of a prophecy about the birth of the Messiah. Then, we can move this star to guide those who are willing to look for the Messiah.” All the angels disagreed with her, and followed the idea of the veteran angel. So, that night of the Messiah’s birth, one Chief Angel looked around for a good place to make the cosmic announcement. She chose a particular field where people and sheep were huddled together in one area.

“There were shepherders camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God’s angel stood among them and God’s glory blazed around them. They were terrified.” (Luke 2:8-9. MSG).

The Chief Angel saw the fear in the people’s eyes. She raised her hand and stopped all the blazing light and the sound of the marching army. She said: “Let me talk to these earthlings and go down to their level so that they can understand the announcement we are making.”

“The angel said, ‘Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David’s town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you’re to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.’” (Luke 2:10-12. MSG).

At that moment, the angels saw the fear vanishing from the people’s faces. They started talking to each other with excitement. They wanted to see the

Infant-Savior that they have heard from their grandmothers and grandfathers. It is at this point that the veteran angel made another suggestion. He said: "I think this is a good time to continue our announcement with singing and loud cosmic celebrations."

"At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises. Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him. As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. 'Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us.'" (Luke 2:13-15. MSG).

At another time, about two years later after the first Christmas, the angels were gathered together to discuss some ways of announcing the coming of the Messiah to the people from the East. One young angel suggested using a twinkling star to encourage the people to search their sacred writings and guide them to where the Savior was staying. And all the angels agreed with her. You know the story right? You can read this in The Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12, the Story of the Magis.

Recap:

Thank you everyone for all your gifts and financial support. We heard from several local churches that they have increased their financial commitments for 2022. We are grateful for all your generosity.

Research: Fun Facts

Australia is the 6th largest country in the world. Traveling by car from Darwin (New Territory) to Sydney (New South Wales) is about the same distance as traveling from Cincinnati, OH to Sacramento, CA.

Fiji's population is about 1 million people and the Christian population is about 65%.

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