



# Letters from the Front

The Lord continues to strengthen the Watters in the strength of His might!

December 2009

Dear praying friends,

*"I will bless the LORD at all times;  
his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My  
soul makes its boast in the LORD;  
let the humble hear and be glad. Oh,  
magnify the LORD with me,  
and let us exalt his name together!*

*Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!  
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh,  
fear the LORD, you his saints,  
for those who fear him have no lack! The  
young lions suffer want and hunger;  
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing." (Psalm 34:1-2, 8-10, ESV)*

The Lord has topped Himself again in doing "far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us"! Magnify Him with us and let us exalt His name together! (If you want to see His latest works in our life painted in full color, read on. But if you only have time for the basic outline, skim the section titles and see which ones interest you. We ran out of time to do a full summary of prayer requests. We did try to highlight the main prayer requests in green all throughout.)

## Tearful—yet hopeful—goodbyes in Minnesota

We thank the Lord for His supporting grace as we said our goodbyes to my family and dear friends, brethren, and partners in the Gospel and many other friends new and old who called, posted on Facebook, and emailed.

We were especially blessed—and our faith was greatly strengthened—by the commissioning service held for us by Grace Baptist Church and the special prayers and tears offered for us by Beacon of Hope, All Nations Fellowship, and Desiring God brethren. How we wished we could take them all with us—or hug them with hugs that will be good enough for many years! What a privilege it is to know and to be loved and sent out by all these dear saints!

The Lord also had a farewell surprise for us in Minnesota: Children Desiring God gave us curriculum materials that we can use for the ministry in Uganda! The materials were initially designed for use with children and youth but have been adapted by many for the needs of adults as well. We have been praying for the funds to purchase some of these materials but the Lord chose to answer our prayers in a different way! All praise to His name!

## Arrived safely in Washington!

Thank you so much for praying! The Lord guided us and kept us safe throughout our 10-day road trip from Minnesota to Washington. He also gave us many ministry opportunities and much encouragement from brethren along the way!

The route we took and some of the blessings awaiting us at each stop were as follows:

Nov. 16 Minneapolis, MN to Emporia, KS  
Nov. 17 Emporia, KS to Tucumcari, NM  
Nov. 18 Tucumcari, NM to Williams, AZ  
Nov. 19 Williams, AZ to Escondido, CA  
Nov. 20 Escondido to Oceanside to Irvine, CA  
Nov. 21 Irvine to Sun Valley to Vallejo, CA  
Nov. 22 Vallejo, CA  
Nov. 23 Vallejo, CA to La Pine, OR  
Nov. 24 La Pine to Portland, OR  
Nov. 25-26 Portland, OR to Bellingham, WA  
Nov. 27 Bellingham to Everett, WA

## Many answered prayers in Seattle ...

Aside from hearing our eleventh-hour prayers for accommodation in Seattle, the Lord moved mightily to resolve many knotty last-minute “situations” for us.

1. At 8pm on Dec. 3, the eve of our departure for Manila, Danny Scott and I loaded the last of our boxes onto the container for Uganda parked at Westminster Chapel in Bellevue! Danny was a great help to us in getting the covered pickup truck that Nelson Reed (our International Director) lent us, driving the truck to Brier Community Church where our belongings were stored, loading the truck, driving it to Bellevue, loading the boxes into the container, and returning the truck to Nelson’s house. The Lord also allowed us to visit with him about his upcoming wedding as we waited for Gretchen Olsen-Jacobsen of Westminster to open the container for us!

Thus ended happily many days and weeks of emailing across two continents concerning what to send via the container, when to load them, how to load them, etc. By the grace of God, three bins and several boxes that traveled with us on our road trip and many more boxes that were stored at Brier are now awaiting transport to Uganda with our entire library of books. Praise God for His grace that was sufficient for us! And for two great blessings: Danny and Gretchen!

2. On Dec. 2, by the grace and mercy of God, with the approval of Rex Carlaw (our U.S. Director), and with the help of Marvin Graves and Carol Flansburg of the U.S. office, we were able to send money to Rebecca’s sister in Manila for the purchase of our Manila-Entebbe-Manila round-trip tickets to Uganda. We needed those tickets to board the Northwest flight to Manila on Dec. 4—and we printed them out on Dec. 3! Praise God for Western Union, Kuya Marvin, Rebecca’s sister Miriam, our exceedingly-helpful travel agent in Manila, and e-ticketing!

We had overlooked the fact that as U.S.-passport-holders, we could only enter the Philippines with either a return ticket to the U.S. or a ticket to our next destination. And, as the Lord willed it, Emirates (our chosen airline) did not allow tickets for flights originating from Manila to be bought online from the U.S. Praise our sovereign King for undertaking for us! It was one of the best birthday gifts Rebecca has ever received in her life!

2 We were able to spend time with beloved friends and supporters despite all the work that we needed to do in the five full days we were in Seattle: The Lord also provided a safe place for some important documents and memorabilia that we decided at the last minute to keep Stateside. (We lost quite a few keepsakes and precious photos of family and friends when Rebecca’s sister’s house was flooded during the Typhoon Ondoy devastation.) An impromptu visit to a dear friend’s new home in Seattle was God’s chosen means to meet our need. As we went from room to room, our friend offered to store things for us—which prompted us to tell her about the prayer we had made just that very afternoon! What a loving and tender Father we have! What an almighty sovereign King!

3 We were also able to meet with Rex Carlaw and Nelson Reed concerning our Uganda timetable and plans, Kimberly Fleege and Carol Flansburg concerning our budget, and—sweet surprise from the Lord—Angie Lauer, an ACTION-Uganda co-worker serving in Gulu! Angie shared with us a lot of helpful information about life in Gulu and Kampala and deepened our longing to serve there!

4 The Lord gave us Kuya Marvin and Sara to make sure we would make it to our flight! They were extremely helpful and patient with us as we packed first for the Uganda container Tue. and Wed. nights and then pulled an all-nighter on Thu. to pack for the trip to Manila! We thank the Lord for their spacious living room and their generous and sweet spirits as we worked away through the night and tried to finish the most important to-do’s on our list. (Kuya Marvin and Sara: We really want to be like you when we grow up!)

## ... in Nagoya, Narita, and Manila ...

The Lord had fresh mercies awaiting us at all our stops during our flight to Manila!

1. On Dec. 5, our connecting flight to Nagoya was already boarding as we landed in Narita—and we still had to go through a long line for airport security. The same thing happened when we landed in Nagoya. We only had a few minutes before our flight to Manila started boarding—and there was a long line again for airport security! By God's grace, we were able to

board both flights in time—though not without some anxious moments. Because of these incidents, my 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday became even more of a blur. But the Lord more than made up for it when we got to Manila.

2. As we approached Immigration at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, we were expecting to be given a 21-day no-fee-no-visa stay. We were prepared to apply for a 38-day extension and pay the required fees in case we couldn't leave for Uganda by Feb. 4 at the latest. As we presented our round-trip ticket to Uganda, we told the officer as much. Imagine our surprise—and joy—when he informed us that he was giving us a one-year's stay as “balikbayans” (returning Filipinos)!

All our tiredness melted away! (Later we learned that the government has been doing this for all foreigners born in the Philippines as well as for their spouses and children. But it still did not detract from our wonder and gratitude.) This time it was my turn to thank God profusely for my Ephesians 3:20 birthday gift!

2 Praise God for the encouragement waiting for us at the Martin Burnham Mission Center (aka the New Tribes Guesthouse in Manila)! In its simple accommodations and quiet surroundings, Rebecca and I were finally able to “collapse” and recover from jet lag and the exhaustion of nonstop travel, packing, and goodbyes since Oct. 16. The Lord had also prepared “refreshments” for us: the friendship of New Tribes missionaries from the U.S., Australia, and Canada who were also staying at the Guesthouse. (Two couples were serving tribes in Mindanao and one in Northern Luzon.) One family in particular—a couple in their thirties who had three young children with them—was clearly there because God wanted to spur us on to Uganda through their story. Three years before, when she was 33 and her youngest was three years old, the wife was diagnosed with cancer. They went home to Canada, received treatment for her cancer (now in remission)—and were now on the way back to the tribe. As she shared with Rebecca at breakfast one morning, she was dismayed when well-meaning friends and fellow-believers tried to dissuade her from returning to the tribe. They said things like: “Oh now, you don't have to return to the tribe because of the cancer.” Or: “Are you sure you are doing the right thing by going back?” She had to tell them that she wasn't going back to the tribe because *she had to* but because *she wanted to*. To her, it was a *privilege* to spend whatever might remain of her life bringing the Gospel to the tribe and loving the people. She asked Rebecca to pray for her language study and the women's Bible study that she wants to start as soon as she became more fluent in the tribal tongue. As we spent time with these co-laborers in the Gospel, our hearts were deeply strengthened. O that we may be as faithful in our God-appointed labors in Uganda!

3 As our four days at the Guesthouse drew to a close, Rebecca's asthma began to be triggered by the pollution and the heat. The Guesthouse is situated in a very polluted part of Manila and Rebecca and I were using public transport to get around. After much prayer, we decided to look for a car to rent. Praise God, the Lord had prepared a vehicle for us! The first call we made to a dear brother who sold second-hand cars yielded a 1990 Toyota Crown at a very affordable rate.

We were able to get it on Dec. 10 and I've been driving it ever since!

5. God has graciously provided two pilgrim shelters for us here in Manila. We stayed a week at the home of Mommy Linda Visda, a widow who attended Rebecca's “Dakila ang Diyos” women's Bible study for many years (and continues to do so under Rebecca's sister Shirley) and an all-time great cook! Mommy Linda made us Filipino favorites like *sinigang na bangus sa bayabas*, *sinigang na salmon sa miso*, *leche flan*, and many others. She even invited us and Rebecca's entire family to a special lunch after we moved because she “wasn't able to cook everything she wanted to cook for us”! Mommy Linda has earned a special place in our hearts because of her love and thoughtfulness!

On Dec. 15, we moved into the home of good friends and will be staying with them, Lord willing, until we leave for Uganda. Thank you for praying about this! They became close to Rebecca when she was still part of the Worship Ministry of HRCC, the church she served full-time for 12 years. The Lord knit their hearts together through a series of life-changing events for the couple and Rebecca has been a “mother in the faith” to them ever since.

2 Rejoice with us! Rebecca has seen her cardiologist—and her heart is in great shape, hallelujah! Her complete blood work results have all come out favorable as well! Please pray for her as she has other lab work to be done and other doctors to see in Jan. We will update you as soon as we hear from all of them. It is very clear to us now that Rebecca's palpitations last May were Mark 4:35-41 episodes. They were opportunities to trust the Lord “as the wind and the waves buffeted our little boat and put fear into our hearts.” We were in the U.S. in obedience to His leading as the disciples were in the middle of the lake in obedience to His command when the storm suddenly came upon them. Indeed we can trust the Lord utterly because even the wind and the waves obey Him! He is the Lord of the universe and the Lord of our lives!

3 Yesterday, Rebecca and I met with a former U.P. High School classmate of hers who worked for the Dutch government in Uganda from 2004-2009. (She is a Filipina and a Canadian citizen and she worked for the U.N. in Somalia before Uganda and

is now working for them again in Bangladesh.) Mira Mariano was all praises for Uganda and told us that she would go back to live and work there in a heartbeat. She spoke of the warmth of the people and the beauty of the country and told us that we would love it there. She also told us that living there is more expensive than living here in the Philippines because most of their goods are imported and gas is at \$6.00/gallon. (Right now, in Manila, gas is about \$3.40/gallon. We often find ourselves wistfully comparing that to the \$2.50/gallon price in Minnesota when we left last Nov.) Mira gave us many helpful tips and told us of the many Filipinos who have migrated there. **Meeting Mira was a special token of our Father's love and our King's power and providence!**

## ... and for Uganda too?

And now for the all-important question: when do we leave for Uganda? As we wrote in our last letter, our ACTION leaders will approve our departure from the Philippines as soon as we have enough outgoing funds.

Our "outgoing funds" refer to our one-time "set-up" funds: the funds we need to set up a simple home (most likely an apartment) and to purchase a reliable, non-fancy, second-hand vehicle in Uganda. It also covers air fares, vaccinations and visa fees, and installation of internet and telephone.

**We praise God for all the funds that He has raised for us since our last prayer letter! We continue to be humbled by the way the Lord has touched the hearts of many to give to our support and ministry and we are encouraged by their response of faith and obedience to Him. Please continue to pray that the Lord will bring in His full provision for us by the middle of Jan. 2010 at the latest.**

**We are praying to leave for Uganda by Feb. 4, 2010.** We would like to begin our immunizations but the timing of some (e.g., anti-malarials) will depend on our final departure date. Our ACTION-Uganda Team Leader Jerry Bingham and his wife Candis and our fellow teammates Jim and Kappy Robinette are already waiting for us. Their prayers and advice have encouraged us greatly! Our Ugandan friend, Trudy Norman, will also be visiting Kampala and Masaka in Feb. with some sisters from Bethlehem Baptist Church and she would like to take us around and introduce us to her relatives and friends. It would be a great help to us if the Lord would allow this. She has also volunteered to help us find suitable temporary lodgings (perhaps a Christian hostel) and even negotiate a good rate for us, as soon as we have a firm departure date.

May our God who is passionate for His glory among the nations bring us to Uganda soon! As you and we enter a new year of service to Him, may He cause our hearts to be tender and teachable toward His Word and His Spirit and may He increase our hatred for our sins everyday! Thank you very much again for standing with us in this great and glorious cause of knowing Christ and making Him known! To Him be all glory and praise!

"We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, ESV)

Privileged to be sent to Uganda by Him and by you,

**Mike and Rebecca Watters**

Photos:



Fellowshipping with Friends



Mike and Rebecca being commissioned at Beacon of Hope-Saint Paul of Grace Baptist Church



Celebrating with another fellow Marine



Grace Community Church and friends



With the Pastor at the Cascade Bible Church



Our joint birthday celebration with the sisters of Rebecca teaching the Dakila sisters at their last "Dakila ang Diyos" cell at their Christmas party Mommy Linda Visda is seated They cooked all our favorite Filipino food! nearest her (in yellow).





Fun at HRCC Worship Team Christmas Party with family and friends



Christmas Day lunch with Rebecca's family at a great new Filipino restaurant

Double-click on this link for secure online giving: <http://www.actioninternational.org/watters> Or send your gift for Mike and Rebecca Watters 40026A (monthly support) or 40026B (outgoing funds) to: ACTION USA • PO Box 398, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043-0398 • Tel. 425.775.4800 • [info@actionusa.org](mailto:info@actionusa.org) ACTION Canada • 3015A 21 Street NE, Calgary, Alberta T2E 7T1 • Tel. 403.204.1421 • [info@actioncanada.org](mailto:info@actioncanada.org) ACTION New Zealand • PO Box 8928, Christchurch 8440 • Tel. 011.643.341.0933 • [rob@brighthopeworld.com](mailto:rob@brighthopeworld.com) ACTION Philippines • PO Box 110, Greenhills Post Office, 1502 Metro Manila • Tel. 632.531.3709 • [take.action@actionintl.org](mailto:take.action@actionintl.org) ACTION United Kingdom • PO Box 144, Wallasey, Wirral CH44 5WE • Tel. 011.151.630.2451 • [info@actionuk.org](mailto:info@actionuk.org) • Registered Charity 1058661 All gifts made out to ACTION are used as designated and receipted for tax purposes.