



# REFLECTIONS

*For Rick*

## Dear Missionary

BY JON WEECE

I am writing on behalf of Christians in the United States to let you know just how much we love you and respect you and honor you! You have a fan base that is cheering you on. We want you to know you are not forgotten and you are not alone.

When Christmas, birthdays, and anniversaries roll around we always set a place for you at the table and pray that God floods your mind with memories. When a loved one here is sick or facing death and there is no way for you to make it home, we'll hold their hand and kiss them for you and pray that God replaces your worry with contentment.

When civil war breaks out and the political climate is unstable, when rocks start flying and tires are burning, we pray for fear to become courage. When you are trying to raise your children and you worry about what culture they will call their own, we keep their picture on our dining room table and we pray God gives you wisdom as a parent. When the enemy attacks (we know he tends to be more overt overseas), we pray for encouragement and ask God to remind you of the victory that is ours in Christ Jesus!

### WE WANT TO SAY THANKS

From the land of fast food, 24-hour electricity, and six-lane interstate highways, we want to say thanks for enduring those take-your-breath-away cold showers every day. Thanks for eating uncooked food and parts of animals that were never intended to be consumed, not even in hot dogs! Thanks for seeing snakes and lizards as friends and for keeping bug repel-

lent companies in business. Thanks for learning how to drive on roads where the largest truck is the law of the land, where one hand on the horn is a must, where potholes abound, and where water buffaloes and donkeys stage sit-ins.

Thanks for being the minority, the object of everyone's attention, but not necessarily the object of everyone's affection. Thanks for demonstrating that ingenuity isn't a lost art and that duct tape really does have 101 uses! Thanks for learning a new language and humbly adapting to new customs that would frustrate the average American.

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Thanks for setting women free from the bondage of societal and religious chauvinism. Thanks for building swing sets and soccer fields and schools for orphaned children. Thanks for clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and giving a cup of cold water to an AIDS patient. Thanks for taking 30 years to translate the beautiful sound of God's voice into a written, readable language. Thanks for fighting jihad with the armor of God.

Thanks for digging wells and planting gardens among the spiritually hungry and thirsty. Thanks for pulling

teeth, and operating, and stitching, and delivering babies on dirt floors with a flashlight and pocketknife! Thanks for treating malaria and tuberculosis and malnutrition with gentleness, concern, and compassion. Thanks for taking a stand against witch doctors and animistic priests who haven't heard about the water-soaked altar of Elijah.

Thanks for coming home and helping us see just how blind and desensitized we are to the pervasive wickedness rooted in our culture. Thanks for changing your name and living underground, reminding all of us that Christianity isn't for the lukewarm and persecution is beneficial to the revolution. Thanks for boldly teaching people there is more to life than physical comfort and 401k plans.

You've given up suits for ponchos, briefcases for backpacks, and Birkenstocks for flip-flops. You've traded in the mundane routine of suburbia for the adventurous life of an explorer. You've replaced earthly title with spiritual status. You've sacrificed earthly gain for eternal riches.

*More than* likely, you've been robbed by a kid with quick hands and even faster feet. *More than* likely you've been cheated out of change in an open-air market where inflation seems to apply only to you. *More than* likely you've been taken advantage of by a taxi driver or a customs official. *More than* likely your mail has been read, your privacy invaded, your sleep interrupted, your stuff stolen, and your esteem jeopardized! Yet, the response of your heart is, "No, in all these things we are *more than* conquerors through him who loved us."

## WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS

Can we ask you some questions? Have you ever appreciated Little Debbie and the Keebler elves more than you do now? Have you ever said to yourself, "I would pay \$2,000 right now for a tall glass of cold, homogenized, Vitamin D, whole milk?" Have you ever wondered why in the 21st century, billions of people are still using chopsticks when they are fully aware of the greatest invention of man, the spoon? Have you ever wondered just how thin you would be if rice wasn't served with every meal?

Have you ever been walking or driving and thought to yourself, "What is that smell?" You now understand that air pollution really isn't only an American problem! The lining of your nose is filled with dust and burnt trash and the only smell your nose recognizes anymore is garlic and curry.

By now, you have probably also learned that time really is relative. You never hear people say, "Let me check my palm pilot." You set a start time for church, but deep down you know it will be a good hour into the service before people start showing up.

As frustrating as this can be, don't take for granted preaching to a crowd that doesn't look down at watches the entire service. And don't take for granted the boisterous expressions of the crowd as they chime in with an occasional, "Hallelujah" or "Amen!" You preach without microphones but your words echo in the heavens and bring harmony to the sweet song of the stars. For it is through preaching that God's glory is made known, his

kingdom expanded, and his creation forced to come to grips with the eternity placed in their hearts.

And oh, the singing! From Hong Kong, Sao Paulo, Nairobi, Berlin, and Paris to Beijing, Chang Mai, Kabul, Cairo, Johannesburg, Mexico City, Bogotá, Saigon, Baghdad, Manila, Moscow, Belfast, Singapore, Taipei, and Jerusalem, the sound of God's global

YOU'VE REPLACED  
EARTHLY TITLE WITH  
SPIRITUAL STATUS.  
YOU'VE SACRIFICED  
EARTHLY GAIN FOR  
ETERNAL RICHES.

family clapping and dancing, smiling and weeping, declaring their allegiance and affection, their dependence and desire, their joy and love for Jesus! Does it get any better this side of Heaven?

## WE WANT TO HELP

Don't hesitate to let us know what we can do for you. Do you need a team of workers to visit? Do you need a vacation, a bag of Doritos, or a copy of *Sports Illustrated*? (You now understand with great clarity that baseball may be America's pastime, but futbol is the world's obsession . . . GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOAL!) Do you need Bibles, interns, prayer, phone cards, computers, a plane ticket, medicine, a new truck, insurance, reinsurance? Do you need money? Don't be ashamed to ask, because Americans

have it and need to give more of it away! Whatever you need, we want to help and we will help.

Never forget what Jesus said, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29).

Never forget what Jesus said, "Yes, I am coming soon!" (Revelation 22:20).

We acknowledge that, like the faithful enshrined in Hebrews 11, you missionaries epitomize this description: "The world was not worthy of them."

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## ON THE | web



You can find this whole issue of CHRISTIAN STANDARD at our Web site: [www.christianstandard.com](http://www.christianstandard.com). News and letters are being posted as they arrive most weekdays. Check out the list of ministry openings posted there, as well. Look for extra features, too. For example, our weekly Sunday school lesson treatment now resides there.

This week's treatment of the International Sunday School Lesson (for September 11) is written by Kenton K. Smith, minister with Dunreith (Indiana) Christian Church. The lesson, entitled "The Believers Share," is taken from Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-37.