

December 2013



Dear Friends,

As 2013 draws to a close, and we look ahead to 2014, I wanted to thank you for your friendship, prayers, and support in the past years. And I also wanted to share some thoughts with you as we look to the future.

### **Learning from The Past For Hope In the Future**

*"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." (Romans 15:4)*

Just as we can learn from the past writings in God's Word, so it is we can learn from our own past experiences. As I reach an older age and I look back on the events of life, how much easier it is now to see God's faithful hand moving behind the scenes and giving direction and hope.

In the past, when events were going well, things seemed crystal clear. His hand was unmistakable when he gave me directions to attend Bible College and Seminary, to get married and have children, even to become a missionary.

But in the actual moment in time of every past event, especially those of a more negative nature, the hand of God was more difficult to discern. Going blind is certainly one of these less positive events in my life. But by God's grace, He has used this condition to challenge my endurance, to encourage me, and to give me hope. In fact, as I look back in the past 20 years, I can see how the Lord has used my blindness to help others to see and find the Savior. After all, how many have come out to hear me speak, not because I was an American missionary, but also because they had heard I was blind?

So to all who have suffered some kind of negative event in 2013, I want to encourage you to not lose sight of the fact that God's hand is always there to teach and give hope. And as you celebrate this coming year of 2014, and as you take the time to reflect on past events, keep in mind that it is not always easy to see God's hand in the background. But, nonetheless, He is there - because God has said, *"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."* (Hebrews 13:5b)

Oh, yes, ... and from all of us at CrossWay International, Happy New Year!

Blessings,

*Dean*