

Dr. Randy Smith, Ph.D.

August, 2008

Dear Friends,

Hope you're having a great day. I'm writing to a just a few of our closer friends to share a bit on missions. A few weeks ago Tammy and I reached a decision that was about 1 ½ years in the making to continue on long term pastoring at Faith Community Church. We had been wondering if the Lord was calling us to return to full time mission work, but concluded that we are to build up our local church and be involved in missions in other ways.

In reaffirming this decision with our board, I also shared my personal conviction that I needed to be more involved in global ministry in some manner. They understood and affirmed the desire to not only have me continue as Lead Pastor, but to also take a couple weeks or so a year to be involved in missions as part of our church's missions ministry. During my absence our Associate Pastor will fill in.

Having been missionaries with Latin America Mission for 9 years, 6 of those in Costa Rica, missions is on our heart. With both a Masters degree and a Ph.D. in the field, I believe I have something to contribute to our missionary friends and ministries. We have numerous contacts with missionaries in various countries and have sought to be an encouragement as we could. For a few, we are the only, or one of very few, who keep in contact with them. I am amazed when they tell me this, but having been there I can understand how it can be true.

Over the past few years I have been invited to teach pastors for a few days in Nicaragua; to teach church leaders in Nepal; to lead a team to Costa Rica; to visit missionaries in Pakistan and Poland; to teach a video series for Russian churches; and to be a board member for a small mission. I was privileged to lead a team to Costa Rica again this summer, but have been unable to respond to any of the other inquiries (except the video teaching that was done here), mainly for financial reasons.

Since we believe the Lord is asking us to remain and give most of our time to pastoring, we want to do all we can to support the work of missionaries and ministries with whom we have contact. Besides the financial partnership that Tammy and I have personally with a few missionaries, our church is recognizing the value of missions and is giving me some time to "pastor" outside of our four walls.

What I've wondered for the past few months, was whether or not there would be a small group of friends who understand my vision in regards to missions, who would be interested in participating financially in terms of helping sponsor me on these trips (Tammy may be able to go on occasion depending on her schedule, which would be a blessing to the missionary wives). Obviously it would be totally up to you and the Lord what you gave or could give, I just want to know if you have any interest. This isn't something I expect everyone will have a passion for, I am just wondering if there are a few that think this is a way they would like to be involved.

Up to this point Tammy and I have financed a good portion of our family's last couple trips to Costa Rica with teams, although we did have a few generous donors that partnered with us. We are doing what we can do with what we have (airline ticket costs alone vary from \$400 or so to Central America to \$2400 to Nepal, not to mention other costs). While I would love to be financially independent and not "ask" others for anything, I'm not, and I've seen that there is a blessing in being involved and involving others.

Anyway, I appreciate you and thought of you. There is no pressure, this is simply a "fleece" I'm laying before the Lord to see if this is the next step in connecting us with needs in other fields a couple or so times a year. Feel free to "pass" without any explanation if you don't really discern this as God's deal for you. If He speaks to you about partnering, however, let me know.