

The Robelen Report

December 11, 2018

Dear prayer partners and supporting churches,

Greetings again from a very active battlefield. In the last six weeks, we have seen God provide in several ways and give us several victories, but we face a number of ongoing challenges as well. As we press onward in this front of our spiritual war, we rejoice at the support we receive from prayer partners such as yourselves.

The biggest news is that our long-awaited child has been born! After a long (almost 42 weeks) and very challenging pregnancy, Priscilla Elizabeth entered the world safely on Friday, November 30th weighing 5 Lbs 15oz. The end of the pregnancy was as trying an ordeal as the rest of it, and we appreciate all those who offered prayers for a safe and healthy pregnancy. Contractions lasted almost three weeks before labor was induced, and finally a C-section was re-



Priscilla Elizabeth

quired. We learned from the C-section that due to the way the placenta had attached, there was even more danger to mother and baby throughout the pregnancy than we knew. By God's grace, Priscilla is healthy, only having problems with colic, and Betsy is recovering from the surgery, although not quite as smoothly as we would like. We would appreciate your prayers for both of them that Priscilla would soon be able to sleep easily and regularly and that Betsy would soon be able to do all that she desires.

At the time of the last update, we were praying that God would provide for us to be able to get the van brakes done and the van inspected so that we could put it back into use for the ministry. Within days of that update going out, a mechanic from one of our supporting churches drove hours to come do the brakes and while he was at it, replace the shock absorbers on the van. It is a huge blessing having the van back in service, especially since my car has been off-line for a couple of weeks; a small but obscure part broke and had to be ordered off the internet since the local parts shops didn't carry it. God has provided a mechanic from a nearby church who is doing the work for free, though, and Lord-willing, now that I we are back from the hospital and once the snow is out of the way, he will be able to finish and I'll have the car back as well.

A couple of months ago, we became burdened about the need for revival; not just the

need for revival in general, but on our lives and ministry. We determined that we were not seeing God's power working here as we ought to, and we began dedicating time every Thursday evening to praying for His power on our lives and ministries. We have not yet seen the full answers that we seek, but we are definitely seeing the firstfruits of those prayers. Even as we have been less able to pursue new contacts and visitation, we have seen an increase in first-time visitors; we have had five since the last prayer letter. Some of them have come several times already, and one of them trusted Christ the first time he came! Demetrius walked to church looking to talk and was ripe to receive Christ. He has been coming faithfully since then and expresses an eagerness to learn and grow in Christ.

We have seen two other precious souls make professions of faith also! One is the eight year-old grandson of one of our faithful members who has been bringing him for months, and the other is another person who reached out to us in a time of need. Chrystal was also open to talking about the Gospel and trusted Christ, but she doesn't live in Farmville and is in a difficult place in life; please pray that she as well as the rest of the new converts will continue in their newfound spiritual life and learn and grow as they need to.

Another need that we mentioned in the last prayer update was the church finances. God has mightily met that need for now. A generous contribution from a dear lady who faithfully reads our letters and prays for our ministry has set the church on much more firm ground for the next few months, and will enable us to do several things that we had been hoping to do but unable to pay for. Please pray that the church will grow during the months of relief that this provides so that it can become self-sustaining soon.

Another issue for the church that is coming up is the need to extend our lease or find a new location. The current lease expires next March, and if we need to find a new location, we ought to start shortly, so we will soon be contacting our landlord through our realtor to see if we can extend this lease. The current location suits us very well, and is about as close to ideal for our current situation as we can imagine; we would love to stay here for at least another year before looking for a larger, more permanent home for the church. (Most people like to see three years of financial records before a church buys real estate.) Rumor has it, though, that the landlord who purchased this building after we signed the lease has different plans for it. Please be praying that God will provide just the right location or that He will enable us to stay here longer.

The situation with the lady who left our church because she was told that she couldn't teach Sunday School or play piano for services if she wouldn't make a priority of attending every service is still ongoing. There are four families that have essentially stopped attending since she left, though we are working to reach out to them as health allows. Please pray that this lady will recognize the harm that her example is causing and become the spiritual help that she could be and should be rather than a stumbling block for younger believers.

Our personal housing and financial situation also needs much prayer. God has wonder-

fully provided for the baby; I was telling someone who came by to bring dinner that at that point God had provided every major need for the baby (crib, changing table, etc. through family and friends, even lots of additional clothing from a hotel clerk that we didn't know), and that the only real need left was for diapers, and within a few hours another lady who didn't even know the person I had been talking to called to tell me that she was going to give \$50 a month towards diapers! The housing situation, though, is still a real need. We are currently staying in a room in the back of the church while we pray for God to provide a more permanent home in Farmville. Humanly speaking, we need much more income than we are currently receiving in support before we can rent or buy what is on the market. We have recently heard from one church that is taking us on for support, and that offsets the supporting church which has closed, but we are still facing a significant decrease in support even as expenses increase. Since the vast majority of our converts and fruit has been from activities other than regular church services, and those activities would have to virtually cease if I take an outside job, we are not willing to abandon the most fruitful aspects of our ministry for mere money. Please pray that God will provide housing that will enable us to put our full efforts towards His ministry and so that those who see us depending on Him will see His faithfulness in providing for us.

Even as we have seen God provide for our other needs and give us such victories, we expect that we will soon triumph in our current trials and that our current needs will soon be met as well. "Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:14a)

In Christ,

Pastor Paul Robelen

Praises:

Several visitors
Three professions of faith
Healthy baby
Van repaired
Church finances helped
Provision for baby

Prayer Requests:

Guidance and provision for dental work
Personal housing/financial provision
Provision/direction for church location
Return of the lady who is pulling others away