

A letter from Frank and Nancy Dimmock in Lesotho

September 11, 2008

Dear Friends,

Early in the New Year, Frank's mom had a wonderful visit with her son, Tom, and his wife, Boyd, aboard their dream boat off the North Carolina coast. She came home feeling happy but tired. She couldn't seem to regain her energy. This became compounded by poor circulation and fluid retention. One short month later, she was diagnosed with liver cancer and given four to six months to live. The night she found out, Mom Dimmock talked to God about it, and He reassured her that it would be OK. As far as she was concerned, all was well. But, across the ocean, Frank frantically pulled out his calendar and looked for an opportunity to be with her again. He had a two-week "window" in February and another in April. We decided that sooner was better than later, and he flew to join his family in mid-February. Special times of physical caring, reminiscing, reading Scripture, eating Chinese food, and gathering with family followed. Frank said a very difficult goodbye to his mom at noon on March 5 and began his journey home. While en route, his sisters sent him an email, saying they had had to say their final goodbyes also. At 11:30 that night, Henrietta "Chick" McMullen Dimmock went to be with her Lord. How grateful we were that Frank had those special final days with her.



Frank and his mother shortly before her death on March 5 this year.

Just before we left the States last June, we stopped by to see my cousin, Wayne Miller, and his wife Mary Margaret at their beautiful home, in the east Tennessee mountains. The kids jumped out of the car and raced in to ask if they could ride "Uncle Wayne's" horses. But Wayne wasn't up to catching and saddling horses that day. He did manage to walk to the paddock with us and feed them some carrots. He had been diagnosed with a brain tumor, and the treatment was really sapping his energy. Our prayer time together and great big goodbye hug, turned out to be our last. Wayne died on Friday, April 11 at the age of 63, after a year-long struggle with the cancer. And we, along with a host of other family and friends, will really miss him.

Perhaps because of the recent loss of his mother, Frank remembered his dad's passing more acutely this year. May marked the fourth anniversary of his dad's death, and he found himself in Kenya for meetings, where he had been when he learned of his dad's stroke. He remembered him with love and appreciation, and grieved again the distance and circumstances that kept him from his side when he died.



Dr. Kwame Bediako had a profound influence on African Christianity.

Last November, Dr. Kwame Bediako and his wife Mary, were the Bible teachers at our missionary retreat in Kenya. We wrote about how much they meant to us, and about his profound impact on our thinking—about spirituality and culture and African Christianity. We got word that he passed away suddenly on June 12 and felt his loss acutely. We pray for his wife, Mary, that she will know God's presence and comfort. This entry on the "Zondervan Blog" ministered to us:

Dr. Kwame Bediako passed away this week. Kwame was one of the most remarkable senior African leaders I have ever met. He had a surpassing level of scholarship (two doctorates—one in English and one in French). He had a range of knowledge of the history of the church in Africa (and Europe) that could keep us spell-bound for hours just listening to his stories. And he had a most profound understanding of the relationship between the

gospel and African culture. He also had a huge passion to bring African Christians together to affirm their Christian identity in authentic ways that would overcome some of the worst legacies of the colonial era. And yet he wore all this learning with such a light touch. His twinkling eyes and sparkling humour and laughter were a constant tonic. It has been such a joy and privilege to know him for many years. We shall miss him greatly. He is a sad loss to Ghana, to Africa, and indeed to the world church....

All ten of us Dimmocks gathered at Rift Valley Academy in Kenya in early July to celebrate Katie's graduation from high school. What a joy! But it was tempered by the sudden illness, that same weekend, of our Jesse's good friend and classmate, Ben Entwistle. Ben had come for "alumni weekend" and to celebrate the graduation of his younger brother, who was in Katie's class. He suffered a stroke on the Friday before graduation and was hospitalized. Infection spread from a disintegrating synthetic heart valve. On July 15, he was put on a special medical flight to South Africa for emergency heart surgery, but he died on the way, 45 minutes before landing. He was 20 years old. The fierce shock and pain of his loss are with us still. Only Jesus can make any sense out of such a death. LIFE ETERNAL was written in large letters on his funeral bulletin with the words of I John 2:17 "The world passeth away...but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."



The Dimmocks family at Katie's graduation from Rift Valley Academy in Kenya, July 2008.



Jesse Dimmock and her good friend Ben Entwistle. Ben, 20, died on July 15 of infection caused by a disintegrating synthetic heart valve.

Two days after we arrived in Lesotho last August, a young man, knocked on our gate asking for a job. He said he lived nearby and would like to help us look after the garden and property. We certainly needed the help, and he began work the next day. He proved to be a good worker, taking initiative, caring for plants, livestock (chickens), and children! Ntate Piti would push the children very high in the backyard swings, to great whoops of delight. He proudly brought his grandbaby to meet us last November. We got to know his wife and younger daughter. In the spring (our fall) he began to get sick. He missed a good bit of work and lost weight. Almost a year to the day later, August 2, Ntate Piti passed away. He was 37 years old. We miss him, but appreciate that our paths crossed his for this year.

Romans 12:15 says to "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." These days, we are among those who weep. As our family in Christ, we thought it important to share this with you. It turned

into quite a litany of loss, and has helped us understand why we feel so "wrung out." Thank you for your prayers.

With love,

Frank and Nancy Dimmock and family: Frank, Nancy, Nathan, Moses, Jesse, Katie, Andrew, Alifa, Isaac and Jackson