

Dear Lim Bôk-su, Peng-an!

Thank-you for sending the news of the Taiwan church and missionary community. I am especially grateful for the generous gift this year. I am enclosing my annual Christmas letter that gives a brief description of my year. However, I do want to update you specifically on some details.

First of all, I am so concerned as always about the future of Taiwan, as are my children. I will certainly be praying especially for the elections on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January and will be asking our congregation to remember this in their prayers also. Taiwan is always in my thoughts and prayers, as for me it always feels like a second homeland. Since Murray (Gô-Ka-bûn Bôk-su) and David (Gô Ming-rên) have passed away and Ruth has returned to Canada, and I am getting too old to travel so far, I do not get out to Taiwan as I did for a number of years while they were all there teaching (2004-2013). Did you know that David received his Permanent Residency certificate just a few months before he died? He always felt that Taiwan was his true homeland. Our 2 Chinese sons often talk about going for a visit, and I think our daughter Anne would like to go too. They were all just 10 when we returned to Canada in 1976.

I am saddened by the passing of so many of our old colleagues. The Noordhoffs particularly were dear friends of ours. Our Canadian contingent from those earlier years met at Crieff Hills Community Retreat Centre in July with 9 of us present. Marie Wilson had hoped to come from New York, but in the end was not able to. We had a good time together, filled with many memories and great discussions. Of course, all of us are aging, so we spent a bit of time telling each other about all our medical problems!!! I refer to this activity as our "organ recital".

My trip to Vancouver in September was extended beyond what I expected. Ruth, who works as an Outreach worker in Downtown Vancouver east side among the homeless and street people, had been assaulted on her way to work one day. She sustained a concussion and PTSD. It could have been much worse, but as it is, she has been unable to work, and has a very limited income. Hence my particular gratitude for the gift from TCCCNA. She has been able to find more suitable living accommodation that is further away from the shelters where she works. Her doctor has said that they will reassess in January to see if she is able to return to work. In the meantime, it is a concern for me and I would appreciate your prayers for healing on her behalf.

I wish you and all our Taiwanese brothers and sisters both in North America and Taiwan, a year of peace and stability and a strong sense of the tender love of God surrounding each one.

Yours faithfully,

*Mary Helen Garwin*



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December 14, 2019



Dear family and friends,

Time for the annual gathering together of the personal stories of 2019, and the opportunity to wish you all a *Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*. I had finished this painting before I discovered that Isaiah writes that the Wolf will lie down with the Lamb when God's peace takes over in our world, but we have all heard that it is the Lion that lies down with the Lamb. So now you know that I know that it was a Wolf and not a Lion. I have

decided that now that I am almost 83, I can get away with making a mistake or two! But the major issue in this mistake is to wish you all God's peace in your hearts, lives, families and in our world.

2019 has passed so rapidly that I begin to wonder if it really happened. But I know I have been busy, so it must have.

Family brings me joy as always. Living in a lovely basement suite in my granddaughter and her husband's home has brought the added joy and wonder of two little great granddaughters. Watching them grow and develop under the love and guidance of their excellent parents confirms all I learned during my professional studies about what children really need, and that is such pleasure for me. But while Natalie, 2, and Laura, 5 months, are just a stairway away from me, Allie who is 3 going on 4 lives in Tottenham with her mom and dad, (Curtis is Anne's son) and I do not get to see her so often. But they will be with us for Christmas Day. Jessica and I are hosting Christmas this year between our two apartments. Already that is turning out to be fun.

Travel was limited to Canada this year since Travel Health insurance is so expensive and not easy to get anyway because of the medication I take for my mild congestive heart failure. I spent almost a month with Ruth in Vancouver in October, which included the last cruise of the season to Alaska. My sister Fran and I spent a week with our sister Judith in Nova Scotia in December. There were lots of little trips in Ontario to visit with friends.

I continue to be active in my church, serving on the Life Long Learning Team, running the Aging Gracefully program, being part of WMS. I still serve on the Governance Committee of the Barrie Community Health Centre, paint with friends on Monday afternoons most weeks, and get invited back to the Sandy Cove Acres Photography group occasionally. I enjoy attending the HD Operas from the Met at our local theatre, saw "Shen Yun" in Toronto, and went with my old school pal, Mary Louise Downer to see "Come from Away".

There were a number of special events: a watercolour course in Collingwood in June, Brantford General Hospital Nurses Alumnae dinner, the gathering of the old Taiwan Mission gang at Crieff Hills for 3 days, Knox College alumnae dinner with my 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of graduating from Ewart College,

I continue to connect with my dear friends in Malawi. Mercy Kunthani started her final year of Nursing training at the Malawi College of Health Sciences, James Kajawo and his two children moved to Blantyre where he has a new job in his own field of accounting, and Faith M'manga continues to be our connection with a group of grandmothers that we support through our WMS. On top of all this I go to a VON exercise group twice a week and have been trying to get out to walk a couple of times a week.

The family are fine, grandchildren all grown and finding their way in the work force. Daughter Anne is loving a new job in accounting, Mike and Carole, and Peter and Jenny are facing empty nests. Rebecca graduated from University this fall. I suppose it is no wonder that 2019 passed quickly. It seems I was busy! Reaching this age is accompanied by the passing of dear friends and reminds me to enjoy every minute and keep a sense of wonder. God bless you and yours in the year to come.

With love to all

Mary Helen Sarvin