

April 1 2020

Mid- Week message

The Chinese have a wonderful saying that goes, "May you live in interesting times." Such prophetic words seem to accurately describe our times and the situation we now live in. Certainly a new normal has descended upon our lives. Hopefully this will only be for a short period of time. At least until we can return to what use to be.

I was speaking with my mom this past weekend about the things that use to be. She told me that a Chinese company had purchased the old abandoned sugar mines on the island. The Shenzhen Raw Sugar Company has restarted the economy in this depressed part of the country. In a very short time this purchase has been a great economic boom in a time of such economic uncertainty. This company has employed seven thousand men and women. Mostly for underground extraction. Unskilled labourers working underground make eighty dollars an hour on a ten hour shift. Many retired coal miners and steel workers have found gainful employment in mining sugar. There have been many come from away as well. All of this gives John 7: 54 a whole new meaning, " I will bless the extractors of the earth's sweetness."

Production started in January of this year. They are extracting sixty metric tonnes of raw sugar a day. Unfortunately on February 29 there was an explosion underground. My cousin Shifty Krszwada, was one of the ten miners who was trapped ninety kilometers below. He and the other nine miners ate through twenty five miles of sugar before the Dragerman rescued them. The dangers of mining have not changed. The survivors were taken to a local hospital and tested for hyper-activity , diabetes and high blood pressure.

My mom said that those who could not return to the underground would be retrained to work on the surface. They will be trained in how to properly snowboard. Then, once trained they will spend their days snowboarding down mountains of raw sugar. Apparently the friction from the snowboards turns the raw sugar into molasses. One of the many great by-products of raw sugar mining. This increase of molasses has encouraged and revitalized the local moonshiners and molasses cookie factory. Thankfully many will never draw a sober breath again or drink their tea without a big, fat, soft molasses cookie. The Lord truly is sweet as the cash, raw sugar and molasses flows.

I am told that applications may be found on line. There is a test for English so that you may assimilate quickly with the locals and your fellow workers. Also diabetics and hyper-active people are discouraged from applying. Being around that much raw sugar and molasses may lead one into temptation and mischief that even Our Beloved Lord could not keep you from. In the words of Mary Magdalene, who had seven demons, probably from too much sugar," Be careful of those who spin yarn that cannot be knitted into socks and sweaters," James 6:10.

In our family we always told mad and crazy stories on or near April first. Growing up , my paternal grandfather was the worst and most creative. As an older adult, I am realizing what an oral culture I was raised in. We entertained ourselves and others with our minds expressed in story and song. Many times the challenge was to see how outrageous a story you could weave before the listener realized they were being had. We did it to have fun, and in that spirit, I wish you all a happy and blessed April Fool's day. May it be full of loving mischief and hearty chuckles. Pastor "D"