

After you have suffered . . .



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"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 5:10-11, ESV)

The highlight of the summer for most of us as Cru missionaries was our staff conference in Milwaukee. One of the events we attended was Heritage Night, a special evening celebrating those who were marking milestones in their service - sixty years, fifty years and so on . . .



Jenny (left) with our team leader, Ryan (right) and two new friends from Australia.

One common experience shared by these long serving missionaries is suffering - some great suffering, some only mild. One couple we met had recently been expelled by the government from the country where they were serving. This was a crushing disappointment to them as they had come to love their neighbors and the ministry God was giving them. Others we know have lost children to illness. Some have lost spouses. Others are dealing with a family member's long term disability.

But in the midst of this suffering these friends have testified to God's nearness and care. Lives are being transformed on campus and in the country where they are serving through the gospel. Churches are being built up even as those who planted those churches mourn. Our summer reading yielded this meaningful quotation:

"The sad things that happened long ago will always remain part of who we are just as the glad and gracious things will too, but instead of being a burden of guilt, recrimination, and regret that make us constantly stumble as we go, even the saddest things can become, once we have made peace with them, a source of wisdom and strength for the journey that still lies ahead."

Fredrick Buechner, *Telling Secrets*

People who have suffered know that life is hard - they are realists. People who have suffered find a new reason to hope. People who have suffered are stronger emotionally and spiritually. People who have suffered have developed positive strategies for coping because of the gospel. People who have suffered have learned to pray to a faithful loving Father who has promised to, "restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish," us.

The past ministry year has had many challenges for us. We now find ourselves in a good place. God has been faithful to bring us through to a wide door of service now open to us. Thank you for the part you have in helping us get the gospel to the campus.