

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, LTD.



ADF Newsletter

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May, 2018

Summer Meeting will Honor Harold and Joyce Watson; Will meet August 25, 2018, at First Baptist Church, Starkville, MS

The retirement of Harold and Joyce Watson from Project Coordinator and Treasurer, respectively, brings transition in leadership. Fortunately Dan Watson has accepted the position of Project Coordinator and Carl Prewitt is serving on an interim basis as treasurer. A permanent treasurer is needed.

Harold will speak at the August meeting and his presentation is eagerly awaited. He and Joyce served as missionaries in the Philippines until their retirement in 1998. Our organization celebrated their return stateside in that year and now celebrates their service to ADF.

Their service to the then Foreign Mission Board was chronicled in the April 1997 issue of the Commission magazine, which is no longer published.

Harold has received worldwide recognition for innovative solutions to soil erosion and hunger. Joyce has been the supportive bookkeeper, manager, confidant, and homemaker. Without Joyce there would have been no Harold as we know him.

ACRONYMS

These acronyms from the Commission illustrate innovative solutions Harold and coworkers brought to the plaguing problems of hunger and erosion.

SALT – Identifies Sloping Agricultural Land Technology which is the most famous development. Basically it employs leguminous plants planted on a contour to limit erosion and enrich soil.

FAITH – Stands for Food Always in the Home and is a simple system of basket composting that assures families a year-around supply of nutritious vegetables with minimum labor.

BOOST – Baptist Out Of School Training is a three month program for young Baptists out of school and often out of work, training them in farming, Christian living, primary health care, home nutrition, and community living.

PREACH – Pastors in Rural Evangelism, Agriculture, Church planting and health care is a program tailored for training rural pastors.

Other programs with acronyms were REDEEM, SALT 2, SALT 3, AND SALT 4.

Note: Permission is gratefully acknowledged to the International Mission Board for use of material from the Commission magazine.

Pray for these

An ADF funded project suffered significant loss due to arson. Pray for another source of funds for our partner. Please pray for the arsonist to become a believer.

Pray for Jim Watson in his trip to the Dominican Republic.

Pray for a treasurer for ADF.

GOOD NEWS! Project requests for agricultural assistance continue to grow. At the present time we have ongoing projects in Central America, Africa, and a number of locations in Asia. BAD NEWS Requests for funding is growing faster than our income. Up to this point we have been able to fund the requests we have at the present time, However, we can expect more requests at our meeting in August. I know many of our members give a year end contribution to ADF. I would ask you to prayerfully consider a contribution prior to our summer meeting. God has blessed us by giving us the opportunity of using agriculture to combat hunger and share the gospel. It opens doors that are closed to other evangelistic efforts. Thank you for your faithfulness.

Don Blasingame

Perspective

God placed Harold Watson in the perfect time and place to prepare him for service where his service was desperately needed. He grew up in Mississippi in a time when poor farmers were being taught to conserve the soil and improve its fertility. They were being taught to install terraces to slow runoff from sloping land and use legumes to enhance soil nitrogen. Terraces directed water into grassed waterways. Tractors were just being introduced but most work was with mules or by hand. Most food was produced on the farm and diversification was encouraged to limit the impact of crop failure.

When Harold encountered the plight of massive erosion in the Philippines the problem was quite different from that faced by Mississippi farmers. Slopes were

much steeper and channeling water with a terrace to a grassed waterway did not solve the problem. Ultimately the basic principles of reducing erosion by directing water and improving fertility were used in a different way. Harold developed Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) to accomplish the same purposes. The terraces did not direct water to a central point of discharge but were constructed perfectly level. The water was discharged all along the terrace just as water flows over a beaver dam. The second major difference was that unlike the Mississippi terraces the legumes were planted in a row all along the terrace where the water was discharged. The plants stabilized the terrace, improved fertility, and slowed the passing water.

Web links to cooperators:

Baptist Rural Life Ministries – <http://www.BRLM.org>

Filter of Hope – <http://www.filterofhope.org>

Gracewater – <http://www.gracewater.org>

Reclaimed Project – <http://www.reclaimedproject.org>

Loving our Neighbor

Harold Watson was leading a four person team on a three week agricultural missions trip in an Asian country. I was a member. The other two members were a soil scientist and a plant specialist.

Harold and Joyce had retired and had moved back to Mississippi from the Philippines. He was the project coordinator and she was treasurer for ADF. Harold was in demand for his expertise and travelled a lot. The objective of this particular trip was to evaluate leguminous plants for SALT.

A number of sites were scheduled to determine how the plants would fare under different altitudes, soils, and environments. The government, often hostile to Christians, was cooperative and recognized the need to address the country's massive soil erosion problems. They had selected the sites, gotten approvals, and made arrangements for transportation. Each week we were to plant five sites. It was strenuous labor. Some of the sites had had little preparation and we grubbed out a seedbed along the contour. In addition to our team we had two believers from inside the country, a guide (who translated but obviously was assigned to keep an eye on us), and a driver.

We had become accustomed to the routine by the second week. Later in the week there was a mix up and approval had not been obtained for the day's work. The government representative found a substitute field but it was overgrown and required considerable hand work that

was more than we could manage. On short notice he obtained laborers from a nearby community. They were from a minority people group who had never met anyone from outside the country. They became very interested in the project and invited us to plant a site near their village. I don't know how the logistics were worked out but we were able to work that site into the schedule.

A number of villagers showed up and we had sufficient help to prepare the seedbed.

Harold arranged a break and seated everyone in a group on the hillside. Then Harold pulled out a canvass and told them the story of a loving God who created an abundant world. He assured them that God loves them and commands us to love one another. We are stewards of the earth and must tend it. If we do that it will reward us with bountiful food. This unreached people group was hearing this message for the first time. There was not enough time nor were they prepared to hear all of the gospel story but seed was planted in their hearing that day.

We had been told that we would not be welcome to enter their village. After the field work was done we were indeed invited there. Their lodgings had thatched roofs and woven bamboo walls. Their cooking was over open fires in the center of the huts and smoke rose to exit at the peak of the roof.

I have often remembered that day and rejoiced in the appropriate way the first Bible story was told there.

David May



Unreached people group village. Photo by author



This plot in Asia was part of a SALT project. Harold and his team planted it in several varieties of legumes. Photo by author

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~CONTACT INFORMATION~

Communications for the newsletter may be emailed to the editor at adfhelps@gmail.com

Information about mission activities for inclusion in the newsletter is welcomed.

Telephone communication may be made to Don Blasingame at 662-323-5646.

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Donations should be mailed to 7541 Siwell Rd. Byram, MS 39272