

Dear Friends:

April 30, 2009

Let me test your cultural knowledge. Ginger, our local staff has just had a baby. Imagine you are going to visit the new mothers and her 10-day old baby. What question would you ask first?

- a. How is she doing?
- b. How is breastfeeding going?
- c. Has the new mother had a bath?
- d. How long is the baby sleeping?



Well, it was “c”, has she had a bath yet? And the answer? Yes, twice already! The aspect of childbirth that Ginger was most concerned about was not the labor and delivery, it was the Chinese custom of *Zuoyuezi* (doing the month). This custom is accepted by Chinese mothers as a time of respite and physical recovery. However, when carried to the extremes it means no bathing, no TV, no reading, no fruit, no vegetables, no getting out of bed, and no going outside for a month after the birth of the child. The positive part is that the new mother is waited on hand and foot for that month. It seemed to Ginger that her mother-in-law was going to be conservative in her interpretation and implementation of “doing the month.” But luckily her mother-in-law has allowed her to bathe!

The pastors and I finished the *Visitation Team Comfort Verses* booklet and it has been printed and given out. Thanks to everyone who sent me verses. It is 56 pages long, with about 300 verses under 31 categories, plus hymns with each category as well. So far we have had enthusiastic responses from all who received a copy. We are planning to repeat the *Visitation Team Training* for those who did not attend the first training, and are adding new topics for 2009.

Currently I am busy with office work, planning for the visitation team training and for the summer student interns’ projects and schedule. My co-worker and I are also working on the statistics for our Metabolic Syndrome study. It is slow work as my co-worker (the statistical analysis expert) and I try to answer our research questions using the 40,000 data points in the computer. It is not as interesting as actually doing the project in the community, but we have found some interesting results about the health, exercise habits and disease rates of the middle aged population that will be used in trainings for community health workers in a few weeks time. In the last 3 months we have followed up everyone who had abnormal results with a phone call to see if they have changed their diet or exercise patterns, or if they have seen a doctor.



Jinibao, who did the formatting, holding the booklet.

I am currently working on my home assignment schedule. I have contacted a few churches to try to confirm some dates and this is how it looks so far. I am waiting on some dates to be set before I can confirm the schedule, for example, my parent's 60th wedding anniversary party is to be held while I am home and that date has yet to be set.

July 23 arrive in Chicago

July 26 Chicago-area church

July 27-Aug. 1 Global Mission conference in Kenosha, WI

Aug. 1 to 2 Chicago-area church

Aug. 2 7 pm fly to New Hampshire

Aug. 7, 8, or 9 train to North Carolina

Aug. 16 North Point, NC

Aug. 23 Wilmington, DE ?

Aug. 29-30 Butler and Pittsburgh, PA ?

Sept. 13, 20, 27 visit New England Churches (20th at St. Peters, Harwich, MA)

Oct. 5 return to China

It is a privilege to live in two cultures, and I really enjoy the work that I do in China. However, I am looking forward to seeing family, old friends and churches in the USA too.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support for my work.

Blessings,

Judy Perry

P.S. If anyone is interesting in reading the following article I can send a PDF copy:
Strand, M.A., Perry, J., Guo, J.Z., Zhao, J.P., Janes, C. (2007) "*Doing the month: Rickets and post-partum convalescence in rural China.*" Midwifery. (Accepted for publication in 2008)