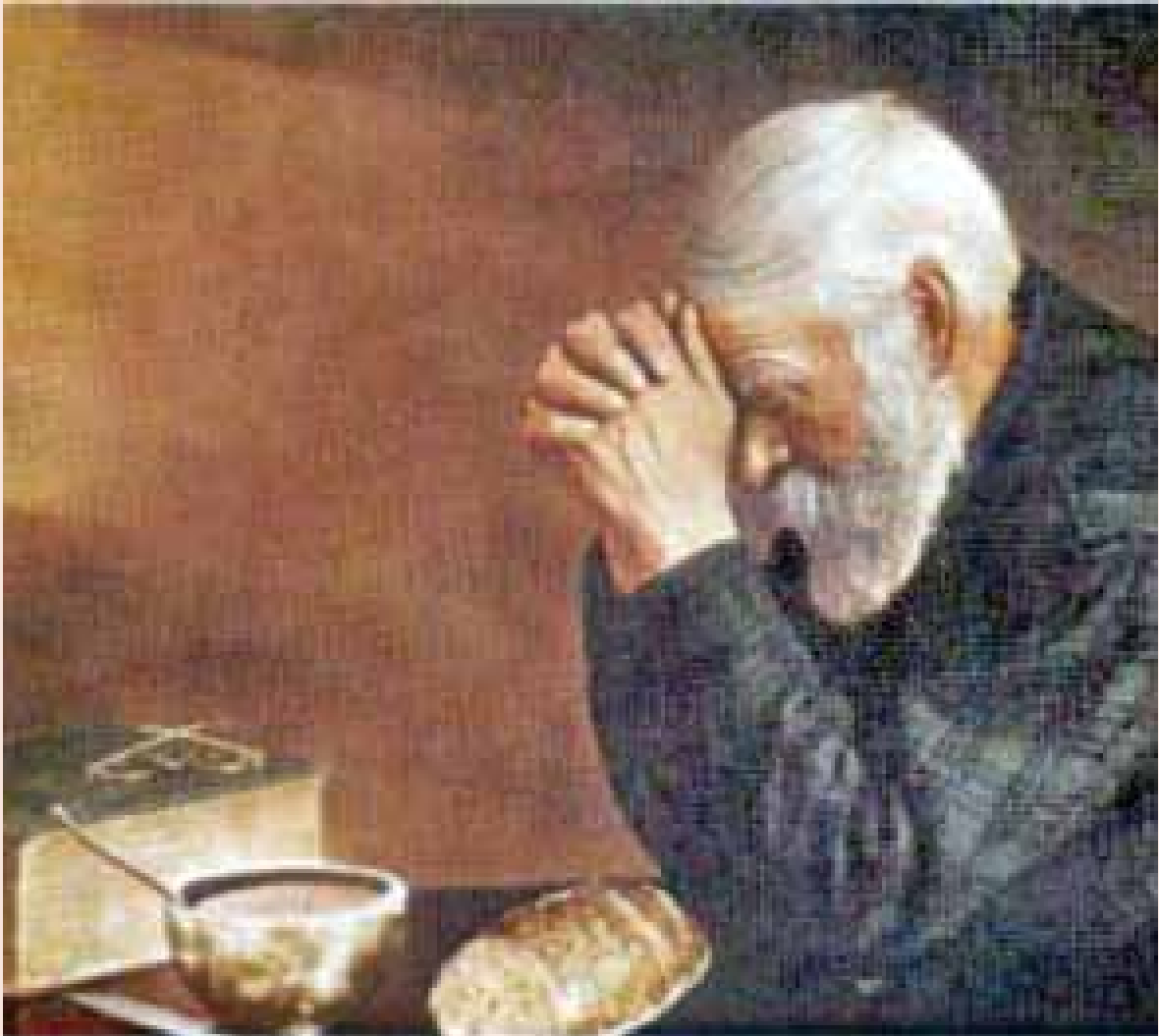


SHIELD OF FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL

# SFMI Prayer/News UPDATE

Fulfilling the Great Commission Through Establishing New Testament Churches



# Heroes of the Faith

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# Editorial Notes

Our cover shows what should be a familiar image to Christians and something that many may have a reproduction of. The image of a grandfatherly type man praying over his simple meal of soup and bread is commonly seen with an accompanying painting of a praying grandmotherly woman.

We appreciate its simplicity and also the reminder that it means little or nothing to the world: “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

Who are the “Heroes of the Faith”? asks Dick in his lead article. Our culture is so saturated with video images through movies, video games, and other media that we forget a number of things. When the Philistines bribed Delilah to betray Samson, they asked her to “Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth” (Judges 16:5). This is a strong implication that there was nothing in the man Samson that indicated why he was so strong.

As someone who read comic books, it took me the longest time to figure out that a character like Superman wasn't inherently courageous. How brave does someone have to be, knowing that bullets, bombs, or explosives cannot penetrate your skin?

The Jewish creators of Superman had to invent a weakness when they realized that “flaw” in their creation. They very much recognized that “Kal-El” (his real name, and a derivative of “Elohim”) was more like god than man, hence the need for a mortal weakness. But we are *not* godlike in our abilities.

Consider the contrary attributes of the “heroes” of the Bible. When David offered to battle Goliath, Saul told him bluntly, “Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth” (1 Samuel 17:33).


Now David had a track record of walking with the Lord. “And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out

of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him” (1 Samuel 17:34-35).

Having said that, however, David was quick to add: “The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine” (1 Samuel 17:37).

James Lucas discusses the “Chosen People,” reminding us that such a designation is an obligation to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. We are not “our own” and we are bought with a price.

The mystery “hid in Christ” is the subject of Richard McDaniel's article. At the time of this writing, many are preparing to observe what some call “Easter” and others call “Resurrection Sunday,” but something that we should consider *each day* of our Christian lives. As Richard reminds us, “Now that Jesus Christ has risen, this mystery is accomplished in all who trust in Jesus.” This mystery, “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

Finally, we have a number of reports from missionaries seeking to be a blessing to all families of the earth. May this be a reminder to continue in prayer for the work in which they are engaged—a work that we share though we never may go beyond the borders of our nation. 



SFMI trainees evangelize in downtown Bend, Oregon.

# Heroes of the Faith



By Dick York

I am impressed with those we call the “heroes of the faith” in Hebrews chapter eleven. They were all ordinary men and women who acted and reacted exactly the way God’s people are expected to act; their sights were set where we are instructed to set ours; their values were what ours are expected to be; their hope was in the same promises that God has given us. Their responses, therefore, could be described as normal—not average, certainly, but normal.

So what’s the difference between average and normal? If your car engine is functioning as it was built to function, i.e., no misses, developing its rated horsepower, etc., you would say that it is functioning normally; anything less would not be normal. If you compared it to one hundred other cars, fifty of which were putting out only 50 percent, and fifty of which were not functioning at all, the average would be 25 percent. Yours might be doing significantly better than average and still be far from normal.

That’s the reason the Apostle Paul said, “But they measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise.”<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, not wise to measure ourselves against the average or even to compare ourselves to the normal, but rather to fix our sights upon the Lord Jesus and pay attention to what it was that produced these heroes of the faith, because it is our desire to be *normal* Christians, not *average*.

What was it that inspired them to attain to normalcy? It was the anticipation of the reward: the fulfillment of the promise that God—who, they were convinced, cannot

lie—had made to them. The same unchanging God makes the same immutable promises to us as He did to them. How did they react to these promises?

They saw them afar off. The fact that they were “afar off” did not lessen their value in the minds of these normal ones, or their allure. God is, as are His promises, immutable. Therefore, they could patiently endure because they were *persuaded* of them: they were absolutely convinced, and their distance in time did not obscure or even diminish their vision or their hope. They *embraced* the reality, which meant that they took them to heart and governed their lives according to the reality they had embraced. It was now hope of the fulfillment of the promises that generated their lifestyle and not the context of their present circumstances.

Therefore, they could **confess** that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; they were *in* the world but no longer *of* it. That’s what Jesus has said of us. We often sing, “This world is not my home, I’m just a-passin’ through;” but sometimes we sing what we’re not really persuaded about and have therefore not embraced. I suppose that’s what the writer of Hebrews meant in 11:15, where he wrote, “If they had been mindful of that country whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to return.” Sometimes we sing about the next world while we live as though we belong to the present one. Why didn’t they do that? Because “now they desired a *better* country, that is, an heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (v. 16). They now

esteemed the value of the promised reward of greater worth than the best of what their present context could offer.

Where our sights are set for tomorrow determines the choices we make today. Hebrews 11:24-25 tells us that Moses was reared with luxury, privilege, prestige and opulence. Humanly speaking, he had every reason to protect his status and live a lifestyle commensurate with his identity as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He weighed that against his heritage as a son of Abraham and made a choice: he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, *choosing* rather to *suffer affliction* with the people of God than to *enjoy the pleasure* of sin for a season." Why did he choose that way? Because of that to which he assigned value. "He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (vs. 24-26).

There is no doubt in my mind that a comparable modern-day scenario would draw scorn from many professing Christians, who would say, "Why would you *choose reproach* above *treasure*?" It was because he had *respect* unto the recompense of the reward.

As believers in Jesus Christ and in the immutable promises of God, we must learn, as our *heroes* did, to evaluate realistically. Our estimation of value must be according to the recompense of the reward, which is everlasting, and not upon the deceptive and fleeting temporal values that capture the lust of our eyes and disqualify us from eternal riches. Moses "got it," and so did the other heroes of the faith whom we admire from a distance but are reluctant to emulate.

I don't have to write any examples of our poor choices and mistaken evaluations. Even as you read this, they come to mind—past choices, or even recent ones, that signify

our attachment to this present world as opposed to that "better country." If there are such disturbing memories, it is important to know that even the "heroes" made some bad decisions, but they overcame them by repentance and faith and went on to win.

Ease and comfort was not a goal for them. *Now*—and the context of it is a very short space of time. *Then*—when we reap the recompense of the reward, it is eternity and will be endless. That was the reality that guided their choices and enabled them to endure without losing their resolve or turning back. "Others were tortured, not accepting

deliverance; that they might obtain a *better* resurrection" (v. 35).

Imagine—even so long ago, they were anticipating the resurrection and into what it would usher them. They were not willing to capitulate to

the deceptive allurements of the present world even under the duress of torture because of what they would gain or lose at the resurrection.

Sometimes we hear professing believers say, "I don't need to obey that...give that up...endure that...because that is not necessary to be saved." But our heroes were looking at a *better* city...a *better* resurrection...the recompense of the reward. To them, nothing here was of as great value; nothing compared; nothing could compete; no obstacle could deter them from their pursuit of what God promises to those who obey Him.

We face many challenges in various forms: trials, temptations from within and without, circumstances that press us to be unethical, unrighteous, dishonest, or impatient. Solutions to those challenges seem illusive, confusing, or even impossible. Such was the case in which the Israelites found themselves on the shore of the Red Sea: "By faith *they passed through* the Red Sea as on

**Not long before he was martyred in 1956 in the jungles of Ecuador at the age of twenty-seven, Jim Elliot said "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."**

dry land; which the Egyptians *assaying* to do were drowned” (v. 29).

Most of us have never experienced anything quite as spectacular as the parting of the waters of the Red Sea, but this historic event speaks volumes about the momentous challenges that we have to our own pursuit of normalcy. We will achieve our goal the same way they achieved theirs: by *faith* they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land. The effort they expended was the same as if there had been *no* sea. It was God who moved the water and made the way. Their part was to abandon their past, set their course for the promise of God, and simply obey. *They* didn’t do the impossible—*God* did. By faith (believing, trusting, resting) they passed through.

The Egyptians, on the other hand, were intent on their own agenda. They were not seeking after God’s will. Quite the contrary; they were adversarial, just as the personal agenda of our flesh is adversarial to God’s plan and to our eternal well-being. With their mind set upon their immediate goals, without concern for God or His promise, or even His direction, they *assayed* to pass through. In their assaying (trying, with much effort, stubborn perseverance), they drowned.

Our heroes did what they did some three thousand, perhaps even four thousand years ago. Even then, as true believers, they were living for eternity; their sights were set. I’m sure there were multitudes of their neighbors who, ignoring eternity, were hard-working, upright citizens, being responsible by concentrating on gaining as much from the then present world as is legally possible. “Choose affliction? No way! Esteem reproach greater riches than treasure? You must be crazy! I’m respectable. I go to church and even tithe. Besides, they have been talking about the end of the world for as long as I can remember, and everything is still the same.”

The Apostle Peter addressed that, when he told us that in the last days there would

be folks saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”<sup>22</sup> But if our heroes of so many centuries ago were mindful enough of eternity that they were willing to forfeit everything they were or possessed for the hope of the promised reward, how much more should we upon whom the ends of the world are come, be likewise persuaded enough to embrace the promise of reward in the coming kingdom? They now know. Their race is run, their victory won, and they know that their priorities were right. Let’s emulate those heroes of the faith—not admiring them from afar but running the race they ran the way they ran it, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Not all heroes of the faith ran their races three, four, or five thousand years ago. Not long before he was martyred in 1956 in the jungles of Ecuador at the age of twenty-seven, Jim Elliot said, “*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.*”


There have been heroes of the faith in every generation: some martyred, some unnoticed—but all faithful, with their vision fixed on the rewards of the kingdom of God. Let us each join their number. What if we could each say with the Apostle Paul, who was also a hero of the faith, “I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.”<sup>23</sup> Who are today’s heroes of faith?

*What could God do today with one saint who was totally submitted to God?*

## Endnotes

1 2 Corinthians 10:12

2 2 Peter 3:4

3 2 Timothy 4:7,8 



# The Chosen People!

By Jim Lucas

Most of us are quite aware that the church (Iglesia) consists of those who are called out of the world to participate as members of the body of Christ. They also are referred to as the *Elect* or the *Chosen People of God*. They have been blessed “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”<sup>1</sup>

We were not called because of any merit of our own. In fact, we were *all* guilty of sin, for there is none righteous, no not one: “for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus was crucified that we might be called the children of promise, or the children of Abraham. The scripture says, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree; *that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles* through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”<sup>3</sup> The wonderful promise that was given to Abraham also included us.

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: *and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*<sup>4</sup>

This aspect of the promise was soon forgotten by the Jewish people. They remembered with great pride that God had promised to make *them* a great nation and that He would bless *them*. They took pride in being the chosen people. But they failed to remember that God had called them to be *a blessing* unto all the families of the earth. They missed it all together! They thought that it was more important for them to be blessed than it was for them to be a blessing unto all the Gentiles.

They also took pride in the fact that God had chosen them to receive the “law of Moses.” They failed to realize that they would never be able to keep such a holy law; the reason being that they could not see the depravity of their own souls. Even after failing for so many years, they continued to insist that others keep the law, which they themselves had never been able to keep.

The law was a tremendous blessing that our Heavenly Father had entrusted to them. Unfortunately, their faith became misguided; they trusted in *the works of the law* but failed to *believe the promises of God*. They became a religious sect and believed that they were the only ones who had understanding of God. They became a people without compassion, zealous for a law that they had misunderstood while insisting that they had great revelation. For example, the fourth commandment concerning the Sabbath became of utmost importance to them. It’s amazing how zealous they could be about a law they could never keep or even understand.

The law was given as a type to foreshadow something better to come (see Hebrews 10:1). Our Lord God was not content just to give us one day to rest, nor a week, but eternity! Christ Jesus calls us to rest in Him for ever.

*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.*

*But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are*

*blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.<sup>5</sup>*

Their hearts were so hard that when the Prince of Peace, the author of the law, walked among them, they did not know Him and condemned Him for healing the sick on the Sabbath. Paul asked rhetorically, “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?”<sup>6</sup> and answered, “much every way. Then he said, “What then? are we (the Jews) better than they [the Gentiles]? No, in, no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.”<sup>7</sup>

As Jews, they had great advantage, but they were no better than anybody else. They would say, “We alone have the law,” but they weren’t true to the law. Right doctrine will not trump right living. There should be no difference in the claim and the conduct (see Ezekiel 36:20). Those who claim knowledge of the Scriptures and fail to walk in the light of the same are defaming the Lord God. Being a Jew did not give immunity. Those who don’t have great teaching but who walk in obedience and love will put to shame those who boast in their knowledge of the word. It’s not good to take pride in what we know and not regard the righteousness of God.

No one bats a thousand. If your batting average is 295, we consider that good, but that’s a long way from a thousand. Jesus said “Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Obviously, we all fall short of the glory of God: Jews, Gentiles, even Baptists, Pentecostals, or whatever—simply all.

The Jews were entrusted with the Torah and were given great and precious promises. They failed to keep the law, but, even worse, they

failed to *believe* the wonderful promises of God. The law was given to them as a school master to bring them to faith in Christ.<sup>8</sup> They missed the purpose of the law, even with Jesus the Son of God in their presence doing signs and wonders.

Jesus has now entrusted the church with the gospel and has commissioned us to take the gospel unto all nations. Our batting average isn’t very impressive. We have received the blessing of the gospel and take much pride in having received it. We also boast much of the vast resources of teaching among us. We quickly point out the hypocrisy of the Jews but cannot see our own. We preach that we are justified by faith (rightly so) and speak much about its importance but do we demonstrate this faith in our daily living? With our knowledge of the Word we can justify our lack of faith or just about any other wrongdoing. Nevertheless, we all know that without faith we cannot please God.

I might ask, “Is there any advantage in being a Christian?” Much every way. Are we Christians better than anyone else? In no way! If we claim to believe the promise of God but fail to take this good news to the nations, we are no different from the religious Jews.

We cannot claim to be saved by grace unless we see our own depravity of soul and truly realize that “in me dwells no good thing.”<sup>9</sup> Grace is given to the weak, not the strong. In order to walk in the salvation of God, it is paramount to understand that without Christ we are all vile sinners.

It’s not a matter of the law vs. faith, but the *works* of the law vs. the *works* of faith. The Jews were boasting in their ethnic pride. If anyone is fellowshiping where they boast in their own group, flee, for they have lost their way.

Beloved, let us rest in God’s faithfulness to keep His promise.

## Endnotes

1 Ephesians 1: 3,4

2 Romans 5:10

3 Galatians 3:13,14


4 Genesis.12: 1-3

5 Matthew 11:28–12:12

6 Romans 3:1

7 Romans 3:9

8 Galatians 3:19-29

9 Romans 7:18 

# God's Revelation: Complete in Christ

By Richard McDaniel

*“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever....” (Deuteronomy 29:29).*

The revelation of God began with His stated purpose. He created the earth to be inhabited, and when it was finished, He put man on it. Man was created in the image of God. That plan has never deviated from its course; it is a process that is completed in Christ. Complementary to His plan are all the major themes of the Bible, which can also be traced to the beginning. Here is a sampling of these themes: Man is a sinner by choice and a sinner by nature; he has a free will to obey or disobey God; he has the capacity to hear God's voice, to repent of sin, to love God, or to hate Him; to call upon God or to run from Him.

This is where faith began, where atonement first came, where grace began, where the priesthood began, where nations were formed, and where marriage was instituted. God began to make covenants with man. Religions began as a substitute for faith. This is where the Messiah was promised as man's Deliverer, God was revealed as the “Judge of all the earth,” and God's Spirit began to move men, to come upon men, and to strive with men. We have the first prophecies, the first of many promises, the first of God's judgments, and the first mention of everlasting life. All of the major themes relevant to man today and to God's plan can be traced back to the beginning of God's revelation to man.

Through Abraham's seed, God promised to bless *all* nations. That lineage of blessing came through Isaac, then Jacob, and continued through forty-two generations unto Christ Jesus. He is the one in whom all nations are blessed. Those who trust in Jesus become that seed and a part of the family of faith. The promises to Abraham also have an application pertaining solely to his physical offspring, the nation of Israel, with covenants and promises specifically for them. Some of these promises are yet to be fulfilled. To Israel pertained the covenants, the giving of the law, and the tabernacle service. These relate specifically to Israel, but they also have a role in the larger picture of God's eternal plan for humanity. The law was given to show man his sinfulness and is used

by God as a schoolmaster to bring man to Christ. The law and the tabernacle were shadows and figures of good things to come contained in the new covenant. Thus the revelation grew and is relevant to both the nation of Israel and the church, which comprises both Jew and Gentile.

Throughout the law and the prophets there are detailed prophecies of the Messiah coming as a ruler and a deliverer. As the Deliverer, he came as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”<sup>1</sup> The Passover Lamb spoken of in Exodus was a figure of Jesus, the true Lamb, whose sacrifice would take away sins forever. The proof that His death satisfied God and that the penalty for sin was paid in full is that He rose from the dead. In His triumph over sin and death, God has declared Jesus Lord. All power and authority has been given unto Him. Submission to His authority will bring one into his kingdom<sup>2</sup> where He reigns over the hearts of men. As a ruler, He will also rule on the throne of David. To qualify for that, He had to be of the seed of David. At His return, He will reign as King on earth and rule over the kingdoms of this earth for a thousand years.

The prophets also announced the coming of a new covenant, which is sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ and is for both Jew and Gentile. In addition to payment for sin, this covenant would bring about an inward work of God, writing the law of God in men's hearts and putting a new spirit in man. God's Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh. The prophecies were God's revelation of what would come to pass with the advent and ministry of Jesus Christ and then of the ministry of the Holy Spirit which would continue the revelation.

Christ Jesus came into the world to continue God's revelation where the prophets left off.<sup>3</sup> Speaking to His disciples, He said, “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.”<sup>4</sup> The Lord Jesus began to speak of and to reveal the mysteries. He went on to say, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”<sup>5</sup> There would continue to be a revealing of the mysteries, but in order for that to happen, Christ had to die, arise from the dead, and ascend to the Father. His death and resurrection were of vital importance to



the plan and revelation of God. Forty days after his ascension, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all flesh. Those who had repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus received the promise of the Holy Ghost, who would now be the revealer of the mysteries.


In Galatians, chapter one, Paul gives testimony of how he received the revelation of the mystery of God. He tells us that the gospel that he preached was not taught to him by any other than the Lord Jesus Christ. In Ephesians, chapter three, he mentions again how that he received the revelation through Christ and that this revelation was not made known in time past to humanity as it was now revealed unto the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. This was not a new gospel or a new revelation distinct from the old, but an adding to it. Now the fellowship of the mystery would be made visible to all through the testimony of the church. The church is the visible body through which God's wisdom is revealed.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout time, there has been a sequence of events and revelations that are like building blocks to bring us to where we are today. The oracles of God were delivered to and through the Jews but now the door has opened up to include the Gentile nations. This was something prophesied beforehand but the fullness of the time came on the day of Pentecost as documented in Acts, chapter two. The barrier that was once there between Jew and Gentile was removed in Christ, and a new identity was formed called the church. There was melded together one fold comprising all who are in Christ Jesus. This is what Jesus referred to when He said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."<sup>7</sup> This fold does not replace the nation of Israel.

In the book of Colossians, Paul states that the mystery has been hid in times past but now is revealed to the saints. What is the mystery he speaks of here? It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory."<sup>8</sup> It would be impossible for Christ to dwell in a man before the resurrection. Now that Jesus Christ has risen, this mystery is accomplished in all who trust in Jesus. We are saved by His life dwelling in us.

This brings us close to the final step in God's eternal plan of making man in His image; the next step is the resurrection of our bodies. With that, God's plan for the making of man in His image will be complete. In the end, those of faith before Christ and those of faith after Christ will all be joined together.<sup>9</sup>

My hope in writing this is to show that the Bible is one complete revelation, building upon itself "precept upon precept; line upon line..."<sup>10</sup> and not a collection of revelations pertaining to various dispensations of time. I see potential for harm rather than advantage in looking at God's works and revelations through the dispensational perspective of dividing time into different ages. When Scripture is divided up in such a manner, it may cause us to think that only certain portions of the Bible have relevance for today, which makes the rest of the book largely historical. Consequently, we may not make full use of the Scripture and reject teaching that applies to us even in this day. It may prejudice us from receiving something from the "living Word," which God can take and apply to any of us today in a specific way that doesn't violate the context. Hyper-dispensationalists have even gone so far as to say that what Jesus taught was a gospel for a specific dispensation, and what Paul taught was a different revelation. This is a serious error and has led many into denying the commands of Christ, who is our only Lord and Savior.

We are to understand that the Bible is *God's* revelation to man and to treasure it as "all the counsel of God."<sup>11</sup> From beginning to end, it is a series of revelations that complement and build upon one another. We are not to "wrest" the Scriptures as some do to their own destruction. Rather we should; "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."<sup>12</sup> The word "dividing" means; "to make a straight cut, i.e. to dissect (expound) correctly."<sup>13</sup> Thus this verse is saying that we are to shew diligence in our conduct and in our handling of the Word, to dissect the word of truth correctly. May the Lord grant to us a greater revelation of His works, His ways and His purpose 

## Endnotes

- 1 John 1: 29
- 2 Romans 10: 9,10
- 3 Hebrews 1: 1,2
- 4 Luke 8: 10
- 5 John 16: 12,13
- 6 Ephesians 3: 10
- 7 John 10: 16
- 8 Colossians 1: 27
- 9 Hebrews 11: 40
- 10 Isaiah 28: 10
- 11 Acts 20: 27
- 12 2 Timothy 2: 15
- 13 Strong's Greek Lexicon

# Missionary News



## Loreto, Aguascalientes, Mexico Mike and Faith Ball

### An announcement after the fact

If God allows, I will have flown to Guadalajara on March 28th and bus to Loreto, a three or four hour trip via Aguascalientes. Our son, Austin will join me in Guadalajara. The purpose of the two-week trip is to accompany some of the Loreto brethren to preach the gospel in the nearby municipalities of Piños, Salinas, and possibly Moctezuma and Charcas. The last three are across the state line in San Luis Potosi. The last time we were there, I challenged the men to see the need to take Christ to places beyond their own communities. They have been faithful to witness in Loreto and the surrounding villages, and now I would like to see them get out of their “comfort zones” and make some sacrifices to take the gospel to others just as others made sacrifices to bring the gospel to them.

We will take five days to travel to other towns about the size of Loreto, which, like Loreto, are also municipality centers. People from the villages come to these “centers” to buy. It is their “holy week” and many come into the towns to celebrate. We also will be asking about assemblies of the saints in these areas.

I don't know how many men will join us from Loreto. Please pray that God will put it on the hearts of the men that He wants to make this commitment. We only want those with a commitment to Christ and His kingdom, not those who just want an adventure. We have few plans but want God to order all activities. Thank you to those who will pray to that end.

*In bondage to Christ, Mike and Faith*

Mike Ball  
mikeball@bigfoot.com  
P.O. Box 334  
Glendo, WY 82213 

## Ivory Coast, West Africa Jerry and Cherry Skiles

**Loma Tribe update:** The work of the 1040i team in Ivory Coast continues to bless people in need. Due to their effort last year, the tribal area we work in has heard that blind people can now see; that diseases can be resolved. For some it is like a dream come true. I have observed that “Desperate people do desperate things.” Being between the language group and the

medical providers gives Cherry and me new insights into the Bible stories. We see from new perspectives why people broke a house apart to get an invalid to Jesus for healing; why a woman pushed and shoved just to touch His garment; why individuals do not take “no” for an answer. I saw how persistence pays off.

One man walked miles to our house in the village to get medical help. He pleaded and I took him to the hospital, where he was one of hundreds hoping for help when the team arrived, but he was not chosen. When Sunday came, the doctors wanted to see the work in the tribe. During the field trip I told stories of how families have been blessed because of what the team is doing. I told them how this man waited last year hoping to have his hernia fixed and then again this year in vain. I explained that this is life in Africa—so many needing, so few getting.

A doctor said, “I'll do him.”

The man selected had pushed me out of my comfort zone earlier in the week. He got his operation done. Another one was chosen in an untimely fashion when a doctor asked Cherry & Julie for a patient during an unexpected opening in the day. A charismatic Loron



who wore a Marlboro hat—the “Marlboro man”—was chosen; he was selected out of the crowd and he got his physical life changed.

Last year, a Fulani woman received a cart so that she could travel without crawling on the ground. Her cart broke a few months later and I was able to repair it. Later she had problems again. She came to me and said she wanted to live where there were roads.” She impressed me. She spoke well, telling me that after receiving the cart she did not need to crawl on the ground; she said, “I am a woman.” She had dignity that she never knew she could have. The area she lived in was too rough and the terrain caused the cart to break. She wanted me to take her to the town where there were roads and she could move with freedom. She communicated without showing emotion.

Discovery of gold a couple miles from our village Bwaybiye has created a literal gold rush. I have gained new insights to the '49er's gold rush and the Klondike. I saw firsthand what men will endure to find gold. We live in a remote area avoided by everyone except the natives. That changed when gold was found. Hundreds of miners and those who follow them came in days after the news was out, and they were still coming when we left! In no time, anything a man could desire became available in what was a desolate area. The last couple of months demonstrated to me how much energy men have when they want something. I am happy for the health and wealth some are finding, but I must confess feeling some melancholy seeing how little energy there is for the Kingdom of God and for the desires of Christ when compared to temporal fortune. I was blessed to work shoulder to shoulder with some who are serious about Christ and His desires. Those people gave of their skills, time, and money to serve others at personal loss and risk for Christ's sake. In the past couple of months, with this new insight I have been challenged to evaluate my efforts. But most of all, as I reflect I say, "Praise the Lord, God is Gracious and Merciful to us!"



*Thank you for your prayers.  
Jerry and Cherry Skiles 🙏*

### **Ghana, West Africa Skip and Julie Voetberg**

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus,

It has been a long time since we have communicated, so I will attempt to bring things up to date.

When we left Ghana in 2009, it was on our hearts to make ourselves more available to the Lord and return to Ghana to see the church and the work there better established. So, when we got home we began deleting the excess from our lives, and also seeing to the weddings of two of our daughters. By God's grace, we have been able to make progress and now plan to be back in Ghana by May 1st. This time, instead of

seven we will be five: Skip, Julie, Clancy, Taite, and Brooks, with Soryn possibly coming later.

The vision the Lord has given us is to help the small churches that we saw sprout there in our first year mature in the Lord and continue the work of making disciples and reaching the outer un-reached areas of Ghana, Togo, and Burkina Faso.

In the summer of 2011, when I went back to take part in conferences, I asked a young local brother in the Lord if there was any congregation in the town that taught and preached the Word.

His reply was "No, there is none!"

When I asked about in the region, he said, "Not any in Ghana!"

That may be a stretch, but based on our previous experience it is not too far from the truth. I know that most of you have heard or read the reports from others who have spent time there, so I won't go into all the details about the need for sound Bible teaching and the making of disciples in Ghana.

We will also work with the Enns in the North, and help David Kangni with conferences several times a year.

Julie and our daughters, Clancy and Taite, hope to spend time in a small orphanage teaching some craft and trade skills and encouraging older girls in the Lord.

In Eph. 5:14-17 we read, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that thee walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

We know that it is the Lord's will that the gospel be preached in all the world, and disciples made who will carry on that work. For us, redeeming the time is twofold: we are getting older and only the Lord knows the number of our days! Also, the signs of the times indicate that the day of His return is soon, and I want to be found faithfully about his business.

Please pray for our teaching and preaching the Word of God, as it is a gift and I am poor at best! Also, for the process of the family getting settled and for our health and safety. We will be traveling around West Africa, using public transportation once again!

*Until the next time, may the Lord bless you all!  
The Voetbergs 🙏*

### **UPDATE: Leaving for Ghana**

**Skip and Julie Voetberg** with three of their children arrived in Accra, Ghana on May 1, 2012. They will settle in Tarkwa again, and will devote themselves to establishing the church there as well as travelling to

other areas to help establish the saints and evangelize. They have asked for prayer for discipline, diligence and discernment.

## **West Africa** **Ed and Patty Enns**

Greetings from Wenchi, Ghana

March was a busy month for Ed, Tim, David, and Fred as they participated in five seminars in three different locations in Ghana (details to follow soon). During much of the time, Ed's hearing in his right ear was really down and he felt close to having an episode of vertigo. God graciously carried him through, and everyone was encouraged with how the meetings went.

Ed and I are heading to the Ivory Coast border tomorrow to see if we can get an extension to keep our car in Ghana another three months and then plan to celebrate our 33rd anniversary before returning home. The rest of April will be filled with preparations for his trip to Ivory Coast in May. He has to make another trip to Accra to get his visa and then spend time translating messages for a seminar he will be doing in Abidjan after a visit to Tougbo, our former village, for a baptism.

*Gratefully His,*  
*Ed and Patty Enns* 

## **Mumbai, India** **Richard McDaniel**

Dear Friends,

Here is a report on the trip to India. I spent six days in Mumbai; what was once called Bombay. This is a huge city of 20 million people. In 1984-85, I went through the SFMI training program with a brother from India by the name of Samuel Singh. Since that time, Samuel has been in ministry in his home city of Mumbai. He has established two churches in the city and one in a neighboring region. Currently, he also has preaching meetings in two of the slums. I was able to preach in both churches in the city and go to a meeting in one of the slums. The slum meeting was particularly special to me. Twenty-five people, mostly women, crowded into a small room in a surrounding of abject poverty and worshipped the Lord together—poor in this world, yet rich in faith.

For a period of three days, during the day I met with between two and four young men for discipleship. Each day we spent four to six hours together in the Word and in fellowship. One of the men was Hardeep. He is 18 years old and newly converted. Samuel had sent him off to Bible College, where he had attended for eight months. His experience was

not good, however, and because of mistreatment he withdrew from school. He had become depressed, suicidal, and in a backslidden state of mind. Thus it was when I met Hardeep. He came for the first time to a meeting since leaving the school. I was able to have some personal time with him and encourage him in the Lord. Subsequently, he was one of the men who met with me each day, and I believe that the Lord has revived him to walk with Him again. Samuel has hired a Hindu man to drive for him. I spent a lot of time in the front seat with him as we drove around through the maddening traffic. Though we couldn't communicate, we developed a friendship. As a parting gift, I gave him a Bible with a personal note inscribed inside. His name is Lalit.

The second part of the trip was for four days, including travel. This was spent in the north of India in a city called Dehradun. The city is in the plain below the foothills of the Himalayas. It is also near the Ganga River, which is a holy site for the Hindus. We saw so many people making pilgrimages, carrying their objects of worship. Hinduism is the life and soul of India. It is a religion of many gods inspired by demons. Officially there is religious freedom, but the country is so rooted in Hinduism that it is connected with the national pride as well as under the influence of the adversary. Christians are tolerated as long as they don't get too aggressive in proclaiming the gospel.

In my travels by plane, I was able to have one lengthy conversation with a Hindu man and learn something about them and the way people in India think about religion. More importantly, I was able to share the gospel with him. One thing that impressed this man was my confidence in my standing with God. After we talked for some time, the man on the other side of this man broke off the conversation. They were speaking in Hindi so I didn't understand what they were saying, but my impression was that he was telling him not to engage me further in the conversation.

In Dehradun I stayed with Don and Arodina Davis. Don is from Minnesota and has been in India for five years. His wife is from India. They have lived in various places in India but now are settled in Dehradun with the intent of staying and being a witness there for Christ. Don's first priority now is to learn Hindi well. He has opportunity to teach English classes and to get into the schools to teach on Moral Values, and so he is considering these things as avenues through which he can share the gospel with people. He would also like to work within the local churches to disciple believers in the Lord. He invited me to come visit him so that I could see the opportunities there, and I think he was also just wanting to have some fellowship in the Lord.

I know that many people were praying for this trip, and I want to thank you for your prayers. As I look at

it from my limited perspective, I didn't see any great accomplishments particularly. There may be fruit from it that only God can see at this time. I think that there are some things from this letter that you can glean and keep in prayer. We can be praying for the saints in these churches mentioned above and for Hardeep and his companions. We can pray for this man on the airplane. I don't know his name. We can pray for Lalit. We can pray for the Davises, and many other Christian workers throughout India. Please be praying for India. It is a country full of people whose primary religion is a worship of demons. There is much darkness there and so much need for the gospel. I hope that you will continue to pray for India and for laborers to be raised up to work in the harvest fields.


*In His Service,*  
*Richard McDaniel* 

## **Nigeria** **Nathaniel Abimbola**

Peace, Joy, and Love to all who love His appearing. We just returned from some of Ethnos' franco-phone fields after my teaching appointment in the leadership program. Fields visited were Kabolians, Beribas, Dendis, Save Irodu, Batonus, Fongbes, and Ohoris (tribal names). I was away from home for over three weeks. The team included some of Ethnos mission partners from Warri Delta State of Nigeria. As Ethnos proposes to document some of our fields' work, God sent them at the right time.

By God's grace, I will go to Kpalime in Togo on Friday, March 16th, for dedication of a new local church building. Moses Oso, Samuel Oledjeji, and myself have ministered among the brethren there for some time. I believe they honor me as an apostle, which is why they asked me to co-labor for the dedication. When Jerry Skiles and Ed Enns visited Togo, I took them to Kpalime to minister. Pray with me that not only the building will be dedicated, but also faithful men for the remaining task ahead of the church in Jesus' name.

Rebecca (daughter) has just gone back to Abuja college: Pray for success, as she is hoping for a license to practice her science studies. Ebenezer (son) is hoping to enter college. Our missionaries are coming August 12-18. Pray with us for finances to feed and accommodate all the missionaries coming home for a month holiday and relaxation before going back for another one-year commitment. Greetings to all the saints. Pray with us for camera and video materials to aid in teaching and communication.

*Thanks and God bless you for all your moral and spiritual support.*  
*Nath & Fellicia* 

## **Maguey, Mexico** **Daniel and Mari Fontanez**

### **A Shout in the Silence**

*Delight thyself also in the LORD; And He will give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass (Psalm 37: 4-5).*

He has done it and He will do it. It's also great to know that our brethren are willing carry our burdens in prayer. Thank you for praying.

### **RETA**

The idea for RETA came out of a need for reaching youth. It consists of tournaments and prizes. We share Jesus with them during the introduction, the halftime, while they are waiting to compete, and at the end. Our first RETA was held on Saturday, February 25th. We had games, and then we had two mental challenges. The first was that they had to memorize a Bible verse, and the second was that they had to watch a short video presentation of the gospel and then answer questions. It was awesome to see these teens reading and memorizing Bible verses such as Acts 3:19-20; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 5:9-10. The youth from the church were able to share their faith with their friends and strengthen their friendships. We had a lot of fun and many opportunities to share the Good News.

### **Evangelistic Campaign**

Every year during "Holy Week" the sister churches of central Mexico have a week-long outreach. This year it will be in the largest and fastest-growing housing development in Latin America: Santa Fe in the Guadalajara area.

About three years ago, the campaign was held there, and afterwards a new church was established. This year, we return because of the great need and the great opportunity to reach out to so many in so little time. We will be going door to door, doing open air meetings, etc.

### **Children's Ministry in Maguey**

One of the most effective things we do at Maguey is reaching out to kids. Please pray against the false religion, peer pressure, and other tools the enemy might use to hinder these kids from giving their life to Jesus. Pray that the teachers would see the impact of their ministry and for the parents, that they would allow their kids to attend and that they would feel compelled to find out what we are teaching their children.


## **A New Roof**

As you might know, we plan to home school our girls and our present home is too small to host a class. We need more space! The owner agreed to build onto the garage space in the front of the house, but hasn't yet. Please intercede on our behalf.

## **Central Mexico Agua Purificada**

There is a project from Living Waters to establish a water purification/bottling plant in Maguey. The idea is, in the words of Bennett Osborne: To establish Drinking Water Purification Installations (DWPI) in conjunction with Living Waters of the World to be operated by missionaries in their local area of Central Mexico to provide safe, clean, bulk water for the community while spreading the Gospel Message. There are a lot of details that go into making this happen. From finding a place, building the facility, fund raising, training, etc. In short, please pray for this project. If this plan works, it will help provide funds not only for my family but for other missionaries in Central Mexico and ultimately for the growth of the Kingdom of God.

Thanks again for sharing our burdens. Lord bless you

*Fontanez Family* 

## **Myanmar**

### **Joseph Hmangath Puia**

I was born of Christian parents at Dawih Khel village in Falam Chin State, Myanmar, on April 14, 1978, and brought up in a Christian family, but I did not experience true conversion to Christ until I was 12 years old. Before that, I was afraid.


One evening, listening to a message on the fall of man and redemptive work of Christ, the Holy Spirit enlightened my heart; I saw myself dead with Christ and resurrected with Him too. I clearly realized that God in Christ already forgave me. Immediately I publicly confessed that Jesus was my personal Savior and Lord.

As I went home and shared my testimony with my parents, our whole family rejoiced in the Lord. It was 1990. From that time I have committed my whole life to Christ for his using.

The evidence of faith in my life is the following: I now see things of God that I did not see before; I now know that God loves me and I am in His mighty hands; I know that I am a sinful man undeserving of God's love and grace; the longer I am a Christian, the more aware I become of sin because I see myself in the light of the Scriptures. Then I am made more humble, obedient, giving, and understanding of others. I now praise God even when life hurts for I know

from His word that it is of His goodness and for His own glory.

Before I converted, I worried about everything but now I am care-free, for I know I am loved by God. Before I found Jesus Christ, I did many bad things, but old things are gone and new things have come; now I can do all things that praise God through Jesus, who gives me strength. My faith is evident in life, speech, and conduct. I have assurance of salvation so I will not fear any more the things in this world .

*Joseph Hmangath Puia* 

## **Second Appeal to all former SFMI Mission Trainees**

In the last edition of the Update, we announced the growing desire of some to have a reunion of all those who have attended an SFMI Training Session over the past many years. We are happy to report that there was some favorable response to that idea.

We were encouraged enough to set a tentative date, which is September 21, 22, 2012.

We would like to hear from more of you before we lock it in. There are some for whom we do not have current contact information, so if you are aware of people that should be included, or if you have not contacted us yet, please contact Frank Stangel:

frankstangel@msn.com  
or phone Frank at (509) 879-1932

## **USA for JESUS Coeur d Alene, Idaho Outreach**

Calling all saints to participate in the Coeur d Alene, Idaho, outreach June 21–30, 2012.

If you would like to participate in this campaign, please contact Frank Stangel at 509-879-1932.

If you can't come to Idaho, please let us know that you are praying for us where you are.

## Meet the 2012 Trainees



My name is Jack Burwell. Upon my conversion to Christ, I began to fellowship with a group that did not think the Great Commission was something we should obey. In spite of this discouragement, I was not able to refuse the Lord's calling. With another young believer, I took my first steps to obey. The

Lord began to equip me by sending many teachers into my life, some of them associates of SFMI. For three years, my wife and I tried to enroll in the SFMI training program with the hope of gaining a clearer understanding of the church and help in disciple-making. God has now opened the door and called us to take the gospel to Bangladesh. I know that God will do more than we can ask or think. SFMI and those who labor in this work are one more gracious provision from the Lord.



Greetings to my brothers and sisters in Christ. My name is Priscilla Lavalley. I was first introduced to SFMI by Mike and Faith Ball. I have been blessed to be with them on a few mission trips to Mexico. The Lord has now led me to

the training program with a desire to be discipled so that I may better fulfill the work God has called me to wherever that might be. *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death."* Philippians 3:10



Greetings to my fellow laborers in Christ. My name is Feilyn Ball. I am the daughter of Mike and Faith Ball. I was born and raised in Mexico in a Christian (missionary) family, but have been far from a good person until the age of fourteen; that was when Jesus

came into my heart. I now seek to grow in his grace and love, and I hope to be equipped to better account for the hope that is in me.

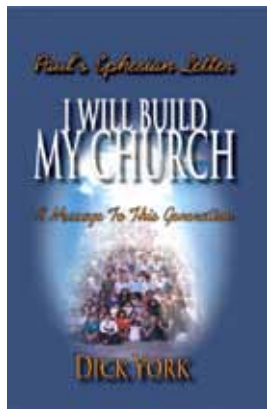
Hello to all the saints. My name is Caley Burwell. I have been seeking the Lord about attending the training program for the last few years. The thought of going was terrifying me, though, and I felt I would need complete

*Continued on back cover...*



## Announcing: Two New Books by Dick York

Two new books by Dick York are now available, both having to do with the church of the New Testament.

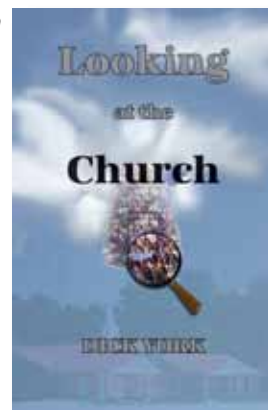


***I Will Build My Church: A Message for This Generation*** is a commentary on the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Ephesians.

**192 pages \$10.50 includes shipping and handling.**

### ***Looking at the Church***

is a compilation of articles, which defines the church and observes some of the significant differences between what the New Testament describes and what has become the contemporary norm as practiced almost universally in evangelical congregations today.



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*Meet the Trainees continued...*

assurance of the Lord's direction in this matter. After an amazing journey, the Lord has given me confidence in His leading, and I am now blessed to be attending the SFMI training program this year. I hope to be travelling with my family to Bangladesh in the future.

Hello. My name is Tracy Burwell. I am so thankful to be in the SFMI training. For three years I've sought the Lord to be able to come. I wanted to go through the training because I felt I needed some clear teaching and discipleship to better prepare me for whatever and wherever the Lord is leading me. 🙏



## **Memorial Day Weekend, 2012**

Conference time is right around the corner. Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup>—Monday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. You won't want to miss it this year. The Lord is planning to meet with us and to speak with us about what is on his heart.

Dun Gordy, long-time friend and also a long-time representative of New Tribes Mission will be with us. He is an interesting, informed and much loved preacher of the word. We are praying and trusting to see you at Friends Conference Center, Rockaway, Oregon. If you're not registered, do it now. Contact Jerry or Cathy Schultz: Phone: **(253) 310-3065** • Email: **writeforfun77@yahoo.com**

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