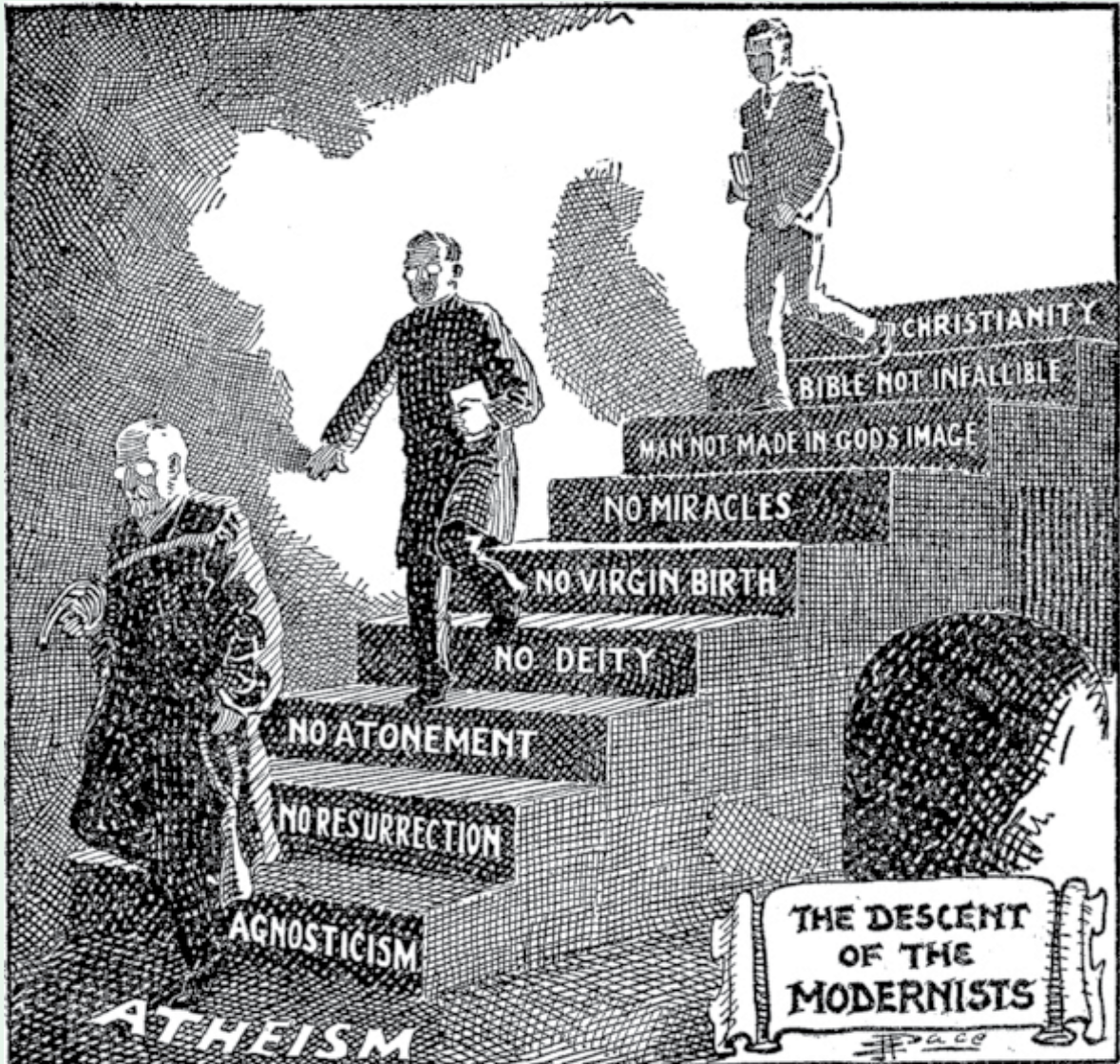


SHIELD OF FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL

SFMI Prayer/News UPDATE

Fulfilling the Great Commission Through Establishing New Testament Churches

Missions And All the Counsel of God



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September-October 2012



Editorial Notes

What is the meaning of mission? What is this “Great Commission” (really the “Grand Commission”) to which we are called? Brother Dick addresses that question in his article while Richard McDaniel contributes an update on the Training Program. Jim Lucas and Dun Gordy also direct us back to the faithful and sure model we have in the Word of God. To those married, Blanche Tadlock

reminds us that the Lord uses marriage to give a glimpse into the world of the relationship between Christ and His bride.

Our missionary reports include two views from Steve Montgomery on the flooding in Atotonilco. He also contributes a map (see below) demonstrating how the fellowship in Atotonilco is reaching out to the surrounding area. Our cover features an illustration by the late E.J. Pace reminding us that we cannot fulfill the Great Commission without all the counsel of God. 

Dear Brethren:

I know that in my letters I make reference to different areas where we have Bible studies. You may wonder where these places are and what the situation is with each group. To help you visualize and pray, here’s a map. I hope this helps!

Steve and Linda

TOTOTLAN: The capital of the neighboring county is the home of Mari Fontanez, Daniel's wife. A group is coming together here for regular Bible studies. Pray for entire families to come to Christ and commit to the congregation.

CUCARACHAS: The biggest need for the congregation in this rancho is men - males- who will be clearly converted and take responsibility in the group.

SAN JOAQUIN: This village of 600 has a small but enthusiastic group of believers, including two men currently in the Training Program. We hope to recognize elders here soon.

EL MAGUEY: A large number of believers converted through the ministry of the church in Atotonilco live in this community. Daniel Fontanez and family live and work here. Pray for men who can be recognized as elders.

SAN JOSE: Mostly one extended family, with a couple others meeting also. We need to see men and families reached and this group grow. Pray for Toño Arriaga.

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The Meaning of Missions



By Dick York

The meaning of missions is in the mind of the hearer. As a child I attended with my mother a little church in which my Sunday school teachers were women. At one point, a man teacher appeared; and I remember thinking how strange that was. From time to time missionaries came to present their “lantern slides” (predecessor of slide projector) and talk about their works; invariably they were women who talked about the food they ate, the clothes they wore and probably other more significant things that were of little interest to my juvenile and unregenerate mind.

My sister aspired to be a missionary, but my older brother didn't. The impression on my young mind, therefore, was that Sunday school, missions and related activities were women's work, something that no macho young man would pursue. I didn't know about C.T. Studd or David Livingstone or about Adoniram Judson or Hudson Taylor. I wasn't aware of the heroic men and women who were involved in much more than eating strange food, wearing funny clothing and teaching children to sing choruses.

I didn't know about people of both genders who were compelled by the Holy Ghost within them to forsake their fortunes and hazard their lives that Jesus Christ might receive the reward of His suffering. My view of missions – indeed my view of the church and of the Lord's work – was superficial in the extreme.

My sister never realized her desire for the mission field; she died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-one before either of her brothers were born-again, but God heard her prayers and stored her supplications until there came a day when those brothers were not only saved but were also sent by God to be missionaries. I realized then that the

work of mission is not superficial at all but is the purpose of God to redeem from every kindred, tongue, people and nation those whom He purchased with His own blood. As redeemed believers, we all are made a part of that redemptive process.

However, not all professing believers share that view. In some there is the idea that salvation is to save us from the misery of hell, to make us happy, to give us a better life in this world, to alleviate our problems. It is the reward we receive for praising God, going to church and not being bad. Therefore, we get caught up in living our lives, asking God to help us succeed in the lives we like to live, the courses we choose to chase and the pursuit of purposes we prefer. We are tempted to think that success is our goal and riches our reward. In this perspective, there is little room for the reality of missions. Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up His cross daily and follow me.”¹

After God saved me, He began to show me a new perspective; and as I saw people in other cultures contending with sickening circumstances, I realized that happiness is not the result of prosperity, popularity or financial success. I heard more laughter among poverty-stricken people than I did among the wealthy at home. I realized at the same time, though, that happiness is not the goal; making people happy is not the same as giving them hope and seeing them set free from sin. There are probably as many happy sinners as there are happy saints. Not all poor people are miserable, and not all sinners are unhappy.

In a recent conversation with a young man, he told me that he had actively served the Lord until he had been offended by the

indifference, unfaithfulness or error of some of His “disciples” and co-workers, at which time he had quit doing the Lord’s work and began doing his own thing, which seemed much more rewarding. Recently, having been encouraged by a message which assured him that he was loved by God whether he performed or not, he had returned to the Lord.

“God loves us,” he said, “because we are desirable.”

God’s desire, according to him, is to make His children happy. Now he says he is able to be comfortable with God while pursuing what he perceives to be the “good life.” God’s desire, after all, is to make His children happy. Unless I misunderstood, it seems he has bought the ubiquitous philosophy that makes the objective of the Christian life to be the happiness of those who live it. Jesus did all that He did to make “me” happy. The ultimate happiness of the redeemed is not in question, but that is the eternal consequence of our being conformed to the image of Christ. That day will surely come; meanwhile, there is work to be done, and “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”²

It seems there is almost universally a willingness to do God’s work as long as it does not demand the denial of self. When I am persuaded that God’s purpose is to further my interests, then I can continue to serve Him on my own terms and be happy with God. Actually, God has rights; we do not. We are God’s property. We are, in fact, God’s property twice over: first, He created us for Himself;³ and then He redeemed us for Himself with His own blood;⁴ therefore, we are not our own; we are bought with a price.⁵ It is well within God’s right to inconvenience us beyond our comfort zone, even to the point of death if He so chooses. For this reason the writer of Hebrews reminded us that we have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin.⁶ Who are we to refuse to deny ourselves and take up our cross or even to complain about such a requirement?

Often, when Jesus chooses people to glorify Him, it involves, for them, extreme

inconvenience and suffering: Mary was humiliated by an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, the disgrace of which did not end after nine months; when Jesus was thirty-three years old, He was still accused of being “born of fornication.”⁷ Lazarus was allowed to die in order that God would be glorified while his sisters Mary and Martha experienced the distress of a death in their family. The blind man of John chapter nine was born blind specifically that God would be glorified by his healing forty years later. The inconvenience suffered by him and his parents, according to Jesus’ words, was for the glory of God and was of greater value to God, and ultimately to them, than was the good life they otherwise may have lived, or one without suffering.

Paul reminded the Philippians that it was given unto them on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for His sake.⁸ So when God calls on men or women to forsake all to experience danger, inconvenience, poverty or hardship to join with Him in His great work of redemption, how can we justify our hesitation? Is it because we have been convinced that we are so desirable to God that His greatest pleasure is to satisfy our every want and facilitate our pursuit of the good life while a few less enlightened saints make themselves miserable mistakenly performing tasks to gain God’s approval?

It is time to shun the siren call to satisfy self and to turn again to the way of the cross, which ends in eternal pleasure at God’s right hand and the approval of a Savior who Himself gave His all. Paul was confronted by the attitude of some in Corinth who projected the idea that salvation was for their benefit and that being saved meant that they had arrived at a place of great benefit for themselves at the expense of Christ.

Now are ye full [he chides them]; now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did reign, that we also may reign with you. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the

world and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong: ye are honorable, but we are despised.⁹

How did these Corinthians conclude that the men who were their examples should be so used while they considered themselves the recipients of such reward and blessing? In fact, they would not reign until the apostles and all of the other members of the body of Christ reign together; and some of those are yet to be saved.

Paul continued, "Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands; being reviled we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."¹⁰

Paul's point was that the saints had been deceived to think that they had been saved for themselves, that their right, therefore, was to enjoy the spoils without participating in the battle. This is a perception also of some of the saints today; but, in reality, we are to be ready to respond when God calls whether to hardness, inconvenience or material loss. Thank God for those misunderstood missionary women who taught children in foreign lands about Jesus. Thank God for my sister whose prayers, at least in part, precipitated my involvement in missions.

But lest I leave the impression that obeying God's call means only being a foreign missionary or going to some other place, I hasten to add that that is not the case; location is a secondary issue. The first is to realize that you are not your own, you are bought with a price. You, then, are to glorify God in your body and in your spirit which

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are His. Therefore, present your body to him, (which is your reasonable service)¹¹ so that you can demonstrate his good and acceptable and perfect will. What that will lead you to be or where it will lead you to go is entirely up to Him. You are already on a foreign field because we who are in Christ are strangers and pilgrims in the earth; so now it is a matter of adjusting our perspective, denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily and following Jesus: abandoning our will, embracing His will and being what He has called us to be.¹²

Surprisingly, the reward for that is much more than temporal happiness or satisfaction, which is engendered or endangered by circumstances. It is profound joy and pleasure now and forever at God's right hand in spite of what inconvenience, hardship, loss or suffering it might entail in this present time. Be all that God wants you to be where He wants you to be: no resistance, no hesitation; that is what missions is all about. 🌐

It is time to shun the siren call to satisfy self and to turn again to the way of the cross, which ends in eternal pleasure at God's right hand, and the approval of a Savior who Himself gave His all.

Endnotes

- 1 Luke 9:23
- 2 Philippians 2:13
- 3 Colossians 1:16
- 4 Acts 20:28
- 5 1 Corinthians 6:20
- 6 Hebrews 12:4
- 7 John 8:41
- 8 Philippians 1:29
- 9 1 Corinthians 4:8-10
- 10 1 Corinthians 4:11-13
- 11 Romans 12:1,2
- 12 Acts 1:8, Luke 9:23

"I do not fear failure but rather I fear succeeding at something that does not really matter."

A quote found on the internet. Exactness and origin unknown



Full-Grown Sons

By Jim Lucas

Grow up! How many times did you hear that during your childhood? And for some of us this occurred even after we had whiskers and a driver's license and thought we were quite capable of doing about anything we set our minds to. We would try some crazy project with very little planning or forethought; it would end in a great disaster, and we would be embarrassed for a while until we would get some new revelation and be off on another project with great enthusiasm and very little thought of the risk involved or of the pending pain we and others would likely suffer. Growing up is a slow, painful process that most would prefer to avoid if possible. In fact, today we have a generation that prefers to avoid it as long as possible. The normal suffering that one must endure isn't really all that bad; but when there is a refusal to suffer instruction, the suffering will be greatly multiplied.

Suffering for the right reasons will always bring a good result; but suffering for our wrong doing can bring a lot of unnecessary pain and heartache. *It would behoove us to accept the facts and not ignore the obvious any longer.*

Today the Church of our Lord Jesus is suffering in some parts of the world for the right reasons and is bringing spiritual growth and rich blessing to all the faithful. As stated by our Lord Jesus:

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*¹

However, in many nations of the world the Church of our Lord is suffering because of her love of the world and the *things* of the world, and our Father is doing as He promised, "to chasten the Son whom He loves."² The Church also is suffering because of an unhealthy desire to grow in numbers and a disregard for her need to grow in the Spirit and the love of God. *It is time for the Church to grow up.*


However, we need not be discouraged or dismayed, for "*it is of the LORD'S mercies that we*

are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."³ We need to take courage; the purpose of God will not fail; God sent His only begotten Son into the world with a plan to bring many sons into glory. We are informed, "*For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*"⁴ Jesus did not suffer in vain; and in the same way that He was made perfect in suffering, our Heavenly Father is perfecting the body of Christ today. If only we could understand how great it will be when we come into maturity, we would be more than willing to suffer anything that comes our way. "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*"⁵

Sometimes when children are growing quickly they will suffer growing pains. Likewise those who have received the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting the redemption of our body.⁶ That's not all, Saints, but the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.⁷

Now is the time for the faithful shepherd boys to collect their small stones, take their slings and bring down the giants in the land who are intimidating the Lord's mighty army. It is time to grow up and be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Where are they? Who among us will come and fight in the Lord's army? Today we need those who have counted the cost, those who know who they want to serve and are not ready to turn back until we take the inheritance that belongs to the Captain of our salvation. Beloved let's be men whom our Father would be pleased to call His sons—full-grown sons of the living God.

Endnotes

- 1 Matthew 5:10-12
- 2 Hebrews 12:6
- 3 Lamentations 3:22
- 4 Hebrews 2:10
- 5 Romans 8:18
- 6 see Romans 8:23
- 7 read Romans 8:19-22 

There Is No difference

Dun Gordy

She was a good-looking young lady—neat, modestly dressed, well-groomed hair neatly styled, the least bit of makeup on to accentuate her tan. She wore the simple accessories of small earrings with matching necklace and bracelet. Those neat little extra attentions to appearance that said “feminine” are rare among the tourist browsing the shops and stalls along Kawakawa Boulevard on Waikiki Beach.

And the clean-cut neatness of the obviously new outfit that her companion wore screamed “honeymooners.” I couldn’t help but smile to myself, thinking they couldn’t have been more obvious if they’d had a placard hanging around their necks. They made a good-looking couple.

And then it hit me. The painful joy-stealing conviction so strong and compelling that it brought a rush of tears to my eyes, and I had to quickly turn aside and look for an empty bench to hide while I stabbed into my hip pocket for a handkerchief. I must have been more concerned for what passerby’s thought because I buried my face in my pocket-rag and tried to fake a cough or a sneeze.

But the pain of my condemnation wouldn’t let up – and even now, 30 years later, that pointing finger of accusation stabs my memory. It is one of those things that you have to confess, repent of and adjust your attitude and actions. And then have to do it again and again.

Less than a week before I had been sitting in a smoky, thatched-roof hut with Paul Wyton on another island in that South Pacific Ocean: Papua New Guinea. As my eyes adjusted to the dimness, I found a place to sit by an old man. It was on a platform of split bark laid across poles, about 6 or 8 inches above the packed dirt floor. An old sow lay nearby, giving suck to her piglets. One of the kids kicked a mangy, skinny dog that gave every indication of being very unhappy about the treatment he was obviously accustomed to. The stooped-shouldered old man pulled a ragged and dirty blanket over his shoulders and looked ahead with a bored and disinterested attitude. He did extend a feeble

hand for me to shake, but there was no grip in his hand or greeting in his gaze.

He was totally deaf. He had not even heard thunder since before the first missionaries arrived in his remote mountain village. Although the Tallmans and Wytons had finally mastered the unwritten language and were able to converse fluently in the Fore dialect, it was physically impossible to give the Gospel of grace to this old man. It was too late in his life to hear. He could not have read the Gospel if it had been written for him. The old man was illiterate and stone deaf. He had lived in his mountains since the Allies had fought the Japanese for control of this island that had not even become a nation.

He had lived and would soon die in absolute and complete despair. He was beyond the hope of the Gospel. The helpless depravity of this cannibal so overwhelmed me with the feeling of desperation that I was unable to contain the rush of tears. I still cannot forget the haunting look of that old man or the agony of my soul as I sat there beside him.

Nor can I erase from memory of the horror of conviction that hit me in that swanky temple of materialism we call a mall in Hawaii.

I was impressed with the beauty of the bride and the neatness of the groom. I was impressed with the total depravity of the old Fore man. I desperately wanted to present the Gospel to the old man, but I could not. I could have easily communicated the Gospel to the honeymooners, but I would not.

WHY? What’s the difference?

“...there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” declares Romans 3:22-23. And the wonderful message is that “...there is no difference...For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” That is the promise of Romans 10:12-13. The amazing grace is that God makes no difference in the matter of sin and salvation!

The shameful disgrace is that we do. 

Training Program Update

By Richard McDaniel

We are coming down to our last month of training in this first segment for 2012. At the end of August, the trainees will go back to their home churches, which in this case, are both in Wyoming. They will spend six weeks in northwestern Wyoming in the area of Powell and six weeks in southeastern Wyoming in the Cheyenne vicinity. This will be their time to apply the training and the ministries God is giving them in their home churches. We ask for prayer for them as they seek the Lord's guidance.


They are also seeking direction for the future. The Burwell family is heading, Lord willing, to Bangladesh. God has not revealed the date yet, but there is a lot to do between now and then; and they need our prayers.

Feilynn Ball and Priscilla Lavalley are also considering ministry in some part of the world. They are seeking the Lord and need our prayers also.

As a training program team we were able to go to Idaho to help with the USA for Jesus ministry. Ministering on the streets of Coeur d'Alene, most of our evangelism was in public places with signs, banners, tract distribution and preaching. A national event brought many people to the city, and we had good crowds for a full week. The gospel went forth to many people.

Our next event (in August) took us to British Columbia for a few days of ministry with Gerhard Friesen, a brother faithful to preach on the streets of Vancouver. We joined him for a Friday night street meeting as well as some other evangelism. On the way there and back we met with some of the saints we know.

The work in Bend is coming along well also. We consistently do street evangelism here and also door to door. Other venues are a local mission where we do the chapel service once or twice a month and a children's ministry which is drawing interest and is put together nicely by the girls on the team.

It's not too early to be thinking about the training program for 2013. Please keep that in your prayers, and let us know if you or someone you know may have interest in it. We are praying to the Lord of the harvest to raise up laborers for His harvest fields. 

The 2013 SFMI Discipleship/Missionary Training Program begins on March 4th, 2013 and ends on November 16th, 2013.

Applications are available at the SFMI office.

Contact us: Tel. 541-382-7081

Email: sfmi@sfmiusa.org

50 Years And Counting

Blanche Tadlock

No, I am not turning 50! That is a LONG time past me. I am talking about fifty years of marriage to Orville Tadlock! For those who do not know me I often have said, "I am married to the most *perfect* man any woman can have; and we get along so well." When they give me that blank look of, "You must be kidding" and do not know how to respond to such a remark, I tell them, "You see, my husband has been in heaven for the past six years; and he has been made perfect and complete in the presence of Jesus."

So what does celebrating fifty years of marriage have to do with a mission publication? I say, "*everything*." I see marriage as reflecting all that God intended for it to be as one of the most powerfully effective gospel witnesses that can be. Orville and I married young (18 and 19). I guess we thought marriage just came naturally and all would work out. In actuality, we had no clue how to be married; and we had never heard that God has a pattern for marriage. Had it not been for our commitment to God, there were many times we would have quit. We tried to figure it out on our own as we heard very little teaching or ministry about how to be married. I knew *submission*, and Orville knew *leadership* and *nothing* in-between. It wasn't until we began to see some examples of marriages that truly understood and lived out that picture of Christ and His Bride that we began to see that our marriage could be something different. After thirty-five years of marriage we began to earnestly seek out and give ourselves to learning how Christ loves His Bride and *how* to incorporate that into *our* marriage and oh what a difference! There was so much to forgive on both sides; there was a need to lay aside ministry, relationships and all else while we diligently gave ourselves over to our marriage. There were resources we took advantage of: books, videos, talking with other couples and most of all prayerfully seeking our Father for the help to understand what this meant to Him since our marriage should **represent Him to the world!**

In our present time there is such a great need for this kind of gospel witness; and I am not speaking about the world's marriages, but of marriage in God's Church! So many Christian marriages are together only because they are committed to their vows before God (and that is commendable and right), but there is so much more that God intends for you. He doesn't mean for you to just *survive* in marriage,

but He longs for you to *thrive*. Orville used to say to me that when we look at our marriage, we can tell how our relationship is with Christ. Is it surviving or **thriving**? Take a look; make your marriage relationship the most important ministry in your life until it represents Christ's love for His church and see what an effective gospel witness this is.

At the Memorial Day Conference a dear brother spoke from Isaiah 58:12 about being a "Repairer of the Breach." He stated that it seems much more exciting and spiritual to go and be involved in something new than to be a *repairer of the breach* in your own family. So I want to encourage you to work at filling the gaps in your marriage. The following are the things I learned as Orville's wife.

1. God desires oneness and unity with Him. So in marriage there should be unity; therefore, do all you can to maintain the unity. John 17: 21-22
2. Talk often with God and listen more than you talk; this allows Him to speak to you. In your marriage—listen to your husband more than you talk. Men communicate very differently than women.
3. Just as we are to honor God in all that we do (Psalms 71:8), so bring honor to your husband by the way you act, talk, and respond to him. Give him the first place in your life—after God. Be his "cheerleader."
4. Just as we confess our sins to our forgiving God, be quick to ask your husband for forgiveness (when needed) and also quick to grant forgiveness. 1 John 1:9
5. Just as you seek to know God, spend the rest of your life seeking to know your husband's heart. Matthew 11:28, Isaiah 55:1
6. Just as you would set aside to spend time with God, set aside time to renew your relationship with your husband, most especially when you have children. If you are too busy to spend time with God or your husband, you are too busy!
7. Just as you would pursue a deeper intimacy with Jesus, so pursue a deeper physical intimacy with your husband.
8. Just as God allows us to make mistakes from which we learn and grow, so allow your husband to make mistakes or wrong decisions without condemnation.

The ultimate purpose in our relationship with God is that we are always growing and being made to conform to His very image. This is a process. So in marriage; it is a lifetime of becoming so one with one another that you begin to look like the Father-Son relationship. Ephesians 5:32, your marriage here on earth should be a reflection or picture of

the relationship between Christ and His bride (the Church). When you begin to really understand this purpose for marriage, it will take on a deeper significance and responsibility. 🙏

First Ever!

SFMI Training Program Alumni Reunion!

September 21-22, 2012 at Bend, Oregon.

If you have ever been a SFMI Training participant since 1962 until now, come share your story and be blessed by those of others. For some of us, much time has gone by; but the future is before us. Let's renew; let's revive; let's reunite; let's edify one another.

There are interesting days ahead; let's help each other finish strong. Let us know if you are coming. If you are not able to attend, send a greeting or a comment to:

sfmi@sfmiusa.org before September 15.

For more information call the SFMI office at: 541-382-7081.

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Please contact us if you are receiving duplicate copies or if there are recipient or address changes.

Missionary News

U.S.A. for Jesus

James and Fran Lucas

Dear Saints,

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and *will declare it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17: 24-26

In this fervent prayer of our Lord Jesus, His heart is open to us; and we can see His keen desire to have His disciples with Him to see the glory that He shares with the Father. He says that the world did not know Him, but the disciples knew that He (Jesus) was sent by the Father.

Beloved, the Father has commissioned us with the same charge. Please pray that the people would know that it is the Father who has sent me and that I would be anointed to declare the Father, that the people could see the love of God unto them. The Father cannot be declared without love being manifested, and this cannot be accomplished without God’s holy anointing. I have also been reminded of what Paul said in First Corinthians chapter eight verses two and three: “And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.” Without obedience to God the love of God cannot be seen; please pray that my obedience will always be from the heart; then the people will know that God has sent me.

Lucas Report Part 2

The Lord is marvelous and forever true. I had a great time with my cousin Wilma in Carthage, Illinois. I had not seen her for many years. She and her siblings are the closest relatives I have left. Monday I traveled on up to Peoria. It is a large city, but our Lord Jesus knows how to take charge and direct His servants. I parked my truck downtown (I am not accustomed to parking meters; therefore I ignored them) and began to give out some gospel tracts. I walked up to a man who had a grin bigger than big, and I asked him what he was grinning about. He said, “I was just released from the federal prison about an hour ago after spending fifteen years there.”

There was another man with him who also had just been released. They had just purchased some pants, and one of them stood on the street and changed his pants. I knew that this was a divine appointment. I was able to tell them before they got on a bus, “You are now free from prison; however, unless you surrender to Jesus and allow

Him to direct you, you will be going back.”

I then proceeded on giving out more tracts when I overheard someone’s conversation concerning how much time was on their parking meter. I thought, “Meter! Hey, I’d better get back down there and put some money in mine.”

The policeman was just about to give me a ticket. I explained to him what I was doing; and it turned out this big black policeman, Mike Scott, really loves Jesus. He wouldn’t let me put any money in the meter but proceeded to invite me to his home for dinner. The dinner was very good, and Mike’s wife and son also love Jesus. They then invited me to a Bible study Wednesday night. The teaching was really sound and very challenging. I am writing this on Saturday. I just had lunch with the Pastor who said he had never met a missionary. He asked me a lot of questions, and I shared my testimony with him. Then he invited me to come tomorrow and preach the Sunday service.

Yesterday I went over to Bloomington, which is also a fairly large city. In the downtown area there are some tables set up. At one of them several people were sitting and talking. I approached and said, “I hope you don’t mind me crashing your party” and proceeded to give each one a gospel tract.

They said, “No problem, have a seat.”

I soon realized that two of these black ladies were Christians sharing their faith with a bunch of derelicts. We were there most of the day and shared with a quite a few people. I want to thank all the Saints who have been praying and fasting with me on this outreach. Next I will go to Tere Haute, Indiana.

Your fellow servant in Jesus,
James Lucas 

Maguey, Mexico

Daniel and Mari Fontanez

A Month of Blessings

We would like to begin with some thanksgiving. God has been answering our prayers, and it would be wrong for us not to tell of His awesome deeds.

Firstly, we are grateful for our new house. We asked for your intercession concerning this, and we knew that God didn’t want us to move from Maguey. We looked all over the place and found nothing. So we figured we would make the best of what we had. In other words, we gave up looking for a bigger house. A few weeks later we got a message from someone who was looking to rent a three-room house in Maguey and at a good price. We went, saw it, liked it and moved a few days later.

We now have a room for homeschooling, less

neighbors, a better view and a cooler (less hot) home. Thank you, God! Second, we are grateful for the leadership training. The men have been challenged and encouraged. The training has stretched me as well. I get to teach Basic Doctrine and have to squeeze doctrines as big as the doctrine of God into a 50 minute class. Yeah, I know: hard but greatly edifying. Keep praying for all involved. Steve and I are the regular teachers, and we have leaders of other churches come in regularly to teach specific topics. The men receiving the training are Omar, Emilio, Jesús, Juan, Hector, Antonio and Ricardo. Pray that we would all get the most out of it.

Third, we are grateful for the new computer I'm using to write this UPDATE. Our old computer died a few days after getting back from Yakima last year. That is the reason why I didn't include pictures anymore. But now I can do that and so much more. Thank you, God, and thank you anonymous donor.

Maguey

For several months the emphasis of the Bible study in Maguey has shifted from evangelistic to what the church is and what the church does in order to prepare the brethren for multiplication.

After several months of this we are now ready to go back to being evangelistic in emphasis. We want you to add to your intercession for Maguey two things: 1.) We will continue to do our prayer walks, but now we will pray for month and the next month conduct door to door evangelism in the same area we did the walk. So pray that God would display His love and power in saving many. Pray also that God would provide New Testaments and other literature we can hand out. 2.) We want to do our meetings outside again. This requires some sort of a roof and lighting. We need God to provide. Pray that we would have the resources to do this and that it would have lasting impact on the community.

Tototlán

We do have a sad note in this UPDATE. Juana who had given her life to Christ just a week before our last UPDATE decided she didn't want to continue to study the Bible with us. Even though she decided to follow Christ, she continued to meet with the Catholic charismatic movement in Tototlán. Within that movement she received the opportunity to teach with the condition that she would stop having the Bible study she had with us. So she canceled our Bible study. I have no doubt that the Lord is at work in her life so this could be His doing.


Isabel has taken steps toward making things right but isn't quite there yet. Continue to pray. Janet's situation isn't resolved yet. Continue to P.U.S.H. (pray until something happens). On a brighter note, God has added Claudia and her two daughters to the group in Tototlán. We aren't sure that she is saved, but she met with other Christians before. She has been faithful to meet every Thursday, and we started a discipleship Bible study with her last week. Pray especially for her 12 year old daughter Fernanda who has some sort of disease in her

blood. We aren't sure what it is yet.

Atotonilco

Last Friday the 13th (odd coincidence) there was an intense outpouring of rain that flooded and washed away cars, walls, business equipment, etc. in some parts of Atotonilco. Homes and businesses were damaged. By God's grace no lives were lost, but some businesses had to close at least for some time. Our church in Atotonilco was also affected by this flood. The place where we meet on Sundays and where we store a lot of our stuff flooded with over a meter and a half of water and mud. We lost a lot of items including Health Fair equipment and supplies and sound equipment. We aren't discouraged though. We know God governs even in the flood. Pray for us that we would know how to glorify God in this situation.

God Bless You.

Daniel and Mari 

Atotonilco, Mexico

Steve and Linda Montgomery

[Editor's Note: *Many of you already know about the flash flood that hit Atotonilco last month. For those who don't, here are excerpts from the email Steve sent the morning after. We follow this with a more recent report.*]

The church recently moved to a large warehouse on the main street of town, which is located in the lowest point in the valley that is Atoto. Yesterday, torrential rains brought mud, rocks and rivers down the hillside. The water reached a raging tidal wave nearly three meters (10 feet) tall. Homes, businesses, buildings filled with water and mud as brick walls caved under the onslaught.

The warehouse lies at the very bottom of that hill. The boiling waters burst open the 5m high metal doors and poured through with such force that they broke down the back brick wall. Against that wall, in one corner, was the storage area where we had everything of the congregation: equipment and supplies...no match for the water, which outside was flipping trucks and carrying off furniture.... The mud line on the wall shows the water was at about 1 1/2 meters. The sound equipment, speakers, cords, cables and microphones were either ruined or lost.

The church responded enmasse; and there were people at the building until after midnight cleaning chairs, distinguishing between what could be kept and what was ruined, searching for missing items under the mud and debris.

Then we sent out to some of you this note after the following Sunday gathering:

The Sunday meeting was a little unusual today... No song books...none of the small communion cups for the Lord's table. But...we were there, in force, and with encouraging stories of God's grace.

Juan Gutierrez's...sister, who had a shop a few doors down, was asking for his help; and he felt

strongly he needed to be there. We encouraged him to go...Several people, knowing that Juan meets with the church, commented how impressed they were that so many church members had shown up to help...how well everyone worked together. One man...saw how much the church had lost and asked if Juan thought we would still continue meeting. Juan answered, "Of course! We'll be here Sunday morning if you would like to join us."

Juan noticed two people picking through some boxes that had been carried off in the flood. One contained New Testaments and another Gospel tracts. They stopped right there to read the tracts, thumbed through the New Testaments, and then began to distribute them to the people around: "Hey! Look at this! Check this out!" Juan decided it was a good use of the material and left them to pass them out as he continued to shovel mud from his sister's shop.

So, it is true that when the enemy comes in like a flood, God will work.

Now for where we are at this report:

I spoke with the mayor, offering the help of the church. While in his office, I met a widow who was looking for help. Her small shanty has a reed and teja roof which was destroyed. Saturday the 28th a team from the Briseño church, the church in Santa Fe and some others joined us here; and we put a new roof on her house. A church in Guadalajara sent a generous offering to the church and a family from the U.S. sent a gift. Together these covered the roof project. We continue to dig out; but our biggest losses were sound equipment, chairs and medical supplies. The church in Briseño (Guadalajara) phoned the day after the flood, donating to the church a set of chairs and a sound system. It is such a joy to be linked strategically with sister churches! The lost medical supplies were those we had collected over the years as we've done outreach health fairs: things like masks, gloves, syringes, cotton, toothbrushes and medicines. We will simply begin anew with these, gathering the materials as we have the outreaches. We also lost many boxes of New Testaments and tracts. We use these as often and as fast as we can; but in this case, we still had some on hand.

Long term, there are at least three homes here in Atotonilco that will need to be rebuilt – two which were totally destroyed in the flood and one which is still standing, but barely. We hope to be involved in ministering to those needs. And for the church here, a need which is pressing but not overnight: We need to find a property which we can purchase, somewhere easily accessible to the brethren and above the high-water mark. Pray for help and wisdom from on high. We would like to move ahead with this in all the speed the Lord would grant us.

Thank you all for praying for the church and city. Though it represents a tragedy, it also provides the church with opportunities to learn, trust the Lord and serve the community in Jesus' name.

Part 2

Dear friends:

So many of you have prayed, given, written, phoned and encouraged us through the last weeks as the church here has been recovering from the flash flood and looking for opportunities to minister to others that we want to let you know what has happened.

Two weeks ago, on a Saturday, about 30 brethren from the Briseño church and the Santa Fe church came as a work team. They joined many of the believers from here. Part of us worked in the warehouse where the church meets, while another team worked at Omar Valadez' shop. Omar's well-drilling business is just a few doors down from where we meet and was hard hit, losing about a quarter of a million pesos in materials and equipment in the flood. As that team pulled pipes and machinery out of the mud, the team at the warehouse scrubbed, hosed, repaired or threw out the things we had still not been able to get to. This was not the first church clean-up day since the flood (about the fourth!); but we were able to move solidly ahead, reorganize, move some items to a house the church rents for the group in Maguey, and make significant strides toward putting the flood behind us.

The next day, Sunday, we had an all-church workday. We came in work clothes, had a shorter meeting and then got to work. There was still one room where we had not shoveled out the mud. We got that cleaned up. There were canopies and tarps that had not been cleaned. They got hosed down, scrubbed up and put away. The last of the chairs were cleaned. We painted and swept and power-washed and hauled away and brought order out the last of the chaos. Then we sat down to eat tamales together and thank the Lord for the opportunity to invest some sweat equity into the life of the church.

One of the projects we had hoped to do on the Saturday while we had visiting work teams was to put a roof on the home of a widow whose roof came down in the torrential rains that caused the flood. However, when



(roof from outside): The roof hanging over into the front 'patio' area. To put the roof on, it was necessary to do brickwork along the front of the house.

Javier Rivera, one of the elders from the Briseño church and an architect, saw the structure on which the roof was to rest, he said, “Look, we CAN do this, but we shouldn’t.” He redesigned the project, replacing the well-worn wooden beams with metal ones; and we put the project off for a week. This Sunday, a team of us showed up at 7am to take off the reed-grass-and-teja roof and begin putting the new roof in place. At 10 am, the team walked two blocks to the park in the neighborhood, where that day we held our Sunday meeting. We started with a potluck meal together at the end of which we celebrated the Lord’s table. After the meeting the team, with some new members, we continued with the roof project. It became necessary to do some unexpected brick work to finish up the roof, raising the height of one wall and evening another; but we were able to get the materials we needed and get the roof finished by 5:30 that afternoon. I arrived home around 6, just as it began to rain! We were so thankful that the Lord had held back the rain until we were finished.

The church has been saving money to purchase



(tejas we removed): Before we could begin installing the roof, we had to remove the existing one, a mix of the roof tiles you see here and reeds tied to wooden beams.



(Antonia en su casa): Antonia smiles into the camera. She is not yet a believer, but one of the women in the church has been ministering to her for a long time. Her married daughter, Lupita, is a family friend of a young man in the congregation (the one who did much of the brickwork)

property of own here for some time, and recently we received a generous offering toward that purchase. We are looking at a couple of different properties right now and would appreciate your prayers for that decision. We will, of course, choose a property well above the flood plain....

Thank you again for your concern, your prayers and your gifts. We are genuinely thankful we are not alone and that the Lord has put us together with you.

Steve and Linda

Ghana, West Africa The Voetberg Family

Greetings Saints,

This week is the beginning of a busy couple months. We will be leaving Wednesday to Accra airport to pick up Prentice and David. On Thursday morning we will travel to Togo for a small four-day conference there and to have our visas renewed. Then, back to Accra and on to our house in Tarkwa with Prentice and David.

This last Sunday, the church here sent two young men on a short week-long trip to the Northern region to share the gospel in that area. They will be going to the smaller villages where there is not much, if any, gospel witness. These are some neat young men, and they have a real love for preaching the word; so I am praying God will grab a hold of them and launch them into the work full time. It is also exciting for the church to be a part of this trip in prayer and financial support. When we announced that all the offering this week was going to be for supporting this trip, it was more than the usual amount; so we thank the Lord that the heart of the church members is that way. Sunday meetings have been encouraging. Skip has been having some discipleship time with a couple of guys every week, and we try and make weekly trips out to Teberebe. Last week we had a Bible study with a few people there, especially three older sisters, who are like triplets of Granny in “The Beverly Hillbillies!”

We hope you are all well; thanks for praying,

*Love,
The Voetbergs*

Nigeria Jack Ring & Austin Ball

Austin Ball and I have been invited to Nigeria for the month of August. We’ll be attending five events. My hope is to bring a little much needed material help for their missions efforts and to encourage them in their stand against doctrines flooding Africa from America that are eroding the missions vision there. We will leave on the 4th of August and return September 2nd.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE MISSIONS MOVEMENT IN AFRICA. The Lord’s work is under attack, and millions that were swept into the kingdom are now being diverted from God’s purposes by an overwhelming wave

of man-centered, false teaching. The folks we will meet are among the few who have not been taken in by this spirit of covetousness. Please join us in praying that they will powerfully preach the truth of God's word and that His people in Africa will embrace the call to "deny self, take up the cross and follow Jesus." There is still a growing missions movement in Africa, which our enemy is attacking.

Pray this promise from God's word: "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19).

Below is a prayer list that I hope many of you will print out and use. I value this more than anything, please help us with your prayers!

Prayer List

- 1) More laborers for the harvest—especially in the Muslim world.
- 2) Arrangements, safety, and fresh vision for the team leaders.
- 3) God's blessing on the conferences.
- 4) ETHNOS ministry as they seek God's help in establishing a media department for missions awareness and mobilization.
- 5) Completion of dormitory for missionary training center in Ibadan.
- 6) Against false teaching.
- 7) Our safety.
- 8) Ability to speak God's word and not my own.
- 9) God's protection and provision for my wife, Jennifer, in my absence.

A Little History

My first visit to Nigeria was in 1979, with a small team from Shield of Faith Mission, Int. We witnessed a nation in the midst of an explosive move of the Spirit of God. Had such a movement happened in a Western country, it would have been the subject of a hundred books on revival. People were getting saved by the tens of thousands. According to Operation World, the number of evangelicals grew from 2.1 million in 1960 (5.7%) to 49 million in 2010 (30.8%), most of that growth occurring from the mid 70's to the mid 80's. Remarkably, those God was using were ordinary people—school teachers, policemen, construction workers, businessmen, farmers, students....


In 1980 we were invited to return with a larger team to hold a ten-day conference for over seven hundred pastors and church leaders. At the end of the conference, I traveled with Nigerian church planters to the Muslim North for ministry among some of the newly formed groups of believers. I will never forget the contrast I saw between God's joyful saints and the "kingdom of darkness." One Friday afternoon in Maidugary, I watched the streets fill with thousands of men—prayer rugs and bowed heads facing Mecca—repeating prayers in a language they didn't even understand. I was told that after 50 years of ministry among the Kanuri people by Western missionaries there

were no known believers. At the end of that visit, we were asked by the Nigerian church leaders to send a team to start a training school for ministers.

From that time on, God birthed in Jennifer's heart and mine a vision to see a flood of African men and women thrust out into the unreached harvest fields of the world. In 1982, we returned as a team of three families to start the Nigeria Christian Leadership Training in conjunction with several Nigerian churches. That ministry continues today under all African leadership as the Christian Leadership and Missionary Training Institute (CLAMTI).

Over the years we have watched God bring to maturity a missions movement that has resulted in the formation of more than 100 indigenous missionary sending agencies with over seven thousand full time workers. We have been blessed with a continued involvement in three of these missions.

What's Happening Now

As the thrust of missions in Africa has moved from the hands of Americans and Europeans to the hands of Africans, Satan has found a way to counterattack. Much of this great work of God has been corrupted by unbalanced "prosperity" theology. There are widespread and numerous doctrinal distortions—greed masquerading as "God's blessing"—charlatans using "signs and wonders" to enrich themselves and build their own kingdoms. This self-centered "brand of Christianity" is moving many away from the Biblical call of God to spend and be spent for the spreading of the gospel. 

Jerry & Cherry Skiles West Africa

Recently I enjoyed a missionary friend's email titled "Bizarre?" In it he recounts a series of events that resolved a seemingly complex problem simply. The title of the email caught my attention because in the past few months while working in Africa I had the bizarre happen to me.

A farmer in northern Ghana asked US Aid to send me to help improve production on his farm and those of his associates in a rural village. He was a Christian leader in the area at whose house a group of believers meet regularly, director of a Christian school and a successful farmer. Finishing my work I returned to a larger town in the predominantly Muslim north of Ghana; and while staying in a guesthouse, I met a Ghanaian man who was also working with farmers. Upon discovering I was an American he asked what State I was from. When I said Oregon, he got excited, as he had attended Oregon State University. I asked about his studies, and he said range management. I asked if he knew Lee, a long time friend of mine who taught at OSU in that department. He knew him well.

A couple months later I returned to Ghana to work with more farmers in the north. I was again surprised when the two main farmers were pastors. It was a delight to help these men train people to apply principles that would increase the quality of life in a very poor part of the world. On this assignment Hovare traveled with me. He came

from Ivory Coast to Ghana via Burkina Faso in about 6 hours on a motorcycle. Hovare was reluctant to come to the farm where I was being hosted because he does not speak English or the local languages but in the end consented.

The farmer/pastor had called a meeting where scores of the areas farmers would meet. After introductions we started our meeting; and Hovare left, as he could not understand anything. After the meeting they were curious about the language I had been speaking to Hovare and how I met him. Many Africans are multilingual, and I discovered they knew one of the languages that Hovare knew; so I encouraged them to greet Hovare. Soon they were in animated conversation; the excitement was obvious. Hovare told me one of the men had been to Bwaybiye (our village in Ivory Coast), had fellowshiped with the believers there, and heard Hovare teach out of Mark. The man was impressed; and being a Christian leader, he returned to Ghana and shared the same message at his home fellowship. The second man had also traveled through Ivory Coast, and Hovare had given him a place to sleep one night at his house.

Most Christian believers acknowledge that God directs our steps. Sometimes events are orchestrated in such a way that they seem bizarre.

For Prayer: I have an increasing concern for the stability and security of the poor population in Ivory Coast. Please pray for them. Hovare says there is increased interest in the Gospel among the Loma. It has been years since we have had a conference in the tribal area; we are planning one this January. Please be in prayer for that and for preparation for the medical team in February. We want to not only work with the 1040i team but also vaccinate the population against the diseases we believe caused many children's deaths last year.

Thank you for your prayers!
Jerry & Cherry Skiles 🙏

Nigeria **Austin Ball**

Since August 5th I have been in southern Nigeria accompanying Jack Ring, our main purpose is to encourage the brethren in the great work of preaching the gospel. Personally, I also saw this as a great opportunity to see 2 Timothy 2:2 in action. That is, after all, our end purpose in missions. We want to see those we disciple take what we have taught them and reach above and beyond what we could ever do alone. I thought I would give you a sort of half time report.

I am now two weeks into the trip. The plan was to go to four different missions conferences in four weeks. We just wrapped up the second one on August 17. The first was a retreat for ETHNOS missionaries. ETHNOS is an organization that is the fruit of the three years that Jack Ring, Larry Montgomery, and Roger Bagley spent here. ETHNOS trains and equips local missionaries to go to the people groups in West Africa that have yet to hear the gospel. Twelve missionary families minister

in seven different countries: Benin, Togo, Mali, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, and northern Nigeria. All this has come about because a few faithful brothers: Moses Osho, Nathanael Abimbola, and Samuel Deji, among others who took to heart the principles of discipleship that were taught them by the three SFMI missionaries.

I met most of the missionaries during the retreat; about seventy attended. It was an eye opener for me. The conditions in which these missionaries work are difficult. Many of them are in remote villages with no electricity and long, dry, heat seasons where they have to travel miles to find water. They must also learn a new language to communicate with the people. Jack did a lot of ministering during those three days. I ministered as well, sharing with them how God is leading me to Bangladesh. They were very interested and made me promise to send them updates of that work. I think Jack would agree with me that these courageous missionary families ministered to us way more than we to them.

The second gathering was the "Come Ye Apart" camp, whose appropriate theme was "The Concerns of God." The overwhelming thing the Spirit seemed to be ministering was the need for laborers. There were more than 600 attendees from the local churches here in Ibadan. There were a lot of young people, and God seemed to be speaking especially to them. Jack ministered for nine hours in the three days, mostly on the need for discipleship. I shared my testimony and gave some reasons why I felt called to full-time missions. At the end of the conference Brother Nathanael Abimbola asked if anyone felt called to give their life to missions, and over 25 young people stood up.

That is the report so far. The Lord is blessing my time here and teaching me a lot. Keep praying! In His service.

Austin B. Ball 🙏

Len's letter: from a sensitive field

We recently had a meal in the home of our U friend, Terry. We have been praying for an opportunity to give her our testimony. While we were eating, I was praying for an opening to share. At the end of the meal I suggested we pray. After the prayer she asked if we prayed to idols. This was the opening I was waiting for. I told her that when we were young we prayed to idols but we had turned to serve the true God and that when we were young we had met the prophet J_s_s. Yesterday she came by our field and said she had enjoyed our visit and wanted to have us to her house for another meal. Part of this family's story is that her father-in-law was yoked like an animal and made to plow a field for several days until he died. The person who did this to him was an M_ll_h. As you can imagine, this has left deep scars in this couple.

We have had the opportunity to go up into the neighboring mountains twice recently. This is big deal for us as we have tried to go several times before and have always been turned back at checkpoint by security

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police. It was nice to be out of the hot city for a change, but the best part was we were able to take a local family with us and visit with them in a very relaxed atmosphere. Currently we are bud grafting our cherry trees, thanks to all the good advice of Fred Nyberg.

Prayer requests:

- 1) For our friend Terry and her family. They have invited us to share a meal with them for Korban Hait (the celebration of the end of Fast).
- 2) For our local friends who are like-minded. For safety, for boldness, for family unity. Praise for the sp_rit_al growth that we have seen.
- 3) For our other American friends who are now back in AK. That they have an effective ministry to their neighbors and acquaintances.
- 4) For continued language acquisition—not so easy for us old folks.
- 5) For the health and growth of the nursery trees.
- 6) For our personal sp_rit_al health. There is a real sp_rit_al battle taking place here and we definitely feel it, especially when we mention the name of the One who gave Himself for us. And especially Marcia who has the added challenge of being a mom who misses her children and grandchildren.

Thank you to each of you who faithfully remember these people.

L&M 

Quebec, Canada **Francois & Nohemi Marcoux**

Our summer has been a blessing. Nohemi and I had been caring for my dad (87 yrs old) in our home; and that was a real blessing, especially at night. I would read Scriptures and pray with him to his joy. (My dad never openly professed salvation and has early Alzheimer's.) Sadly, however, my dad fell and broke his hip bone in the beginning of July. He is still in the hospital, and we fear he will never walk again.

We had to cancel a Bible Expo this week at an evangelistic outreach in a place called Ste-Anne-des-Monts, for lack of adequate permission to set up our exhibit in the local mall. But the Lord has blessed us this week by being able to attend a week-long Bible conference in upper state New York on the *Life of the Messiah* with bro. Arnold Fruchtenbaum.

Thanks for your continued prayers for the Gospel to go out in Quebec. Please continue to pray for our weekly Bible study with our Mexican friends. Their enthusiasm to know the Word is so uplifting!

In Him,
Francois and Nohemi 