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God's Expectation for Rain

by Moses Osho

As it is for every investor to expect gain and for every farmer to expect harvest, so also God has an expectation whenever He gives rain.

What is Rain?

As I study the Scriptures, I discovered that rain could be the outpouring of water substance upon the earth or spiritual blessings upon His saints. Leviticus 26:4-5 says: "Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely."

Rain could also mean an outpouring of judgment upon sinners and the wicked. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Psalm 11:6 "The Lord does this to magnify himself, and sanctify himself, that He might be known in the eyes of many nations, that they may know that He is the LORD." Ezekiel 38:22,23

When the rain is spiritual, it could mean: anointing, blessing, restoration, revival or a breakthrough, as in Joel 2:28-32 Everyone desires rain because of its good effects on the earth.

An adage says, "A day's rain surpasses a thousand days of drought."

A song goes thus:

There shall be showers of blessing,
This is the promise of love;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Savior above.
Showers of blessing,
Showers of blessing we need;
Mercy drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead.

The absence of rain will bring drought, famine, outbreak of diseases and discomfort upon men as a result of heat. So also, when rain is too much, the farmers will not be at ease because of the fear that their crops could spoil.

When rain is normal, the people will rejoice and count it as a blessing because it will have the following effect:

- There shall be clarity. II Samuel 23:4
- There shall be fruitfulness for harvesters. Leviticus 26:4-5
- There shall be abundance of food with gladness. Acts 14:17
- There shall be cool and fresh air that brings comfort.
- There shall be enough water to refresh the thirsty people.
- There shall be healing to the dry land.
- There shall be growth to plantations.
- Drying crops shall be revived.
- It shall give more strength to the rivers to flow and to flush away garbage.
- God shall thereby be glorified. Ezekiel 38:22-25

God's Expectation for Rain

God has never done anything without a purpose. When He made the heavens, it was to declare His glory. The firmament was made to show forth His handy work. Day and night were made to show forth God's knowledge. Psalm 19: 1,2 Almost everything created by God has its spiritual significance and purpose. God gives the physical rain that the ground may suck it up and produce food for the eaters. When God showers His spiritual rain upon His people, His expectation is that His people might become blessings to the needy and the perishing sinners.

God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 1:3 God expects us to manifest or demonstrate these spiritual blessings in the physical, hence:

He made us the salt of the earth so that we can transform the earth. Matthew 5:13

He made us the light of the world so that we can illuminate the world. Matthew 5:14

He gave us power over serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy – we have authority. Luke 10:19

He made us to sit together in Christ in heaven, far above all principality and power, and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. Ephesians 1:21; 2:6

We share the kingdom with Him.

He puts His Holy Spirit in and upon us – we can produce His life and fruit. I Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 5:22-25

He gave each of us different gifts to accomplish our mandate in the Church and to the world. Ephesians 4:16; I Peter 4:10; Mark 16:15-20

He made us His temple. He dwells in us and works in us. II Corinthians 6:16; Philippians 2:13

All these are part of all the spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us in Christ Jesus. Just as it is expected of the ground that drinks the physical rain from heaven to produce food for the eaters, so also God is expecting us, after we have received the spiritual blessings, to produce both the fruit of the Spirit and the fruit of our lips confessing His name. Hebrews 6:7-8

In Leviticus 26:3-13, we shall discover some principles that could apply to us as Christians today. When God gives rain, that is, the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit and His blessings, the following are the result:

Each tree, representing each Christian, shall yield fruits by exercising his or her gifts for the edification and growth of the Church and also by soul winning. vs. 4a

Every land, meaning each church and ministry, shall yield their increase; that is, they shall capture more ground of nations for the Lord. vs. 4b-5

There shall be peace and stability, vs. 6.

There shall be power for mission, vs. 7-8, "And ye shall chase your enemies... and five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword."

There shall be true prosperity, vs. 9-13. "For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you."

In Acts 1:8, we discovered that the expectation of God in sending the rain of the Holy Spirit upon the Church is that we might be witnesses unto the Lord Jesus Christ both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. By this alone can the whole world enjoy the effect of the spiritual rain poured upon us.

Hindrances to Rain

Truly, it is the will of God to give rain in its season; but, there are some things that could hinder it.

The first hindrance is the *North Wind*. The Scripture says, "The north wind driveth away rain." Proverbs 25:23 Going by the self-centered desire expressed by Lucifer, who became Satan, in Isaiah 14:13, we read thus: "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: ***I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north***" (emphasis mine). We can see that Satan has his counterfeit throne set in the sides of the north. This is the very place that the psalmist signified as the city of our God and our great King. Psalm 48:1-2 Lucifer, Satan, placed his counterfeit throne in the sides of the north, that he might:

Make the people to believe that everything that comes from the north is from God.

Confuse the saints

(Continued on page 2)

Jim Lucas' Column



THE TWIN TOWERS!

The world trade center fell and the Pentagon was attacked. The United States is now at war against terror. The Bush administration is moving forward with vigor. Congress has given full support to build up our military, which President Bush says will be second to none. The American people have voiced their total support and flags are flying everywhere; it seems everyone is proud to be an American.

Everyone seems quite confident that the enemy will be found and destroyed. The terrorist of this world will indeed be destroyed, but I doubt that our human efforts will succeed.

I am reminded of Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, when he said to the men of Israel who were persecuting the apostles, *"Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.... if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."* Acts 5:35-39

This event may be of God, *"for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."* Hebrews 12:6 It's quite common for God to use a heathen nation to judge those He loves.

I am not saying it's wrong for us to defend ourselves against terrorists. But the urgent need of the day is for the American people to put their faith in God. More than lifting up our flags, we need to lift up our voices to God in prayer, asking forgiveness for our sins. We are a nation of liars. We print on our money, "In God We Trust," but we all know where our faith is. Our Lord has made His hatred for

our first love known when He allowed the towers of the "trade center" to be brought down. They fell quickly and easily before the whole world. Our Lord God is a mighty God. He has made known His displeasure of our proud and lofty ways. In the same way as the small stone from David's sling brought down the giant Goliath or the walls of Jericho fell at the sound of the trumpet, so were the twin towers.

The bringing down of towers is often a sign of God's judgment. Remember the tower of Babel? The people said, *"Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth,"* Gen. 11:4. The World Trade Center towers represented a similar agenda.

Towers are symbolic of power and safety. But listen to King David and see where he had his trust. *"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in Him will I trust: He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Savior; thou savest me from violence. I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies."* II Sam. 22:2-4

It seems the Lord brings down towers in times of abundance and unholy complacency. In Isaiah 30:25 we read, *"And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall."*

Isaiah, in chapter two, speaks about the last days; *"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of*

the Lord of hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty, and upon everyone that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day." Isaiah 2:11-17

As Americans we are proud and our Heavenly Father sees the need for us to be humbled. We have *"a form of godliness but deny the power thereof"* to live in righteousness. We have mega-sized churches, but very little light and salt; therefore, immorality runs rampant. We are *forever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Favour is shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness; but when God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.* See Isaiah 26:8,9.

Isaiah said, *"Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them."* Isaiah 26:11 It appears that few are recognizing God's hand of judgment on our nation, but I am sure we shall see. If only we would acknowledge our sin (immorality, murder of innocent babies, pride, covetousness, materialism, etc.) and repent, we would find God's mercy and loving care. Jesus warned the people of His day of this same need. We read

in Luke 13:1-5, *"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."*

They didn't take heed to the falling of the tower nor to the solemn warning but continued in their sin, even to the point of crucifying our Lord Jesus. Judgment came about forty years later, when Titus came with his armies and destroyed Jerusalem. It seems history is repeating itself. Today God is still pleading with His people and warning them/us. *"The just Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: ... I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant."* Zeph. 3:5,6 It appears God will cut off the nations. Our towers are desolate, but our cities are not yet destroyed. Let us pray for Israel that she will see God's hand that is lifted up and for our own nation also to repent of the pride and sin that is destroying us. Our strength is not in our armies or our modern weapons. The only hope we have is to call upon our God with all our hearts, in full surrender to Him.

(Continued from page 1)

Discredit God
Discourage the following of the true God.

Divert the attention of the world unto himself for worship and allegiance.

With these facts, I will conclude that Satan is the north wind that could hinder rain.

One other thing that could hinder rain is *sin*. "And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish
page 2

you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power; and **I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:** (emphasis mine) and your strength shall be spent in vain for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits." Leviticus 26:18-20; Jeremiah 5:23-31

We can have Rain Again

God is not interested in us having hardship and drought. The Scripture says that "In all their affliction he was afflicted,

and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." Isaiah 63:9

Because of the love of God towards us, we could have rain if we:

- Repent ^{I Chronicles 5:26:27}
- Reorder our priorities
- Prepare our vessels and land
- Ask ^{Matthew 7:7-8}
- Arise and shine, that is, **Go** preach and live Christ Jesus
- Advance by faith ^{Deuteronomy 1:6-8}

Finally, let us sing together:

There shall be showers of blessing:
If we but trust and obey;
There shall be seasons refreshing,
If we let God have His way.
Showers of blessing
Showers of blessing we need.
Mercy drops round us are falling,
But for the showers we plead.

Amen

Fifty years! One half century, six hundred months, eighteen thousand two hundred fifty days. I'll not count the minutes or seconds. No matter what terms I use to describe the time lapsed since the Shield of Faith came into existence, it seems in my recollection as only yesterday, but, at the same time, a completely different world away.

I remember the Sunday morning shortly after my wife and I had returned to the Northwest from attending the American Soul Clinic in LA. We decided to worship at the First Baptist Church in Eugene. While waiting in the hall for church to start, I found myself standing next to a tall young man who seemed as strange to the church as myself. We struck up a conversation and soon found that God had led us both to Eugene to minister in similar ways with a similar vision. The tall young man, of course, was Dick York.

He had rented a house on Eighth street, and was in the process of starting a ministry to indigent men who found their way into the south end of the Willamette Valley. We met the following week where we had opportunity to compare notes, pray

Dick Kelso, Fifty Years Ago

together and plan some areas of ministry.

I had been involved in Radio and TV ministry in Southern California and felt that radio was a vital venue for ministry in the Northwest. Brother Dick also had been praying for such ministry. So it wasn't long after the formation of the Shield of Faith that "The Shield of Faith Hour" radio ministry was launched in the Eugene area, and some time later in the Vancouver, BC area. At the same time we were conducting meetings in various churches from Northern California to Southern British Columbia. Dick would preach and I would lead the singing and sing solos. From time to time we would go door to door sharing the claims of Christ with those who would listen. It was during one of these times, while going with a pastor from a Vancouver area church, that we made contact with the lovely young lady who later became Brother Dick's mate for life, Darlene. When they married we were holding a series of meetings in a little community near Hood River, Oregon. They chose that time to also celebrate

their honeymoon. Consequently, I have always said I went along with them on their honeymoon!

The years have sped by and the Lord, in His wisdom, has led us into different ministries down through the years. Dick and Darlene wound up in Korea for a term, then to Bend as well as Texas and now back to Bend. Lee and I have had opportunity to pastor several churches and now, for the past eight years, have been in an Associate position at Rogue Valley Community Church in Rogue River, Oregon.

I said previously that time has gone by in a hurry and the world has taken on a different complexion. Sad to say it is not a good one. But we should not be shaken, for God has warned us through the Apostle Paul (as well as others) in second Timothy 3: 1-5. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.



For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:

from such turn away."

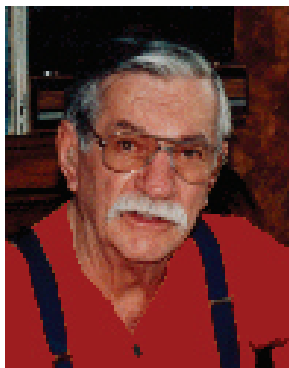
In spite of the turn the world has taken, God's call to take the Gospel message to all the world has not changed! We must remain as committed to this call as we were in those days 50 years ago when the Shield of Faith International was prayed into existence—to go, being strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, "above all, taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." May God's will be done, that we occupy for Him until He comes for us.

Dick Kelso.

II Corinthians 1:12

Roy Gable, 2003 - SFMI Jubilee Year

How fortunate we were to be there at the beginning, Dick York, Dick Kelso and myself. The small mission house where Dick York lived was soon full and running over. The activity was constant: prayer, Bible study, ministering to transients. We needed more space.



We were witnessing on Willamette street downtown Eugene and noticed this empty brick hotel building. We crossed the street, turned the knob on the door, and to our surprise it was unlocked.

"Let's check it out"

We went upstairs, walked through it, then fell on our knees and prayed and claimed it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What a privilege it was for me to work with my brother during those times. I learned what walking by faith really meant. Dick York walked by faith.

Many men came to the Mission, received clothes if they needed them, a hot meal and a warm bed and had the Gospel preached to them. We became fishers of men. Our batting average wasn't too impressive, but sometimes we would hit a home run. Wow! What a feeling to see a

lost soul come to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit was speaking to hearts and some believed.

Ben and Maude Singletary came to the Mission to minister and they were used of God mightily. Ben would preach and witness, Maude would witness and counsel

with everyone who would listen. Ben was a bundle of energy who worked constantly picking up food: bread from the bakeries, milk from the distributors, and food from the grocers. He started the paper recycling that today provides much of the budget for the Eugene Mission.

Many of the pastors in Eugene, Oregon, met Dick York and became interested in the work. Most of the churches were sympathetic with the work and helped wherever they could.

But the vision of the Shield of Faith was worldwide. Dick and Darlene, with their children, Nate and Mark, went to Korea as missionaries.

Ruth and I became superintendents at the Eugene mission in 1958. Oh, how we missed Dick York and Ben Singletary. But we did the best we could and prayed a lot.

There were good men on the board of directors. Ernest Unger, the present director, came at the right time and gave of himself to the work. God caused it to prosper and it is still alive and well.

The Shield of Faith Mission International reached out into the whole world from its small beginning in 1953 right there on 6th and Willamette Street in Eugene Oregon.

Three of us who were there at the beginning—Dick York, Dick Kelso and myself—are still on the board of directors, Dick York, of course, being the founder.

Ruth and I send our greetings to all our brothers and sisters in Christ in Eugene. What a blessing you were to us; we will never forget you. We are still active in the work with SFMI, the most important work being prayer.

In the years to come, there will be many more wonderful stories of God's saving grace. It started fifty years ago when Dick York was obedient and began teaching others and discipling them to go and do the same. The teaching is the same and God has given the increase. I feel very humbled to have been a small part. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he that winneth souls is wise." I will continue to do what I can in the work of SFMI.

Ruth and I and our children were

members at the Assembly of God church in Eugene from 1951 through 1960. We have been members of First Baptist church here in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, for twenty years now.

We are still busy with the SFMI training program in Bend, Oregon. Many go out from there using the skills they have learned to reach a lost world.

When Dick asked me to write, commemorating our 50th anniversary, I felt very grateful. Not only is Dick my brother in Christ, he is also my best friend. His itinerary is full. He does not quit. The only time he slows down is when he is in the hospital having heart bypasses. It has been a privilege to work with him when I can, and I pray for him continually.

Dick York, Dick Kelso and myself—I am in good company. We sang a trio at a conference in Texas one time. You noticed I said one time. The people were kind but we were not asked to sing again. Kelso was asked to sing again, I was asked to sing again, but Dick York was not asked to sing again. I think it was God's way of keeping him humble.

"The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Editor's note: Don Oswin, an elder in the Creswick church, wrote this report.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am writing to you on behalf of Christian Bible Fellowship, Creswick, Australia, to report some of the blessings that we have received as a result of the twelve months of ministry that Tim, Kimber, Steven and Trevor Montgomery have given to us.

Twelve months ago when the Montgomery's arrived in Australia, all that we knew for sure was that it was God's will that they should come and that they should spend as long as He wanted with us. What type of ministry would they have was for God to reveal as time went by. Initially settling in, finding a house, transport, etc., all went very well with little assistance from the Fellowship. This quickly showed us that this was a resourceful family.

Then we began to pursue a visa. All appeared to be going well for a time, but it quickly became apparent that after September 11 things even in Australia had changed. While all this was going on, Tim and family were settling in and getting to understand Australia and Australians, which they did very well and quickly.

By this time God had begun to show Tim the opportunities for ministry among us. He quickly began teaching two groups of Bible studies/discipleship through the week, as well as door knocking/evangelism in the town of Creswick and

teaching during our Sunday fellowship. Tim and family were kept extremely busy with these activities and others for some time, until we struck problems with the visa application and Tim was forced to stop all but his teaching during our Sunday fellowship. At this point it seemed difficult to understand what God was doing, but much fruit has been born during this time of difficulty.



Because Tim has been unable to continue door knocking, those that were going with him have continued in his stead (with his constant encouragement) and have been able to maintain the dozens of good contacts made with many follow-up visits and requests for Bibles. Also, new homes have been contacted as well.

At the beginning of Tim's discipleship ministry, he had begun to encourage people to maintain a diary of what God was teaching them through the week. Each week as Tim began the studies, he would go round the room and allow any

who wanted to share what God had shown them through the week. By the time Tim was forced to stop this formal discipleship teaching, the sharing that people were doing was taking up all the time available for the study. Much real blessing has come through these times as God has spoken directly into individuals' lives through His Word. This came about because Tim and Kimber had begun to teach people to expect to hear from God.

Praise God, Tim has just been given approval to continue this work of door knocking/evangelism and discipleship at a somewhat reduced capacity until his visa is finalized. This is great news; but as wonderful as these ministries are, they are not the things that I believe were God's number one priority in sending the Montgomerys to us. The most important things they have ministered the whole time they have been here (visa or not) is how they have lived day to day in our community. They have taught us by the Word and example to expect to hear from God each day about each aspect of our walk. This has truly made a lasting impression on the life of our Fellowship and the small town of Creswick.

Tim and Kimber and the boys have lived what they preach and teach, and the whole Fellowship and community have been able to observe them through the difficult times as well as the good. When God reveals His will through His Word, they have been faithful to testify of His



Word to them and follow His leading. Even when some doors have closed, they have continued to listen to God. This tenderness to the voice of the Lord has meant they have often been used in the lives of many within the Fellowship who have needed a word from the Lord or comfort or direction.

Tim, Kimber and the boys will leave us with a most precious gift—that of knowing that Almighty God, Maker of Heaven and Earth, wants to talk directly to us, His children, every day about all aspects of our lives. They have shown us that knowing His will and being

Steve Montgomery News

We are sometimes encouraged, sometimes overwhelmed as the work here takes root. This Sunday a "new" family joined us. They met with us briefly when we first arrived here, but have not been meeting with anyone since. They are believers who have eight children and live in a village half an hour from here. Tragically, the older kids, now late teens, have grown up with no Christian fellowship and are not walking with the Lord. One of the daughters, 16, has some serious problems, including, apparently, anorexia. These kids were all sweet, shy, tender



kids when we met them three and a half years ago. They were anxious for fellowship and excited about being part of a group of believers. Now, years of isolation have left them open to the

darts of the enemy.

We were reminded again this week that we are dealing with first-generation Christians who bring with them the horrific background of generations of rejection of the Gospel, idolatry, hypocrisy and flagrant paganism. We find ourselves confronting histories of child molestation, wife beating, generational marital unfaithfulness, alcoholism and a general ignorance of the most basic understanding of marriage and child rearing. The very issue of the authority of the Word in the daily life is often challenged when work ethics are brought into question. A common saying in Mexico is: "Primero comer que ser Cristiano," which roughly translates, "It's more important to eat [that is, to earn a living] than to be a Christian."

Not exactly Job's perspective regarding his necessary food.

Hector is a man with a good work ethic and a degree of understanding in the Word. He has shared in the meeting before and it has been a blessing. His family life,

however, is not in order. He often belittles his children and wife in front of others to the point of tears, which has caused some of his children to be rebellious toward him and all authority.

Joel is about the same age as Hector, in the mid-thirties, but younger in Christ. He is growing by leaps and bounds, but comes from a long way out. He is a rough, tough, nobody-gets-in-my-way macho who needs to learn how to love his wife and how to discipline his children biblically.

Ramon is a quiet-spoken man of the same age, perhaps slightly younger. He is a man with great potential if he will continue committed to the congregation.

We've started a youth group, which is doing well. Josh generally teaches, though he has invited others. Josh is continually surprised by how little these youths know. When they studied the book of Jonah, he prepared an in-depth study with pithy observations and piercing applications, only to discover that the others didn't even know the story: "He got eaten by a fish? You're kidding, right?" "Vomited up! Gross!" They are studying

the life of David now; and when Josh suggested they study his life, several didn't have any idea who he was. They *are* learning, however.

The Sunday meeting is beginning to take on a different look, as the people get up their nerve to read a verse, share a testimony, pray or ask for prayer, ask for a song or even share a song. After a meeting where several have participated, everyone is excited seeing the Lord act through the body.

Linda is fine and encouraged by the open doors for ministry that are presented to her as the assembly grows. The cafe is doing well and continues to be a point of contact for conversations about the Lord.

Josh (Steve and Linda's youngest son) is doing well, active in the church here and also encouraging the believers in La Barca. (a small town a few miles south of Atotonilco)

Thank you for your faithful service to us, Steve and Linda



obedient to it is an exciting life to live. We praise God for what they have taught and shown us so far and thank God for the time that is left for them here, for we know that much more fruit will be born in that time and the years beyond.

May God bless you for sending the Montgomerys to us and your on-going ministry around the world as you head into your next fifty years of serving the Lord Jesus Christ—until He comes!!

Your Brother in Christ,
Don Oswin



Jerry Skiles returned to visit the Loma tribe and brethren in Ivory Coast. As you know, there has been a rebellion in Ivory Coast and the area where the Skiles have lived and worked has been controlled by the rebel forces. Although a peace accord was signed by the rebels and the government, it was later rescinded so hostilities continue.

There is a possibility that by the time you read this, Jerry will be back in the States. However, even if that is the case, your prayers for Ivory Coast and the Loma people are needed.

Jerry spent the first couple of nights in the capital city of Burkina Faso, the country that borders Ivory Coast on the north, and then traveled to a small town near the Ivory Coast border where he hoped to meet people who could assist him to get into Ivory Coast.

Mike Ball

The Lord gave us a fruitful ten days in Mexico with the brethren. We had become aware of problems in the church in Aguas that had not been dealt with properly. There were resentments between some of the leaders and issues that had not been settled. I had planned on exhorting the church about the Cross in the every-day life of a disciple. By Sunday, we had had a full week of visiting the brethren in their homes. As they talked openly with us about the problems, it became obvious to us that there was a lack of humbling themselves and of preferring the other to one's self. We had liberty to teach and exhort them strongly in the homes and in the church.

Sunday, I told them I did not know how long I might preach, but that I had a lot of catching up to do. As it turned out, I spoke for an hour and forty-five minutes concerning denying self and recognizing that we are dead if we are indeed in Christ. And dead people are not self-conscious. I spoke on the marks of a true disciple: deny self, take up the cross, and love the brethren.

There seemed to be some reconciliation and change of hearts. Please pray for these believers as they seek to be true disciples of

our Lord.

There are some good things going on there. There are some new believers that are being discipled. In Loreto, a village in Aguascalientes where a few folks have believed the Gospel, the church is growing. I could see growth in Manolo, one of the firstfruits in Loreto. We were greatly encouraged in the time we spent with these dear saints. We were there for three of the ten days. These disciples are diverse in their way of life. Manolo's family are well to do in comparison to the others, several of these being very poor indeed. But there is such love and acceptance between them and humility in Manolo in spite of his having more than the rest.

The meetings there on Sundays are full of input from several of the brethren. Manolo's parents are following the Lord now. The salvation of Manolo's sister is a testimony that God is not limited. This lady has been deaf the last few years. She started coming to the studies in Manolo's home a few months ago. Marcial (*a blind brother who began to evangelize the village of Loreto with Mike before there*

He carried medicine with him that is much needed in the tribe. With the help of the director of the regional hospital, Jerry received permission from the rebels to enter the country and proceed to the village. One of his objectives was to minister the Word to encourage the believers there. A conference was arranged; and Jerry, along with a native brother whom Jerry has discipled, and has become a prominent leader in the fledgling church, were the speakers at the conference.

Jerry reported to his wife in Oregon by telephone that the conference went very well. At least one person was born again and the Word of God was received and appreciated by all in attendance. There was some concern for one of the women from the neighboring Loron tribe who, on her walk through the jungle to attend the conference, was bitten by a snake. She was prayed for and has been recovering. God is faithful to answer prayer, both for the salvation of souls and for the sustaining of health.

It is only a very few years ago that both the Loron and the Lomapo were unreached tribes worshipping fetishes, living in darkness, and under the oppression of demonic forces without any knowledge of God. Now they are assembling to worship God, to hear His Word and be taught by their own people. We are much encouraged by the evidence that God's Word does not return void, but

were any believers there) does not know how to sign, but she is able to read lips. He explained the Gospel to her and her response was "What do I need to do to have Jesus in me?" She continues in the studies with Marcial.

Marcial is doing a great work, is a hard worker and would appreciate your prayers very much. He travels to Loreto three times a week and is on the bus four hours each day as he has several studies there plus a prayer meeting and the meeting on Sunday. He also has several studies in Aguas in homes. Marcial receives some support from friends and a little bit of help from the church in Aguas. He would give even more time to the work if he did not have to take the time out to make a little income. We have an account set up for him in our bank for anyone who desires to help him out in the work in Loreto and Aguas. Please keep these needs in your prayers.

Thank you,
In Christ, Mike

it accomplishes the purpose for which He sends it.

There are still other unreached tribes in Africa, but there is also a move of God among His people there. African Christians are sending African missionaries to reach African tribes that have languished too long without the Gospel. But now the tide has turned, and in spite of the persecution that Christians endure in many African countries, the Gospel is doing its liberating work.

Gallegos Family Tonala, Jalisco, Mexico

Thank you, brethren, for your prayers. We have had an eventful year. Since September, Jose Luis and family are situated in North Africa. After finishing up a year of ministry in Arandas, they returned to Tonala for the summer and then were sent out by the church as Mexican missionaries. Right now, they are focusing on the study of Arabic. Later in 2003 we will make decisions about establishing the ceramic shop in Africa in order for them to justify their residency there. They are teamed with a couple from Venezuela. Please continue to pray for the pioneer effort in ministry to Muslims.

This year we were able to purchase land for the church in Arandas. We also were able to get the church building 90% done. Although we have the roof on and have dedicated the church, we still have a lot of detail work to finish. There are between 20-25 brethren meeting together in Arandas. A month ago, we baptized twenty-two new believers. Six of these were from Arandas, the rest from Tonala.

Our children continue to take more responsibility for ministry here in the Tonala church. That is a great blessing to us. Leila, our daughter, is now in Spokane doing her first year of college.

Pedro Salazar continues to have an effective ministry here in the church. I expect his role to increase and mine to diminish in the local church. Lord willing, we hope to establish elders within the first six months of 2003. I need to focus more on training and missions aspects. Please pray that our key leaders will be ready for this key transition as I work to prepare three or four key men for the local ministry.

The family who lost their 18-year-old son and five-month-old granddaughter are really doing well. They are an inspiration to us. Thank you for your prayers for them during this difficult time.

In Him,
Larry Gallegos



David Wornu Kangni

I received the forgiveness of sin and was born again on October 3, 1998. Prior to my freedom in the spirit through the grace of God, I led a self-righteous life. I thought that if I continue to do good and show kindness, if I am actively involved in church activities, pay my tithes, fast and pray and do good works, I'll find happiness. And some day I'll attain that perfection which will qualify me to enter into heaven when I die.

As a result of my strong conviction of self-righteousness through good works, I ended up fasting for forty days, during which time I lived without drinking water or eating food from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. I had long prayer sessions, four to seven times daily at specific intervals. I was positive that through such spiritual exercise and my good works I would obtain freedom from sin. Sadly, though, nothing in me changed after all these things. The sin matter and lack of peace in my heart were still present. Why? God said, and He is absolutely right, that the righteousness of a man is as filthy rags before Him. (Isa. 64:4 and Phil. 3:9)

On October 3, 1998, at a Bible teaching conference in Germany, the value of the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the Cross and His Resurrection were revealed in my heart. Instantly, the sin matter in my heart vanished, emancipation from sin came to me. Since that day, I have peace with God and great joy in heart day by day.

Years back, I almost drowned in a swimming pool. I was saved by a lady who saw that I was drowning and about to die. She saved my life. I did not contribute anything in the rescue operation. This horrific incident gives me insight and clear understanding of the Scripture verse in Eph. 2:8-9: ***“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.”***

Finally, I would like to give thanks to the Lord for leading me to the Missionary Training Program here at SFMI, Bend, Oregon. Indeed, the training is awesome. To God be the glory for keeping alive these dedicated and faithful saints who are instructing and leading us into making disciples. Back in Germany, where I am residing permanently, is my wife, Marian, and our two children, Anastasia and Martin-Luther. Please pray along with me for them during this period that I am separated from them.

David Wornu Kangni



Amber Hotrum

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Phil. 1:6

The Lord put it on my heart to come to the Discipleship Training Program, and He has provided the way.

In the past few weeks, I've been learning so much about following the Lord closely and seeking His will in all things. At this point, I don't know what the Lord has planned for me next, but I do know that in His time He will show me. I do want the Lord to work through me and use me according to His will. I have no ability of my own. It is my desire to walk closer and closer with my Lord each day.

Amber Hotrum

Hello! My name is Robin Duggan. I've come from Dallas, Texas, to attend this training program. I'm twenty years old, and three years old in the Lord. I was once a very angry person and I fought against God. I guess you could say I was a sheep that didn't want to be found.

Knowing Jesus has given me peace and been to me like cool water that quenches a fire. Now I have a different sort of fire, and that is to carry the Gospel to the rest of the world. I believe the Lord is preparing me to serve Him as a missionary. I believe the Lord has given me a heart



Robin Duggan

for the African peoples. I believe this training program in Bend, Oregon, is just a little step in God's training program that extends into eternity.

God has many training programs for us in our lives, so Bend, Oregon, isn't the only place to receive this training. Be faithful in what God has given you to do and you won't miss out.

In our classes here in Oregon, we do extensive studies of biblical principles that we may deepen our understanding of the Scriptures. I want to learn to be led by the Holy Spirit while I am here, or at least have a better grasp of what that means. I encourage you all to search the depths of God's Word and see how deep it really goes.



Elisa Rice



John Blank

I was saved at the age of seven. I prayed with my father one night. Over the next several years, I had doubts about my salvation. I kept wondering if I had done things right. One day my father had me speak with an elder of our church. He gave

me an example, using Eph. 2:8,9. He took a Twinkie and said: “Look, God is offering you eternal life just like I am offering you this Twinkie right now. All you have to do is receive, but He cannot make you receive.” Then he showed me in Eph. 2: 8,9 that we are saved by God's grace, and that it is not of ourselves. He then offered me a Twinkie and I took it and ate it, and it was good. I also received a peace in my heart and things became clear to me.

At the age of thirteen, I started visiting apartments with my father, with a group called “Evangelism Explosion” on Wednesday nights. I immediately began developing a love in my heart for the lost.

Over the next several years, God gave me the opportunity to go on mission trips to several different countries such as Mexico, Guatemala, Jamaica, Bolivia, and Argentina. In Argentina I felt the Lord's

calling towards missions as I saw the Lord working in my life during the two months I was there. After the two months in Argentina, God miraculously gave me the ability to speak Spanish. I felt the Lord's calling more than ever through what He had done in my life and by the gift of Spanish, which He had given me.

This past December, I graduated from Southern Methodist University with a BBA. I felt the Lord's leading towards the Training Program as a practical way to prepare me for missions. Now I am looking for the Lord's preparation in my life during this time and the Lord's leading concerning where and what He wants me to do in His ministry. I am excited to see what the Lord has in store for me as He continually molds me into a more Christ-like servant.

I grew up in a Christian home with wonderful, godly parents. I said the sinners' prayer when I was about six years old, but the reality of Jesus being my Savior and Redeemer didn't become real to me until I was about thirteen.

I have never studied the Bible in depth, and I have never felt comfortable about being able to defend my faith.

I heard about the Shield of Faith training program through my friend, Sheila Wolf (who is also in the training program). I thought it sounded like a great way for me to get a deeper understanding of the Bible and learn some apologetics, as well as how to witness to people.

I have been more challenged in my Christian walk during this short time of being in the Training Program than I have in my whole Christian life. I praise God that He gave me the opportunity to do this.

Conference Registration

You are reading this in March. The Annual SFMI Memorial Day Conference is May 23-26. Isn't it early to be talking about registering? As a matter of fact it is not. We expect another full house this year with many of the missionary families in attendance. Early pre-registration will be important for us to know how to plan, and for you to be assured a good place at the table. So please send your completed form as soon as you know for sure that you will be coming.

There are now two annual conferences in the Northwest: the **Memorial Day weekend at Twin Rocks on the Oregon Coast**, and the Labor Day weekend conference in Northeast Washington. **The yellow form on this page is for Memorial Day.** The May/June Update will carry a registration form for the Labor Day Conference.

The policy of SFMI is to provide the conference without charge. All expenses will be met by your freewill offerings. Obviously there are expenses that must be met, but we do not want finances to be a deterrent to anyone's ability to participate. Please come prepared to do what you can. We will trust the Lord to meet the expenses as He has always done in the past. We look forward to seeing you there.

If you want to know what the actual cost per person to SFMI is, this information will be provided by the registrar only upon request.

RM	#	Office Use Only	FT/PT	Office Use Only	Rec'd
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Annual Northwest Conference 2003 Shield of Faith Mission International

Registrars: Mike Williamson and Chrissie Wise
Mailing Address: P.O.Box 144 Bend, OR 97709
Phone: 1-541-382-7081

Twin Rocks Friend Campground, Rockaway Beach, Oregon, May 23 - 26, 2003

How it Works: Arrivals begin at 5:00 p.m. Friday, May. 23. The first meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. There will be no meal served Friday night. Please feel free to bring snacks. Saturday morning is our first meal and Monday lunch is our last meal. We have spaces available for tents and RVs. There are family cabins and lodging for others. Bring your own bedding, or bedding can be provided for those in need. Twin Rocks Friends Campground is a **non-smoking** facility. Pets are **not** allowed. Copy as many forms as you need. Mail completed forms to Shield of Faith Office. We look forward to seeing you this year. **Register Early!**

Family Registration:

Last Name: _____ First: _____ Home Phone: _____ - _____ - _____
 Address: _____ Work Phone: _____ - _____ - _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail _____ @ _____

Spouse: _____ *Please include infants.*

<i>Child:</i> _____	<i>Age:</i> _____	<i>Child:</i> _____	<i>Age:</i> _____
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<i>Child:</i> _____	<i>Age:</i> _____	<i>Child:</i> _____	<i>Age:</i> _____

Circle Choices

Nights staying over:	Friday Night	Saturday Night	Sunday Night
Sleeping Arrangements Needed:	Room	Tent	RV
Meals:	Saturday Breakfast	Sunday Breakfast	Monday Breakfast
	Saturday Lunch	Sunday Lunch	Monday Lunch
	Saturday Dinner	Sunday Dinner	

Special Requests or Needs:

Fill out this form in detail and mail to SFMI office



The Earth is The
Lord's, and the
fulness thereof,
the world and
they that dwell
therein. Psalm 24:1

WEB SHOTS

The SFMI Prayer/News Update is published bi-monthly and is sent free of charge to God's people everywhere upon request. If you have friends to whom you would like a copy sent, please submit their address to this office. In response to inquiries about the cost of publication: \$6.00 per year per subscriber. Yes, contributions to offset this cost are accepted, but not solicited.