



Why Does it Take so Long?

By Dick York

"I'm desperate, God! Why does it take so long for you to answer prayer?"

If you have never said that out loud, it is quite probable that, at some time, you have thought it in your heart. On occasion it seems that He answers almost before we finish asking. When that is the case, our confidence in God is bolstered and we feel as though we are His special people, and our desires are His special project. But that is not always the case. There are times when it seems the world will end before God answers our prayer; in fact it seems doubtful that He has paid any attention at all to our cry. Maybe He didn't even hear us cry. Sometimes it seems as though prayer is a futile exercise because it is evident that no one is listening.

We have prayed, we have waited, nothing happened. We have given up hoping that God will answer when we hear a jubilant testimony from someone that has prayed and waited and continued to believe. Then, one day, after literally years of patient trusting, God has answered their prayer. So we are persuaded in our heart that we should be patient. Perhaps that will happen for us.

The key words, of course, are "continued to believe." That is not some nebulous sales job that we do on our psyche, persuading ourselves that if we believe anything strong enough and long enough, our faith will bring it about. That is not the case. Our faith doesn't cause anything to happen. God is the author of His work, whether it is provision, the salvation of our loved ones, the healing of our diseases or the perfecting of our souls. It is God that brings it about. Faith is our attitude of trusting Him. Trusting Him is a present tense, on-going attitude based on His faultless and unchanging character, not on the fact that He has complied with our will in our time. Faith trusts God

for who He is, not for what He does.

God has made many promises in His Word. Some of them are personal, some national, some conditional, others unconditional. Saints of all ages have waited literally for centuries for some of the promises of God to unfold. At the end of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the famous and well-beloved faith chapter, we read of some who "received not the promise."

Up to verse thirty-five of that chapter, we read of the positive answers to prayer, the visible fulfillment of promises, and it causes us to rejoice in God's constant faithfulness. We don't know, of course, how long it seemed to those who prayed and waited, nor how many times they were tempted to despair while they were waiting, but we can see from our perspective that their trust was well placed no matter how long it took.

From verse thirty-five we read of others who waited for similar promises, "others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, and were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all [to whom the promises were made] having obtained a good report through faith received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

So why, in this case, did it take so long? Because they could not be made perfect without us the rest of the members of His Church! Some of God's promises will be fulfilled in the

kingdom. If we do not have an eternal perspective, it may seem that God has not been faithful.

But perhaps there is more than one reason for the apparent delay in God's response to our urgent prayers. We pray for the Lord's soon return, but He has not come. Jesus said, "Surely, I come quickly." The apostle John, therefore, prayed, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." But still, after two thousand years, He has not come. What's the matter?

It is obvious that the Lord's perspective differs from ours as much as ours differs from that of a fruit fly. The fruit fly lives his entire life in twenty-four hours. To him, then, our one day is his entire life-time. What is "quickly" for us is to him an eternity. But further, seeing from God's perspective, who "is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,"²¹ there is still more reason to delay.

The prophet Jeremiah lived comparatively late in history, the apostle Paul even later. God, it is noted in Scripture, knew both of these men, before they were born. This can be said also of you and me. It was not the will of God to terminate the progress of history—to turn out the lights and lock the door, so to speak—until all the children were in. So we wait, and some of us wonder, "How long, O Lord...?" But He is faithful and true, it won't be a minute too long. Trust Him. If God had finalized history early, Jeremiah may not have been included among the number of the redeemed, or, perhaps, the apostle Paul or you and I.

Another reason may be that every incident of history reveals something more of God's character. God's revelation of Himself continues to unfold with every event of history. As the children of Israel wandered in

the wilderness for forty years, every incident said something to them about the character and the faithfulness of God. Even modern day conflicts have revealed God's power and his goodness to those who are able to see. Even the rise and fall of nations declares the consistency of God's principles if we are willing to notice. God's Word is complete. The entire revelation is recorded in the inspired Word of God. But to us, the revelation of what is recorded is still unfolding. Prophecy has all been written, but the fulfilling of that prophecy is still in the process. God is revealing Himself day by day. Even our waiting is accomplishing His purpose in us.

A further and much more subjective reason for the delay in answered prayer than the ones noted so far may be in the fact that God has committed Himself to working through the visible body that He has prepared for Himself. Regardless of what we may hear from other sources, God created all things by the Word of His power; and He created them for His own pleasure. All things were created by Him and for Him. No matter how independent from God man may try to become, he can never negate that fact. God Himself is an invisible spirit. But God's plan was to reveal Himself to someone with whom He would fellowship. He created man. This was to be the visible image of the invisible God, so that not only to man, but through man, God would manifest Himself.

The main factors in fellowship with God are love and obedience, neither of which can be in evidence apart from freedom of choice. As a part of the "image of God" in which man was created, man must have a will and the ability to choose. He chose to disobey, even as God foreknew that he would.

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How Great is that Darkness!

The Apostle John says, “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and we declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” ^{1 John 1:5-7} He did not merely say, if we walk in the light we have fellowship one with another; he said, if we walk in the light **as He is in the light**, we have fellowship one with another.

Do you ever stumble? I sure have. Jesus said that if a man walk in the night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him. ^{John 11:10} Jesus said, “Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.” ^{Luke 11:15} When light is directed straight into the eye, it hinders more than it helps, we are not able to see anything else. Many of us get taken up with certain truths. We are so busy looking at the trees we fail to see the forest. Or, we can only see the mote that is in our brother’s eye and fail to see the beam that is in our own.

The Pharisees had the most upright and conservative doctrine of their day. They took pride in being followers of Moses; but they crucified the One of whom Moses testified. They had light, but their light blinded their eyes from seeing the Messiah.

Some may say, how could they do such a thing? In all reality, if you or I had been there, we may have been no different. It is only by God’s grace that anyone stands redeemed. The Gospel is hid to them that are lost, for the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto

them. Notice He blinds the minds of those who believe not—Satan works in the world of unbelief. He is an angel of light who dwells in darkness.

^{2 Cor. 11:14}

Our unbelief gives him a place in our lives. He will bring some truth to our attention that obscures what God wants us to see. For example, some weary saint, struggling through a trying time, failing and feeling worthless, is told that he needs to do better and to be holy, for God is holy; when what Jesus wants him to hear is that he is already “accepted in the beloved.” There is only one that is holy and that is **the holy one**. If we, by faith, will abide in Him, His holiness will be revealed in our lives by His grace that abounds for those who believe.

Unbelief is prevalent among the Lord’s disciples. A man came to the disciples to have them cast a demon out of his son, but they could not. Jesus said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you?” Then he healed the child. Peter had the faith to get out of the boat and walk on water; but when the waves came up and the wind blew, he lost faith. Jesus said to him, “Thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” Many of us, who came out of the world to follow Jesus, when the waves of life and the winds of tribulation rage, take our eyes off of Him; and then the “light” that comes will deceive us.

When we fail to keep our eyes on Jesus, we become concerned about self. We begin to look for position, recognition, or self-preservation, just like the disciples when there arose a reasoning among them which of them should be greatest. ^{Luke 9:46} When our eyes are not only for him, we think too much of ourselves. We may develop

a sectarian spirit, like John who said, “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.” Jesus said to him, “Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us.” When our eyes are not only for Jesus, it is easy to be vindictive and intolerant for those who don’t agree with us. We know not of what Spirit we are and forget that Jesus did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. (Read Luke 9:51-56)

It is amazing how a saint can one minute receive a great revelation of God and the next minute walk in darkness and become an instrument of the prince of darkness. For example, Peter had a tremendous revelation of God concerning who Christ was, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This was not revealed unto him by flesh and blood, but by our Father in heaven.

Then Jesus began to explain to his disciples how He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things. Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.” Peter is standing against the Lord, even rebuking Him. His flesh is at enmity with God. He is savoring the things of man not of God. ^{Matt. 16:15-23}

He was being used of the enemy to discourage Jesus from fulfilling His mission, one moment basking in the revelation of God, the next blinded by the wisdom of this world. Perhaps he thought he was noble in his endeavor to spare Christ from suffering. Peter did not understand the wisdom of God and Jesus’ speaking of the cross was foolishness to him. (See 1 Cor. 1:18)

Peter at this time was still a very carnal believer. He lacked in the humility and brokenness that was to come. After his boasting that he

would never deny Jesus, the night that Jesus was arrested he denied him three times, then went out and wept bitterly. Jesus explained how it is that we are capable of such actions. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore your eye is single, the whole body is full of light. But when your eye is evil, the body is full of darkness, **how great is that darkness!** ^{Matt. 6:22,23} The darkness is so great that one is capable of doing evil believing that all is well.

The eye is directed by the heart. (See Proverbs 4:20-23) When the eye is single, we abound in light and grace; but when the eye is evil (not single), we abide in darkness. Jesus said, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” ^{Luke 9:62} Remember Lot’s wife. We may, like Peter, stumble around for a time in darkness; but we must eventually come to brokenness and true repentance of heart. Then we only have eyes for our precious Lord Jesus, the fairest of ten thousand and the lily of the valley

Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If the whole body therefore is full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.” ^{Luke 11:35-36}

If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. ^{1 John 1:7}

Pride and other distractions bring darkness—a very great darkness. But in Jesus we have grace to abide in the light. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. We received Jesus and His great salvation by faith. Let us continue in faith and we will abide in Him in whom is no darkness at all.

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To redeem this fallen man, and to pay the death penalty for his sin, the Word was made flesh. The same Word that had created all things for God's pleasure took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of Adam before he fell. This is Jesus. When Jesus came into the world, He said to the Father, "A body hast thou prepared me." That was the body of the man Christ Jesus, prepared to be the final and perfect sacrifice for sin. In that perfect man dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He was the express image of the Father, and the visible humanity through whom the Father worked. This was man as God meant man to be. He did the Father's will without reluctance, perfectly, willingly and immediately. When He spoke to the Father, there was no delay. He spoke, and the Father's will was done.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, those who are redeemed thereby are called the body of Christ. This, now, is the body through which God works. Because the flesh in which we live lusts against the spirit, the Father's will is often met with reluctance and unbelief on the part of God's people. But God, nevertheless, is committed to work through the Church, which is His body. Much of our waiting for God is because God waits for us. Flesh is flesh. Since the fall of Adam, all flesh except that of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was born without sin, has been by nature resistant to the will of God and more willing to live by sight and human reason than by faith.

We pray, therefore, sometimes not according to His will;² sometimes to consume it upon our lusts.³ Sometimes we pray for God to remove the things that He has placed in our lives to perfect us.⁴ In all of these cases we do not experience the answers to our prayers that we desire to see. That does not mean that God does not hear our cry, it means only that He cannot answer the way we ask Him to. He does not ignore us, however; He perfects us and then answers according to His will.

In Genesis 15:16 God told Abram that He could not give Canaan land to Abraham's seed until the iniquity of the Amorites was full. God waited four hundred years. When God told Jonah to preach to the Ninevites, Jonah took ship in the opposite direction. God waited. When God brought the children of Israel to the southern border of the land He had

promised them, the children of Israel feared the Canaanites and refused to go in and possess the Land. God waited forty years. God has often waited for man over the course of history. Does that mean that God's will is frustrated by man's disobedience? Not at all! God is patient, and God is gracious.

When the children of Israel rebelled against the LORD, God spoke to them through Isaiah the prophet and said, "For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, 'No'... And therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you."

Through the course of history, God has waited a lot, while man has stopped the clock and delayed the game. The answers to many prayers are on hold until the subject is willing to repent, or trust, or until the thing that God is doing through the situation is accomplished.

Think about this one. The Lord told His disciples to "Go and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."⁵ There was a context for that commission. Earlier, in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew it is recorded that Jesus, in prophesying of the end time, said, "When this Gospel of the kingdom has been preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, then shall the end come."⁶

It is hard for me to believe that the answer to John's prayer, "even so come, Lord Jesus," is not somehow related to Mathew 24:14 and the Church's serious attention to getting it done. After all, Jesus, who is our Head, said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, **and to finish His work.**"⁷

Endnotes

¹ 2 Peter 3:9

² 1 John 5:14

³ James 4:3

⁴ 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁵ Matthew 28:19,20

⁶ Matthew 24:14

⁷ John 4:24

What's Going on around Here?



Training Program

Mission Trips

Discipleship

Evangelism

The initial session of the training program for 2003 ran from January 13 through July 19. On August 19 a second segment commenced, which will continue through October. The last week of October will see several of the trainees—probably five of them, Lord willing—leaving for Kenya and Tanzania with Tim Montgomery and his family. There, if God should open the doors for them, they will spend their time teaching the believers and making disciples. It is a time that promises to be extremely profitable in their preparation for future ministry, either at home or abroad. We have been impressed that God has wrought an outstanding work in maturing those who have spent this year so far in the training program. Vision has been born, and the Word has given clear direction to some who, when they came, were, to a degree, lacking both. We are praising God for what we believe has been a productive and fruitful year to date.

The 2004 Training session will begin January 12, which is only a little over four months away. We have been much encouraged to hear of the interest that there is among many concerning next year's program. We would urge you to pray about your participation. There is no tuition charged for the instruction. Each student is responsible for his or her own living expenses and accommodations, so it is wise to begin to make arrangements in advance, especially if you are coming from out of town or out of state. If we know in advance, we may be able to help in finding suitable accommodation. You may acquire the necessary application forms for the 2004 session by writing or calling the Shield of Faith Mission International office. The address, telephone number and email address appear on the masthead of the SFMI Update.

Mexico



Steve Montgomery – Update Prayer Requests –

“The Circle of Silence” is comprised of the seven states that are the least reached areas of Mexico. These seven states are right in the middle of the country, each sharing borders. Los Altos de Jalisco is a mountain range in Jalisco where Atotonilco is located. We are in the center of this circle. The population of Atotonilco is approximately sixty thousand. There are more than thirty Catholic churches and only two Protestant churches. The percentage of Christians in this area is less than two percent.

Two years ago, Bibles for the World was prepared to do a distribution of New Testaments here in Atotonilco. At the last minute, they were not able to do so. They have now contacted me about setting a new date. We hope that by the time you receive this newsletter, we will have begun to distribute fifteen thousand New Testaments—one for every home in Atotonilco!

Satan has had rule in Los Altos de Jalisco (the Jalisco Highlands) for hundreds of years. Some of his most common strongholds are: the Catholic Church and its traditions, tequila as an industry and as an alcohol problem, homosexuality and prostitution.

We are asking the Lord to break the strongholds and to fill this land with His people. With this in mind, we planned various evangelistic events during the summer. We would like to ask that you join us in prayer for these people, and the ongoing results of our outreach.

Three of these events are:

#1 -Youth Group Evangelistic Event, Aug. 10-16 (past, but pray for the continuing results)

#2 - “Bibles for the World Outreach,” with Dr. Pudiate as speaker

#3 - Believers’ Conference, with Jim Lucas as speaker, Sept. 16

Event #1, the Youth Group Evangelistic Event. We had approximately 25 Americans (mostly youth) coming from

a church based in Lancaster, CA. We paired one American with one Mexican and sent them out door-to-door evangelizing. We chose four neighborhoods in which to concentrate our efforts.

Event #2, After the public event with Dr. Pudiate, the actual Bible distribution will continue for some time.



Our prayer needs are:

People Home: That people would be home to receive the New Testaments

Openness: That people would be open to hear the Word of God.

Teamwork: That we could be united in vision and purpose. That we would be prepared to share the hope we have in Jesus.

No Rain

Literature: Please pray that we won’t have any literature or equipment stolen or vandalized.

Good Attendance: Not only that people would attend the evening evangelistic events, but that they would be good, well-behaved, attentive, open. Pray especially for the children in this area.

Safety: That the people coming from various regions will be protected throughout their trip here.

Event #3 Believers’ Conference with Jim Lucas is still ahead, Sept. 16.

Things have been a whirlwind since we returned to Mexico from the Oregon conference. It feels as though we have hit the ground running. We had an evangelistic event in August 10th through the 16th and were busy trying to prepare for about twenty youths who came down for it. The plan was to pair them up with Mexicans and go door to door passing out New Testaments in each neighborhood. There was teaching, and in the evening music followed with mimes, a movie and preaching.

Peter Warren, from Dallas, TX.,

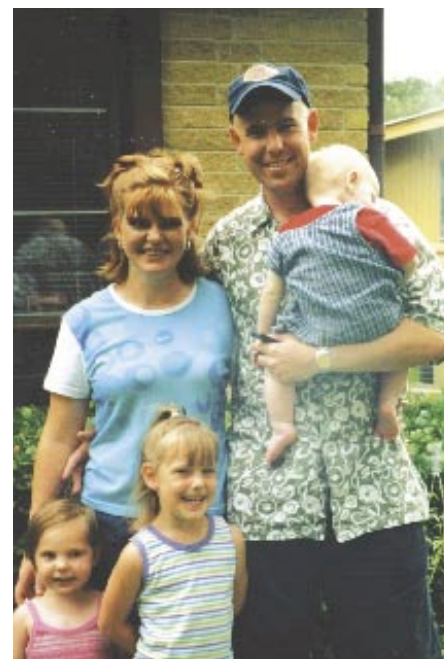
Joined us. He was willing to help where needed, which was a blessing.

Abby has been ministering to a young lady named Claudia. She got saved a few months ago and is having a hard time enjoying the Christian life. She is dating a guy who is unsaved and knows that it’s wrong but is justifying the fact that she can help lead him to Christ. Her home life is really rough. She and her brother are the sole providers in the house. Her dad, mom and brother need the Lord. Please pray that the He will capture their hearts and that they will turn from their divisive ways.

Please continue to pray for Enrique. We’re seeing the Holy Spirit working in his life. It’s encouraging to see him grow in the Word. He has decided to change the location of where we meet. We are meeting at the coffee shop, not at his home, so we miss seeing his mom, dad, and siblings. I would ask that you might keep his family in your prayers.

In addition, thank you for your faithfulness in praying for Juan and Margarita’s family. We are now having a Bible study in their house where there is less distraction. Their daughter Shelly is coming around as well as her brother Luis. Luis is about 22, likes to play basketball and I believe the Lord is fostering a friendship between the two of us. Pray that the Lord will open his heart to hearing more of the Gospel and at the same time develop a strong friendship that will be lasting.

We understand more and more everyday how much we rely on the prayers of the saints. Thank you for being a vehicle the Lord is using in our lives and those around us. In Him, Drysdale family



Africa



Togo was African but different than Ivory Coast. The people were much more respectful. The African people have such a flair for pomp and grandeur. Their singing and worship brought tears to my eyes. On earth, we Americans might be the workers; but the Africans are the worshippers.



I went believing that part of the success in Africa is to see the Africans catch a vision for what they can do with the resources they have, I am more convinced than ever that that is part of what is needed there. The youth are so frustrated and angry, yet they don’t see that opportunities are within their reach. I am convinced that if they can only channel those energies to productivity of their natural resources, rather than towards destruction, that Africa will have positive development and change. Personally I learned a lot about

Ministry date



other extension agents who eventually took the message to the village level. The organization has contacted me to do the same teaching in another country they work with in West Africa.

I saw a lot of evidence of Christian influence in the area of Togo I was in and many who I worked with were openly professing and confessing Christ as their Savior.

There are many opportunities for these volunteer programs in developing nations in the world. Volunteers are needed in just about any occupation one can think of. If you are interested, contact me; and I will assist you in researching the possibilities.

In September Cherry and I are planning to return to Ivory Coast. There are areas in Ivory Coast where stability has returned. We trust we will make contact with the believers we work with and hopefully we will be able to return to our house in the tribe and live there.

On the governmental level, progress is moving in a positive direction. We are not sure how quickly that reaches to the tribal area we work in. What we are hearing from the international news is better than what we are hearing from our contacts in the country. At times it sounds like the rebels know their

farming, and how I can help the Loran and Loma people with what I learned there. I came away from there with a larger vision for helping Africa.

News from Ivory Coast is still mixed. There seems to be positive movement, but then a set back will come. Some missionary friends just returned to Abidjan and are planning to take a trip into the northern part of the country. Their homes in Bouna, are all being lived in by the rebels. I understood the missionary feelings when, after writing that, he wrote "grrr." We all need the Lord's Spirit when dealing with things like that.

My time in Togo was very encouraging and beneficial. In the time I was there new farming practices were introduced to hundreds of farmers through an extension service by the Non-governmental organization (NGO) I worked with. The farmers who were involved in this NGO were forward-thinking people who were looking for new ideas to help them become more productive. These farmers are a minority, but I know that if these few can implement successfully new practices, the majority will follow and positive change will begin to happen in Africa.

I taught a few supervisors associated with the NGO cashew nut farming, and then I followed them as they taught



days are numbered and are taking advantage of the lawless state to loot and plunder as much as they can before "government" takes control.

Cherry and I need wisdom and discernment to know when and how to help in stabilizing the area we work in. When we return, we are hoping to hear news of our vehicle that was commandeered early in the rebellion. We hope there might be some restitution for it. We also hope that the majority of our household goods are still intact from the plundering that the rebels did to our house. We are comforted to know that the Lord knows everything and that, as we move, he will be a help and a guide every day. We appreciate in advance your prayers for us as we return.

Jerry & Cherry



In December, Jim and Fran Lucas, with Mike Ball, will join the team in Africa for a short time.



During the month of August, Dick York and Steve Montgomery made a trip to Nigeria to minister at the annual "Come Ye Apart" conferences in Ibadan and Ogbomoso. This article is being written too early to have a report on that activity, but we will share information belatedly in the next edition.

Africa today is a hotbed of activity, revolution, rebellion and war. It is also a place of spiritual activity, both positive and negative. It seems that as God waters the garden of Africa, everything has sprung into activity, both good and bad. The Gospel is flourishing, and Africans are sending missionaries from one nation to another, New works are springing up and many are being saved. At the same time, Islam is thrashing about and captivating many; AIDS is ravaging the populations of many nations, and rebellion and revolution are destabilizing the continent. In all of it, God is doing a great work, and a huge opportunity with many open doors has appeared on that continent.

There is a need throughout the world for men and women who can hear God's voice and are ready to respond to His call. It is not God's will that every believer be a missionary to a foreign land, but it is God's will that every believer be a disciple indeed. The SFMI Training Program is designed with that in mind. It is our desire, by the grace of God, to encourage the saints to have God's vision for the world, whether it be the world at our doorstep, or the world on the other side of the earth.



If you come to the 2004 Training Session, these men will be your instructors. Clockwise from top left, Larry Montgomery, Tim Montgomery, Dick York, Richard McDaniel, and Jim Lucas. All are experienced in missions. All are actively engaged in ministry. And all are eager to serve you.





Radio Ministry Breaks Through Buddhist Stronghold in Myanmar

A national missionary from Myanmar (Burma) was surprised to discover small groups of Christians in an area of the country that is particularly hostile to Christianity. These

people, including some former Buddhist monks, had come to Christ via a local radio ministry in Myanmar. The area in which they live was so closed to the Gospel that the mission leader said, It can never be evangelized by a resident missionary or even an itinerant missionary openly. This is why I believe the Lord has been using the radios.

The missionary produces a daily radio program that reaches thousands in this predominantly Buddhist country. When the missionary found the tiny bands of new believers, they were thrilled to finally meet someone who could disciple and teach them. They had been meeting secretly with no guidance

from a mature Christian. They begged the missionary to return to their town as often as possible.

Additional workers are planning to help the new believers by providing fellowship and teaching, medical care for lepers and the poor, food and children's evangelism. The missionary is to distribute more radios at strategic places where a contact will be responsible to tune in to his Gospel program. The ministry will begin taking promising believers from the area to another safer location for leadership training and then sending them back to their own people. In this way, says the mission leader, local authorities will never know what is going on.



Top: Lavish Buddhist temple, one of many extravagantly ornate structures in a land of abject poverty.

Above: A golden statue of a mounted warrior in the town of Kale in the western state, Chin.

Myanmar, formerly Burma, is the land in which the famous pioneer Baptist missionary, Adoniram Judson, served. It is now governed by a military Junta that is extremely corrupt and oppressive.

Below: A high-ranking government official brings a gift to the Buddhist monks who control the nation by an inordinate degree of influence over the military, which is the government of the country.



Christian Suffering In North Korea Prison Camps

(Adapted from an online news service report)

International human-rights organizations are reporting that tens of thousands of people accused of political crimes are being tortured, starved, humiliated and murdered in modern-day prison camps in North Korea, where some of the worst brutality is reserved for Christians.

International human-rights organizations estimate that there are two hundred thousand prisoners in twelve political prison camps in the country, plus about thirty forced-labor and education camps. A month-long investigation by NBC, which included interviews with U.S. and Korean officials and former prisoners and guards, found that the camps are not unlike the worst labor camps built by Mao and Stalin in the last century.

Many North Koreans become Christians after fleeing to China, thanks to a number of missionaries and Christian groups operating near the border. Some of the new believers later sneak back into Korea to preach to their family and friends.

The worst treatment in the camps is often reserved for Christians, who suffer deprivation and martyrdom.

Several thousand Christians were being held in labor camps where they reportedly face torture, starvation and death, according to Amnesty International.

“Christians are considered to be less than human and are treated worse than animals by their captors, unless they are willing to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ and declare that Kim Jong Il is God,” said Soon Ok Lee, who spoke last month at Hanmee Korean Church in Itasca, Ill.

Yet the Christians would continually sing hymns and looked up to heaven, crying out to God even at the point of death, said Soon, who became a Christian in the camps and credits God with her escape.

In spite of this severe persecution, the church in North Korea continues to grow. Norbert Vollersten, a German doctor who worked in North Korea, told UPI, I have spoken with the former commandant of 10 concentration camps, who was so impressed by the strength of the inmates’ faith that he fled the country, became a Christian and was baptized.

Those who help North Koreans are in great danger as well. We have an

unconfirmed report of one Christian evangelist who was beheaded along with his wife and child by North Korean secret police because of his outreach to Korean refugees.

It is impossible to know how many Christians are living in North Korea, because all believers are forced underground and those who are discovered are sent to labor camps where they are tortured and most likely killed. But informed sources believe that thousands in North Korea know Jesus Christ and the number of believers still grows. Christians in North Korea must meet in small groups of no more than four or five people, usually family members. After 50 years of communist rule, the implementation of Juche philosophy teaches that there is no power greater than Kim Il Sung, the Great Leader and Kim Jong Il, the Dear Leader. [Because of] severe persecution, it is only by God’s grace that there are any Christians left in North Korea.

Even though Soon Ok Lee, a former prisoner, was not a Christian at the time of her imprisonment, the Christians made a significant impression upon her: “They had such a warm love that

the rest of the people did not know. I have seen and felt that even in such a difficult situation they were able to express love for others. They sometimes even took responsibility for others’ wrongdoing; they took the blame to protect others...I realized that they are living in a different world, experiencing a different level of love. One of the reasons I have survived up to this moment is because of them. I reflect back and keep it as a guide, remembering them as they gave up their lives for the Kingdom of God with the type of love that all Christians should have.”

The Lord’s will is working. One North Korean refugee envisions, “I believe that one day, God is going to use the North Korean Church, together with the South Korean church, to spread the Gospel to Asia. The present has to be seen as a time of preparation. As the verses in Proverbs suggest, we want to be a part of that preparation.” Last week, Christians throughout Europe prayed for North Korea. Let’s continue their prayer efforts.



“The Field is the World” Matthew 13:38

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

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