

In This Issue

Cover, **How Did We Get Here?**

Page 4, Jim Lucas' Column
**In Him We Live and Move and
Have Our Being.**

Page 6, The Circle of Silence,
Steve Montgomery Column.
The Increase of His Government.

Page 8, **Ministry Update.**

Page 13, **News from Other Sources**

Page 15, **About Conferences**



How Did We Get Here? by Dick York



Who, a generation ago, would have imagined that the most pressing issue would have been the preservation of the right to murder your own children with the blessing of government and at public expense?

In the appointment of a Supreme Court justice, the major issue—almost the singular issue—is whether or not he will rule in favor of *Roe v. Wade*. We have become quite comfortable with the idea of abortion, but when it is allowed up until the moment of birth, it becomes, obviously, murder. This is the “constitutional right” for which a very large and powerful minority in our country demands protection. Those who oppose this heinous abuse are labeled extremists—far right-wing extremists. No protection for the lives of the children is upheld, only for the legal right of their abusers to kill them. How did we get to this place in a formerly civilized society?

Actually it is a long story that began a long time ago—before the American Revolution or the socialization of Europe, even before the founding of Egypt. Six thousand years ago, shortly after the creation of man, the rebellion began. What we are seeing today is the predictable, even prophesied, result.

There are people who lose interest in understanding a matter if we trace it back to the beginning or creation. They become bored with the “religious” point of view. But, in fact, this is not religion; it is reality, just as the present result is not religion. It, too, is a very troubling reality.

Present day conventional wisdom asserts that the

historic account of creation is a collection of myths invented by ignorant and superstitious savages to explain what they could not understand. But now, to them, science has produced an “enlightened” explanation of the origin of life. It has eliminated the superstitious belief in a creator or in a supreme authority. In thereby reducing mankind to mere animal status, there is no need to restrict him by law or by peer pressure from doing whatever animals find acceptable to do to satisfy their carnal instincts.

In fact there is a God to whom man, created in His image and for His purpose, is responsible. No denial, no matter how convincing, can reduce man’s accountability.

The first man was created as a mature person, enlightened and directed by God, with access to all wisdom and knowledge as he walked in communion and in dependency upon his creator. In so doing, he was to visibly manifest the character and will of the invisible God.

It was God’s plan to bring many sons into glory. He would do this, not by creating by himself many distinct humans, but by ordaining the one man he had created to reproduce after his own kind, thereby becoming a worker together with God in filling the earth with a people for God’s name. This is not religious speculation, but historic fact. The norm, then, was God and man in harmonious relationship. God is not the creation of man’s superstitious imagination, but man was the creation of God’s proclamation, and the world’s population is the result of man’s procreation. This was God’s purpose. Sex, obviously, was the necessary means of producing this “miraculous” result.

So how, then, did this holy, God-given instinct become the increasingly destructive ingredient in our deteriorating social fabric that it is today? It fuels the illicit flesh markets of the world—the multi-billion dollar pornography industry, the worldwide traffic of kidnapped children for purposes of prostitution and worse. It is the base material for our entertainment

industry. It is the hook in most of our commercial advertising. It has become an important part in our increasingly perverted education system. It inspires murder, deception, theft and treachery. What’s going on?

It didn’t start out that way. It wasn’t even a factor of the fall of man into his sinful state. But because of the important—even critical—part it played in the accomplishing of God’s program, it soon became strategic in Lucifer’s plan to usurp God’s authority over the creation. There is no sex scene in the account of Adam’s fall. There is one underlying factor—an act of disobedience, which was a declaration of independence from God’s authority. At the instigation of Satan, man declared himself to be like God. And here is where it all began.

Man, in the beginning, was placed in authority over the earthly creation. He was the masterpiece of all created things, but he was not divine, nor was he made to be a master independent of God’s authority. In other words, he was not an initiator, but a servant, an underling subservient to God’s direction. Of necessity he was given a free will in order that he might be capable of two responses most important to the relationship that God desired to have with him: love and obedience; neither of which can be dictated.

Once introduced to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life by Satan’s subtle direction to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam’s ability to decide became the exit from his holy relationship with God, and his entrance into the dark realm of Satan’s newly acquired authority which was the result of Adam’s defection. Now began Satan’s gleeful perversion of all that represented God’s perfect plan and the willing enslavement of mankind.

God is truth; Satan is a liar and the father of lies. God is the author of life; Satan is a murderer. God is light; Satan is the ruler of darkness. Because man was made to function under authority and is helpless to do so independently, he became a pawn in Satan’s

wicked agenda.

Satan is the angel Lucifer, whose name means “light.” He is a deceiver. Through deception he presents darkness as light, evil as good, and generally turns everything upside down. This, no doubt, is why the scriptures say, “There is a way that *seemeth* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” ^{Prov. 14:12.} People fail to understand this because Satan, the god of this world, has blinded their eyes. ^{2 Cor. 4:4.}

The most primeval instinct of man is to reproduce. Under God’s authority, this God-given instinct would have produced a godly seed and filled the earth with humanity in the image of God. Under the perverted authority of Satan it degenerated into an orgy of self-gratification. From procreational, sex outside of God’s context became recreational. Many of the children it produced were unwanted, resulting in a horror of grief, misery and brutality that children have suffered throughout the annals of history.

The children that should have been the Lord’s soon became sacrifices offered to such gods as Ashteroth and Chemosh. Man’s rebellion against God was expressed by the hijacking of the most sacred of human relationships and turning it into a vile perversion. It is Satan’s clenched fist in the face of the Almighty.

Because sex is the most basic of our instincts, it is the most easily perverted of the lusts of fallen humanity. In any case, whether legitimate or adulterous, sex produces children—often unwanted by those who produce them, but not unwanted by God. They become another means of demonstrating contempt for God. As a sacrifice to the god of convenience, self-will or lust, millions of children have been murdered by abortion just as millions in old-time were sacrificed to the aforementioned gods of the heathen nations.

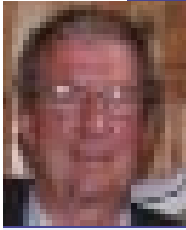
For many generations, the influence of Christianity in modern western nations made adultery, fornication and sexual perversion

officially unacceptable. Laws were made to discourage their practice. Of course no law can prevent sin, which flourishes despite all legal attempts to stifle it, but at least such social mores announce that some behaviors are unacceptable, and a certain restraint is produced.

But law cannot produce righteousness. In many subtle and not so subtle ways resistance to restrictive laws mounted in this nation. Entertainment based on sexual innuendo normalized what had once been considered taboo. Ridicule of family values encouraged rebellion against established norms and against “old-fashioned” parental guidance. Sex education in schools began to arouse children’s interest at an increasingly early age until it seemed “quaint” to imagine that anything sexual should be dealt with discreetly. Innocence was destroyed, virginity ridiculed and sex “outed” as a normal form of recreation in which all are expected to participate. To think otherwise is to be “religious.”

From there, any teaching of righteousness or moral behavior was classified as “religion,” and anything bearing that label violated the disingenuous interpretation or the “separation of Church and State” clause. In Satan’s rebellious authority, God must be silenced. Because it was God who said, Thou shalt not commit adultery” and it is one of the Ten Commandments found in the Bible, it must be expunged.

This dishonest, artful position is a strategy born of Satan’s rebellion against God in our society and his way to further demoralize a reeling nation. Immoral sex is a foundation stone in Satan’s purpose to usurp God’s plan. Abortion is the child sacrifice that Satan demands. This is a spiritual battle. It is unlikely that those who insist on making abortion the single issue on which to reject or confirm a Supreme Court appointee realize who or what is behind their insanity; but whether they realize it or not they are pawns in a spiritual battle being waged in the heavenlies. ■



Jim Lucas' Column

In Him We Live, and Move, and Have Our Being

Life brings with it many surprises, some pleasant some not so pleasant; everything seems so complicated at times. There are times that we become so confused that we don't know which way is up! In fact, "up" for us in our hemisphere, is in the opposite direction for those who live in Australia, "the land down-under" as it is called. In the day in which we find ourselves living, many do not know what is right or wrong. Some are even saying that there is no right or wrong; they say that there are no absolutes. I say that is absolutely bizarre. However, it shouldn't surprise us when people who are in darkness, deprived of truth, become confused. Jesus said, "If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth because there is no light in him." ^{John 11:9,11} Those who know God should not be stumbling around confused and without direction. The Apostle John said, "This then is the message that we have heard of Him, and 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." ^{1 John 1:5,6}

"Jesus said, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." ^{John 8:12} When we do not walk in the light, life brings many surprises. The sudden impact of an unexpected obstacle in our path in the middle of the night can be very disturbing and even dangerous.

Hurting – Confused – Disappointed

I see a lot of Christians all banged up, hurting, confused, disappointed, even disillusioned and afraid to go out into the world proclaiming the **good news**. They are not all that pleased with life and they find that it is easier to grumble about the many things that are disturbing them than to give God praise and thanksgiving. They will only walk in well-known paths and fear to venture out into unfamiliar territory; they have been hurt too many times. When we look at this in the light of the teaching of Jesus, we see that many who profess to know the Lord Jesus have no light in them. The light of the glorious gospel may have been revealed unto them, but they are not walking in it. Jesus is the light of the world, but we must follow Him or we will abide in darkness and not partake of the light of life. Life without light is no life at all.

Is it hard to be a Christian?

It must be miserable living in darkness when others are overcome with joy unspeakable and are full of glory. It also must be frustrating to have once known the peace and courage that was found in Christ Jesus, but now know only fear and anguish of soul. Similar to one living under the law: "And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." ^{Rom.7:10} No wonder they are saying it's hard to be a Christian.

Don't believe it, it's not hard to live the

Christian life, if you abide in him. If we fail to deny ourselves and follow him, it is impossible because we cannot live without him; he is our life. Once we deny ourselves and the old man is dead, then we put him to rest back in the dust where he came from. This rest of soul is so sweet. Then, and only then, can we get on with living for Jesus. You cannot live with Jesus if you are not living for him.

How do I follow the Spirit?

Living for Jesus may seem mysterious. You may wonder, “How do I follow the Spirit?” First of all you must establish your faith in the word of God. Do you agree that the word of God is true and that the things we feel or see are not always true? It is essential that you believe that you are accepted in the beloved no matter how big a failure you may have been. The blood of Jesus washes us from all our sins whenever we come to him in true repentance and are ready to live for him. He knows our heart and he will give grace to the one who is trusting in him. We shouldn’t fear failing. We know we may fail; therefore cast all your care upon him. Believe him; that is, believe his promises, don’t consider your weakness, but consider his faithfulness. Paul explained it like this, “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” ^{Col. 2:6,7} Abounding therein with thanksgiving is paramount, for this is the fruit of true faith. Faith rejoices in the victory that is promised even when it is not yet seen. The abundant grace of God will work in the heart that is established in Christ Jesus. This establishing in the faith will take time. There will be failures; but the believer will always bounce back stronger than before. The progress of growth will vary with each individual, but all those who are in Christ

Jesus are destined to grow into the very image of God. As the seed cast into the ground has everything in it that is needed for it to spring out of the earth in its time, so will you my beloved. For you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. ^{Col.1:10} Christ in you is your hope of glory.

No Worries Mate

Abiding in Christ is the key to living in the light. This is not as difficult as you might think. Forget the idea that you must hang on to him. As the Aussie would say, “No worries mate,” Christ is the vine we are the branches. The vine will hold us up and sustain us with life; the branch rests in the vine where it was born with no struggle, abiding in the strength of the vine. The same way that we put the old man to rest with all of his foolishness and left our past behind, now we can rest in the vine and the fruit of the Spirit will be manifested in the days ahead. Nothing we do will make the fruit grow, we are dependent upon Jesus who is our life. The longer we continue established in faith and abide in him, the more we will become like him. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, **unmovable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch, as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. ^{1Cor.15: 58} To abide in Christ and to live in him is not difficult because he is not afar off, he is ever present. Just as the little fish in the big ocean abides in the ocean and lives the life he was created for, so it is for us, for we were created unto good works ^{Eph.2:10} and the life of the Spirit of God becomes our life. We now have the mind of Christ and it is his Spirit that works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. ^{Phil. 2:13} God forbid that we would live out our days in a small fish bowl trapped by our fears and unbelief; we should launch out, **FOR IN HIM WE LIVE, AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING.** ^{Acts 17:28}



THE INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT

Isaiah 9:7 states “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end...” This verse, of course, is part of a longer section that speaks prophetically of the Lord Jesus. What catches the attention here is that the author is not saying that Christ’s government will have no end, though that is true. He is stating that there will be no end to the increase of His government. His rule, His dominion, will increase forever. Whatever implications this may have for eternity, its application to us now is one of great encouragement.

The church of Jesus Christ continues to grow, continues to extend into new territories and new lives ceaselessly. This has been true throughout history and is true today. There have been times of great advance and there have been periods where the advance was slower; but there has never been a time when Christ’s Kingdom has not been advancing, growing, increasing. The advance of His Kingdom encounters resistance. In areas, the Good News of His benevolent Kingship is held back. Messengers are turned away, rejected, beaten or even killed. Nevertheless, His Kingdom continues to grow, year upon year, region by region, life by life.

This reminds one of Priscilla Leonard’s moving poem, “The Tide is Sure to Win:”

*On the far reef the breakers recoil in
shattered foam,*

*While still the sea behind them urges
its forces home.*

*Its song of triumph surges o’er all the
thunderous din:*

*The wave may break in failure, But, the
tide is sure to win!*

*The reef is strong and cruel upon its
jagged wall.*

*One wave, a score, a hundred, broken
and beaten, fall.*

*Yet in defeat they conquer, the sea
comes flooding in,*

*Wave upon wave is routed, But, the
tide is sure to win!*

*Oh! Mighty sea, thy message in
clanging spray is cast.*

*Within God’s plan of progress it
matters not at last*

*How wide the shores of evil, How
strong the reefs of sin.*

*The wave may be defeated, But, the
tide is sure to win!*

The town of Santa Maria de Valle is an example. With a population of 3500, it sits in the geographical center of the Jalisco Highlands and is part of the county of Arandas. There is no Christian church or Bible study in

this town, but the extension of Christ's message and Kingdom is beginning to impact this town. Consider these happenings:

The Jesus film, presenting the life of Christ from the Gospel of Luke, was shown in the main plaza of this town one year ago. This was the first time a public event for the announcing of the Gospel had ever taken place there.

Francisco Miranda, a successful rancher who was born in Santa Maria and came to Christ several years ago, regularly loans his large ranch in Santa Maria for Christian outreaches. Recently, he offered 25 acres for a conference ground on the edge of town. He also showed us a piece of property one block off the main plaza, which he has reserved for many years, to be donated to a congregation that the Lord raises up there.

Radio Encounter has proposed establishing in the Highlands a Christian radio station, and the ideal spot for a small station appears to be Santa Maria del Valle. A group of believers from the area are soon to meet to consider the possibility of taking the next step in this project.

While attending a meeting at Francisco's ranch, we spoke to lady about Christ and found her very open to the Gospel. She had been reading a Bible, had many questions, and has been receiving the Word like a sponge. We have been able to follow her up, and a couple is spending this weekend with her family, at their invitation, to explain more about the Good News.

A couple from St. Louis, Missouri, Juan and Pat Guerra, came to see the Highlands with the intent of moving here as church planters. They visited several cities, towns and villages, but were most impressed with the open doors

in Santa Maria del Valle. While walking the streets there, they made friends with a family who invited them to their home for a birthday party! Juan is an Hispanic who retired from the U.S. military some years back. He has started and owned his own business and he and his wife have planted a church among Spanish-speakers in the US. They have rented a home in Santa Maria and hope to be living there by the beginning of February.

We rejoice that after many years in which Francisco Miranda has prayed for this town, the doors are beginning to open for the Gospel of Christ, without forgetting that...

Only twenty minutes away is San Miguel El Alto, with 28,000 people, where one young family struggles to see the Good News take root there.

Jalostotitlan, forty-five minutes from Santa Maria, population 28,000, has no Christian church. Carlos, the young man in San Miguel, is starting a Bible study there.

Thirty minutes south, in San Ignacio Cerro Gordo, population 9,500, three families are meeting in a small Bible study which they hope will blossom into a functioning congregation.

Yahualica, Valle de Guadalupe, Mexicacan, Villa Hidalgo, Unión de San Antonio, San Julian, San Diego de Alejandria, Pegueros and hundreds of others – towns, cities and entire counties – are still among the desolate communities of the Jalisco Highlands, unreached with the Good News.

Please join us in praying that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth laborers to this section of His harvest.

Steve and Linda Montgomery

Ministry Update

Positive News from Ivory Coast

For over three years Ivory Coast has been divided between a rebel movement in the north and the government controlled south. While there has been little in the way of armed conflicts between the two sides, there has not been peace.

After many previous agreements, the conflicting parties have agreed on a Prime Minister who is to spend the next year disarming the rebels and militias and establishing order for national elections in October 2006. This is the most positive news from Ivory Coast in a long time. All the political factions are in agreement at this point, which is a first since the conflict began.

Once the rebels are disarmed, law and order should replace the anarchy that the rebels and their guns have used in the Northern part of the country.

The task of rebuilding the country after three years will be difficult. Many people have suffered injustices. Historically, in Africa these grievances are not dealt with, due to the volume and complexity of trying to handle them. Children have grown older but have not advanced in school. The infrastructure has declined severely. These problems will have to be addressed with a weakened economy and a general mistrust by all parties. In my



observations, the African people show a great resilience to adversity. Their tenacity in overcoming adversity is one of their many strengths.

We continue to pray that the process to peace and reconciliation will continue.

Liberia, which borders Ivory Coast, has shown positive moves of stabilizing by recently electing a President.

Cherry and I are planning on returning to Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso in March and April and hope to be able to have a conference there and access future ministry. We will be teaching principles from the Bible concerning work, especially concerning agriculture. There are many unused natural resources and



Jerry and Cherry Skiles

many human resources that need to be understood from a Biblical perspective for the future stability and welfare of the African youth and its future.

From Nigeria:

An interesting testimony from Nathaniel Abimbola, working among the tribal people

Beloved,

From Baaki village, one of the member's sons named Samuel, a young man of about 22 years was brought to our house around 11pm; seriously sick. By God's intervention,



he partially recovered and he was then taken to the hospital. On examination, nothing could be diagnosed and his complaints afterward were that he couldn't sleep. Some injections were given

to him in order to aid his sleep, but even with that he still had problems. So, his father asked that Samuel should stay with us in town while he would return to the village, while promising to return the next day. However, before dawn, the boy gave up, and was already stiff and smelling like a dead body in the morgue. On waking up and seeing him like that, I woke my wife and my son Emmanuel who had recently returned from the Marine School he is attending.

Emmanuel had previously seen a revelation that the spirit of death invaded the house. I started calling the name of Jesus several times, not knowing what else to do. Until I saw that where I had laid my hands on him had started to grow warm, then I began to command his spirit to come back in the name of Jesus. After some minutes, the formerly stiff leg and hand began to show signs of movement and he opened his eyes and spit out some sticky saliva.

He later said, "Pastor, I am stiff" and I asked "How do you know?" And he replied, "I came out of my body, and while I was going, I met Jesus and he told me to go back into the body." Praise God!

In fact, I quickly called the doctor on phone, who came about two hours later and on touching his body exclaimed that some parts of

his body were still very cold while some were growing warm. All this confirmed that only Jesus performed the miracle as the boy had truly died.

Shalom. Thank you very much and God's blessings. We hope to give more testimonies and news reports from the field. We pray that the Lord himself will strengthen and uphold you . He sees all. Maranatha!

In His Love and Bond,

Nathaniel and Felicia Abimbola.

NIGERIA (VOM-Canada)

Sardauna Anaruwa Sashi, once a devout Muslim, became a faithful follower of Christ earlier this year. Having learned of his conversion, the police apprehended him on September 21st. According to an October 31st report by Compass Direct, during four days of detention, the 30-year-old resident of Paiko was severely tortured. He claims that at one point police beat him with their batons and almost killed him. It was only through the intervention of his pastor and a lawyer from his church that he was released. Since he has become an "infidel" in the eyes of his Muslim employer, he can no longer care for their cattle. Besides the loss of income he faces, Sashi's pastor has said that the Muslims will also never abandon their resolve to kill him. Sashi has reportedly received death threats since his release. While he fears for his life and the lives of his wife and relatives who have also turned to Christ, he testifies he will never recant. Paiko is located in Niger state, one of Nigeria's Northern states where Shariah Law has been imposed.

Pray the Lord will strengthen Sashi's faith as He provides for his needs. Pray God will help his wife and family members remain true to the Lord. Pray the love and power of the Holy Spirit will take away the resolve in the Muslims' hearts to see Sashi killed.



Greetings from Loreto,



The Lord brought one of His saints to Loreto from another town. Jose Luiz is from a small town about 45 minutes away. He came here to look for a job. We met him downtown as we were preaching in the plaza. He was sharing the gospel with a man as I walked up to give them both a tract. He has been saved less than a year. He had come to Christ in an apostolic congregation and began to listen to Bible teaching on the short wave. He came to realize the error of some of the practices of the “apostolics”. When I met him he had been in town three days. He now meets with us. He has a job working for Manolo in construction. He seems to be a faithful man and quite eager to witness of Christ. He is a musician and hopes to teach some of the saints to play different instruments.

Please pray for two couples that have started to receive Bible studies with Marcial. Both men are named Miguel. One is called Miguel Angel, so you can distinguish between them in your prayers. They are not saved but seem to be very interested.

All is well with our family

“Be still and know that I am God”. Bye for now,

Mike Ball

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the name of our Lord, who has faithfully kept us safe in His embrace.

I have been struggling with some of my Bible studies. It seems that as soon as they really start getting close to the truth, the doors begin to close.

Jose and Lydia, who were really interested in the Word and were even beginning to attend church, have now decided that they do not want to create waves in their family nor their community. Therefore, they have stopped our Bible studies and no longer attend church. They are still accepting my visits so I continue to see them in the hopes that the seeds that have been planted will begin to sprout.



Yolanda and her husband, who have also begun to attend church, have had difficulties attending. Yolanda is a believer; Eduardo is not. I was finally able to change my Bible study with Yolanda to the evenings, so that her husband could attend, when she became sick. She has been very sick with hemorrhoids and is afraid of the operation. She hasn't been able to attend church very often and our Bible studies have also suffered.

The Bible study I'm having with Dane (the teacher) had really begun to grow. She was inviting many of her family members and co-workers to join us. She has really been a mouthpiece for Jesus, even though she still is not joining us in fellowship. The others who had started to come have all fallen off.

Ramon and Ramon Jr. have also fallen away. Ramon Jr. has since gone to the States to work and Ramon Sr. went back to drinking. Just recently I've run into him, and he appears to be doing a little better. I hope to be able to start a Bible study with him again. Please pray for him

especially, since the holidays are a very hard time to stay sober.

The ground here is hard, but I know the Lord has His people here. With many of these Bible studies appearing to go into hibernation it has caused me to ask the Lord what he wants me to be doing. I ask that you pray for me on this, that He will lead me in His paths. We need His guidance to know how best to do His work.

In Him,



Dear Friends,

I just wanted you to know how things are here. The students are doing well, learning little by little about the most important thing in the world. Right now there are five that seem quite interested. Next week we will talk about the story of Joseph. I pray that they read their books and understand the meaning behind the story, and how it applies to them.

I am grateful to the Lord for giving me the opportunity to share with a few people here on a regular basis. Since last semester we started meeting and began studying Genesis. Now we are about to start studying the book of Luke. I am amazed at how clearly the Word brings understanding about God. In some ways, I think it is advantageous that the

people whom I have been talking with have had no knowledge of God, this being a result of a society or government that is atheistic in nature. In this way they do not have to begin with preconceived notions about God.

I am blessed to watch people see and understand concepts that they have never heard before. Among these are concepts like creation, sacrifice, sin, blood, and love. Sometimes I wonder what they are thinking when they hear these ancient stories, and see that the same concepts are repeated time after time. I wonder if they are amazed at the fact that the Bible was not written by people that were from the same time period and background. Of course only God knows the answer to these and other questions; even the most important question: what will He do in the lives of these young people after they have learned about Him? I must trust God concerning this. Perhaps I am here only to sow and someone else will come to reap. Praise God who sees the future, and who not only sees future events, but also orchestrates series of events in ways that only He can.



I was blessed by a question that one of my students asked after we had just had a talk about the Ten Commandments. Having never heard of the virgin birth, she asked a question about Jesus, saying something like, "If all come from Adam and all are born into

sin, then where did Christ come from?" I trust that the Lord is working giving these students understanding about Him and about His Son.

Life for me here is quite different than in Dallas or other places that I have been. At home I am more accustomed to being around family and friends. Here it is sometimes a little isolated. Because I am on a university campus it is almost like I am back in college again, except instead of going to class I am teaching class. Many of the teachers go home to the city after they have finished teaching, so most of

my contacts are students. I would also like to develop relationships with the teachers as well. The students are quite busy with their studies and classes, so during the day I am either teaching class or studying the language.

The Lord has given me contacts that know a good deal of English, so communication is not a problem. We read passages in their language and then I talk about it in English. Of course, my skills in their language are not better than their English, so having the studies in English is preferable. Actually, at this point to have a Bible study in their language seems to be an impossible task.

I will be finishing the school year here as an English teacher. I look forward to see what

God will do in my life and in the lives of those around me. I feel blessed to know the Creator of the heavens and earth. This is an interesting place, and here I think the Lord is teaching me to trust Him to do His work. It is His job to make Himself known, and He uses His people to do it. When I am in crowds of people in the city or on the college campus, sometimes I wonder why God does not somehow reveal Himself to them as He has to others. Why does He not speak to them in dreams if there is no Christian to tell them about Christ? But then after I think this I am reminded that God is God and He does what He wants. I am just His servant and, hopefully, I will be found to be a faithful worker when the day comes for me to leave this strange world.



Shiela Wolf



My dear friends and family,

I've been here in the Middle East for two weeks now, and amazingly enough I'm still loving it. It's frustrating to not be able to talk to the people here, but I guess that will just motivate me to learn Arabic more quickly. I want to cry some times when I walk down the street because I know that almost everyone I pass doesn't know God. You can see the emptiness in their eyes. It is strange for me to think that there can be so many people in one place who don't know who Jesus really is, let alone that they need a savior. There are very few believers in this country, and most of them aren't even from here. Please pray for these people; they need the light.

Thanksgiving dinner was a lot of fun. We went to a little restaurant that served fish. Tim told the waiter about what size fish we wanted and the cook made it for us right then. They put a thin piece of plastic over our table because the people here eat their meals family style and don't really use silverware. They served us the whole fish, eyes and all, a round piece of bread that was about two and a half feet across and a quarter inch thick, and a goat broth soup that tasted a little like chicken noodle soup, but instead of chicken and noodles floating around it had funny, squishy, chunky things in it. Yum! The best part of the whole experience was that we ate with our fingers. There seem to be a lot of finger manners that have to be learned in order to eat properly but I had fun learning. The biggest one is never to use your left hand to get food with.

I'm learning to wear my balto and headscarf properly, but the scarf still slips some times and shows my hair. How very scandalous! This coming Wednesday I'll have a lot of practice at keeping my hair covered. We will be traveling from the Capital where we've been staying for the last two weeks, to the east, where we will be living for a while. Originally we were going to leave last Friday, but because of different things that have come up, it has been postponed until Wednesday.

The trip will take anywhere from 16 to 18 hours, because we have twin three month olds and a two-year-old; it usually takes them about 14 hours. There are about twenty checkpoints along the way, and those can often eat up the time. For the first part of the trip we will have a guard riding with us. Sarah will have to ride in the back of the Land Cruiser with me, the three boys will ride in the middle in their car seats, and Tim and the guard will be up front. After the guard leaves, and we are away from town, Sarah and I don't have to wear our head coverings and she can move to the front. We might end up wearing the headscarves when we get to a checkpoint just to reduce questioning. Please pray for our safety, the kids, and speed.

I was hoping to send some pictures, but I think the cord that hooks my camera to my computer is packed away and I won't be able to get to it for a while. God has been so good and patient with me. If anyone wanted to improve on their teaching skills, all they would have to do is watch God for a while. He's the most creative and effective teacher. He has taught me so many things in these last two weeks, some of them being very stretching, and others just sort of fun.

I praise God that his ways are higher than my ways and his thoughts are higher than my thoughts.

Thank you for your prayers, they are a comfort to me.

Your sister in Christ,
Sheila

News from other sources

Many Christians around the world are suffering for their testimony of Christ, especially in countries dominated by Islam or Communism. It is often supposed that Communism is an obsolete system that has been either eliminated or so radically reformed that it no longer presents a threat to the free world. That is not the case. It is not only a threat abroad, but has made major inroads into our own political system, albeit by another name. It is an atheistic philosophy that imposes upon its people government instead of God. Where government is god, all other competing gods must be banished. It demands the absolute allegiance of every citizen, and to believe in a religion other than humanism is considered counterrevolutionary. Many believers where Communism prevails have paid and are paying a high price for their faith.

The same is true where Islam dominates. As these two forces increase in the United States, those who are enemies of Christianity are emboldened to step up the war on anything that promotes or even encourages the promulgation of the gospel or the name of Jesus Christ. By observing what is the experience of Christians in other countries, we are able to see the nature of these religions. For that reason we publish here from time to time reports and prayer requests from other missions and Christian news agencies such as VOM (Voice of the Martyrs) and Compass Direct.

These reports concern believers of many denominational persuasions, sometimes with language and titles that seem inconsistent with the way SFMI views the New Testament Church. However, we see the Body of Christ as all who are in him, and identify with those who suffer for his sake. These reports may help us pray for brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted for their faith.

SOMALIA (VOM sources)

Dr. Osman Sheik Ahmed, a well-known figure in Somalia's higher education sphere, was shot and killed October 7th, in Northern

Mogadishu. Witnesses have confirmed to Dr. Osman's family and members of his house church that he was assassinated by Islamic hit men from Mogadishu's radical Islamic courts. He is survived by his wife, Zahra Ali Hassan and nine children. His wife is in hiding fearing for her life. Reuters reported in 2003, that a top leader of Kulanka Culimada, the Islamic terror group that runs the Islamic courts said: "All Somali Christians must be killed according to the Islamic Law. Such people do not have a place in Somalia and we will never recognize their existence and we will slaughter them."

Dr. Osman began assisting a number of Christian NGO's from 1988-1990, as a volunteer. His skills in government relations and public service earned him a great deal of respect from Somalis and from the international community he was assisting. It is a tough time for the Christian community in Mogadishu, where three Somali Christians were attacked on October 31st. Pray God will strengthen the suffering Christians in Somalia, making Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. Pray the faithful witness of Somali Christians will bring many Muslims to Christ. Give thanks to God that, contrary to human logic, no amount of persecution can thwart the Christian faith and for church growth in most areas where the blood of the martyrs is shed.

North Korea:

Child Beggars: There is so much poverty in North Korea, and children, in particular, suffer the most. These children who have no parents and no home try to grab every grain of rice on the ground at the local markets, but they are often driven away without having had anything to eat. Pray for these child beggars on the streets. These children have no one to care for them. Pray for good supervision of these children and that they may one day hear the Gospel.

Guards/Prisoners: There are various prison camps in North Korea; their conditions are appalling. Christians are imprisoned if it

becomes known that they love the Lord Jesus. Please pray that these Christians will be able to show something of the Light of Christ to their fellow prisoners and to the guards. An ex-prisoner from one of these terrible prison camps, Soon Ok Lee, said that the Christians she met in the camps never denied God and continued to be a living testimony to their faith.

Underground Christians: In North Korea any expression of faith in Christ is punished and they are in great danger of being sent to a prison camp. Pray for the Christians who continue underground, despite the difficult circumstances and pray for safe and encouraging meetings.

NIGERIA (VOM-Canada)

Sardauna Anaruwa Sashi, once a devout Muslim, became a faithful follower of Christ earlier this year. Having learned of his conversion, the police apprehended him on September 21st. According to an October 31st report by Compass Direct, during four days of detention, the 30-year-old resident of Paiko was severely tortured. He claims that at one point police beat him with their batons and almost killed him. It was only through the intervention of his pastor and a lawyer from his church that he was released. Since he has become an "infidel" in the eyes of his Muslim employer, he can no longer care for their cattle. Besides the loss of income he faces, Sashi's pastor has said that the Muslims will also never abandon their resolve to kill him. Sashi has reportedly received death threats since his release. While he fears for his life and the lives of his wife and relatives who have also turned to Christ, he testifies he will never recant. Paiko is located in Niger state, one of Nigeria's Northern states where Shariah Law has been imposed.

Pray the Lord will strengthen Sashi's faith as He provides for his needs. Pray God will help his wife and family members remain true to the Lord. Pray the love and power of the Holy Spirit will take away the resolve in the Muslims' hearts to see Sashi killed.

About Conferences

One of the on-going ministries of SFMI is the sponsoring of conferences. Over the years—forty-four years, to be exact—Shield of Faith conferences have been a blessing and an encouragement to many people in many places. Of course, a lot of planning and prayer goes into the preparation of each conference, but most of the planning involves logistics, not programming. Many of those receiving this newsletter have attended an SFMI conference at some time or another. Quite a large number of you attend as regularly as you are able, and come back year after year. It is one of those annual events that is on your calendar in indelible ink.

This Update is published bi-monthly, which means only six times each year, but in four of those issues we either talk about conferences, as we are doing here, or we include a registration form for a conference, as we will do in the next issue, so it seems there is a major emphasis on conferences. There is a reason for that. There is a growing family of saints who increasingly share a common vision for the Church, for mission, for family and for being effective in our witness to the world and the edifying of the saints. We see the latter responsibility as being not that of a qualified clergy, but of believers—body members—qualified by the Holy Spirit.

In order to encourage that outcome, programming is minimal. In the opening paragraph it is stated that the planning involves logistics, not programs. Accommodations, meals, activities, financial arrangements all require a great deal of attention and organization. The schedule usually includes a mature and capable speaker, or perhaps two, with allotted time to teach. These men may be invited from within SFMI or from other missions or organizations that are sound in doctrine and vision. Or they may be simply unaffiliated men of godly character and proven

ministry. But the highlights are the unplanned, open meetings at which time all the ministry of the Word, the music and whatever else the Lord may ordain, is spontaneous as the Holy Spirit leads. The result has always been families singing and playing their instruments as unto the Lord; men from churches far and wide refreshing us with keen insights from the Word of God; men, women and even children testifying of God's great work in their lives. Every morning there is an open prayer meeting including nothing but prayer wherein everyone who wishes to attend is encouraged to seek the face of God with praise and petition. Prayer for the conference, for the families, for the nation as well as for missionaries and for those in authority are commonly heard and shared every day. All in all, it is a wonderful time of edification and encouragement.

Of course there are expenses attached to a conference of several hundred people, but SFMI's policy is that there is no charge for those who attend. It is understood that those whom God would have there come from various economic circumstances. Expenses are met by free-will offerings and it is expected that each attendee will do what he can in this regard. None should stay away because he "can't afford it."

The annual Memorial Day Weekend Conference at Twin Rocks, Oregon will be May 26-29, 2006. It is not too early to make plans to be there. A registration form will be included in the next Update.

The annual Labor-Day weekend conference will be held at Deer Lake, Washington. The registration form for that will be published in the July/August Update. The Fall conference in Texas will be announced in a future Update. Please watch for it. We look forward to meeting you again or for the first time at one of the upcoming conferences.

Wishing you a Happy (Blessed) and prosperous 2006.

Time goes quickly by and the new years pile up one upon another until they seem to overlap. Surely twelve months have not gone by since we welcomed 2005; but here we are. Fortunately the Bible contains the formula for both happiness (blessing is the word often used in scripture) and for prosperity. David wrote in his psalm, "**Blessed (happy)** is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; **and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**" Psalm 1:1-3

Another psalmist wrote, "**Blessed is the nation** whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." Psalms 33:12 **Happy is that people** that is in such a case: yea, **happy** is that people, whose God is the LORD. Psalms 144:15

How strange that there should be a large and influential minority within our nation that would seek to deprive us of that blessing by divorcing us from any influence of the Lord in our schools, our government or any public place. "**Nevertheless** the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **'The Lord knoweth them that are his.'**" But Paul, who wrote these words, adds the admonition, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2Timothy 2:19

What a blessing to know that the Lord is keeping track, he knows those that are his; he's not confused about who is who. There is a difference between them that are his and those in the world that take counsel against the Lord and against his Christ saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Psalm 2:2,3 But since this year the battle is so hot, and the stakes are so high, those of us who name the name of Christ will need to spend this year considering the application to our lives of the counsel God gave to Joshua:

"Be strong and of good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them. **Only be thou strong and very courageous,** that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: **turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: **for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest"**

Joshua 1:6-9

Shield of Faith Mission International
P.O. Box 144
Bend, Oregon 97709

Return Service Requested