

In My Flesh Dwelleth No Good Thing.

by Dick York

“In My Flesh Dwelleth No Good Thing.”

Imagine a man such as the apostle Paul making such a statement about himself. Paul who had had such revelation of God that he was actually caught up to the third heaven and heard marvelous things that were unlawful for him to utter—things that no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man. We don't normally think of Paul as living in a body of sinful flesh. Flesh, yes; but sinful flesh?

Flesh is sinful. The law of sin is written in its members. That is a fact that is stated and emphasized in the scriptures.

We are tempted to believe that by effort, or will, by meditation or study, we can improve ourselves and reform our flesh. Even within the church there are programs, invented by and borrowed from the world, that ostensibly are designed to reform our flesh and make us more upright. If we struggle with anger there are anger management classes; if alcohol is the problem, there is AA. (Yes, even some churches have AA programs.) Whatever thing the world produces to assuage the sorrow and consequences of its sin soon finds its way into the church. Why is that? Because somehow we have failed to understand that in flesh—any flesh, even that of the apostle Paul—dwells no good thing. It is irrelevant whether the flesh is behaving itself well or poorly, flesh cannot please God.

The only way God could deal with the flesh was to put it to death. Even he couldn't reform it, he had to destroy it. Paul said, “When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” ^{Romans 7:}
⁵Everything that is born of the flesh produces death and dies itself. When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans he said,

In This Issue

Page 4 The High Calling of God: Jim Lucas **Page 6** The Birth of a Church: Steve Montgomery
Page 8 The uncompleted Universal Church of Today: Jerry Skiles **Page 10** Ministry Update
Page 13 NW Memorial-Day Conference Testimony
Page 14 Labor-Day Conference announcement **Page 15** Conference Registration Form

“[T]hat which I do I allow not: for what I would that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I *do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil that I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*”

Sin is the issue here. It is in Paul's *flesh*. He is speaking in first person because he is just like everyone else that he is addressing. This is the common experience of every believer who has come to Christ. This is not a mystery to most of us, because we are very familiar with the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. Step by step Paul is instructing the Roman believers about this struggle and where the victory is in it.

In Chapter one he started from the utter depravity of the human race. In chapter two he made it quite clear that this description of sinful man extended to all, Jew or Gentile, religious or otherwise. In chapter three he made two things very clear: first, that there is none righteous, no not one. And second that we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God has set forth to be a propitiation (a satisfactory substitutionary sacrifice). And through our faith in Jesus' blood God declares his (Jesus') righteousness for the remission of our sins. In chapter four he explains how this salvation is appropriated by faith in the promise of God if we believe on him

who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. In chapter five he makes it clear that we were made sinners, not by what we did, but by one man's (Adam's) disobedience. And we are made righteous, not by what we can do, but by one man's (Jesus') obedience. Then in chapter six, Paul explains that Jesus, who took upon himself the likeness of sinful flesh, died and was buried, taking sin to the grave. Now we are to reckon ourselves dead with him and buried with him, and understand that sin has no more dominion over us. But all of this we must understand and appropriate by faith.



In chapter seven Paul speaks of sin as though it is an entity. He tells them (and us) where its control lies, **in our flesh**. Sin, like the devil, has been dealt with eternally by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, but there is still an area in which both the devil and sin operate until God's program is finished and Satan is cast into the lake of fire. In the meantime, sin has no more dominion over us, but we have victory over it *through the Spirit*. This is the key.

Every honest Christian will confess that his hearts desire is to walk perfectly before the Lord, but from time to time he is disappointed by some failure to do so. He is experiencing what Paul described in the seventh chapter of Romans. He refers to it again in his letter to the Galatians in which he states that the Spirit and the flesh oppose one another; and he makes it clear that we cannot do the will of the Spirit if we walk after the flesh. But on the other hand, we cannot fall to the will of the flesh if we walk after the Spirit. That's what Paul meant when he said, "*This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*" *Galatians 5:16,17*

This is the problem inherent in many modern versions of “the gospel,” which promise that if we please the Lord, he in turn will satisfy the longings of our flesh. According to some, for example, the way to get rich is to give money to the Lord. Or the road to better health is to support certain religious ministries. This aspiration to fulfill the lusts of our flesh by doing some religious exercise that seems to be spiritual is inconsistent with the word of God.

The flesh and the Spirit are two different realms. In the world of the flesh, our perception of happiness or fulfillment is circumstantial; if our circumstances are good we will be living the abundant life. But that is not what Jesus taught. He said, “*Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth.*”
Luke 12:15 The abundant life is the life of the Spirit that produces joy and peace even when fleshly circumstances would dictate otherwise. The flesh, on the other hand, cannot produce an abundant life. It can never be free from the dominion of sin. In the flesh is only the prospect of death. No matter how prosperous one might become, he still faces the singular prospect of death. In fact, the scriptures, in describing the legacy of the flesh go even farther, they describe the present condition of the flesh as being already dead.

Think of it: the Bible says of the sinner, “You were dead in trespasses and sins.” Of the believer it says, “The body is dead because of sins.” That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and it must die. There is no life in the flesh. There is sin in the flesh; and the wages of sin is death. All that the flesh can do is die. No wonder, then, that the word declares, “So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”
Romans 8:8

Lest you should think that that means that as long as you are living in your present body you cannot please God, let’s look at the context in which this statement is made. Paul wrote, “There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, *who walk not after the flesh,*

but after the Spirit.” And again, “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*”

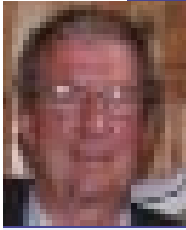
There is no way, of course, that we can live on this earth without our bodies. But it is in the very members of that body that the law of sin is written. Your fleshly (carnal) mind is attached to your flesh. It seeks the comfort of the flesh, the appetites of the flesh and all that relates to this material world. The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then (as we have already stated) they that are in the flesh cannot please God. By nature, there is nothing in our flesh that can cause us—or even allow us—to overcome the law of sin that dominates it.

But—and here is our hope—but ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, *if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.* Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
Rom. 8:9 We must make no mistake about this: until we receive the Spirit of Christ, we are totally subject to the law of sin and death. It is written right into our members. The reformation of the flesh does not resolve the problem of sin.

Listen to the very next verse. “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; *but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*” Nothing but sin is in our flesh, but only righteousness is in the Spirit of Christ. Christ alone is righteous. Christ alone is our salvation; and Christ alone can please the Father. That’s why Paul wrote, “Christ in you is your hope of glory.”

This is the reason that Christians sometimes wrestle with sin. Then they try harder to be better—to reform their flesh. But the word of God says that that is not the answer. Sin has dominion over our flesh. But if we are in Christ, we are not our flesh. Our flesh is not us. We are alive in the Spirit. Christ is in us; and if we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of our flesh. The reason? Because sin does not have dominion over Christ. Therefore, our body being

continued on page 7



Jim Lucas' Column

The High Calling Of God

Continued from last issue

In the last issue we looked at the bright future for all of those who believe the promises of God. We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the comfort of the scriptures and the great hope that the God of all hope has brought us (See Rom.15: 4, 13). The greatest hope of all is well expressed by John; "When he (Jesus) shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." ^{1 John 3:2} Jesus has prepared a place for us, now he is preparing us for that place. Imagine, thinking like Jesus, talking like Jesus, walking like Jesus. When this old body of sin falls away we will be raised up in the image of the one we all love and adore. John went on to say; "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

According to this declaration, every man who has this hope in him holds the power to change. He will change from not being pure to being pure. The reason being there has been given unto us, "Exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." But he that lacketh these things (That is the many things that faith in the promises can bring: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity) is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins (See 2 Pet.1: 4-9).

It appears that many professing believers have forgotten the purging of their sins and the exceeding great and precious promises. I say this because of the lack of joy and peace that many are manifesting in their daily lives. When we

believe God we are filled with joy and peace and we abound in hope (See Ro.15: 13). We forget because we do not have an earnest expectation of hope in this life or in the life we will have in heaven. Paul had an earnest expectation. He said in Phil. 1:20; "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."

My friend Elijah McDaniel has this earnest expectation and hope. Elijah has Down syndrome and is about 25 years old. His heart was worn out and he was in the hospital waiting for a transplant heart to be given him. At that point of time it wasn't real clear what lay in store for him. He really blessed Francille and me one day while we were visiting him. He said about three times that afternoon, "If I die, I go to heaven, but if I live joy and peace." He now has a new physical heart but his spiritual heart is still full of joy and peace. Anyone who knows him will agree that he always manifests this lovely disposition.

It is far too easy for us to excuse our lack of joy and peace. We have a tendency to think it is because of the particular situation that we find ourselves in that is to blame for our grumpy attitudes. Then the situation changes, but it still does not satisfy us and we are still not content.

Sometimes we say, "I don't want to be a hypocrite." Well, it might be too late; possibly some of us already are. To try and act content when you are not is obvious hypocrisy. However to profess to believe the gospel and all the exceeding great and precious promises, and yet

live without the joy of salvation and the hope of eternal life is also hypocrisy. But this hypocrisy is only obvious to those who are not in the same condition, that is, those who do not profess any faith in Christ at all, or those who do profess to believe and, as a result, live and abound in the hope of the promises of God.

We cannot excuse the lack of faith to live a normal Christian life. We should never compare ourselves amongst ourselves to see what is normal; we must look into the word of God to see what is expected of us. Whenever we allow the circumstances of life to overcome us and dictate our moods, we are not walking in a way that pleases our Lord Jesus. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." ^{1 John 5:4,5}

When faith is in our hearts, we will be speaking it with our mouths. Jesus said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." ^{Luke 6:45}

In Galatians 5:22,23 we are told that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. These are not the fruits (plural) of the Spirit, but fruit (singular). The fruit of the Spirit has all of these wonderful qualities and if it comes to our attention that we are lacking in one, we need to take notice, because surely we will be lacking in all. To not manifest the fruit of the Spirit is a serious condition that needs our utmost attention.

Prayer is the way to overcome the temptation to worry. If we pray and bring our concerns to God he promises to give us peace beyond our understanding, meaning our peace will not rest in our understanding but in the promises of God.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the

peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." ^{Phil.4: 6,7}

"The joy of the Lord is our strength." ^{Neh.8:}
¹⁰ We are able to go on day after day when the joy of the Lord is present, but when we are robbed of our joy through unbelief, we begin to grow weak and fail to walk in the Spirit. The salvation we need is close at hand but we refuse to partake in the grace because of unbelief. The faithful however, "with joy will draw water out of the wells of salvation." ^{Isa.12: 3}

The house of God is made up of the faithful. In Heb.3: 4-6 we read. "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." It appears that the faithful will hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end. You see, my friends, we cannot truly rejoice in the hope if the hope is not there. In verse 14 of the same chapter he goes on to confirm the importance of continuing in the confidence, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

How about you, my friend, do you have an earnest expectation of hope? Many have prayed for various gifts of the Spirit, but have you sought for the best gifts as Paul exhorts us to do in 1 Cor.12: 13? He explains to us in chapter 13 what the best gifts are and in the last verse of the chapter he says; " Now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity."

We hear much about faith and love. And we should, because they are the greatest of all. I trust now you can also appreciate the importance of hope, and that you will seek for it with all your heart. Then we will be able to say with Paul, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."



In The Highlands of Jalisco, Central Mexico

THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

Steve Montgomery

Santa Maria del Valle is almost exactly in the geographic center of the Jalisco Highlands. It is 40 minutes from Atotonilco and has a population of approximately 7000. It is in the municipality of Arandas, and is identified on Arandas' WebPage as one of the communities most known for its devotion to Roman Catholicism. According to the census of 2000, this town was one of many in the Highlands with no testimony to Christ. However, with Highland cities of 25 and 30,000 people with no Christian church, Santa Maria seems like an unlikely first-level target.

Except for one key consideration:

Francisco Miranda, born and raised in Santa Maria, is a successful businessman who has been saved for a number of years. Though

he lives in the city of Aguascalientes, he has carried a burden for his hometown since he came to the Lord. Over the years he has prayed for Santa Maria and on visits there has spoken to many about Christ. He has shared with us his concern for his town on visits to Atotonilco, provoking the church here to pray also.

Francisco maintains a ranch in Santa Maria, which he loans to Christian groups for conferences. Each year a group from Houston comes down for outreach in the Highlands, showing the "Jesus" film in street meetings in towns around the area. Two years ago, they showed the film in Santa Maria for the first time. Last year they returned with the film. These were the first public proclamations of the Good News in this town.

In September of last year, we held a conference at the ranch, and while there prayed together for Santa Maria. Later we held a leader's meeting there to discuss a training program for the Highlands. At that time, several had opportunity to speak to people about Christ, and one woman, Ivett, was so open to the Bible that we visited her family on two subsequent occasions. Slowly, the message of Christ was entering Santa Maria del Valle. Nevertheless, for a church to be established in this village, it would probably be necessary that someone move there for that purpose.

Then in February Juan and Pat Guerra settled in Santa Maria with the intent of preaching the Gospel, making disciples and forming those disciples into a church.

They invited Gabe and Brenden Booher for a concert in the downtown plaza.

They hosted a team from Open Air Campaigners.

They invited the youth from La Barca and Atotonilco to preach in the plaza.

They prayed. They witnessed. They passed out literature and made friends. They started evangelistic Bible studies. And they prayed more.

On May 28th, the church in Santa Maria del Valle celebrated their first meeting together. Six believers from the village, along with another six people who have been listening to the Gospel, met to hear the Scripture. Meeting with them were brethren from churches in Arandas and Atotonilco who had come to join in this historic event. The Good News of Jesus Christ has taken root in this community.

The Scripture states that “of the increase of His (Christ’s) government and peace there shall be no end.” Since the day of His resurrection, His government has been on an unstoppable increase, conquering hearts and bringing them into His covenant of peace. That Kingdom has now reached Santa Maria del Valle and has begun its conquest there. Nothing in the entire universe can hold it back.

continued from page 3

dead because of sin, and the Spirit being life because of righteousness, when we walk in the Spirit, the righteousness that the law defines is fulfilled in us. ^{Rom. 8:4} Paul wrote this, “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” He is not speaking here of the resurrection when he will raise our bodies from the grave. Those will be *immortal* bodies. In this verse he is talking about the Spirit of God animating (quicken) our *mortal* bodies—the ones we are living in right now. The Spirit of God is able to commandeer our mortal bodies and use them as instruments of righteousness when we walk in the Spirit.

The saints sometimes struggle to grasp these simple truths because they don't seem simple. It seems to some to be a very complex and abstract theory—kind of nebulous and impractical—but that is not the case. It is as simple as this: there is nothing good in me, but Christ is perfect. All of my righteousness therefore is in Him. I must trust Him. To trust Him more, I must know Him better. As I fellowship with him, the simplicity of His truth will become revelation and life rather than academic theology. When it does, His life will be evident in my daily conduct. Sin will not have dominion over me.

We wait for the day when even our bodies will be free from every vestige of sin. “*The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, **the redemption of our body.*** What a hope, NO MORE SIN!!

The Universal Church is made up of the saints of the past, present, and future that have been saved through the blood of Jesus Christ. It will include people from every kindred, tongue, people, and nation.

Rev. 5:9-10 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Most mission organizations speak of about twelve thousand people groups currently unreached with the Gospel. The church is challenged and responding. Missionaries are focusing in on this task with zeal and commitment. I commend and support this effort, but I do not see it in the same light in which it is often represented.

The church we see in Revelation 5:9 is the *completed* body of Jesus Christ. All the saints who have lived, who are living, and who will be living are there. Church history shows the progress of the Gospel from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria, and its current attempts to reach the uttermost part of the earth. We can not measure the Universal Church of the future by what we see of the present church. We have to see the church of history and the church of today to understand what remains to be done in the Universal Church. Many nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues are in the Universal Church from the past but not in the church that we see on the earth today. Most of the nations that surround the Mediterranean Sea were “Christian” nations in the early centuries after Jesus Christ. Today most of those nations have lost or abandoned Christianity for Islam or another Humanistic post-Christian world view.

The Universal Church is comprised of the saints from kindred, tongues, people, and nations of the past, plus the saints from kindred, tongues, people, and nations of today, plus the saints from the remaining kindred, tongues, people, and

nations of the future.

If we use this equation, I believe we can strategically identify the remaining people groups that are currently absent from the Universal Church.

Reaching those people groups with the Gospel is the vision I have. It is the vision I wish to see the Church embrace.

There are great needs for the Gospel in all nations, and there are great resources within the Universal Church to meet these needs. It is my belief that God will use the complete Body of Christ of this generation, built upon the foundations laid by the historical Universal Church, to complete the unfinished task that remains.

Nations that have abandoned the Gospel need to repent and acknowledge their error. Many “Christian” nations need to return to the teaching of Christ and not their geo-ethnic-political centered Christianity that sees themselves as superior to others in the Body of Christ. There is only one



The Uncompleted Universal Church

by Jerry Skiles

Church, and the Lord Jesus is the Head of that entire Body.

The Gentile and Jewish believers from Judea, Samaria, Greece, Italia, and Egypt carried the torch of the Gospel into Gentile nations. After centuries of being heathen nations, the northern Europeans carried the Good News and saw themselves as the gatekeepers of the Gospel. They embraced Christianity so much, that they anglicized it. Their art, culture, and worldview melded together to such a degree that Jesus became a middle-class, white Anglo-Saxon, whose Gospel was worldly prosperity. (We of North America speak of the syncretism of Christianity in other cultures but fail to see it in our own.) Much of today’s mission thrust is looking at missions with little thought to the historic church. We treat many Islamic nations as if they had never heard the Gospel, when they

are in fact post-Christian nations. European nations and people are still mission fields, but they are post-Christian nations.

We need to consider history when we are seeking to make a strategic thrust into the remaining work of seeing every tribe, nation, language, and people reached with the Gospel. We need to evaluate history to know how to pray for people and their relationship to the Truth. The spiritual forces that blind the people who have never heard the Gospel are probably not the same as those among they who have rejected the Gospel.

I believe that Satan is using every trick he knows to keep these people out of the scope of the Church. I believe these groups will be found imbedded deep in Islamic territory; they will be in hard places to reach geographically. These groups will be found in countries that for centuries have been isolated due to political boundaries. They will be ethnically proud and not wanting to embrace a “foreigner’s religion.” Many of these tribes will be found in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

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I believe there is a small number of tribes that have never in all of history heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. We will never be far from the Lord’s will for our lives if we identify and work towards seeing these groups reached with the Gospel.

I also believe that God will help and bless those who begin to focus on this work. God will not be received by these people as a foreign deity but as the Creator that they see as having every right as the Lord of Heaven and Earth to make claim to them. God will demonstrate Himself to them in this manner.

The Bible describes a longing in the creation for peace and harmony to be restored.

Ro 8:19-23. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who

hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they (every creature), but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

There remain some clues to when harmony and peace will be established in the Kingdom of God. One of those is when a representative from every kindred, people, language, and nation will be represented at the Revelation 5:9 event. Another will be when the album of Martyrs will be completed. Revelation 6: 10-11

Rev 6:10-11 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

I believe that all ministries will continue as the Body of Christ works under the Lord’s leading. My appeal is not to stop anything and start something new. My appeal is to remember the remaining task. Let us not become distracted from seeing the task of every tribe and people group reached with the Gospel. We can and should define the unfinished task as reaching those who will be the remaining members of the Universal Church. I believe there are individuals in the Body who are willing to dedicate their life and resources to this task. I believe the Lord has given this generation of Saints—the present members of Christ’s body—to see this task completed in this generation.

Today is the day for Christians to stand down from their nationalism and prejudices, place the Lordship of Jesus above all else and work together for the completion of Christ’s commanded goal.



Jerry Skiles

Cherry, Brisbin, and I recently returned from an encouraging trip to Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire. While in Burkina Faso, I ministered to about 75 church leaders and pastors who had come out of the rural areas to a conference for teaching and encouragement. The focus of my ministry was on teaching and developing the agricultural resources in the area. Cherry also taught the visiting women on ag development. After the conference with the Burkina Faso church leaders, we traveled to Cote d'Ivoire where we ministered to the believers in the Loma and Loron tribes.

Hovare and Telkore, both mature Loron believers who have put into practice the agricultural teaching, traveled to Burkina Faso to listen to the teaching and also to bear witness that the principles work. I was encouraged with the fellowship I could have with these two friends and fellow laborers.

In almost all rural churches in West Africa there is extreme poverty. Those who minister to these people also suffer from the universal poverty. Often times, the only positive change occurs when outside help comes and builds wells, delivers medicines, or provides financial aid for food. This foreign aid has created an attitude that if change is going to occur, it will occur when outsiders act. I call this dependency wealth. Many people in the developing world feel that the rich nations and individuals can eliminate their poverty. The poverty problem is immense, and short term success can be achieved with isolated individuals or areas, but in time, most of these successes succumb to the influence of the poverty that surrounds it.

The first thing I emphasize in dealing with

problems in third world countries is Jeremiah 17: 5-8:

*Thus saith the LORD;
Cursed be the man
that trusteth in man,
and maketh flesh
his arm, and
whose heart
departeth from
the LORD. For he
shall be like the heath
in the desert, and shall not
see when good cometh; but shall inhabit
the parched places in the wilderness, in a
salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the
man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose
hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree
planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out
her roots by the river, and shall not see when
heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and
shall not be careful in the year of drought,
neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*

God is jealous about wanting men to understand that He is ultimately the provider, and any teaching or action that does not focus on that will bring a curse rather than a blessing.

As the conference in Burkina Faso closed, the men left encouraged with what they had learned. I believe that they recognized clearly that God had entrusted them with a stewardship of natural resources, and that they had been given a mandate to use and develop those resources for the Glory of God.

I ended the teaching with a vision of reaching all the tribes in the area, especially those that have never once heard the Gospel. I was approached by Luc Pale, a middle aged church leader who had surveyed his region and discovered a tribe that is still unreached. His concern for the Lombile people and their eternal salvation was a blessing and encouragement to me. I came away from the encounter blessed, knowing that the work is the Lord's, and He is using His people to accomplish the unfinished task.



Efforts to reunify Cote d'Ivoire continue, but the rebels still hold the control of the north with their guns. We were



given passage without much problem. The rebels are accustomed to getting what they want and that does create some conflict when traveling in their areas.

They do have guns but know it would not be in their best interests to use them.

When we arrived in the village, we were met by the crowds of cheering children. It is hard to keep composure when surrounded by the children wanting to touch you and smiling to see you. Our house had been broken into again, and the blankets and towels that we had left were gone. The village pump was broken. We did bring bottled water for drinking, but the dry season had left water gathering for the villagers to be a slow process of scooping water from holes dug in the dry creek bed.

The believers' conference was not as well attended as in the past. A child of one of the believers had died in Gogo, so only a few came from that church. The outlying areas knew of the conference but did not hear anything further, so they thought problems had come up and the conference had been cancelled. In the end, only about 70 believers came. The water resources were extremely stretched with the 70 visitors, so we could not help but feel that it was just as well that a large number did not attend. We did get to meet the 12 new believers at the Bwaybiye fellowship and see the spiritual growth and maturing that is taking place under Hovare's leadership. The teaching was well received and the fellowship encouraging.

The chief of the Bwaybiye had recently died, so the village was without leadership as they select a new chief. Stealing has become rampant concerning the cashews, and the elders feel helpless against it. The government powers would normally step in when circumstances get out of control. The

rebels did come into the village concerning the fields, but in the end fined the village \$100 for the trouble.

Hovare traveled with us to the capitol of Burkina Faso, and we had some quality one on one time. He has been very involved with ministry. He has finished the first translation of the Gospels in the Loron language. He is now planning to begin translation of the Loma Bible as Paul Briggs of New Tribes mission is now living in Burkina Faso and is working on the Loron translation.

Our next trip to see Hovare will be to spend several weeks dedicated to finalizing the translation he has done of the Loron Bible. We trust this will be a time of refreshment for Hovare as we will be able to spend quality time together away from the many demands he has on his life currently.



Jerry and Cherry Skiles

Hovare's number one prayer request was that people would pray for the ministry to the Loma tribe.

Jerry was scheduled to go to Nigeria in May, but that was cancelled due to circumstances beyond his control.

Brother Moses Osho
Nigeria, West Africa

Please be in prayer for me as I am praying to begin evangelism and discipleship in the area in which I am presently living. The Lord has given me peace to embark on this ministry. The local church I planted several years ago in Eruwa (Tribal area, Nigeria) is doing well. I witnessed this as I was there recently.

We are also doing fine in the Ethnos Christian Missions. We are trusting God to help us as we are entering Abomey in the Republic of Benin to start a new work.

We will also be bringing all our missionaries together from August 7-12 for a time of refreshing and prayer.

[Larry Montgomery received this information through a phone call from Moses. Larry added these remarks. *“Moses told me that the missionary who will go to this area is going out from the church in Ogori-Ije.*

This is encouraging news indeed as about 20 years ago these people were first contacted by Nath Abimbola. He is a graduate from Christian Leadership and Training Institute who moved with his family to the area and began discipleship and evangelism. A church was established, and now they are sending their missionary out. Nath is now the “director of missions for Ethnos Christian Mission.”]

Nathaniel Abimbola
Nigeria, West Africa

I have just returned from my mission trips to all the fields in francophone (French-speaking African) countries. All is well except all the francophone citizens rely on the Nigerian economy in order to survive, and this is affecting the work a lot since the missionaries, in general, have little support. My trip also lacked support, but God saw me through. The training program you offered in Nigeria taught us to live by Faith, and it is helping us in our everyday lives.

Peter Warren

At the end of the month [June] I will be moving back to the United States; thanks for supporting me with your prayers as the Lord has allowed me to sow seed and study the language here. As many of you know, I have been spending time talking about the Bible with some people here and have been able to share with a few of them regularly. I am encouraged that the Lord has provided someone to continue to answer these contacts questions and to teach them about Jesus. These believers live just down the road, and they seem very good at explaining the things of the Lord. The Saturday before last a young man and woman came to my apartment and shared their testimonies with the students. I felt that this had an impact on the students lives because they could see that Christianity is not just for foreigners and they could hear the gospel message in their own language.



Last Saturday I went out for dumplings with one student, and she told me that she had asked the Lord into her life. I was very happy to see some fruit from the time that I have shared with the students here. It has been a blessing for me to see the Lord work in the life of this girl. By His mercy and power He brought her from saying there is no God to believing in Christ. Recently another student sent me a text message saying that she was worried about her finals and decided to read her Bible. She said that after reading she felt relaxed. Another student has been reading many of the materials that I have given him. It seems that he likes to study the Bible. Most of the eight students I have been talking to understand some major concepts in the Bible such as sacrifice, blood, sin, and forgiveness. My hope and prayer is that these can become real in their lives and that they would know the grace of God.

Mike Zigglemeyer

This was a good conference for me. It has been 2 weeks since the conference but I do remember Jim Lucas' message. It was a challenge to me. I remember his tears as he spoke. I want this love he has for everyone. He reminded me it is God's love I need.

Jim asked, "Are you obedient to the faith? Do you really have a great love for God? Do you realize how much God loves you? If not, you need a revelation of God's love. You need to remember the great price Christ paid for your soul. You know about our great God's love, but do you really know His love for you?"

If you get that revelation of God's love, you will want to see sinners come into the kingdom of God. You need to pursue God's love! Pray and ask God to give you a greater understanding of His love. He who sows with tears will reap in joy. Take time to be alone with God"

I felt like Jim was trying to stir my heart. I felt a rebuke to love our Lord more. I know I fall short and almost take for granted the price Christ paid. I fall short in love for sinners and fail to share with them, not that I have never shared Christ with others. I can remember the joy of praying with a sinner to come to Christ. I know I can get complacent and lukewarm. I can get so busy trying to get God's Word into me and forget to pray for others and share with them. It is more than just knowing God's Word. What about His love, His feelings for me, and His feelings for the lost that need to be loved—the "needy" as Jim would say? Can a believer be needy for more of God's love? I'll let you answer that.

I asked myself if my own family sees this love of God or lack of God's love in me. I really did a self examination as Jim spoke. I don't want to be complacent. I prayed as Jim spoke: "Lord, fill me with more of the knowledge of your love,

not just knowledge. Can you help me love the lost? I am needy like Jim says; how much more the lost! 27 years, and I am still needy for God's love. It was His demonstration of love that saved me. All these thoughts I had going on in my mind. I was in tears. The truth can really hurt. Thanks, Lord, for loving me when I am not so loving at times. Without His love I am nothing.

I want to remember Jim's sharing God's love with me at the conference. I look forward to next year's conference. I want to remember in prayer the Gate's family (a family severely injured in a car accident as they left the NW Memorial Day Conference). I desire more of

God's love because His love is the only real love there is. Amen? Amen!

Chelsea Zigglemeyer

The main lesson I learned at the 2006 Shield of Faith Memorial Day Conference was the importance of an individuals' walk with the Lord. At the conference I found that not all of the youth were "perfect" Christians. I had come with the mindset that all the kids would be much more serious than the kids in my youth group at Calvary Chapel, but I was wrong. Many of the children of missionaries were as wild as some of the kids in my youth group. Although they come from awesome families, I learned that I can't expect them to be like their parents. The Lord is the one who has to work in their lives. They can't "ride on the coattails" of their parents' relationship with the Lord. Instead, they have to have their own personal, individual relationship with Jesus Christ. I learned that I can't be too harsh on the kids in my youth group and that my judging them won't help them. I'm definitely not perfect either! The Lord alone has to mold me into what He desires me to be. Parents don't always determine the actions and mindsets of their children. I have to trust God alone for my life and the lives of my peers.

NW Memorial Day Conference Testimony



Mike, Chelsea and Ann Zigglemeyer

The 2006 Memorial Day Conference was a memorable event. The unfinished task lies before us, and through Jesus we will accomplish it. The ministry and reports from saints throughout the region was encouraging. Of course, as usual, the conference was recorded and is available on CD's using the MP3 format. They can be ordered through the SFMI office.

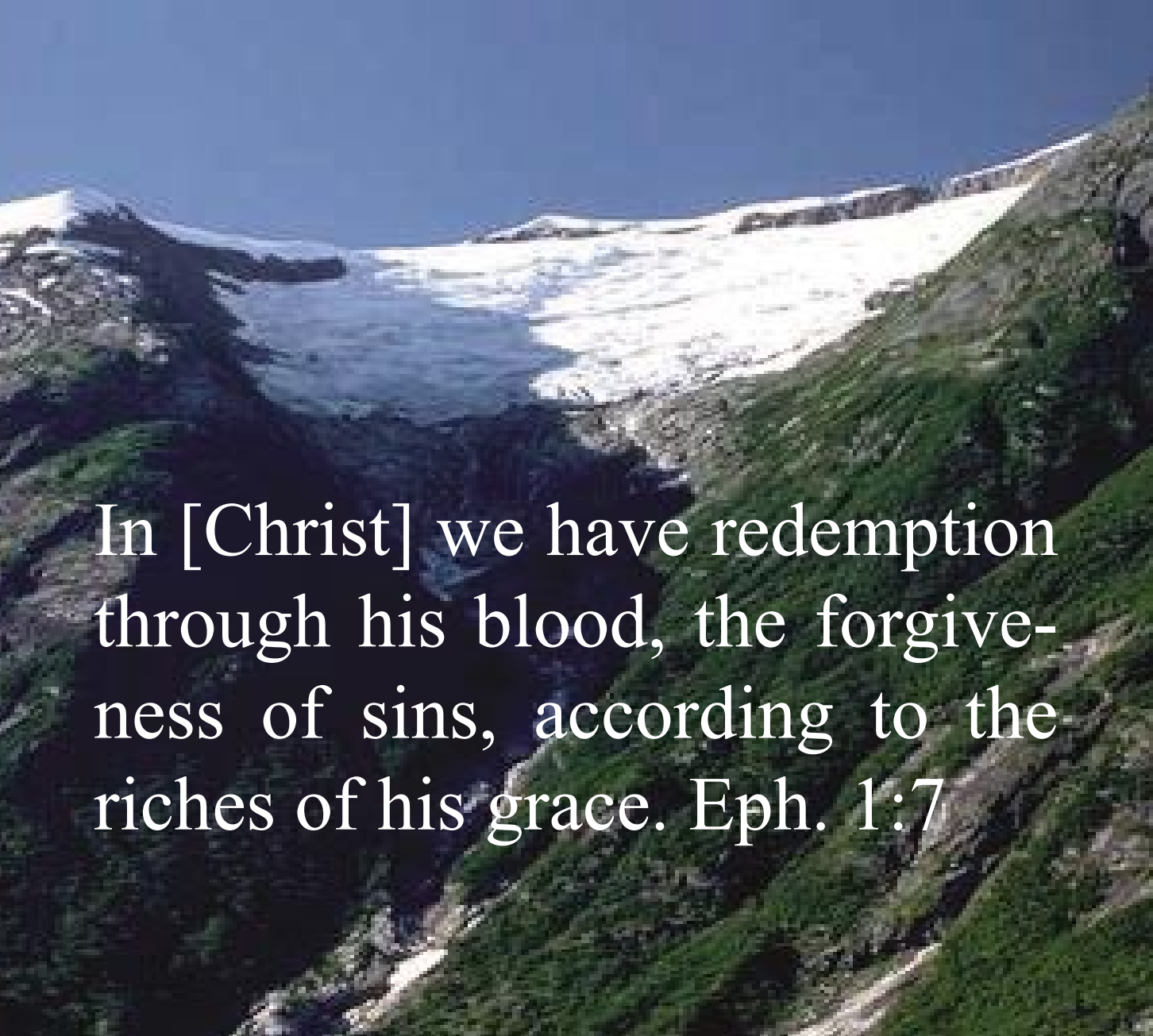
Conference work is an important aspect of SFMI. Throughout the years many believers have been encouraged to follow the Lord in some specific and special way. Many have caught a vision for the fields that are whitened for harvest and have set their course to answer God's call, whether it is here at home or a distant land. Others have found a fresh vision of the church and have a new appreciation for what it means to be in the body of Christ.

Labor-Day Washington Conference Coming Up!

A regional conference in northeast Washington State has been growing over the past several years. We again anticipate a good crowd of eager saints to participate on this **Labor Day weekend**. As with every conference, there will be specific, planned keynotes; but there will also be ample time for ministry from those attending. Be in prayer for the keynote speakers as well as for those who have come to minister to one another. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

The conference will begin on **Friday night, September 1**, and conclude at **noon Monday, September 4**. These events, of course, cost money; but we trust the Lord to meet those expenses through the freewill offerings of those who attend or through His own means of provision. There is no specified charge for the conference so that all may attend and none will be inhibited by limited resources. The scriptures state this principle well: "As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack." (2 Corinthians 8:15)

Your family registration form is on the next page.



In [Christ] we have redemption
through his blood, the forgive-
ness of sins, according to the
riches of his grace. Eph. 1:7

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