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The Christ of God

by Dick York

Christ died for us—a cliché, or an event that altered our eternal destiny?

Our penalty for sin was death, which has been defined as eternal separation from God. Should he then not have needed to die and remain dead forever in order to have died in our stead?

No! His work went beyond paying our personal penalties. It was, through death, to abolish death and to destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and to bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel.¹ Consider the account of Jesus' transfiguration in Luke 9:29-31: "*And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish in Jerusalem.*"

Does this not seem a strange choice of words? Accomplishment, by definition, is to succeed in a purpose; to fulfill a plan. If a man is murdered, is that an *accomplishment*? Or if a man commits suicide, did he *accomplish* something? If he dies of cancer is that a goal to which he aspired?

Normally, dying would not be considered an accomplishment, but rather a grim end of any opportunity to accomplish anything. Living a life of courage may be considered an accomplishment; dying in the process would be a courageous but sad termination of that accomplishment. Living a hundred years would be an accomplishment, but dying brings it to an end. But in Jesus' case, death was something he was sent to "accomplish."

It could not have happened in the normal course of his life because he was without sin for which death is the wages. But Jesus, the perfect man, came into the world specifically to give his life a ransom for many—to satisfy God's righteous demand that death can be the only satisfaction for the absolution of sin. Sin must die; there is no other remedy for it.

In Jesus' earthly life, all that preceded that dark, but

glorious day at Calvary qualified him to be the perfect and unique sacrifice for sin. His virgin birth, which precluded his inheriting Adam's fallen nature; his perfect obedience to the Father, which made him free from any sin of his own doing; his humble submission to the cruel punishment by his executioners; all marked him as the perfect, unblemished sacrificial lamb of God.

Jesus knew who he was and why he came. He asked his disciples, "Whom say the people that I am?"²² They had many fanciful ideas. Then he said unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answering said, "**The Christ of God.**"²³

Jesus responded, "The Son of man **must** suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."

Notice the imperative! This is not something that is incidental to Jesus' resume. This is the critical imperative of Jesus' career—he **must** be slain; he **must** be raised the third day.

Peter, of course, was right when he described Jesus as the Christ of God. Christ means Messiah, literally *the anointed one*. He was indeed the anointed one who, since the Garden of Eden was designated as he who himself would be bruised while crushing the serpent's head.⁴ He was the one typified by the serpent nailed to Moses' pole in the wilderness, upon which the people must only look in order to live after being bitten by the deadly snakes. That serpent represented sin. Jesus, many years later, was *made sin* for us,⁵ and with that identity he went to the cross and became our "serpent on the pole."⁶

He was the one to whom Isaiah made reference when he said, "Unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given,"⁷ a statement prophetic of Jesus' birth and of his death. "A child is born" is unmistakably the announcement of the birth of a baby; and in this case the miraculous birth of a unique infant—the Son of God and a virgin mother. None other could have qualified

to accomplish the purpose for which this one was anointed.

"A Son is given:" Not a redundant statement reiterating his birth, but the shocking announcement that a mature son had been given up—sacrificed. And that message is followed by the incredible revelation that his sacrifice of himself will not preclude the fact that the government shall [nevertheless] be upon his shoulders. And, furthermore, of the increase of his government there shall be no end—the obvious presumption of his resurrection to rule and reign forever.

If indeed, as Peter had discerned, Jesus was the Christ [anointed] of God, he was anointed for a specific employment during the thirty-three year period between his birth and his death. It was the performance of that assignment that identified him as the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed One.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking for Christ said, "*The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*"⁸

That is what his disciples witnessed as they trod the highways and byways of Judea and Galilee with him preaching good news for the hearing ears of the meek (for it was the meek that heard him gladly, while the proud and self-righteous condemned themselves by rejecting him.) They saw him opening the prison house to those who were bound by sickness and sin, deception and demonic darkness. They heard him proclaim the acceptable year of the

LORD, and announce God's vengeance upon sin and unbelief. They saw the dispensation of joy to the mourners, and those who traded the spirit of heaviness for a garment of praise; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

For three and a half years they saw all this and were convinced that "this is he of whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets did write." And, having done all, he laid down his life in that cruel Roman execution at Calvary, fulfilling all that the law and the prophets said about him.

So what was achieved when he "accomplished" death?

Jesus, in fact, came to die. The Bible says, "He was made a little lower than the angels *for the suffering of death*, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."⁹ Actually, his role was to be the last Adam and carry the whole corrupted race to the cross and to death. Christ died for all and, if one died for all, then were all dead. For this reason, if the Gospel message ended with "Christ died for your sins," it would not be good news. It would be a hopeless finality. The good news—the gospel—is in the resurrection. The good news on the personal level is, since we died in Christ we cannot die again. We no longer have a past; it is dead. We have only whatever glorious future is reserved for us in Christ Jesus.

When Jesus went to the cross, he "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree..."¹⁰ He was literally "made sin for us."¹¹ So we know how fully and finally sin has been dealt with on our behalf. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews takes it a step farther when he writes of Christ's death saying, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise himself took part of the same; that *through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil*; and deliver them who through

fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."¹² According to the apostle Paul, "Our Savior Jesus Christ...hath *abolished death*, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."¹³

What a glorious accomplishment has been wrought through the death of our Lord. It made way for the resurrection, by which a new race of men was brought forth, created in Christ Jesus. The apostle Paul says of the resurrected Christ, "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, *the firstborn from the dead*. The apostle John reiterates that truth saying, Jesus Christ, ... the faithful witness, *and the first begotten of the dead*."¹⁴ Jesus Christ is the second man now, the head of a new race in which all are made alive. Whereas in Adam all die, In Christ shall all be made alive.

The death of the Lord Jesus was no tragedy. It was the victorious stroke by which death was abolished, sin was fully and finally dealt with once for all, and Satan was rendered powerless over those redeemed men and women who have been washed from their sins in Christ's own blood. Those who have trusted Jesus death as their own are no longer sons of Adam, struggling under the bondage of a fallen nature; we are sons of God waiting expectantly for that day when we shall see him as he is and we shall be like him. What a marvelous hope has been born by the glorious death and victorious resurrection of our living Lord. **He "accomplished" death.**

(Endnotes)

1 2 Timothy 1:10

2 Luke 9:18

3 Luke 9:20

4 Genesis 3:15

5 2 Corinthians 5:21

6 John 3:14

7 Isaiah 9:6

8 Isaiah 61:1-3

9 Hebrews 2:9

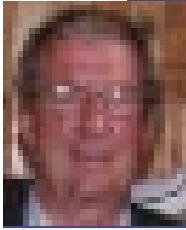
10 1 Peter 2:24

11 2 Corinthians 5:21

12 Hebrews 2:14,15

13 2 Timothy 1:10

14 Revelation 1:5



Jim Lucas' Column

The High Calling of God

Most true Christians know that Christ has saved them, that they have been delivered from sin and eternal punishment, and called out of the world. Few, however, realize how bright a future they have in Christ Jesus, or how special they are. Most of the time we don't feel special. In fact, we are the most despised people in this world in the same way that our Lord Jesus was rejected, abused, crucified and made a spectacle. The world hates us in the same fashion. Beside this our accuser is reminding us day and night of our shortcomings and failures. And as if that were not enough, we think we also have to remind each other of our failures, and they are not hard to find. It would do us good to consider the call and purpose of God for every born again believer. The word of God makes it clear that every believer is chosen of God and called for a very specific purpose. In the same way that Paul prayed for the Saints in Ephesus, I now pray for you.

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.” ^{Ep.1:17,18}

That you may know the hope of his calling: do you have hope or are you hopeless? Hope is a wonderful, mysterious power that enables us to face dreadful circumstances. Hope takes the heat out of the fire or even the sting out

of death. Hope is not acquired by chance, but through knowledge of what has been promised. The hope of the promise is no greater than the one who gives the promise. When the One giving the promise is the creator of life—God, who cannot lie—the promise becomes an anchor to the soul, a rock and a sure foundation for the faith that is born by simply hearing the words of life. We, like the Ephesians, were at one time “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” ^{Ephesians 2: 12} Thanks to our Lord, we are no longer without Christ, and Christ in us is our hope of glory.

I want us to look at some of the great and precious promises that we have been given. However, before we do, I want to point out that promises are only beneficial to those who believe them. Many today confess to believe in God. Much of this profession is mere lip service. Even the devil will acknowledge that God exists, but it is quite possible to know that there is a God and still fail to trust Him. Do you believe God? That is the question. There are only two types of people in the world: those who believe Him, and those who don't. Those who don't believe Him make a liar. ^{1John 5:10} The promises of God are of the utmost importance to the believer, for they are the very source of our faith. ^{Romans 10:17} Nevertheless, many who profess to believe in God are ignorant of these precious promises. The absence of peace and joy in those who profess to be Christians is the evidence of not believing the scriptures. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written

for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

Romans 15:4 “Now the God of hope (will) fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” Romans 15: 13

The God of all hope has given us so many wonderful promises. I think it would be very difficult for those who believe, not to be filled with joy and peace. For starters, we have the promise of the forgiveness of sins for those who believe unto repentance. We have the promise of Eternal Life, given by God who cannot lie, before the foundation of the world. Jesus promised to be with us always. We have been promised that Jesus will teach us all things. He promised us if we will seek first the Kingdom of God He will add unto us all things that are needed in this life. Jesus promises to do all that we ask of him in faith believing. Believers are assured that as Christ has risen from the dead, they will rise in like manner. We have the blessed hope of His soon return. Jesus has promised to prepare a place for us. Heaven is before us; there will be no tears or sorrow there. He has made us Kings and Priest and we shall reign with Him; we shall judge angels. If you are not familiar with any of these promises, please look for them as you read the word of God, and hide them in your heart.

Jesus endured the cross for the joy that was set before him. The suffering of the cross for the believer is considered a privilege. Because we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, we can rejoice in tribulations also. Romans 5: 2,3 Remember the God of all hope will fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope.

We have a very special promise in Romans 8: 28,29: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Paul says, and we know he is very confident, that all things work together

for good for those who love God and are the called according to his purpose. In order for us to have this confidence, we need to know that we love God. Do you love God? I trust you do. But how much do you love God? Do you love him with all your heart, soul and mind? We are commanded to love him with all of our might. Love is the principle thing. Even if we have faith to move mountains and we have not love, we are nothing.

Called according to his purpose: Everyone who is in Christ Jesus is called according to his purpose. The purpose of God for the believer is revealed to us in the following verse. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Romans 8:29 Our heavenly Father has predetermined that we shall be conformed to the image of his Son. The promises of God are many, and they are all wonderful; but, this exceeds them all. Imagine—to be like Jesus. We will be like him, because we are partaking of his divine nature. The nature of Jesus is free from the lust of the flesh; the nature of Jesus is absolutely holy and perfect in every way. ^{2 Peter 1:4}

According to Romans 8: 28, all things work together for good because God uses all things to teach us to trust in this new nature; and the nature of Christ in us will conform us into his image. It’s not important what you have or don’t have, or what you know or don’t know, but it is important who you are. The greatest hope we have is well expressed by the apostle 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: to think like Jesus, to talk like Jesus, to walk 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.”

To be continued.



Steve Montgomery

The Highlands of Jalisco



LIFTED UP OR CAST DOWN?

Psalm 147:6 “The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.”

An interesting insight comes out when one reads this verse in Spanish. In place of “ground” as the final word, Spanish says, “earth”. The words “ground” and “earth” are the same in Spanish, but as I read, I was struck with the thought of the devastating limitation of those that don’t know Christ. All the work, all the impact, all the significance they can ever have is limited to this planet, to this life. They are cast down to the Earth, limited to the finite and passing, so that the wealthiest man, the greatest statesman, the most dynamic speaker, the most accomplished performer or sports figure can never have the fruit that the lowliest believer can have.

In Ephesians 2:10, we read that we are “His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath foreordained that we should walk in them.” Literally, we are His *poiema* (Gr.), His epic poem. When we are born again, the new life that we enjoy is life created in Christ Jesus, and there are things God desires to accomplish through us, works that He prepared beforehand and

into which we enter as we walk with the Lord. These works have their beginning in God Himself and are as eternal as He is. They were planned beforehand and will continue to give God glory throughout eternity. Works that are not part of His “poem” begin with men and end with them.

We walk in these foreordained works by faith, and most of the time we don’t have the privilege of knowing what God is doing until much later – perhaps until we are with Him. Occasionally, though, God allows us a glimpse of His glorious foreordained works. I want to share one with you.

Ben and Brenden Booher accompanied me to visit a sister in the hospital in Guadalajara. In the bustling center of this city of four-plus-million, we decided to stop at a small taco stand. It was early, so only one other table was occupied. Spying our Bibles, a gentleman at the other table identified himself as a believer. An hispanic, he is the pastor of a Calvary Chapel in California and was in Mexico to visit his brother, who is suffering with a terminal disease. “I wanted another opportunity to talk to him about Christ,” he explained.

The conversation then turned to us. Ben and Brenden told him where they were from and why they were in Mexico. He was interested, but when I told him I live and work in Atotonilco, he nearly fell off his chair! “That’s the city where my brother lives!” The young man across the table identified himself as the son of the sick man and a former English student of mine at the High School in Atotonilco!

I have had two opportunities since then to visit this man, Nestor Saavedra. He is the Director of a secondary school here and has insisted in continuing with his responsibility despite his illness. The unique manner in which I met his brother has opened a door of contact. He invited the Booher family to play at his school and more recently agreed to have Misael Hernandez, a close friend of ours who works with Open Air Campaigners, do a presentation in the school. Right now, the schools are on Spring vacation, so I’m hoping to see Sr. Saavedra at his home.

- ✓ A man in Atotonilco is diagnosed with a terminal disease.
- ✓ A believer in California prays and makes a trip to Mexico.
- ✓ Two sets of men stroll into the same tiny taco stand in the middle of Mexico’s second largest city.
- ✓ The King of the entire Universe allows them to see one of His foreordained works, works that have their beginning in God’s eternal plan and will redound throughout history to His glory.

Pray for Nestor Saavedra, and rejoice that as believers we are not “cast down to the Earth”.



The Lord has opened doors for the church here in a number of areas in the past weeks:

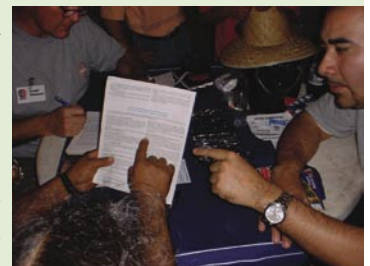
Medical Mission:



Dentists treating a young boy

eye doctors treated over 350 people in a day and a half. While the patients waited in the crowded “waiting room” of the tent, they watched Christian films. Each person received a New Testament or Gospel of John. Nearly 100 people asked to know more about the Bible. Since the outreach, six new evangelistic Bible studies have been established in this neighborhood

Grupo Impacto, an outreach of several churches in California and Mexico, worked with us to organize a free medical clinic in a poor neighborhood. four medical doctors, two dentists and three



Eye doctors use Gospel of John to check vision.

Booher Concerts

Rudi and Carla Booher, with their family, visited and we were able to hold a concert in the main plaza. The Good News was announced to



The Booher brothers singing Gospel songs in the plaza

a crowd and we have two new contacts from that time.

A few weeks after Rudi and Carla left, Ben, Brenden and Gabe Booher arrived, instruments in hand. In company with the Hermanas Barocio, well known for their ranchero music before becoming believers some years ago, the Booher Brothers gave an excellent concert. For the first time, we were granted permission for an event on Sunday evening when the Plaza is packed. There was clear preaching of the Gospel, a stirring testimony and songs that exalt Christ to the lost.



Barocio sisters singing in the plaza

The next week was filled with concerts – in Santa Maria del Oro, in Rancho Viejo and twice in Arandas. These were all in public plazas, where the Christians of the area took advantage of the time to distribute literature, witness and preach publicly.

Leadership Seminar

A group of church leaders from four congregations in Washington visited Arandas and Atotonilco in March to see the Highlands and to find out how they can help the advance of the Gospel here. They toured the area, meeting Christians in different communities and visiting communities where there are no churches. One afternoon they drove to the top of a mountain from which they could

see and pray for several towns. Imagine their surprise when they found that the guard at the radio towers had lived for many years in Yakima, Wa., home to several of the team. More significant yet, they found him reading a New Testament which had been given to him by a believer only a few days before!

While here, this team presented a one-day leadership seminar which was superb. Those attending were exhorted by the material shared and challenged also to see how they worked together in the presentation.

Baptisms

The entire congregation from Atotonilco made plans to meet with the church in La Barca on a Sunday. We announced that at that time Josefina would be baptized. As the time drew near, others said that they, too, wanted to be baptized. That Sunday, seven new believers were baptized! And the following Sunday two other new believers were baptized!



Baptism takes place wherever water is available. Here Steve and some of the brethren baptize in irrigation water.



Conversions

The evangelistic study with Hortensia was going well. She seemed to be understanding the Good News. For a few weeks, she had shown up at the Sunday church meeting, asking questions afterward and expressing a desire to learn more. Then came the Sunday in which she stood up at a time when many were sharing testimonies.

“I want to accept the Lord. I’ve been a sinner. I’ve...” (Here, in tears, she began a litany of her sins). “I know I need the Lord to forgive my sins, and I want to give my life to Him.” She called out on the Lord that morning

and was born again. The next Sunday, she bounced to her feet at the first opportunity to share a testimony: “The Lord has really been doing some tremendous things since I got saved!” she exclaimed. What a glorious thing to see lives captured by the beauty and glory of Christ!

As I was writing this letter Efren, one of those baptized in the past weeks, arrived at the house with a friend, Ediberto. As we began to talk, it became apparent that through reading the Bible and talking with Efren, he had become convinced of his sin and wanted to know what to do. We talked about the inspiration and trustworthiness of the Scripture then began to look at some of its promises. When we got to Romans 10: 9, I explained the verse by relating my own conversion experience some thirty-six years ago. We prayed together and he called out on the Lord, declaring he wanted Christ to come into his life and take over. We talked more, looking at some further promises from the Scripture, and then he and Efren left, rejoicing. Now I’m back at the computer finishing this letter. Ediberto is from Acatic, one of the counties of the Highlands where there is no church. Again, what a glorious thing to see lives captured by Christ.



Remember Mike and Faith Ball and family as they continue to witness in Loreto, Zacatecos, Mexico.

Permission to Republish

In the last issue we published an article called “What is this Thing Called Worship?” We must have struck a chord judging by the amount of positive response the article received. Many people from around the nation called, wrote or emailed to express their appreciation for the sentiments expressed in the piece. Many requested permission to reprint and distribute the article to members of their congregations. Some of those requesting permission did not receive a response from us, so this blurb is in lieu of the personal phone call or letter that you did not receive.

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Thank you for your interest. Go ahead and copy the articles, distribute them and make the circle larger. God bless you in Christ.



Ed Drysdale
Atotonilco, Jalisco, Mexico

The last few months have been a whirlwind. We have had many visitors and a number of evangelistic campaigns. A group called Grupo Impacto blessed us tremendously. They came down with a mentality to serve in whatever capacity they could, and that is what they did.

This team consisted of medical doctors, dentists and two eye-care personnel. Our goal was to minister to the physical as well as spiritual needs of a poor community that we had targeted. We set up a waiting station in which we had the opportunity to ask pertinent questions about what they believe and what were some of the problems in this poor community. This in turn opened doors for us to minister the Good News and provide them with New Testaments.

We have attempted many evangelistic outreaches to this community without much success. We kept knocking but without many results. However, when this group came, it made a colossal impact on how the community perceives Christians (what they call Aleluyas). Before, we were preaching to them, trying to rescue them from their spiritual darkness, but not addressing their physical needs as well. What I learned most from this outreach is that sometimes (not always) in order for someone to hear what you have to say you need to attend to their physical needs first because they can't truly listen if they are in pain.

Our Lord Jesus is our perfect example. There is an old saying, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you

care". In our case, we believe that the Lord opened the gates wide so now we can minister to them spiritually. From this outreach we have over a hundred contacts. One of those contacts,

Manual and his wife Rama, are really soaking up the Word. I believe they are close to making Jesus their Savior. The saints here have a lot of following up to do with these contacts. Pray that they will be faithful in this endeavor.

One of the Priests said, "They are only offering free service so they can win you over."

Apparently one of the men in back of the service stood up and said, "Then why haven't you offered us free medical service?"

The next week the priest had followed up with free mammograms. The consensus is that the Aleluyas aren't so bad after all; at least they care!

As for the church, we have been really encouraged by the growth of the brothers and sisters. Last week we had a baptism, eight people were baptized. A couple of weeks ago we had a graduation party in honor of the brothers who have faithfully finished a 1½ year discipleship course. We have seen a big change in those that have attended and are praying that more brothers in our congregation will sign up for the next one.

The church has not been without its struggles. One family has been especially hit hard. Their youngest daughter ran away to the U.S. with an unsaved man, and another daughter is battling with a



istry date

mental disorder. She was diagnosed with this disorder years ago but had been doing well with medication until her sister ran away. This has been very hard

on the one sister who has had to handle the load, and of course the parents also. It has been very encouraging to see the church rally around this family in this difficult time. Each one has taken a very personal interest in helping as they can. It is really a joy to be a part of this people's lives!

On another note: we are returning to Oregon for the summer. We look forward to seeing you! We are coming home for a time of rest and rejuvenation. We will be in Bend from June—Sept. We will be attending the Memorial Conference and look forward to sweet fellowship. Upon our return to Mexico we plan to move to Valle de Juarez. We have been praying for this region for some time. It is another area of Jalisco up in the hills surrounded by a mountain range. We believe the Lord is calling us to take up the cross and follow him there. We will miss the friends we have made here but we believe the Lord is poking our nest. We have become pretty comfortable where we're at, but it's time to stretch our wings and fly. Thankfully we won't be flying too far away! It's only two hours from Atotonilco. We will be plugging into a congregation in Jilquilpan (1/2 hr. drive) until the Lord raises up a work in Valle de Juarez. We know of no believers in this town of 7,000. There is a small group of believers in another colonia a little outside of Valle de Juarez.

Please pray for us with all these big changes coming up. We will try to keep you posted as best as we can through the coming months.

Your co-workers, the Drysdals

P.S Dear ones, this is Abby. I would really like to thank you for praying for my health. Just about the time Ed sent out our last letter I began to feel a real improvement in my health. Praise the Lord! I believe I am almost completely recovered. I will have to continue with meds and check-ups but I feel great!



Nathaneal Abimbola
Nigeria



The Peace of Christ will surround your mind and envelope you in Jesus name. We give glory to God for all His doings all over the earth.

The missions commitment has taken us to many places. In February, we had training for the leaders of the local churches in the Francophone region of Togo and Benin republic. Also, on the 9th of April, there was a gathering of all the local churches among the Save where Tunde Oloyede, Soji Adebawale and myself ministered at the conference. The conference's theme was "The True Faith of Believers."

On the 16th of April, we had a "resurrection march" to four villages around Baaki; including Baaki(The tree village). We danced and sang all through the trek between the villages. With

each stopover at the villages, the people came out and the messages preached centered on the resurrection power and redeeming life to be found in Jesus. At the roundoff, the word of knowledge was given to the villagers to be expectant of God's resurrecting power in their midst; with the outward manifestation of rain falling that very day to bring restoration to all their dried-out crops, which were suffering from weeks of no rain. Praise God! He honored His word and immediately we got back home from the field, the rains fell in long dripping showers.



The church at Baaki

NEEDS:

Prayer for two young men from Ohori-Kakanfo field who broke their legs through a motorcycle (Okada) accident; the rider died a few hours after the accident. But, the two brothers were miraculously saved although with serious injuries. Please, pray for the quick recovery and for the financial needs of their care to be met.

Also, at Baaki village, another brother was recently discharged from the hospital. But, he has not fully recovered as he still complained of chest pain. He also had a motorcycle accident.

In Republic of Benin, a brother is in the hospital recovering from a severe typhoid attack; with an operation also performed on his intestine. Another brother also is recovering from a motorcycle accident.

Please, also pray for the Ikubanni family in Ilorin. Their father slept (died) a while ago. Pray

for the children as they are still quite young; and for their mother that she may receive extra grace to fulfil all her responsibilities.

Greetings to all the beloved in Jesus name. Christ, who redeemed all who believed in Him and His resurrection power and accepted Him as Lord and Saviour, will ever be an abiding presence in your lives. God's blessings be with you all.

In His Love and Bond,
Nath Abimbola.

From Other Sources

Eretrea, North Africa

Since May 2002, the repressive regime of President Isaias Afwerki has closed down all independent evangelical churches and refused to allow their members to meet anywhere for worship, according to Compass Direct. Although ordered to apply for legal registration, none of these churches has been granted government recognition. Evangelical believers caught by the police while gathering in their homes are arrested and detained, often held incommunicado for months without charges. Nearly 1,800 Eritrean Christians are now believed to be under arrest because of their religious beliefs and held in police stations, military camps and prisons in twelve known locations across Eritrea, according to Compass. The jailed Protestants are routinely subjected to physical beatings and severe psychological pressure to deny their religious beliefs. One of the mothers was asked to visit them and convince them to sign a document stating they will practice "individual religion" but not together with other believers. Not one signed, and they remain faithful.

Offer up prayers of thanksgiving for these faithful believers who have not denied their Lord and Savior. Pray their loving witness will lead others to seek the God of peace. Pray God will give all Christians a sense of hope that despite persecution and suffering, He is building His Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

SFMI Annual Memorial Day Conference

Twin Rocks Conference Center

Rockaway, Oregon

Friday, May 26 - Monday, May 29, 2006

This month is conference month. For many years, Memorial Day weekend has been the time of the SFMI annual conference. In the last issue of the SFMI Update we included, as we always do, a registration form, which we urge everyone to fill out early and send it in to reserve your place at the table, so to speak. However, due to a glitch in our mailing, a large number of copies were never mailed. At least a couple hundred of you did not receive a March/April issue in which the registration form was enclosed.

If you plan to come but have not received the expected registration form, please write, email or telephone the office, giving us the following information and your reservation will be made and honored. Tell us:

- Your name, address and telephone number.
- How many will be in your party.
- How many are children and how many adults.
- When you think you will arrive and when you will leave if before the final session.
- If you will come in an RV let us know that.
- If you have any special needs tell us what they are.
- If you plan to share the word or minister to us in music or in some special way, it would be helpful if you let us know.

Remember that there is no charge for the conference. All the expenses are met by the freewill, unsolicited offerings of the saints. Please come prepared to contribute according to how God has provided for you. We want you to come and share the fellowship of the Lord with us even if you are without means.

The first session is at 7:00 p.m. Friday night. No dinner is served on Friday, but there will be snacks after the meeting. The first meal will be breakfast Saturday morning. The last meal will be lunch on Monday before departure. We look forward with a great deal of anticipation to what we expect the Lord will do among us. Please come prepared to participate in the open meetings.

In Memorium

There is an appointment we must all keep. For the appointee, if he or she is safely resting in the Lord Jesus, it is a glorious time of reunion with the Lord Jesus and the saints and loved ones that have gone on before. For those left behind it is a time of sorrow—but not the kind of sorrow endured by those who have no hope.

Since the last issue of this Update two dearly beloved friends, who have for many years been a part of this ministry have moved on to the heavenly Jerusalem to join the other half of the church. The company there is growing, and it is fascinating to realize who comprises that eternal generation called “the Righteous.” The writer of Hebrews defined it like this:

“But ye are come unto the mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an

innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant...” Hebrews 12:22-24.

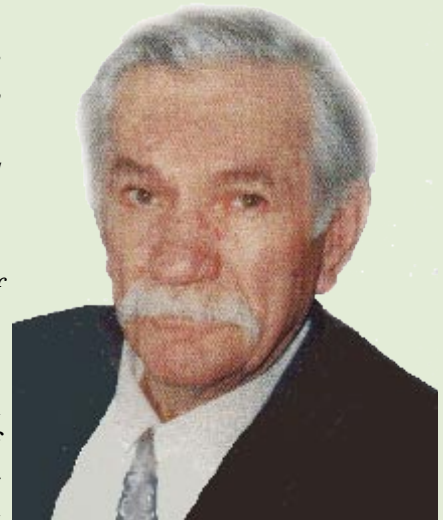
So we say a temporary goodbye to our brothers Orville Tadlock and Roy Gable, until the day we meet them again on that glorious resurrection morning, or perhaps before, if the Lord should so decree. In the meantime, pray for their widows, and the families they have left behind, that they might enjoy the comfort and the presence of the Lord Jesus who will surely continue to meet their needs.

Orville was a fervent and indefatigable witness wherever he went, a challenging preacher, and a wonderful father to over seventy-five foster children. He leaves behind his wife of forty-three years, blanche, who is cut from the same cloth, and continues to serve as Orville did.

Roy is our old Oklahoma storyteller who the folks loved to listen to. He has been a board member of this mission for several years. He leaves behind his wife of fifty-six years, Ruth, who has been our dear friend since 1953. Our prayers will continue for both of these dear ladies.



Orville Tadlock



Roy Gable

A Testimony by James Paul Bonner, San Antonio, Texas



I was a young Christian when the Lord gave me a verse: Matt. 5:6, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

This was an encouragement to me because, as a young Christian, I desired to please the Lord by living a righteous life, but more often than not, found that the flesh seemed to have more victories in its win column than the spirit did. I hungered for righteousness and for the fulfillment of the promise that I shall be filled. I noticed that the one who hungers was not doing the filling but someone else; namely the Lord.

One day I was at a church meeting hearing a visiting missionary named Peter Plummer. I was impressed with his personal testimony. After the meeting I spoke with Peter and confessed to him my struggles with my flesh. I said, “The Christian walk is so hard, with so many struggles.”

Peter replied, “There are no struggles in Jesus.” Then he changed the subject without explaining his baffling statement.

What in the world did he mean? David had plenty of struggles; just read the Psalms. We could easily find many examples in the word of saints who struggled with their flesh.

I appreciate now that he didn’t explain what he meant, because it made me ponder his statement for several years. I have come to realize that in Christ is rest and peace, not struggle. The only way we can enter into this blessed place is by faith.

The other day, as I prayed, the Lord rebuked me. It seemed the Lord was saying, “Do you think that seeking me makes you worthy?”

My reply was, “No Lord.”

The Lord said back to me, “The only thing that makes you worthy is the blood of Christ. You can only approach me on that merit alone.”

I began to realize that although I had a doctrine of salvation by faith and righteousness by faith, I had


a mentality that was by nature works oriented. The flesh can’t comprehend the simplicity of faith. Our flesh tells us that we have to *do* something to please the Lord.

We know that the Lord is a rewarder of them that *diligently seek him*. Somehow deep down I trusted in my puny efforts to seek God diligently as something that would merit favor with him. Saints, this is only unbelief. The rest of the verse that I just quoted goes like this, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Like many saints, I have struggled with feelings of unworthiness. These feelings often have their root in our failure to walk consistently in the Spirit. Also we have an enemy that is called *the accuser of the brethren*, who tells us just how unworthy we are.

The scriptures teach that the victory that overcometh the world is faith. All that’s in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. When we see Jesus—that is, he reveals himself to us and speaks his word to us—we receive faith and grace. The flesh just melts away in his presence. We have a desire, by his grace, to put off the old man with his works and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Saints, we must seek the Lord like never before. Trusting not in our pursuit of God, but only in Christ; righteousness is by faith. We are at the end of the last days and Jesus’ sobering statement in Luke 18:8—“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he *find faith* on the earth”—should make us stand up and take notice. “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of *faith* and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation *by our Lord Jesus Christ*. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.” 1 Thess. 5:4-10.



Nigerian Students Missing After Beating

Two Christian female students from the Ahmadu Bello University in Kaduna State, Nigeria went missing after they were severely beaten by seven Muslim women in their dormitory on March 18. The two students, Joy and Priscilla, were attacked, harassed, intimidated, flogged and left unconscious by seven students, veiled in Islamic robes

Compass Direct reports that the two were taken to the university clinic and have not been seen since.

Because of the attack, the university closed for two weeks. During that time, the

university took action against the Muslim Students Society by removing their leadership for failing to maintain control. According to the Daily Trust news service, when the university reopened on March 28, there was added security. The university has promised to investigate the attack and punish appropriately.

Pray that there will soon be news as to the whereabouts of Joy and Priscilla and that the university will take action that there will be no further incidents of this kind

Pray that the Christians among the student body will be emboldened to share Christ with their peers. Ask God to show His love to the young women who were responsible for this brutal attack.