

January

February

The History of Hatred

and the antidote

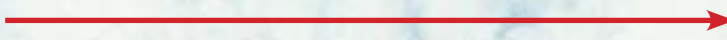
By Dick York

The question has been asked, “Why does the whole world hate America so much? After all, there is no country in the world that has given more aid to other nations, contributed more to alleviate poverty and disease, and has even contributed to the modernization and prosperity of nations it has defeated in war.” That seems to be the truth. Some have joked about it saying, “If you want to establish a prosperous country, declare war on the U.S.A., surrender, and the U.S. will set you up with a prosperous economy.” It happens all the time. Take, for example, Germany and Japan after World War 2.

But this article is not about the U.S.A.; it is about the history of hatred. Hatred and evil, it seems evident, are woven into the very fabric of the world system; and they cannot be avoided by being good, benevolent or kind. One of the problems of American policy is that she hopes to change her enemies’ attitudes by being nice to them, by capitulation and compromise, by trying to demonstrate that we are really nice people. The

enemy gloats because he interprets this as weakness and is encouraged to strike another blow—hopefully the deathblow—against his weakening adversary.

Our national leaders keep repeating that they believe Islam to be a religion of peace in spite of the brutality, genocide and mass murder they are seeing around the world. They tell us that aberrant, violent extremists have hijacked this “peaceful” religion and do not seem to notice that the “moderate victims” of



their hijackers do not denounce the violence of the “extremists” among them. Why is that? It is because the so-called moderates know that the violent ones are practicing their religion as it is taught in their “holy book,” the Koran. If they were to denounce the violence of the “faithful” in the execution of Jihad, they would be denying the will of Allah. The jihadists are encouraged by the naiveté of our Western leaders.

In the West, because our religious experience has been mostly with Christianity, we believe that all religion teaches what Jesus taught. We must be disabused of this error. No one taught in the past or teaches today what Jesus taught. Jesus himself said, “*All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers.*”⁷¹ That is true of *all* the ancient religions that were established many generations before the birth of Christ. And it is equally true of all that have been more recent, such as Islam, established six centuries after Christ. It could also be said of many religions designating themselves as “Christian.” The history of Catholicism and even of some of the reformers includes the inquisitions, both Catholic and Protestant, during which time unspeakable cruelty was exercised against their perceived enemies. Hatred ruled.

Jesus taught not only with his words, but also with his life. The apostle John, too, taught, as Jesus did, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”⁷² Jesus taught us even to love our enemies and demonstrated it as he hung on the cross petitioning the Father to forgive them even while he was dying at their hand. Religion has never had the capacity to teach as Jesus taught. He was the personification of righteousness and of love. He loved as his Father loves. The history of religions disproves either their ability or inclination to teach what Jesus taught or in the way that he taught it.

To see the character of time-honored religions one needs only to go to nations where those religions prevail and dictate the atmosphere of the society. Take a trip to Myanmar (Burma) where Buddhism controls the people or India where Hinduism dictates the societal norm. These are a couple of the religions that came before Jesus, which he called thieves and robbers. If you were to travel there, you would readily understand why he said that. And as for those religions that have come since Christ, try some of the countries where Islam dominates or aspires to dominate: Somalia, Sudan, or Saudi Arabia. It is

evident that hate, not love, is the dominant trait.

The history of hatred begins in the heavenlies before time began. Lucifer, the initiator of iniquity, in his opposition to God said, “I will be like the Most High.”⁷³ Ever since, he who is now called “the god of this world”⁷⁴ has loved and promoted evil and iniquity while hating and opposing righteousness on every hand. Nowhere is this more evident than in religion.

In the record of human history, it is first noted in Genesis 4: 1-8 in the story of Cain and Abel. Until that time, there was no record of religion in the world. The norm until Adam’s fall was man and God in fellowship with one another. Religion, until then, was neither necessary nor known. After the fall, however, man became aware of his fallen state and began to try to please God—or perhaps flatter him—in order to cultivate his favor. Cain’s action fits this description; Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord. This was a religious act initiated by his personal perceived need to do something for God. It may have been sincere, but it was neither required nor directed by the Lord, as evidenced by the fact that God did not respect it.

Meanwhile, Abel, Cain’s younger brother, also brought an offering of “the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.” This was apparently initiated by the Lord because it had all the earmarks of the offerings that the Lord later ordained at the hands of the Levitical priesthood wherein they were to offer the blood and the fat of their sacrificed animals. “And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.”⁷⁵

What happened next defines the conflict and sets the tone for all the recorded history that was to follow. Even today, it is the explanation for the seemingly irrational hatred that fills our world and dominates the news. “*But unto Cain and to his offering [God] had not respect. And Cain was very wrath, and his countenance fell.*”⁷⁶ The bitterness and hatred of Cain’s unrepentant religious heart was revealed by the anger that ensued. He became so angry that a murderous rage filled his heart, “*And Cain talked with Abel, his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.*”⁷⁷

When the apostle John, in the New Testament, explained this action he said, “*And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother’s righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*”⁷⁸

All through history, right thinking people have probably wondered the same thing: why did they hate and kill the prophets? Weren't they telling the truth and looking out for the well being of Israel? Why did they hate Jesus? He did nothing but good things. He healed the sick, fed the multitudes, and gave sight to the blind. He met the needs of people, and even the people who benefited by his goodness hated him; it is so irrational. It all started in the heavenlies with Lucifer's rebellion.

It is a fact of life: darkness hates light; evil hates righteousness; the god of this world is at war with the God of heaven and earth. "But," many would ask, "isn't religion supposed to be good and promote righteousness?"

There may have been a time in which the words "religion" and "religious" were used in the English language to denote true worship of the Lord, but in fact religion has been an enemy of righteousness throughout history. It was the priests of Baal that opposed Elijah. The priests of Israel opposed Jeremiah. The Pharisees and Saducees persecuted Jesus and finally demanded his crucifixion. Religiosity is a counterfeit for and the enemy of righteousness. Therefore, from the perspective of the world, righteousness is the enemy.

For this reason the true Church, that is the body of Christ, throughout the world and in every generation has been persecuted in some measure; and it is also the reason that believers in our present age should be prepared to experience the same. Jesus said, "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.⁹ ...But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*"¹⁰

We opened this piece, in the first paragraph, by referring to the U.S.A. Was that meant to imply that, as a nation, we are godly and righteous followers of Jesus Christ? Not at all, but many of the principles that guide this nation are the result of godly men of the past that honored God's word and guided our founders to embrace its teachings in the establishing of our national character. Wherever and to what degree those principles are still evident, they will be reminders to the enemy that they were authored by God. In the mind of the enemy, that is sufficient reason to hate. We who are in Christ should not be naïve and therefore surprised by the world's irrationality. Nor should we forget that the apostle

Paul said, "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.*"¹¹ Remember also Paul's victorious proclamation, "Now thanks be unto God, which **always causeth us to triumph in Christ**, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place."¹²

The world will continue to hate because Satan, the god of this world, is the author of hatred. Jesus said of him, "*He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.*"¹³ This is true also of the world's religions that he has spawned. But Jesus did not offer us another religion. On the contrary, he inspired these words, "*In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteousness. Marvel not my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*"¹⁴

(Endnotes)

- 1 John 10: 8
- 2 1 John 3: 18
- 3 Isaiah 14: 14
- 4 2 Corinthians 4: 4
- 5 Genesis 4: 4
- 6 Genesis 4: 5
- 7 Genesis 4: 8
- 8 1 John 3: 12,13
- 9 John 15: 18
- 10 John 15: 25
- 11 2 Timothy 3: 12-14
- 12 2 Corinthians 2: 14



Jim Lucas' Column

Wisdom

The Bible speaks much about wisdom, and we know that only a fool refuses to understand knowledge. Solomon wrote, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding."¹ He also said, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."² If this is the case, then how do we reconcile the teaching of Paul in the New Testament? Let's look at **1 Corinthians 1: 17-31**

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Paul says the world by wisdom knew not God. He must be referring to the lie that Eve heard in the garden. "Ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil."³

They became wise; their eyes were opened, and they knew they were naked; but they did not come to know God by this wisdom. Wisdom was increased as well as sorrow; they knew they were naked and that they fell short of the glory of God, which they possessed before they partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

What does Paul mean by "the foolishness of preaching"? Obviously the simplicity of the gospel message is foolishness to the wise in heart. Adam and Eve not only received wisdom, but they also received the pride of life. It pleases God to humble the proud. In James we read that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Where does all wisdom come from

anyway? In Ex 31:6 we read, "And in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee."

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

We have the same problem today. We have those who claim to have all faith, but they require signs and follow after signs and wonders. However, due to their pride they fail to believe the word of God, or else the *signs* would follow *them*. They boast in their faith, and they only have enough faith to get out of the boat and find themselves drowning in the despairs of life and refuse to look to Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. I believe it would do us well to say, "Lord Jesus, please help me in my unbelief." The Jews because of pride thought they were the only ones who knew of God's miracles. Today we have certain groups that believe that they have some kind of corner on faith. If we refuse the cross of Christ, then we have not believed the gospel of Christ. I find that many who speak much about miracles shun the cross and live ungodly lives and heap treasures unto themselves. They talk much about the faith to receive more in this life and are not prepared for the life that Jesus is calling them to, which is a life of self-denial. The true believer is not afraid of the cross.

Like the Greeks who sought after wisdom we have many doing the same thing today. They are forever learning yet are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.⁴ This is especially true here in America where we have access to so much knowledge, we have at our fingertips all kinds of learning aids: dictionaries, encyclopedias, commentaries, concordances and etc. Paul said, "All have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."⁵

A good example of this modern day pride is revealed when a brother in Christ will say concerning a verse or a word in the authorized translation of the word of God, "What it means in Greek is..." He in his pride is saying he knows better how it should be translated than fifty-

two bible scholars who thought it should be translated just the way we have it.

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

Those who lean on their own understanding do not easily understand the life of the cross.

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Here we have the great mystery revealed; Christ is the wisdom of God. It appears God gives all men a measure of wisdom. (But not all men know Christ.) Wisdom is good, and we need it. Solomon was given this wisdom more than all other men. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.⁶ And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.⁷

However if we take a good look at Solomon's life, we find this wisdom did not bring him a good result in the end. Solomon failed from the beginning. It says, "And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places."⁸ Just like many today that do not remember the teaching of Jesus, who said we cannot serve two masters, Solomon did not find the grace to walk in the wisdom he understood. Paul helps us to understand: "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 which I would not, that I do."⁹

Many people today have great understanding but very little grace to walk in the light. God through Solomon taught us, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."¹⁰ It appears that Solomon himself did not learn the fear of the Lord. Job said, "Behold the fear of the Lord that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."¹¹

Solomon married hundreds of wives and in the end followed after their gods. For it appears that he died in this idolatry and brought idolatry back into Israel. I conclude, you can have wisdom without grace; but if we come to Jesus who *is* our wisdom, we find grace to live and walk in the fear of the Lord. He who knows this wisdom (Christ) will depart from evil.

We may have all wisdom, but we cannot be saved by it or come to know God, unless we come first to Christ Jesus. David said, "Behold, thou hast made my days as

an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity."¹²

David knew that his age was nothing; he did not rely on his wisdom. He knew that even the wisest of men were nothing compared to God. The wisdom that we find in Christ Jesus is not just for the aged, but it is for all who will listen to her call. A young man can walk in the wisdom of God. The older I get the more wisdom I need for more is expected of me. This causes me to call upon Jesus who gives me the wisdom I need for the day. My faith is not in my limited accumulation of knowledge but in Christ Jesus who is my wisdom.

Solomon proved his father David's words to be true. His wisdom exceeded that of all men; he had every thing; he lived in a time of peace. He was natural man at his best, which is altogether vanity.

David's testimony was that he had a heart after God. David had revelation of Christ; he spoke much about him. He failed many times but went on in the grace of God. Solomon's testimony, on the other hand, was that he had great wisdom and was very rich, but I don't see the grace of God to recover from his sin. I conclude that what we need is Jesus who is our wisdom.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.

(Endnotes)

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|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Proverbs 3: 3 | 7 1Kings 10: 24 |
| 2 Proverbs 4: 7 | 8 1 Kings 3: 3 |
| 3 Genesis 3: 5 | 9 Romans 7: 18,19 |
| 4 2Timothy 3: 7 | 10 Proverbs 9: 10 |
| 5 1Corinthians 8:1 | 11 Job 28: 28 |
| 6 1Kings 10: 23 | 12 Psalm 39: 5 |

Martha had stood at her brother's bedside watching him toss and turned as he became increasingly sick and weak. She had talked with the doctors, tried the remedies and prayed. And she had thought about Jesus.



Steve Montgomery

She and her sister had sent a message to Him on the other side of the Jordan, telling Him Lazarus was sick. If only He would come, Lazarus would be healed. He would enter the room, put His hands on their brother's head, and the fever would be gone. Lazarus' pain and Martha's worry would be through. If only He would come.

But He didn't come.

Martha watched her brother die, knowing that help existed but not seeing that help come when it was needed.

And now, four days after Lazarus' death, Jesus had come - too late. He asked to be taken to the tomb. Then He asked that the stone on the burial cave be removed. He stood in front of that darkened cave where a dead man had lain for four days, prayed and then shouted into that darkness, "Lazarus, come forth!"

The next words are stunning in their simplicity:

"And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

Out of the grave, still wrapped in his death garments, hopped and hobbled the man who had been dead!

What power! What authority! The same voice **Had he simply shouted "Come forth," all the tombs of the planet would have opened. That day is still in the future.** that spoke and the worlds were framed spoke again and a dead man walked out of his tomb alive! A friend once observed that Jesus prefaced His shout with Lazarus' name because, had He simply shouted, "Come forth!", all the tombs in the planet would have opened. That day, according to John 5:28, is still in the future.

The crowd watching may have been so amazed that they missed a small aspect of this miracle that is extremely significant. With such command and authority that death itself backs away at His word, isn't it strange that the dead man should come out still wrapped in grave clothes? Surely we would expect that Jesus would bring him out of that tomb free of all entangling ties to defeated death.

And then, stranger still, He turns to those around, His disciples and possibly Mary and Martha, and tells them to pull off the grave clothing with which Lazarus was wrapped.

Why did the Lord Jesus do that? A word from Him and those clothes would have fallen to the ground. Yet He reserved that word and instead told others to do the job.

There was work for the followers of Jesus to do. He had given this man life, yet the process of untangling him from the death he had left behind

The Lazarus

was to be a work of faith charged to His disciples.

This is the Lazarus Factor. The disciples were given the job of discipleship.

Training men and women to be fruitful followers of the Lord is a basic charge for the church of Jesus Christ. Just as the victim helped by the good Samaritan was taken to an inn to be cared for as part of his rescue, so the Lord Jesus takes men and women who were dead in their sins, beaten and bruised by life, and gives them to the Body of Christ to strengthen, train and mature for service in God's Kingdom.

Christ had given Lazarus life, but the process of untangling him from the death he had left behind was charged to the disciples.

Jesus Christ made the training of a handful of men one of the primary accomplishments in His ministry. In the church of Jesus Christ, we need to keep clear that one of our most important tasks is training men and women.

I note three things the Bible specifically mentions about the resurrected Lazarus, and I think we can use these to see the three key areas in which we need to train men:

**Lazarus' bound feet,
his bound hands
and his covered face.**

That is, Lazarus needed to be set free, helped and unentangled in his walk, his work and his words.

The Walk, that is, the man. God is more interested in who we are than in what we are doing. Our character is our most powerful communication. We train men to trust the Lord in the challenges of daily life, to understand and leave behind wrong attitudes and understanding. Mark 3:14 tells us that Jesus “ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.” The priority was for the twelve to spend time with Christ and one another, seeing and learning godly character which would then impact their work and words. We are called to spend time with other believers in purposeful training that will change and mold their character. Character and attitudes not only matter, they form the basis for all that comes out of the life of the believer, determining both the quality and quantity of fruit produced in his or her own life and the lives of those around. Thus Solomon tells us: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)

The Work, which touches the areas of mission and method. In order to be useful for the advance of the Kingdom of God both in the lives of others and in new geographic areas, we need to know what God’s purpose is and we need to know how God would use us to accomplish that purpose.

The mission is to glorify God by taking His message in word and action to the world around us, cooperating to see that message go throughout the whole earth. Proverbs 14:28 declares that God is glorified as more people believe Him, and it is our mission to be co laborers with God to see that happen.

Hudson Taylor spoke of doing God’s work God’s way. Though there is tremendous liberty and diversity in the way God leads us in accomplishing His work, there are some methods the Word of God establishes, such as the importance of the church, submission to the Word of God, the clear announcing of the Gospel, the

necessity of proceeding in faith and an understanding of the leading of the Holy Spirit. In training others, we teach them both the priority and the procedure.

The Words, or, the message. As we train others, the priority area of attention is character. Secondly, we train others in purpose and procedure so that they know the goal and how to get there. But the third area is also of vital importance: What is the message to be communicated? A man of sterling character who understood his mission and method would not be fruitful if he had the wrong message. 2 Samuel 18 tells that story:

Ahimaaz, a runner, was not chosen to take a message to King David; another had been sent. Nevertheless, Ahimaaz so insisted that he be sent also that the General acceded. He passed the other runner, arriving first to give the message to the king. He was a man who wanted to serve, an excellent character quality. He knew how and where to run, essentials of his work. Nevertheless, when he got to the king, he was set aside because he didn’t have the message.

We can wonder how often enthusiastic believers have been given a task because of their commitment to the work, only to be set aside by the Lord until they learn the message. Training others must include making certain they are carriers of the right message.

The Task Given:

The Lord Jesus Christ, who made the universe by speaking, stood at the mouth of an empty tomb and charged His followers to take on a task, the task of untying and unencumbering another so that in his walk, work and words Christ could use him as an effective witness for His glory. We have received the same charge: To train men and women to be fruitful disciples of Christ.

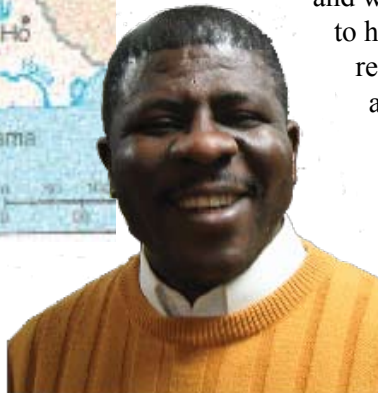
The example of Lazarus gives us this in a figure, but we need not go only to figurative examples to find this task given to us. In Matthew 28:19 and 20, we find the Lord Jesus instructing us to make disciples, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” It is not enough to teach others all things Christ has taught us. We must first obey and then teach others to obey all that He commands. As the church of Jesus Christ makes disciples, we need to deal with the walk, the work and the words of those we disciple.



Jerry Skiles



Jim Lucas



David Kangni

I work at the BMW Company, and I oversee a small fellowship named The Lighthouse Fellowship in the city of Regensburg south Germany.

In 2003, I attended the SFMI training program and that was when I got to know personally men like Dick York, Jim Lucas, Jerry Skiles and several others. A vision is flowing in my heart for the nations of Africa and especially Ghana as the start point. A careful personal survey in Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe just to mention but few, whose citizens I have had extensive sharing with about the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, reveals that hundreds of the so-called Christian congregations all over these countries are like what Paul describes in Romans 10:1-3. The key root cause in the mainstream churches and the para-churches is the lack of sound and correct biblical foundational teaching and witnessing of the gospel. There is also a rapid invasion of the continent by many Islamic groups who capitalize on the poverty of the African people - hence pumping money for support and lobbying even the so-called Christians with weak foundation in the gospel to convert and embrace the Islamic religion.

My vision is to see the birth of an international missionary training center that will draw West

African saints to training, mobilization and dispatch them for the work in reaching the world with sound and accurate biblical knowledge of the gospel of salvation. The center will also hold seminars and conferences that might be beneficial to already existing denominations relative to sound and accurate teaching of God's Eternal Purpose. It will also assist infant fellowships in the region in discipleship training and how to organize such young local assemblies according to the New Testament teaching and principles.

A secondary vision, which I consider equally of great significance, is a presentation through seminars and workshops that will teach the saints in Africa as to how they could use the resources within their reach to develop and sustain themselves. There is a long-standing mind set in Africa even among the saints - ie. call and wait for aid, and also the continuous exodus of the youth to go west to other developed nations to seek greener pasture, which in many cases is met with disappointment and loss of lives.

Target
Ghana
March, '07

If God allow, Bro. Jim Lucas shall be joining me here in Germany and handle some of the discipleship training course which I shall be conducting in the Regensburg fellowship from November 11, 2006 till Feb. 2007. Then we will travel to Ghana to survey the nation. During our trip we intend to visit: (1) To go north into Ghana and survey the conditions of the Kamara people located near Bole. (2) To visit Kpetoe, a town located at the southeast of Ghana, about 2-hrs drive from the capital where an infant fellowship is springing up. (3) To visit Tarkwa, a town located at the southwest of Ghana and noted for its gold mining which is a target for a strategic ministry. It is about a five-hour drive from the capital. (4) To Lome, the capital of Togo where there is an existing young fellowship which I would like the team to meet. That is about a three-hour drive from Accra. (5) To hold a three-day conference at Accra possibly at the Ghana Police Church conference center.

Jerry Skiles' Africa

This time Mali

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has a program called "Farmers to Farmers," which has selected non-governmental organizations (NGO) to administrate it. These NGOs seek American volunteers from agricultural communities and place them in developing countries to assist in promoting farming practices and principles that will alleviate poverty and encourage long-term development. I have been privileged to be a volunteer with the program in several of my travels overseas. It accomplishes two purposes which are dear to my heart: helping people to discover and use the natural resources God has entrusted to them, and putting me in places where the native populations have not heard or been exposed to Christianity except through negative propaganda. Jesus said in Matt 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

One of the many things I have discovered in my travels abroad is that most of the developing world expects men to mix their faith and actions together, both publicly and privately. It seems, only in the developed western world, that people think a person's faith is supposed to be segregated from public life. I have had few problems sharing my faith in the predominately Moslem countries where I have been.

I returned from an assignment in Mali right before Thanksgiving. It was an interesting and challenging task as I was asked to evaluate and recommend changes for the future of the NGO that sent me. This assignment came about due to an evaluation by USAID, which basically said, despite the NGOs' efforts, there are no significant changes occurring. As I researched this problem among other NGOs and development agencies, my conclusions concurred. Our efforts to see poverty end in Africa and development occur is not succeeding.

My research led me to some conclusions I did not like. In the past, I worked with improving tribal practices with a native tree that produces nuts that women gather and extract oil from. The traditional practice that African women use produces poor quality oil. Cherry and I have worked at communicating these principles to them and how to improve them.

We explain that as quality improves so does the price they will receive. The women are subsistence farmers in abject poverty. Their yearly efforts with the nuts might produce twenty dollars worth of revenue for them.



I strive to see an increase in productivity of at least ten percent with my intervention during these assignments. On this assignment, I realized that even if I am successful with the increase after my intervention, the women will have twenty two-dollars rather than twenty, not near enough to impact their poverty.

My evaluations made me realize that solutions to poverty do not begin with changing practices but in changing attitudes. When individuals change attitudes, it affects their practices, which then affects their poverty. The disciplines to change practices can produce positive short-term results, but people will resort back to old ways when the disciplines or efforts do not give the desired long-term results. This can be understood best by Americans' obesity and dieting. Most Americans who are overweight have dieted at some point in their life, and many have seen positive results. Yet the years go by, and the weight returns and adds. While dieting is needed to solve the weight problem, there is a deeper issue that must be addressed, which is that weight problems begin with wrong attitude and behavior concerning food. A total mental makeover is needed to see lasting change in eating to solve the weight problem. It is the same with poverty.

I left Mali hoping that my efforts were not in vain. I communicated my thesis to those who sent me and hopefully left them with some practical tools to work with in the future. I always go on my missions trusting to be a blessing but return feeling I have gained more than I have given.

Mali reinforced my conviction that change only comes through a work of God in man's heart. As a new year begins for us, let us remember that our prayers to God have an impact on the peace and prosperity of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. The Gospel of Jesus is the root solution to man's problems. Man needs salvation that comes from an act of God! That is the Gospel. God has

acted and now man needs to respond to what God has done.

I am always thankful for the part that every one of you have in this ministry. I trust you enjoy your part in the ministry of the Gospel; I enjoy sharing what I know with those who need to hear.

I will be returning to Ivory Coast, to the Loron and Loma tribes in January for the yearly conference. Pray with me that God will be glorified and that the believers will be encouraged with the teaching and fellowship. I will be meeting with the elders of the Loma village where we lived as well. Our meeting will be concerning issues of thievery, and our relationships with them for the future.

And then in March I will travel to Ghana.

Africa, still the Dark Continent.

But multitudes of people there are receptive to the message of the Gospel. At the same time, they are receptive to the seductive messages of many others.

Islam is on the hunt for those who can be brought under the bondage of its religious legalism.

There are also those that bring another Jesus who vainly guarantees temporal blessing and makes the cruel promise of health, wealth and prosperity, which is appealing to those in poverty.

It is our hope to deploy a team to Ghana in 2008 to work with David Kangni and Jim Lucas, preaching the Gospel, making disciples and preparing national workers.

We are praying the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers. If God is speaking to you about this project, please let us know.

FAMILY BIBLE CONFERENCE

in the Highlands of Jalisco

Our semi-annual family Bible Conference was held this year in Aguascalientes, 3 hours north of Atotonilco. Since the event is sponsored by the churches in La Barca, Atotonilco and Arandas, we had a lot of work to organize it “long-distance.” Ten days before the event we took a team of men there to set up the large circus tent and three army tents. While there, we also assembled ten bunk beds that we had built for the campground’s use. A week before, Linda and another sister from the church here, Cuca, drove there to make arrangements for the meals and purchase many of the needed supplies.

On the first day of the conference, families began to arrive with tents of all sizes. We had anticipated a small number bringing tents, with the majority of attendees in the dorms and army tents. The opposite was the case as tents popped up across the grounds in a plethora of colors, designs and sizes. Three families arrived from Manzanillo, having driven seven hours. The main speaker, with his family and another, arrived after a six-hour trip from Torreón. Thirty adults came from Loreto, only an hour away. Together with believers from La Barca, Arandas, Atotonilco, Jiquilpan, Guadalajara and other communities, around 150 participated in the event.

An unusual experience for many (especially the families from Manzanillo) was that of awakening each morning to the bone-piercing cold of an Aguascalientes’ winter, with frost on the ground and a cold wind icing its way through tent city.

Roberto Eager walked us verse by verse through the book of Colossians under the theme “In Christ.” He laid before us the supremacy, sufficiency and preeminence of Christ and then took us to the implications and impact of those truths as presented in the last two chapters. The teaching was clear, practical and helpful. We were all encouraged and edified.

The church in Arandas had charge of the registration. The church in La Barca organized the

children's classes. Atotonilco organized the publicity and the kitchen. The Briseño church in Guadalajara was responsible for the music. Hector Flores from Atotonilco was the "master of ceremonies." With varied degrees of success, but with noteworthy effort on the part of each congregation, the conference was a group effort and showed how the brethren in the various churches are growing.

Thank you for praying.

A LEADERS' RETREAT in the circle of silence

Westside Baptist Church in Yakima, Washington, along with Bethel Church in Pasco, Washington, sponsored a leaders' retreat for families working in the Circle of Silence with a special emphasis on those in the center of the Circle, the Jalisco Highlands. They chose as their theme "Lifting One Another's Arms." Thirteen families attended. Here is a report.

We listened quietly as the woman who, with her husband, had been at the leaders' retreat shared how God had ministered to her there:

"My husband came home the Monday night before the retreat tired and wounded. He shared how one of the women in the church had attacked him, criticizing him for a dozen perceived offences. As I listened, something within me broke. I had seen my husband unable to sleep for weeks, rising at all hours to pray for the church. I had seen him battle and struggle to see a church planted here. And tonight, I felt I'd reached the end.

"Without telling my husband, I made up my mind. Thursday, when we returned from the retreat for the evening Bible study, I would publicly thank my husband and the church for the opportunity to help in children's classes and in the women's study but then would explain that I was stepping down from all responsibility. I would explain to my husband that I would be his help, his support, but that I wanted to hear nothing about the church. I was set on closing the church out of my life. I carefully thought out the speeches I would give, the things I would say.

"The next day we went to the retreat. Marvin Cole spoke in the first session about working in a tribal group for 12 years before seeing the first convert. I thought, 'How can I be discouraged when we have only been in this town for a few years and have seen several converts?'

"Then Joseph spoke at the next session, and stated that though the Devil is certainly seeking to discourage us, we need to remember that we – all of us at that retreat – are the people God has raised up to take the Good News to unreached communities.

"The women had a separate time together, and tears filled my eyes as I listened to one say that we must remember that God did not just call our husbands to this work. He has called us, as wives, to be part of reaching these unreached cities.

"Healing and hope were ministered to me at this retreat. You came alongside me and lifted up my arms."

As I listened, I thought of all the confusion we had gone through to get here for this event. I was in the US for the Shield of Faith Board Meeting. The organizers were flying in from Washington. We had five flights cancelled on us. We were changed to three different airlines. We arrived in Guadalajara with only half our luggage. We got to the site of the retreat at midnight, when the retreat had started midday.

As I looked at all that, and then at how God had ministered so richly during the days of the retreat, and then as I listened to this woman's stunning story, I saw one thing clearly:

The Enemy had planned to take one couple out of the work, off the field in a key position in the Jalisco Highlands. To accomplish that, he had tried, among other things, to keep back this team of encouragers I saw around me.

No doubt the Lord did many things at this retreat. We heard many say they were greatly blessed, and Linda and I certainly were. But we especially rejoice that the Lord allowed us to get a glimpse of what He did in one couple through this retreat.

Other News from Mexico

Ed and Abby Drysdale

The Drysdales, as most of you know, have just returned to Mexico after a few months of furlough in the States to a new field—a very difficult area where there is virtually no gospel witness—where, until now, they have had difficulty finding someone who would rent them a house.

I have news! We found a house. It's very small but really pretty. We felt like we could live here for a year and let people get to know us as good renters. We hope to fence in the roof (like with a 3 ft. brick wall and 8 ft. of fencing on top of it) and possibly cover part of it since there is no place for the kids to play. We also hope that we can convince the owner to let us add another room on the roof "al cambio de renta" (at renters' expense) so Ed could have an office, but until then we will keep the house Jim and Fran are going to stay in. That way Ed can have an office, and

it can be a meeting hall when needed. I don't think all of our stuff will fit in this house. We will either keep it at the house Jim and Fran are staying in, or we will downsize. This house doesn't have any closets, so we will need to buy 'roperos'. (wardrobes)

Please be praying that we can get our washer and dryer hooked up ASAP. Also I've checked on the phone, and they say it can take months to get one. Please be praying that it will happen much faster than that! I will feel settled when we finally have lingo and email, also a washer.

Abby Drysdale

Jim and Fran Lucas will be traveling to Mexico on December 2nd to minister with the Drysdales. They asked for prayer for safe travel on the trip of approximately 2600 miles. They will return on February 1st.

This may be your opportunity

STRATEGIC MINISTRY HELP NEEDED

NEEDED: One family that will work to coordinate teams that visit the Highlands for outreach, prayer or information. The family chosen will be given to hospitality and gifted in people skills. Job skills include high ability to administrate and organize, a willingness to work with diverse groups, initiative, flexibility and good communication skills. Ability to speak Spanish is not required but would be helpful.

The chosen family will locate in the Jalisco Highlands and will be a liaison between visiting teams (or teams interested in visiting) and full-time workers in the area. The initial commitment will be for two years.

This is a faith ministry, not a salaried position. The chosen family will need to trust the Lord for their support.

This is a very important job, deeply needed for the advance of the Gospel in the Jalisco Highlands. Interested parties, please write evemontqomerymx@yahoo.com.mx or: phone (214) 256 - 4003.

FOR CURRENT INFO, ARTICLES, PHOTOS AND PRAYER REGARDING THE JALISCO HIGHLANDS, check out mexhighlands.org

The Mike Ball Family Loreto, Zacatecas, Mexico.

Hola!!

It's been 3 months since we last wrote. It seems that there's not a whole lot of news to tell. We are thankful to the Lord for His constant care for us, for the life that He imparts to us daily, and for His power to accomplish the task He has set before us—that task being, chiefly, to make disciples. I just read yesterday in the “Companion Bible,” where the author says that the Great Commission of Matthew 28 is not for this dispensation but for the Jews in the last days. How thankful we can be that the apostles did not have such an understanding of dispensationalism and, therefore, did indeed begin to go unto the nations, making disciples. What a task and privilege it is to be involved in making disciples for our Lord. This is a task that only God's Provision, the Holy Spirit of Christ, can accomplish through us. Man can accomplish the task of building churches and establishing ministries without God's provision, and even make disciples, but no man can make disciples of Our Lord without His Provision.

We have been busy with teaching through home Bible studies as well as teaching in the church meetings. Actually, Mike's time of teaching the Word on Sundays has diminished quite a bit, with 2 of the brothers ministering more often. Manolo, on more than one occasion, has brought a series of messages over the course of several Sundays. It is encouraging to see the brothers developing ministries. A couple of the younger brothers in the Lord are sharing the Word around the Lord's supper.

In the home Bible studies, Faith has just begun a discipleship study with an older lady who was saved a while ago when her sister, who was a Christian, passed away. She was so impressed with the differences she saw in the way the brethren celebrated the death that she was moved to give her life to the Lord. Mike has discipleship studies with 3 couples. He also continues to have studies with Victor (mentioned in the last Ball Bearings). Please pray for him as he still does not meet with the saints. Mike has started studies with an American man who is living here in Loreto while waiting for his Mexican wife's legalization papers to come through.

Jose is another man Mike has Bible studies with. He lives out in a nearby village where he is the only believer. He got saved through his nephew who came

to know the Lord while living in Aguascalientes. Please pray the Lord will save others from his village.

On the family front, we are all well, keeping busy with home schooling, etc. T.J. has been in the States with his aunt and uncle working on a car. He hopes to be home soon. Austin is still in the public school, enjoying his Physics class as well as basketball. He has been invited to be on the Physics team. I guess he's not just a jock.... Borden is our faithful one, who always does his best to finish any task given him. He helps keep our homeschoolers on track, reminding them to do their geography, etc. Feilynn just turned 14; she's still a bundle of energy, but more controlled now, and turning into quite a young lady. She helps me a lot with Viana. Chantel has almost caught up to her in height and is a very loving big sister to Viana. Angelina flies through her schoolwork in order to get to play with her myriad friends. Viana is the darling of the family and loves to play outside with her friends. She has several friends her age living right close and visits their homes regularly. She is learning some words of Spanish along with her English. She says “sha sha” for thank you, which sounds more like “gracias.” She loves to wave and say “adios” to all the cars that go by, and the dogs too. A few weeks ago, one little boy she was playing with was asking her “donde esta” (where is it), and she was replying “I know,” which is her way of saying I don't know.

Please pray for the men of the church that they will have a heart to serve the body and learn to love their wives. Please pray for a couple (Jorge and Juaniz) who started to receive studies in their home but because of pressure from Grandma, backed off. They have big problems as he drinks and beats her. They are neighbors to a family in the church. Please pray for Karina, a 19-year-old in the church, who is thinking of getting married to an unsaved man. Thank you for your prayers which are so dear to us. Your fellow-laborers in Christ, the Mike Ball family

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Francois Marcoux Participated in the SFMI Missionary training in 1987. Since that time he has served the Lord in Morroco, Mexico and Canada. He is French-Canadian and fluent in French, Spanish and English. His wife Nohemi is from Mexico. We want to introduce you here to them and the ministry of

Bible Museum



Marcel and Mireille Ouellet



Francois and Nohemi Marcoux

For the past three years the Lord has led my wife Nohemi and I to serve together with Marcel and Mireille Ouellet in a ministry called Bible Expo. It consists of an exhibition of old Bibles and manuscripts, timelines and charts of the plan of God through history, creation charts, etc. It also includes scale models of the Tabernacle and Noah's Ark. Marcel began this ministry approximately 7 years ago.



We usually set up the Bible Expo exhibit in shopping malls, college campuses or fairs and try to continue for a minimum of three days. This allows interested people time to return. We plan these exhibitions with local fellowships of believers in order to encourage them to come and give of their time in witnessing and then to follow-up on persons who have shown interest after we leave.

We seek permission from shopping mall administrators not in the name of any denomination or church but under the name of a nonprofit organization called in French "Musée de la Bible" (Bible museum) with the goal of presenting the Bible as a historical document and helping people visually understand its contents.

After we had prayed for many years, in the spring of 2006 the Lord provided us with a 1984 Presvost passenger bus. We are presently in the process of converting the bus to accommodate about 10 people or more. With the help of other saints that the Lord has sent to assist Marcel, we have redone the flooring, siding and roofing, installed a kitchen, a separate toilet and shower and related plumbing plus two

bedrooms in the back. At the time of writing, there is still work to be done in the bedrooms and heating. Insuring the bus and an inspection will then be required before being able to register it.

Marcel has set up Bible Expo in many cities of the province of Quebec as well as Prince-Edward Island. In January 2006, the Lord opened a door to present Bible Expo in Torreon, Mexico in a shopping mall and two universities. Bible Expo can be presented in French, English or Spanish, so we can basically set it up anywhere in Canada, the US and Mexico.

The response we get varies according to the places we go, but generally it is always very encouraging. The response in Mexico was really overwhelming, exceeding all our expectations. We are planning another trip to Mexico for the month of February 2007. Dates are already scheduled in the spring of 2007 to present Bible Expo at the University of Ottawa and Prince-Edward Island.



Normally we try to guide people through Bible Expo with a sequence. We usually begin with the Plan of God through a history table, where we give an overview of God's Eternal purpose, the Fall, the value and meaning of the blood in the Old Testament sacrifices, the calling of Abraham and God's promise to him and to his descendants, Israel as a chosen witness to the nations, their deliverance from Egypt, their wandering in the Wilderness and the Conquest and the dividing of the Land. We deliberately do not go in detail at this point with the creation and the flood events, keeping that

continued on back cover

From Noah Webster's Dictionary, 1828



FAITH

1. Belief; the assent of the mind to the truth of what is declared by another, resting on his authority and veracity, without other evidence; the judgment that what another states or testifies is the truth. I have strong faith or no faith in the testimony of a witness, or in what a historian narrates. 2. The assent of the mind to the truth of a proposition advanced by another; belief, on probable evidence of any kind.

3. In theology, the assent of the mind or understanding to the truth of what God has revealed. Simple belief of the scriptures, of the being and perfections of God, and of the existence, character and doctrines of Christ, founded on the testimony of the sacred writers, is called historical or speculative faith; a faith little distinguished from the belief of the existence and achievements of Alexander or of Cesar.

4. *Evangelical, justifying, or saving faith, is the assent of the mind to the truth of divine revelation, on the authority of God's testimony, accompanied with a cordial assent of the will or approbation of the heart; an entire confidence or trust in God's character and declarations, and in the character and doctrines of Christ, with an unreserved surrender of the will to his guidance, and dependence on his merits for salvation. In other words, that firm belief of God's testimony, and of the truth of the gospel, which influences the will, and leads to an entire reliance on Christ for salvation. Being justified by*

faith. Rom. V. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. xi. For we walk by faith, and not by sight. 2Cor. v. With the heart man believeth to righteousness. Rom. x.

5. The object of belief; a doctrine or system of doctrines believed; a system of revealed truths received by Christians. They heard only, that he who persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. Gal. i.

6. The promises of God, or his truth and faithfulness. Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? Rom. iii.

7. An open profession of gospel truth. Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. Rom. i.

8. A persuasion or belief of the lawfulness of things indifferent. Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Rom. xiv.

9. Faithfulness; fidelity; a strict adherence to duty and fulfillment of promises. Children in whom is no faith. Deut. xxxii.

10. Word or honor pledged; promise given; fidelity.

11. Sincerity; honesty; veracity; faithfulness.

12. Credibility or truth.

(American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster, 1828)

Would we find such a definition of faith in a modern dictionary?

Following are three quotes of this wise and godly man; one concerning our language and two concerning our form of government.

“The majority of the general public is unaware that Dictionaries today follow the practice of “description” as opposed to “prescription,” -- the idea that the popular (mis)use of language should be allowed to alter the established meanings of words, to suit the wants and habits of each successive generation. The danger of this practice is the removal of vast bodies of knowledge and wisdom from public access.”

“When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers, ‘just men who will rule in the fear of God.’ The preservation of [our] government depends on the faithful discharge of this Duty; if the citizens neglect their Duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted.”

“If there is a possibility of founding a perfectly free government, and giving it permanent duration, it must be raised upon the pure maxims, and supported by the undecaying practice, of that religion which breathes ‘peace on earth, and good will to men.’ That religion is perfectly republican . . . it is calculated to humble the pride and allay the discontents of men . . . it restrains the magistrate from oppression, and the subject from revolt . . . it secures a perfect equality of rights, by enjoining a discharge of all social duties, and a strict subordination to law. The universal prevalence of that religion, in its true spirit, would banish tyranny from the earth.”

continued from page 14

for the last table which deals specifically with these issues.



Then we lead visitors to the table where we have the model of the Tabernacle to a scale of 1:75. All three tables were designed according to the posts of the outer court of

the Tabernacle. There we enter into more details as to the meaning of the animal sacrifices and the altar of burnt offerings, the laver and the Tent of Meeting with its divisions and furniture. With the accompanying charts we then apply this to “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” explaining how Christ came to accomplish all these types in his death on the cross and bodily resurrection from among the dead.

At this point, many people have expressed to us that for the first time in their life they have begun to understand the relation between the Old and the New Testament. One man told Marcel: “I have been 60 years in the Catholic church and I have understood more in this half hour than in all those years.” One man in a shopping mall in Mexico, all excited with a ray of light in his eyes, told me, “Thank you! Thank you! God has revealed himself to me through you in such a mundane place,” and he departed almost literally jumping for joy.

We then link the Tabernacle with the two subse-

quent temples of Solomon and Herod.

Finally, we lead visitors on to the Creation and Flood table, where we have a chart of the 6-day



Creation Week, a timeline from Adam to Christ, a model of Noah’s Ark (1:100), some fossils, old Torah manuscripts and Bibles. We also

have a section with a few chairs where people can view a DVD presentation on the subject of creation, the history of the Bible or other important topics.

If you would like to discuss the possibility of having Bible Expo presented in your area or would simply like to have more information, please contact us at:

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