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Things SFMI Wants to Preserve



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Things SFMI Wants to Preserve

By Dick York



Since its beginning The Shield of Faith has considered the work of the Lord a non-competitive arena; those who preach the true gospel are members of the same body, with the same head, proclaiming the same kingdom. They are neither competitors nor adversaries, but co-workers. However, we hold certain distinctives. Let's consider some of those principles that we feel are important to conserve.

1. The New Testament Church Vision.

It is too late for us to "start" a work. God is there before us, and we can only do what he is already engaged in. When God's plan is finally finished, it will be a church from every kindred, tongue, people and nation without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. It will be an assembly of redeemed sons of God, perfectly conformed to the image of Christ who is himself the express image of God the Father.

Church simply means called out. It consists of those who were called out of this world's societies when they heard his voice in the preaching of the Gospel, which is the Word of God by which men and women become saved. The church, therefore, exists wherever the Gospel has been "heard." If God, then, sends one of his saints to a land or a place where there are no believers, he is the first member of the church in that place. His mandate is to preach the Gospel. Those who hear and in whom faith is born are added to the church. God began the work before that saint arrived.

We, the saints, are, so to speak, the bacteria of an infectious, beneficial (anti) disease that travels around the world wherever we go. Our work is to infect, not to cure. But we must be perfectly clear about the Gospel we preach and what the Bible teaches about what the church is and how it operates. Somehow, as Jesus taught, there must be a sharp line drawn between the commandments of God and the traditions of men. The former addresses the problem; the latter contributes to it.

Many godly men in the previous generation with whose latter years our early years have overlapped shared their observations, denounced encroaching errors, cried out their alarming

prognostications and described in negative terms the conditions the present church largely embraces as the spiritual norm. What we do not want to do is dismiss their anointed warnings as the paranoid ranting of old men who felt threatened by change. These were men, like Israel's prophets, who tried to call the church to repentance. We want to be among those who have heard that call and responded appropriately.

In our vision for "New Testament Church" principles, it would be counter-productive to perpetuate, or leave unmolested, the tradition of a clergy-laity system in newly birthed congregations that God may allow us to influence or oversee. It must be clear, according to our analogy of bacteria spreading a beneficial (anti) disease, that we are all bacteria and equally infectious. Although there is, of necessity, oversight by a plurality of appointed elders, there are no lords over God's people. Every child of God, being gifted, must learn to be led by the Spirit of God and have liberty within the context of the assembly to minister accordingly. He must learn to exercise forbearance, longsuffering, self-control and submission to authority in order that the Holy Spirit can coordinate the corporate ministry of the assembly without the exercise of legalistic controls.

Part of today's error in the modern church is in the interpretation of words. "Synonyms," which are not synonyms at all, are misused in describing legitimate parts of church order. These non-synonyms include: entertain/edify; worship/music; Christian/disciple; pastor/elder; obedience/legalism; attendance/participation. Most of this linguistic tangle can be shaken out if we carefully apply the Word of God. In any case, it is important that we do not carry the seeds of our home-grown syncretism in our baggage.

2. Verbal Inspiration of Scripture and the Unnecessity of Multiplied Versions.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If every word of scripture is inspired, the preservation of those words, insofar as is possible, when translating from one language to another is imperative.

The modern method of dynamic equivalence would seem to demonstrate that the words are not as important as are the ideas they formulate. Often, however, in the interpretation of ideas the point is missed or nuances of the idea are overlooked; and the idea written by the translator is not the same as the thought intended by the author. As a result, a distortion is produced.

In 1611, translators produced what we know as the KJV. For the next 350 years it was recognized in the English-speaking world as “The Bible.” Its authority was unquestioned in the church; and even the world regarded it as a weighty document whose precepts commanded respect. It was the moral foundation of the Western world.

Of course, the truth has always had its antagonists; and in the nineteenth century a godless element among religious German intellectuals mounted an aggressive undertaking to dispel the moral restraints of God’s Word (Psalm 2). This movement of biblical higher criticism sought to poison the well by casting doubt upon the authority of scripture. They accomplished their objective by revising the Greek text of the New Testament, and from that revision producing a new version of English scripture. With the aid of the revised manuscripts and the method of dynamic equivalence, since 1950 more than one hundred and thirty revisions of the Bible have been produced, each one moving us a little farther from the original words recorded by holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The common excuse for this constant revision is “to make the scriptures more easily understood by keeping the language up-to-date.” But it is ludicrous to believe that each new translation is justified by language change. What *has* been accomplished, however, is the almost total dismissal of the Bible as any kind of authority: historical, scientific, or moral. It has become simply another piece of religious literature among many.

One of our responsibilities is to contribute to the promotion of a renewed confidence in the Word of God, not by denouncing the insipid but popular versions that are so widely used, or those that use them, but by using exclusively the AV and encouraging by example its use by others. It should be our authority and our tool, and we should be able to confidently explain why when asked.

3. Principle of Faith

Jesus was no ordinary man. At the age of thirty, He laid aside his carpentry tools and began to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. He called men to follow him to a life that their peers neither embraced nor understood. They were called to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” trusting that all necessary things would be added unto them. They went forth in obedience to his commandment depending upon his promise. Never had their means of support been so reliable or its source so inexhaustible.

Two things contributed to their ability to get the work done: one was hearing his voice, thereby knowing it was his will; and the other was being assured of his promise to sustain their obedience with his provision. They did not need to know HOW it would come, but only WHO would provide it.

As a mission, we want our work to have the same seal upon it and to be evidence that the Lord Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. Ours is not an enterprise about which there is nothing of the supernatural. Our plans are not our own, neither are our methods. This does not mean we should not be business-like or thoughtful about how we do the work he has assigned us, but it should mean that what we are engaged in is obviously his work and could not be done unless he were doing it. Each of us must be committed to dependency upon the Lord himself.

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4. Defining a Missionary

The word missionary is never used in the Bible. The biblical title is apostle.

There are actually three kinds of apostles mentioned in scripture. Two of those kinds are unique; they will never be duplicated. The third kind defines what we call missionaries.

An apostle is a “sent one;” the premiere apostle was the Lord Jesus Christ. He is called the high priest and apostle of our profession. The commission for which he was sent, and which he accomplished, was to reconcile us to God, once for all.

The second kind of apostle was depicted in the twelve disciples that Jesus chose to follow him, whom he called apostles. They, along with the prophets, became the foundation of the Church. They are unique and irreplaceable.

The third kind is they who are sent out by the Holy Spirit from the churches to proclaim the Gospel to every creature and make disciples in every nation. This is an ongoing breed that will continue to multiply until every nation has heard the Gospel witness; and then shall the end come. Today we call these missionaries.

The word defines the man it describes. A missionary is a man on a mission. He must know what that mission is. When a missionary has defined his mission, he must then have a commitment to fulfilling it, an unshakeable dedication.

Some common conceptions that people have of missionaries are superficial because they are simplistic observations of what their subjects were doing at some specific isolated juncture of their work. Paul made tents for a period of time in Corinth; was that what Paul's mission consisted of, making tents? During another period he taught for two years in a school. Was he, then, a school teacher?

Those things that may occupy the missionary's time from day to day, whether he is a pilot, a doctor, a mechanic or a teacher, do not define a mission or a missionary. Sometimes, for some people, those things tend to obscure the real substance of his mission; and sometimes that's true of even the missionary himself.

The work of the missionary is redemptive: the proclamation of the Gospel and the demonstration of

the life of the Lord Jesus in whatever circumstance he may find himself.

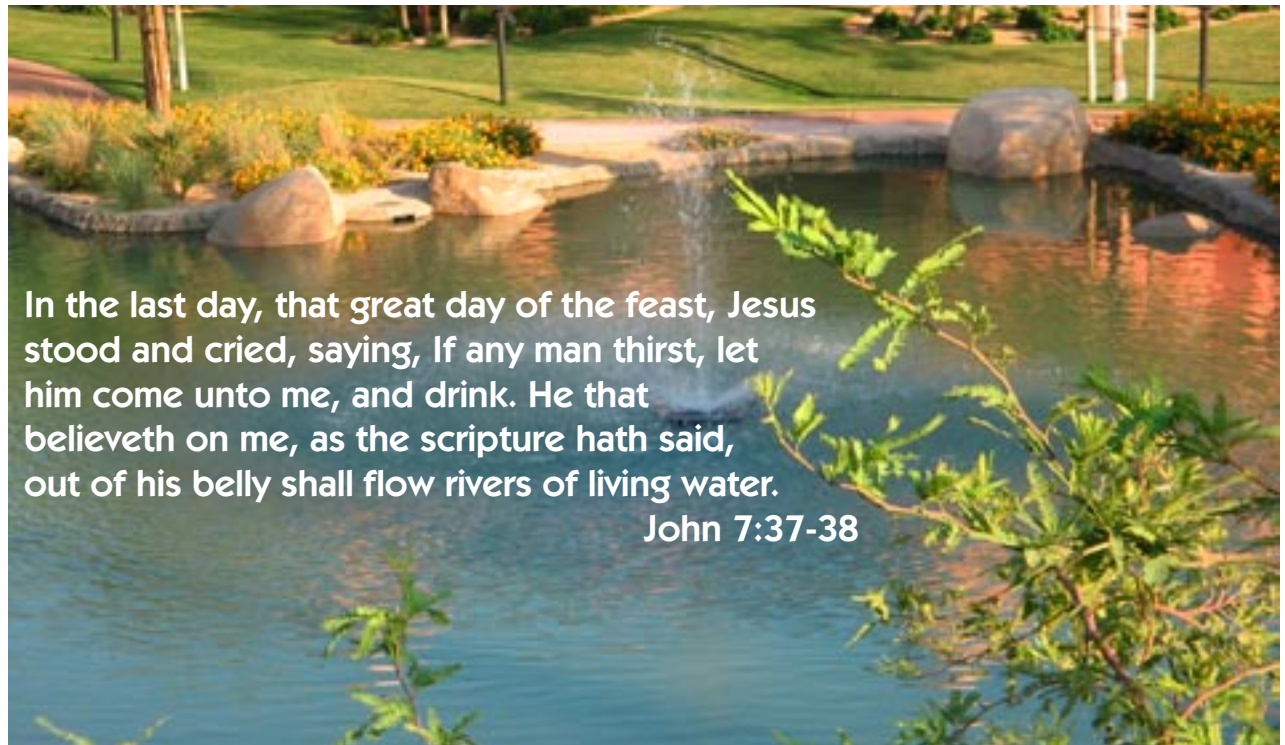
5. Disciple-making; Resulting in Churches

The commission that Jesus gave to his disciples was, "Go, and teach all nations (make disciples in every nation), teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And the promise that accompanied that command was, "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

According to the Word of God, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. The Church is the body of Christ; therefore in principle there should be no change from one generation to another. Today, our contemporarily over-used word, especially as regards missions, is "church planting." The Bible doesn't say anything about that; it doesn't have to. That should be the natural outcome of disciple making.

Jesus said, "Make disciples." The apostle Paul perpetuated the idea by saying, "[teach] faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." That's a simple paraphrase of Matthew 28:19,20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Then they were to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost and teach them to observe "all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

A church is like a salad. It contains many ingredients that grow in the garden. Someone planted



In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

John 7:37-38

each of those ingredients, but no one planted salad. The ingredients which, when joined together make a salad, represent disciples which, when built together, make a church.

The farmer doesn't plant salad. In like manner we don't plant churches; we make disciples, and Jesus builds His church. He is the chef. We are the planters of the seed that produces the ingredients. The church in any place is the assembling of disciples, and the work of the church is making more disciples. But disciples of whom? The goal is disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, sheep who will hear His voice and follow Him. The believers in Antioch were simply disciples before they were known as Christians.

The distinction between "discipling" and "church planting" may seem trivial; but it is important because of the consequences. Time has proven that it is possible to plant "churches" without true disciples, whose vision will often become better buildings, bigger congregations, advantageous affiliations, even, in some cases, denominational competition when as yet the number of believers is so small as to be unnoticed in the national population.

Or we can simply preach the Gospel with the view of making disciples of the Lord Jesus, then teaching those who believe to observe all things that the Lord commanded and trust Him to build His church.

Their vision will be to teach faithful men to teach others also, and they are likely to be less hindered by the smallness of their congregation or the lack of buildings or beneficial affiliations.

As in Paul's day there is still room for concern about the churches and the view some Christians have of "church." To them it may be something they can stand aside from and point to and expect it to do things that they are not a part of. But the believers are responsible to multiply, to be the example, to set the pace, to demonstrate what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. We are the gifted ones from among whom God calls His apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. We are the church. We are to bring forth fruit after our own kind, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded us. This is not a formality it is a family. People are to be born into it by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. When they are saved, they are added to the church—not an organization, but an organism.

Our attitude is important, our view of the church, how we see our role and our view of the great commission. What will I do if I go abroad to the mission field, or if I stay home and labor here? Will I make disciples? Or will I plant churches? If I make strong disciples, strong churches will evolve—He will build them. If my view is to plant churches, it does not necessarily follow that there will be strong disciples.

Strong disciples are not those who have merely impeccably orthodox theology. They are those who also cherish godly character, the fruit of the Spirit, grace, forbearance and longsuffering. They are those who present their bodies a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God. They are those whose goal is to be not conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their mind that they might manifest the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

6. History

Our original approach to the work and what

we still teach in the training program involves five "steps," namely: 1. Evangelism, 2. Follow-up, 3. Conferences, 4. Training, 5. Sending.

Evangelism, includes every legitimate way of getting as much of the word as possible to as many people as possible as often as possible. Its objective is

not to get decisions for Christ on the first contact, but to plant the seed of the word line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, that the Holy Spirit might put the message together in their hearts and produce saving faith.

Follow-up includes continued communication, the extending of fellowship, drawing them into Bible studies individually and in groups, baptizing them, teaching them to assemble regularly to break bread, to minister to other believers and to recognize that this is the church.

Conferences bring the churches together to expand their horizons, to encourage vision and cooperation and to build cohesion among the larger body of believers.

Training involves those who catch the vision and sense a specific calling of God to be separated to the work of the Gospel.

Sending is when that calling is recognized by the other saints and they are separated to the work.

This, I believe, should still be our pursuit.

Their vision will be to teach faithful men to teach others also,...believers are responsible to multiply, to be the example, to set the pace, to demonstrate what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.



Africa's Spiritual Need

Africa is a very colorful continent that holds any first-time visitor spellbound with her diversity of landscape, jungles, deserts, highlands, farmlands, and vast range lands for cattle. Her spectacular variety of animals is the best in the world.

The diversity of the people is likewise fascinating. You will meet fine doctors, nurses, lawyers, and people with most of the trades of craft. Businessmen from your hawkers on the streets selling peanuts, fruits, socks, handkerchiefs, etc. to your adventurous import/exporters, of coffee, tea, and automobiles.

In many of the cities you will find a growing middle class of people that are struggling to form some stability and grasping at every opportunity to better themselves. There are a great number of poor people all over Africa; they are seen in the cities and villages and almost anywhere. Then there are those who are beyond being poor; they are in poverty, destitute, calling out for help.

The people are very diverse, thousands of tribes that prefer to speak their own mother tongue. However, most Africans speak about three languages. Each tribe has distinct customs and way of life; each tribe has its own unique form of dress or lack of dress.

Africa is rich in natural resources—land being its largest—the second largest continent in the world. There has been development of the land, but there is much more that could be developed. She has gold, silver, diamonds, timber, fish, and produce. Africa could produce much more because it has the work force, millions of people who are capable of doing great things if they are given the opportunity and training. Africa has suffered from exploitation for many generations.

I have set my pen to this paper for one purpose only and that is the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. The church was given a great mandate, which is to preach the gospel to every creature and to make disciples in all nations [tribes] (Rev.5:9).

Thanks to Jesus there has been considerable advancement of the gospel into the tribes of Africa. Many of these tribes have had the gospel for more than a hundred years. The discouraging news is that after such a long time, they haven't managed to take

the good news to the remaining unreached tribes.

The great commission was not given to just a few select people but is a God-given responsibility of every believer in Christ Jesus. These tribes must be reached; and we need to do everything in our power to reach them for Jesus, who is worthy to receive the reward of his suffering.

If we are serious about reaching them, let us consider the things that are hindering this massive church from doing her God-given mandate. She is a sleeping giant. The hindrances go back to the traditions that the gospel was wrapped up in. The gospel came into Africa with a lot of excess baggage. The gospel in itself is pure and powerful, and it has made a significant change for all who have believed upon Jesus our Lord. The teaching of men, however, clouds the truth of God's Word, and the traditions of men are like huge weights that are difficult to lay aside once they become ingrained in the heart.

The missionaries came from countries where they lived in comfort and abundance. When they saw the condition of the poor Africans, they had compassion and brought aid in abundance. Their compassion is appreciated, but they didn't have the advantage that we have; we can see the results. Hindsight is always much easier to see than foresight. It is always good for us to be generous and compassionate of heart; nevertheless, we shouldn't always give to every need we see. There are times when love dictates us to say no. Anyone who has had the privilege to bring up children can understand this. The new in the faith were conditioned to look to the foreigners for all their needs. This robbed them of a very important lesson: God would supply all their needs. He is not a respecter of persons. It is human nature to take the easy way; they simply asked from abroad.

Their dignity was also lost in the process; begging became the norm. There was a dependency of not only the physical things they needed but spiritual guidance as well. The churches from abroad had most of the say in the management of the affairs in the African churches.

Because of this unbiblical hierarch ruling over them, they failed to learn to be self governing, which is the biblical way. Every congregation of



believers is under the headship of Jesus Christ, their great Shepherd. Neither did they learn to be self supporting and least of all self propagating.

Our Lord Jesus is a wise and wonderful master builder of his church. We know he will finish the final touches of perfecting his Bride. The work of the ministry of taking the gospel to every tribe is the exercise that will form the spiritual muscle of the African church. In order for the church to send out missionaries and support them, it will need to be self-supporting and self-governing. When the church shoulders these responsibilities, all the members in the congregation will be involved. They will have learned the blessing of giving and what it means “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” Their integrity will be restored, and their testimony of love will bring glory to God.

Our Lord Jesus has managed to reserve a remnant of wonderful faithful people in Africa, and at the time of this writing things are changing rapidly. Our Father is just about to reveal many more precious men and women of God, these will take the challenge to live lives that truly bring honor to him.

I just read a testimony that you will appreciate. It is found in the book, *When Charity Destroys Dignity*. It is written by Glenn J. Schwartz.

Don't Chase Buffaloes!

Several years ago I (Glen Schwartz) did a seminar in Capetown, and a pastor shared his story. Several years before, he had been in North America preaching in various churches. On one occasion he phoned home to find out how his family was doing. His wife was not there, but his sister-in-law answered the phone. Her first words were, “Oh pastor, I'm glad you called. I have a message for you. By the way your family is fine, everything is fine here; but I have a message for you. I had a dream the other night,

and God told me to give you this message: “While you are in America don't chase buffaloes.”

This was a rather strange message, so the pastor hung up the phone and said, “Thank you Lord for the message; but I have no idea what it means.” He went on preaching. One Sunday evening he preached in a church where he was given the collection as his honorarium. They simply gave him the money that came in rather than writing out a check. He took the money back to the place where he was staying and began to count it. In the process, he came to a five-cent piece which in America is called a “buffalo nickel.” He looked at the buffalo and said, “That is the meaning of the message. I am not here to get money.”

So he said, “Thank you Lord. I got the message.” Little did he know the importance of that message, because the very next morning he was taken for breakfast by a wealthy businessman. The pastor said, “I don't know how wealthy the man was, but he owned four airplanes.”

As they were having breakfast, the businessman said, “Pastor I liked the things I heard you saying in the church last night. I have a lot of money, and I would like to give you some. How much do you want? Just name the amount and I will write the check for any amount you say.”

At this point the pastor was being tested; he knew he was not supposed to “chase buffaloes.” So he turned to his businessman and said, “Thank you very much, but God in his providence cares for me and my people in his own way.” The pastor then said, “I didn't get any money from that man.”

He finished preaching in North America and went to England where he boarded a flight for Johannesburg. On the plane he found himself sitting beside a white South African businessman. The businessman asked the pastor what he did and he said, “I am a pastor of a small congregation in

Capetown.” At this the businessman replied, “I am a member of a church that supports apartheid. I don’t agree with the policy of my church or my government, so I won’t give money to my church. I would rather give it to you. How much do you want? Just name the amount, and I will write the check.”

Again the pastor said, “Thank you very much; but God takes care of me and my people in his own way.” The pastor said he didn’t get any money from that man either. Instead, he went back to Capetown, and the small congregation he was decided to build a new sanctuary. They gave all the money necessary to build their new building. Then he said as he smiled, “And we found that we didn’t need any ‘buffaloes’ from America to do it.” One can only imagine what would have happened to that congregation if he had presented them with two checks representing hundreds of thousands of dollars from those well meaning businessmen. All too often such goodness of the heart has destroyed local giving initiative in many parts of the world.

My wife Francille and I are returning to Africa. Before we were in East Africa; this time the target is West Africa—Ghana, in particular. While I was in Ghana in March of 2007, we registered a missionary training school. It is called, “His Vision Mission.” Two fine Ghanan Brothers are on the board of the school: David Kangni and Isaac Toffa. They both have a genuine love for Christ Jesus and high hopes of seeing the Lord use their people in the work of the Lord.

Our mission is very simple: we want to preach the gospel and make disciples. We believe there will be faithful brothers and sisters that will make themselves available for mission work. They will need training; we are hoping to have a place with enough acreage for a farm where we can provide this training (a two-year course). The training will be in-depth Bible study, Old and New Testament. Lord willing, when they leave, they will have good knowledge of the Word of God. Included will be cross-cultural training, for entering the unreached tribes. A good work ethic will be taught and practiced. There will be teaching on how to use the African resources. The goal for the school is for it to support itself and be totally operated by Africans.

Along with my wife we will have on the team Skip Voetberg and family, Tim Spurling, and Janelle Nye.

By God’s grace Tim Spurling and Francille and I will be departing about the ninth of January, 2008. The rest will be

joining us soon after. We request you to consider praying for the team.

GHANA: Things to pray for.

1. For favor with the government.
2. For the Lord Jesus to give us favor with the church leadership in the evangelical churches.
3. For seventy disciple makers: African, American, Mexican, or people from any other country in the world, but we need seventy dedicated men to make disciples throughout the country.
4. For a facility for a missionary training school, a boot camp where men can be prepared to reach the unreached tribes. We need enough property for a farm, so that the school can be self supporting.
5. For the African believers to get the vision and an understanding that God will use them to reach these tribes, and pray they will begin to develop their resources to support this ministry.
6. For the glory of God. Pray that within a few years we can see all the unreached tribes in Ghana with a witness of Christ.
7. For the glory of God. Let us pray that it won’t stop there, but the Ghanan believers would take the gospel to many unreached tribes in many parts of the world and that other African countries would do the same.

Does this sound like something that you believe would bring glory to God? If the answer is yes, then please join with us in prayer and be a fellow labor in getting the gospel to the many tribes that still haven’t heard the good news of the Lord Jesus.

James Lucas

If you want to contact us, phone: 541-576-3004 or e-mail: hisvisionmission@yahoo.com





Faith and Faithfulness

By Steve Montgomery



In Luke 17:5-10, we read the following exchange between the disciples and their Lord:

“And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.”

“Increase our faith,” the disciples pleaded. Their petition is echoed by a multitude of believers today that desire to become either Great Men or Great Women of Faith. The disciples saw the stunning works the Lord Jesus was doing and wanted to do the same. “If Jesus is doing these works by faith, and we can’t seem to do them, then obviously we must need a greater quantity of faith.” This reasoning is reflected in a myriad of books and sermons with titles like *Ten Steps to Increasing Your Faith*, *How to Get More Faith* or *Greater Faith in Five Simple Steps*. So the disciples question is no big surprise to us.

But Jesus’ response is a stunning surprise.

For what He tells them is that the quantity of their faith is not the issue! Lack of quantity is not the problem for the disciples, for even what might be judged the smallest amount of faith is sufficient to accomplish gloriously grand works.

So if quantity is not the issue, what is?

Jesus continues:

“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

“And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

“Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”

Jesus tells the twelve that the issue is not the *quantity* of their faith but the *quality*. Jesus tells

them that the issue is not *faith* but *faithfulness*. The true man of faith is a faithful man.

“Man of faith” sounds like a pretty exciting title, conjuring up pictures of miracles and impressive accomplishments, served up daily as the normal fare.

“Faithful man” does not sound nearly as exciting. It brings to mind more the man who continues consistently in the routine of life, doing what is set before him to do with the attitude of a servant.

Yet it is the second picture that Jesus invokes when He talks to the disciples about faith. Faith is more related to obedience than to impressive accomplishments and has more to do with *work* than *works*, more to do with *serve* than *show*, more to do with *duty* than *dynamism*.

Denny Gunderson, in his book *The Leadership Paradox*, relates the story of a caravan caught in the midst of a suffocating sand storm. Blinded by millions of microscopic missiles, the animals are barely able to move, let alone find their way to the walled city ahead. In this moment of crisis, the family servant, bowed down by the waves of desert tide, makes his way to the head of the caravan. Feeling through the wind-borne sand, he finds the ropes and begins to lead, guide, pull and persuade the animals forward. Each step is a battle as the sand seeks to covers both animal and servant. Insistent, the servant slogs through mountains of shifting sand, as at the same instant more sand pours down on them and swirls around them. He pushes on toward a goal that seems now little more than a dream, an ephemeral hope some undefined distance ahead.

With the relentless sand blotting out the sun, it is impossible to judge the passing of time; but after what seems an eternity but may be only an hour, the family on the caravan catches a glimpse of a wall, a gate, a roof.

Agonizing steps and minutes later, the howling winds and beating sands are quieted by high city walls as they pass through the gate.

As the family stumbles gratefully from the caravan, they encounter a tragic sight: their faithful servant face down in the sand, dead, rope still dangling from his hand, clothes, scarf, sandals

blanketed in sand. The story illustrates an intriguing piece of middle eastern etymology, the word “diakonos” is one of the most common words for *minister* in the New Testament. *Dia* is a Greek word meaning through or from one side to the other (as diameter), while *konos* may be translated as dust or earth (as “shake off the dust of your feet may be translated as dust or earth). A man of faith is a faithful man, a man who by patient continuance

seeks to lead those he serves through the storms of opposition, resistance and doubt, and bring them safely to their goal, to the glory of God. Proverbs 20:6 affords us a glimpse into the very heart of God, where we hear a deep desire expressed: “Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: *but a faithful man who can find?*” The great need in all of our lives is not an increase in our faith, but an increase in our faithfulness.

Mexico Conference Report

By Steve Montgomery

The joke goes like this:

A dog says, “You feed me; you caress me; you house me. You must be God.”

A cat says, “You feed me; you caress me; you house me. I must be God.”

Thus, from this little joke, we titled our bi-annual conference, “Cat Theology or Dog Theology?: A Serious Call to a God-centered View of Life.” Francisco Presenda, representing the ministry Unveiling His Glory, presented a series of teachings on the difference between a view of a God who exists to serve us and the God of the Bible, Who has saved us to serve Him. We were called to review our teaching, our music, our decisions and our view of the world based on a God-centered perspective. The final session presented the fulfilling of the Great Commission as a primary objective of the church of Jesus Christ and reminded us that the principle motivation is not pity for those who have never heard but a desire to see God receive the maximum glory.

150 people from congregations in Arandas, Tepatitlan, Guadalajara, Jiquilpan, La Barca, San Jose, Manzanillo and Atotonilco enjoyed the exposition and the fellowship. Arandas took responsibility for the schedule and the meal preparation, while Tepatitlan (a congregation that didn’t even exist 7 months ago!) was the host church.



During an open time, a family from Atotonilco stepped to the front. Ricardo introduced his wife and children (pictured left), then explained, “I can’t sing or play an instrument, and we are all too new in the Lord to know many verses by memory. And I certainly can’t preach to you! I simply want all of you to know that we have decided to follow the Lord Jesus and count it a privilege to be here among you.”

The Sunday after the conference, a brother shared this testimony: “My mother died when I was young, leaving behind several of us children, including my little sister, who has Down’s Syndrome. My dad, an alcoholic, sought solace in drinking, and I grew up resenting what had happened. Even after I came to Christ, I continued to struggle with my mom’s untimely death. “How can we say God is just, when it is manifestly not true?” I wondered. Then at this conference, Francisco called us to see things from God’s perspective. Life is not fair, but God is just. I saw how my dad, who had not treated my mother well, came to see what he had lost. I saw how I had enjoyed many years with my mom and how what she had taught us held us together after she was gone. I even saw how many of the things she taught me prepared me for the Gospel. I see now that God is just; and He does what is right, for His glory.”

Thank you for praying for this event and the fruit

from it. We trust this will redound to the glory of God in the advance of the Good News in the Jalisco

Highlands and throughout the Circle of Silence.



One of the children's classes.

Meet the Board:

I Am Nothing; My Life Is Yours

The Personal Testimony of Jim Miller



I was born and raised a Catholic and attended seven years of Catholic seminary. In 1968 problems surrounded my life when I left the seminary in July, enrolled in a public college, and continued my education with a military deferral.

In the fall of 1968 the military switched from a draft system to a lottery system which allowed no deferrals. Having just left the seminary, I decided to enlist in the Air Force before I was inducted into the Army, shipped to Vietnam, and expected to carry and fire a gun.

I became a Vietnamese linguist, so my overseas assignment was set. During my more than 40 combat missions on a reconnaissance plane, fear

terrorized me as I considered my apparent hopeless condition. I didn't know what to do. My wife and I attended regular church services while in Okinawa, but my life (our life) remained in shambles.

In November 1971, I received orders that would relocate me on a remote base in Thailand. Talk of alcoholism, drug addiction, and marital unfaithfulness were all I heard about this tour of duty. To say the least, I was greatly terrified with fear strangling my life. I believed I would become one of the statistics.

While on leave at home in the States before leaving for Thailand, I was reintroduced to the Bible; and I knew that this book held the answer to my dilemma. As I was about to board my flight from Portland, Oregon to Travis AFB, I told my wife I was determined to find the answer we both needed and were searching for.

When I arrived at Travis AFB, I happened to

Continued on back page



Missionary Reports

News From Mexico

Mike and Faith Ball

The brethren here are doing well for the most part. We see some growth in us all. The Lord is teaching us how to love one another in new ways, new to us, that is. Juan Jose (one of those involved in ministry in the church) and his wife, Myrna, have had some problems getting along. They were open to some exhortation and teaching that seems to be bringing some fruit in their lives. They need your prayers that they would learn to love one another and be a team to train their kids together.

Manolo has had some good ministry concerning love. This last time he exhorted us to love and care for one another as a mother cares for her children. We must be concerned for one another's growth and spiritual needs.

We continue to go out every Wednesday evening to preach door to door. There are four of us that do this. Toño and Javier are very motivated to do this.

I am preaching door to door and in the streets in Villa Garcia, a small town 30 minutes away, 3 times a week. Also other days that I have time I am doing the same in the nearest subdivision to us. In Villa Garcia I have been invited to hold Bible studies in a home of a couple that has held them there in the past. I would be able to invite anybody that wanted to come to their home for these studies. I just met these people last Thursday and hope to start this very soon. Please pray for this couple. I believe that they are, at this time, unsaved.

Thanks for your prayers and love for us,

Mike Ball

Ed & Abby Drysdale

We are encouraged. For the first time last night we had people show up for a Sunday meeting in our home. We decided to hold the meeting at 7 pm to see if we could eliminate their biggest excuse—work. Efraim and Rosa came with their 6 children. I've been having Bible studies with them and things were going well. Then Efraim began to have a difficult time making it a priority. Rosa has remained interested. It was exciting to see them both participating.

Along with Efraim and Rosa came Sandra and her young daughter. Sandra is a neighbor of Efraim and Rosa, and just recently we've begun a Bible study in her home. On our last visit she told Abby

and I that she has been eavesdropping on our Bible study with Efraim and Rosa. She would hide on her balcony so that we wouldn't see her. Sandra was raised as a Jehovah's Witness and has come to reject their religion do to the lack of "witness." She is hungry to know the truth. She is a young widow supporting a little girl of 6.

We have come to the decision to leave off a Bible study that has been held in Elva's store for almost a year now. We feel like it is time to see how interested she really is. Will she be willing to make an effort on her part? We pray that she will. Please continue to uphold her in your prayers.

In lieu of this Bible study we've been able to set up another one with a young couple, Carlos and his wife. They have 4 boys and live in the poorest part of town. I have had many good talks with Carlos. He is interested and listening. He disagrees with me concerning the "saints" but still is open to talk to me. That, in itself, says a lot for usually if they disagree on that issue they will not listen to you anymore. He is willing for me to come and speak to him about the Bible. Please pray that this family will find the Truth.

The kids are doing well in school. They enjoy it so much that they don't give us a hard time about getting up in the morning or in doing homework. Caleb still struggles with his homework. Please pray the the Lord will help him catch up in his studies so that it won't be as difficult for him.

Your co-workers, The Drysdales

News from Africa

Jerry & Cherry Skiles

I trust this finds you all well and enjoying the Lord's blessing. All goes well for us. Cherry is enjoying her involvement in her students lives.



The Lord has blessed her with wonderful kids and administration. Some of the students have their problems, but Cherry continues to be the cheerleader I am blessed to have married.

I am planning on returning to the tribe the first of the year for the annual conference teaching.

The two tribal ministries in Ivory Coast that made up a large portion of our lives continue to move

forward despite the hardships of the civil conflict. God sustains despite difficult environment and circumstances.

We are told and confronted by life that change is inevitable. We rejoice that there is a realm in our existence that does not change. God remains the same. He continues in Love and Goodwill towards men just as His servants spoke to the Shepherds of old. **Luke 2:13-14 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.** We want to say Amen to that and join in this declaration of the heavenly host. Glory to God, peace, and goodwill to you and yours for 2008.

Jerry and Cherry Skiles

Len and Marcia Sali

Some of the information in this newsletter is sensitive. Please do not email, post or distribute.

Greetings from Los Altos in the Circle of Silence! Recap of the recent events:

Oct 8 - 29. We were blessed to be able to spend time with our daughter Beth and her husband following the birth of their first child, Petra Amanet Sali Ringsrud. (Amanet means “a precious gift given, to be cherished and cared for”).

Nov 1-4. Retreat for church leaders in Los Altos. It was a time of refreshing for the kingdom workers here who labor faithfully in a difficult field.

Oct - Nov. Len and his helper, Daniel Fortanez, spent many hours working in an orchard at Rancho Los Ocales. The owner of this land has given them free reign to introduce current orchard practices in 1.5 acres of fruit trees. Daniel is a bi-lingual young brother who is faithful in his church, participating in preaching responsibilities and working with youth. He is a tremendous asset to our fledgling agricultural project and we thank God for him and his wife Marisol.

Nov 9 - 19. I (Marcia) was in Washington to move my mother from a nursing home in Yakima to one in Mount Vernon where she will be near my sister. Mom weathered the trip well and is now settled in a lovely place with a bed by a window!

Nov 21-22. We celebrated Thanksgiving in Arandas with Judah and Alyssa.

Nov 23 - 25. We attended the annual family Bible camp sponsored by the group of churches here in Los Altos. **Prayer requests:**

For language acquisition, we still have not found a language tutor.

For safety and effectiveness of visiting teams and friends. May they catch a vision!

For a fruitful visit with our friends in California. For local believers, that they would be courageous and mighty in their witness.

For the agricultural project, that it may find favor with local authorities, have success in its endeavors in local orchards and may it be an effective tool for God’s glory.

“For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy” (Romans 15:8-9).

Len and Marcia Sali, Ignacio Luis Velazquez #126 Atotonilco, Jalisco, CP 47750 México

News from the Homefront

Larry and Christa Montgomery

There is good news from Nampa! It appears Larry will be getting a new hip after all—sometime after the first of the year. He has an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon, and the results of this appointment should be an authorization for a hip replacement. We can rejoice with Larry and pray that the operation will be a success. Hopefully, before too long Papa Larry will once again be doing the “Nigerian Two-Step.”

News from Nigeria

Moses Osho

Please be in prayer as SFMI has mailed an invitation to Moses to speak at the Memorial Day Conference in Rockaway, Oregon. We had invited him last year, but he was denied a visa. Pray that the invitation will arrive safely, the consulate will be favorable towards our request, and that all the travel plans for Moses will work out well. Moses will be in the United States for about 40 days with stops in Oregon and Texas .

News From Israel

Francois Marcoux

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For those who still might not know my son Jean-Daniel and I were in Israel for one month. It is particularly nice also to find interesting materials to add to our itinerant Bible Museum (Bible Expo) ministry back home. We actually were able to have an Expo Bible set up just before our departure three weeks ago at a Family Camp in Texas. The theme this year was “The Tabernacle.” There was also a model of a full size Tabernacle on the site for families to visit.

It has been really nice to see so many places

where biblical events have occurred from the Old and New Testament. For example, Daniel and I went hiking two days on the mountains on the east side of Lake Galilee where the herd of swine went violently down a cliff and choked in the lake. There is only one place where this is possible on the east side. It was particularly nice that the place is still natural, free of any religious site claim. Such is also Mount Gilboa where King Saul and his sons died during the battle. We still have many places we want to visit. Walking around Old Jerusalem and the Temple Mount is also quite an experience.

But what has been even more of a blessing than just the dead stones is to meet the living stones the Lord is building up in this country from Jewish and Arab background.

The Lord was pleased to have us meet up with a very dear and faithful brother in the Lord and his wife, Albert and Angel Yacob, who had been recommended to us by believers we know in Canada. They work for the Jerusalem Bible Society. They have with great affection opened up their house to us here in Jerusalem. Albert travels a lot among the Arabic speaking brethren assemblies in Israel and the territories. He is much involved in teaching and distributing God's Word in Arabic as well as Hebrew. He also fluently speaks Hebrew and is frequently asked to translate between the two languages

I would like to share a few prayer requests of which I have become aware and feel it is my duty to share with you. Some of you might have heard of the assassination by Hamas of Rami Ayyad, the brother in charge of the Bible Society in the Gaza Strip. He was well known of Albert. He leaves behind his dear pregnant wife Paulina and two children. The book store had already been blown up six months ago. People complained that there were Muslim families living in the same building of the Bible Society bookstore. They were told it didn't matter, that they had died as martyrs! Now the whole team (26 of them) of the Bible Society in the Gaza Strip has received permission from the Israeli government to leave Gaza for a week. They are presently staying in a German guesthouse near Bethlehem, south of Jerusalem. Permission is being sought to prolong their stay out of Gaza since they are targeted by Hamas. Please pray for these Arabic speaking believers and the Lord's work in the Gaza strip and the rest of the believers residing there as they are being persecuted by their own people.

Pray also for the Messianic congregation of Arad, a city situated between Beer-Sheba and the Dead Sea. They are being continuously harassed by the Orthodox Jews to a point that some believers are feeling

intimated. There is also a lawsuit being built up against them. Pray for the judge's impartiality in this case, which can affect all the other Messianic congregations in Israel. We have attended to two of them already. One here in Jerusalem where Meno Kalischer (son of Zvi) is pastor and another in the Galilee. Although these congregations are still a very small minority, they are definitely growing throughout the country.

Also the building of the Baptist church of Jerusalem (shared by 3 or 4 other denominations) was the target of vandalism and arson just 2 or 3 days ago. Damage has been limited to the furniture only. They are still unsure who the perpetrators are. This building has been burnt down in the past.

But this shows the Lord is at work also. There are more and more demands by the Arabic speaking population for Arabic Bibles and Hebrew New Testaments by the Jewish population, which most have never seen in their life. When we arrived in Tel Aviv we spent our second evening talking with a young Israeli man named Ofer. He was astonished how as a gentile I knew so much about his country. We were able to clear up some misconceptions he had towards Christianity and present to him the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. He wants to meet us again. At one point he said, "Are there Jews in this country who believe that Yeshua is the Messiah"? Please pray for Ofer. Also, just a few days ago as brother Albert was driving up the Jordan River Valley, his vehicle broke down. He had to have it towed back to Jerusalem. While he was waiting on the side of the road, about 7 or 8 Jews stopped to offer their help. One young man working nearby (near Guilgal) even came back twice. They started talking, and Albert finally was able to offer him a complete Hebrew Bible, which he carries with him in his jeep. The young man was overjoyed saying he had never seen the Hebrew New Testament and he finally was going to be able to read it.

In the beginning of November, Albert received permission to have a series of 6 exhibitions of Arabic Bibles and Christian literature: 3 in Nablus, one in Ramallah and two in Jenin. He has received already a container from Egypt of \$25,000 worth of books printed by the brethren assemblies there. He is offering this literature free of charge, since many cannot afford to buy books. I have to mention though that this exhibition has been postponed a few times since last March because of the authorities and civil unrest. So this is also something to pray about. Albert told me that once he gave a *Daily Bread* type calendar to a believing lady, and she just started to cry for joy. Most believers have to read and reread several times their calendars before they can get a new one.

Another piece of good news is that each year now there is a big gathering between Jewish and Arab believers in the woods. This year there were approximately 800 believers. The Word is shared in both languages followed by a time of fellowship. Each year the gathering is growing. Praise God for his wonderful work through the blood of our precious Lord and Savior who alone can bring together these two peoples together. Many are seeing this and want to know more about the Lord Jesus. What a testimony!

I heard also a dear believing Jewish lady who has been in Israel for many years say that while attending her dying husband in the hospital, in the same room there was a suffering Arab man from Jenin whose son

is with Hamas. To say the least, he didn't like Jews. But through the love and hope that only Christ can give, this Jewish believing lady shared her faith with this man who at one point completely broke down in tears. They embraced each other. The man, now back in Jenin, has written a beautiful letter saying he believes in Jesus the Messiah and wants to go and visit her in her home town. This man has been put in contact with other Arabic speaking believers in the West Bank and Albert.

In our most precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Yeshua HaMeshiach in Hebrew or Yesoua al Mesiah in Arabic),

François Marcoux

Where are the Uighurs?

Where are the Uighurs? Eight to ten million Uighurs live in China, mainly in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Uighurs live in the oasis cities surrounding the Taklimakan desert along the old silk road. The Taklimakan is one of the largest shifting sand deserts in the world, second only to the Sahara in size. Approximately 500,000 Uighurs live in other Central Asian countries

Pronounced: oo-ee-huhr in there language, wee-guhr in English

Language: Also known as Uyghur, a Turkic language related to Uzbek

Written Uighur: Arabic script in China; Cyrillic (Russian) in

Central Asia; modified Roman script used on the internet

Religion: Sunni Muslim

Although the Uighur have a rich history, because of the abandonment of major trade routes through Central Asia, they have become forgotten and virtually unknown to most of the world.



Testimony, continued from page 11

meet an old language classmate of mine. As we talked, he told me how he had gotten saved and what a difference that made to his life. Over the next two days as we flew to Thailand via Alaska and the Philippines, he told me the wonderful story of Jesus and our salvation He purchased on Calvary. When we finally arrived at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, I asked him if I could bunk with him. I had found someone I thought could keep me on the straight and narrow.

Over the next three weeks I attended Bible studies, Saturday night meetings, and Sunday masses. I believed I was doing well until Saturday night, the last weekend of January 1972. After our usual meeting I headed for my barracks, totally exhausted. I got ready for bed and for over 45 minutes tossed and turned in my bed. Why couldn't I go to sleep?

Suddenly I heard, "If you were to die tonight, where would you spend eternity?" I sat up, looked about the

room, and saw no one. I knew God was speaking.

I replied, "I think I would go to heaven."

"You would go straight to hell!" God said.

"What must I do to be saved?"

"You have attended all these Bible studies and heard men who know me. Now all you must do is surrender your will, your life, your all to me."

I answered, "I will do whatever you want me to do and go wherever you want me to go. I am yours."

At that very moment my life was filled with a peace I had never had before. I knew I was God's and headed for heaven. My life changed completely that night, and over the course of the next three weeks I sent envelope after envelope of tracts to my wife to share with her the good news of Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord, He reached down His merciful hand from heaven, touched her heart, and she became a child of God. The scriptures declare: "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37: 4). That has happened to me.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does SFMI send missionaries to mission fields? Are there "Shield of Faith Missionaries?"

A. No. We work closely with sending churches to facilitate and serve those God has called to missionary service, but they are sent and supported by their local churches.

Q. What services does SFMI provide to missionaries?

A. We provide a candidate screening process, and then practical missionary training for those recommended to a particular mission field by their local church and SFMI. Once on the field, SFMI channels funds, distributes information to supporters, provides ongoing guidance and accountability, limited pastoral care, emergency assistance, and other services.

The SFMI Prayer/News Update is published bi-monthly and is sent free of charge to God's people everywhere upon request. If you have friends to whom you would like a copy sent, please submit their address to this office. In response to inquiries about the cost of publication: \$6.00 per year per subscriber. Yes, contributions to offset this cost are accepted, but not solicited.

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