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Fulfilling the Great Commission Through Establishing New Testament Churches

Believers Who Define Themselves by Other Men

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Believers Who Define Themselves by Other Men

By Dick York



Many believers who define themselves by other men's names obviously follow men and are enamored by human leaders. Theological positions are often defined by the names of the men who seem to be their originators. There are examples: Calvinism, after John Calvin; Arminianism, after Jacobus Arminius; Wesleyanism, after John Wesley; Lutheranism, after Martin Luther. Many other theological positions, although not featuring the names of their originators, just as effectively compartmentalize the church. The fact is, any doctrine we espouse is either true or it isn't; and whatever is true doesn't oppose whatever else is truth.

Amazingly, many young believers are hard-core Calvinists or Arminians or whatever (whether they recognize those names or not), and they are totally persuaded about the pre-tribulation rapture or post-tribulation rapture or whatever the case may be while, as yet, they have not so much as read the whole New Testament and know nothing of the Old other than the stories they have heard their preacher tell. Beyond the Gospel itself, almost everything they believe is based on hearsay. Their authority is their pastor or their denomination's doctrinal statement. When they want to know what God says about a matter, they read a book, go to the internet, or open a commentary. As a result, their faith is always based on what God supposedly revealed to someone else.

Because this problem is a human one and showed up very early in the history of the church, the apostle Paul addressed it. About 57 AD, he upbraided the believers in the city of Corinth with these words:

"For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in

*the name of Paul?"*¹

*"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God...my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: **that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.**"*²

*"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? **For while one saith, 'I am of Paul;' and another, 'I am of Apollos;' are ye not carnal?"***³

Today we are not so much choosing sides with Paul, Apollos, and Cephas but with men who have interpreted their teachings in various contradictory ways. But the truth doesn't contradict itself; therefore, one verse of scripture does not argue with another. Where such seems to be the case, we must understand that therein lies something we don't understand. It is better to acknowledge our present lack of insight than to twist one of the verses to reconcile it to the understanding we may think we have of the other. The apostle Peter addressed this issue when he wrote:

*"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; **in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they***

do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.⁴

Some things, as Peter said, are hard to be understood: and no wonder, since the Bible is everything of God's mind that he has chosen to reveal to men. Its riches are unsearchable; they are not gleaned by mere academic research but by revelation of the Spirit. That is why Paul prayed for the believers at Ephesus:

*“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know, etc....”*⁵

Again, the understanding of scripture is by revelation, not mere academic study. Nowhere is this more evident than in what the Bible itself teaches us about the Pharisees, including Saul of Tarsus before he was converted and became the apostle Paul. They knew the scriptures best but were, at the same time, the most fanatical opponents of what they taught. Paul, writing to the Romans, said that the law and the prophets—the Old Testament scriptures, which he had studied so diligently all his life—testified of Jesus.⁶ Why, then, didn't he know who Jesus was? Why did he persecute Jesus' followers to the point of delivering them to death?⁷ Jesus himself, while rebuking the Pharisees about their lack of understanding the Old Testament, which they claimed to believe and follow, said:

*“Ye search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”*⁸

Paul did not understand that the law and the prophets, which he knew so well, were testifying of the Lord Jesus until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. Then the eyes of his understanding were opened; and the scriptures, which the way he had understood them justified his hatred for Jesus and those who followed him, now revealed Jesus as the long awaited Messiah: the same scriptures, but in the light of the spirit of revelation.

Paul, before this revelation by the Holy Spirit, was convinced that the scriptures he had studied, thought he understood and believed, contradicted the truth that was being preached by the “fanatical heretics” of the sect of the Nazarene. Obviously those who were followers of this charismatic rabbi Saul believed what he believed. Some of them probably justified their position simply on the ground that “that's what Saul believes.” And some of them may have perished because they never received the revelation of the Lord Jesus that Paul received.

The same is true today, even within the faith; the saints take positions before they have heard from the Lord through his word and lock themselves in to doctrinal schools of thought that are contradicted

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by other scriptures because they are impressed by the arguments of some charismatic or renowned theologian. The frequent result is that they are thereby divided from a great number of the saints or bound to others who may not be saints at all on the strength of what

someone else believes. This need not be the case.

Bear in mind that God is not a respecter of persons. Nothing becomes true simply because some great person believes it to be true or because someone who is especially nice thinks it's true. Truth is vast and inflexible. No one knows it all or understands it perfectly. The apostle Paul said, “*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*”⁹ We still look expectantly for that which is perfect to come: “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*”¹⁰ Jesus is that which is perfect; and when he has come, we will be perfect as well. “*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*”¹¹

There are, of course, many things that we know. We know what God has made clear to us in his word and by his Spirit. **We know** that when he shall appear we shall be like him.¹² **We know** that we have passed

from death unto life because we love the brethren.¹³ Ye may **know** that ye have eternal life.¹⁴ **We know** that the Son of God is come, and . . . **we may know him** that is true.¹⁵ **We know** that so many as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death.¹⁶ **We know** that our old man is crucified with him;¹⁷ and **we know** that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.¹⁸ There are many things that we know because they are clearly stated in God's word and the Holy Spirit confirms them in our hearts. There are other things, however, which are not so clear to us, even though they seem to belong to someone else; and the Holy Spirit has not confirmed them to us. There is nothing wrong with saying, "I don't know," when in fact that is the case.

God has promised to guide us into all truth.¹⁹ Guiding implies a process that involves time. When we hear confident men proclaiming "facts," we should hear with a ready mind and then search the scriptures whether these things be so.²⁰ Sometimes this will involve "putting things on the back burner" until they are confirmed or dispelled by the Holy Spirit. It is not required by God that we fit neatly into anyone's school of theological thought. Sometimes we may say, "I think I agree with you, but there seem to be scriptures that teach otherwise; I will continue to wait on the Lord to confirm it." At other times we may say, "At this point I tend to disagree; but when I know more, you may prove to be right. For now I will stand here and continue to listen to the Lord."

We know that theological knowledge does not constitute spiritual maturity. The apostle Paul said:

*"Now as touching things offered to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him."*²¹

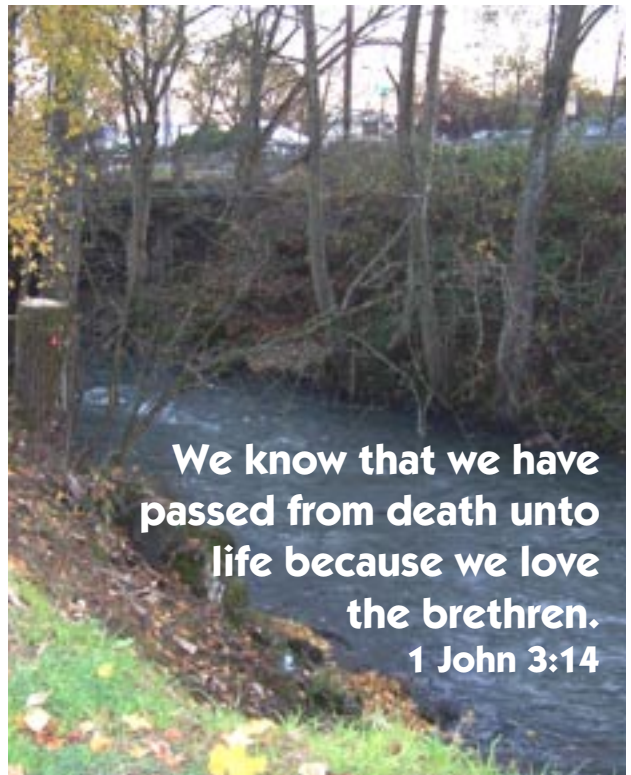
This statement by Paul was made in the context of sacrificing to idols. But in any other context it is a stand-alone truth. Our earlier reference to the Pharisees illustrates this well. It was pride in their knowledge of the scriptures that puffed them up and blinded them to its truth. It is our love for God, for Jesus, and for the brethren that will keep us humble in the knowledge we do have and make us realize that as yet we know nothing as we ought to know.

I know doctrine, and you know doctrine; but when

we see him, we will know even as we are known; we will see eye-to-eye.²² In the meantime, *what* we know is miniscule. *Who* we know is of utmost importance. Let us add to our faith virtue and to our virtue knowledge;²³ but may it be the knowledge of Christ in whom dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily, not the knowledge that puffs us up to make us impervious to the Spirit's revelation. 🙏

(Endnotes)

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| ¹ 1 Corinthians 1:11-13 | ¹³ 1 John 3:14 |
| ² 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 | ¹⁴ 1 John 5:13 |
| ³ 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 | ¹⁵ 1 John 5:20 |
| ⁴ 2 Peter 3:15,16 | ¹⁶ Romans 6:3 |
| ⁵ Ephesians 1:17,18 | ¹⁷ Romans 6:6 |
| ⁶ Romans 3:21,22 | ¹⁸ Romans 6:9 |
| ⁷ Acts 26:10-12 | ¹⁹ John 16:13 |
| ⁸ John 5:39,40 | ²⁰ Acts 17:11 |
| ⁹ 1 Corinthians 13:9,10 | ²¹ 1 Corinthians 8:1-3 |
| ¹⁰ 1 John 3:2 | ²² Isaiah 52:8 |
| ¹¹ 1 Corinthians 13:12 | ²³ 2 Peter 1:5 |
| ¹² 1 John 3:2 | |





A New Song

By Jim Lucas

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

There are lots of songs that are very good, but this song is very special. We cannot sing this song yet, but someday soon we will sing this song. The song is very special because in order for this song to be sung, Jesus had to shed his blood at Calvary, the blood of the innocent given for the redemption of the guilty. This was the greatest sacrifice the world has ever seen. The Lord Jesus set the pattern that faithful men and women have followed in every generation ever since. The apostles all shed their blood for this very special cause, and many more have risked all and freely laid down their lives to carry the good news to those who were bound in sin. We cannot sing the song until there is a witness in every kindred, people, and nation. Thanks be to God there will be faithful men and women in this generation that will go and carry out this marvelous plan of God. It appears we are getting real close to reaching all the tribes; let us not grow weary in well doing.

Who will these be that God will use in this generation? It will be those who have ears to hear the call of God and will step out in faith to obey. Paul said that he received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith. Who will be the apostles of this generation? Those who heed to the call; Jesus said many are called but few are chosen. Paul told the Roman believers that they also were the called of Jesus Christ. Please read Romans 1:5,6. The word apostle means sent one; in Romans 10:14 we read:

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall

they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

Who will these be that God will choose to proclaim the glorious Gospel to the unreached. Will it be those who are highly educated and have degrees or those who are obviously gifted? The strong ones who are able to endure all the hardships or the brave that do not fear? The wise people who can learn languages easily? The people from countries that have a lot of money and abundance of resources? No, those are not the ones God will send. He is looking for those who will bring glory to him not to themselves. In first Corinthians Paul explains:

“The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 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; 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: That no flesh should glory in his presence.” I Corinthians 1:25-29

Do you qualify? If you know that you are weak and not wise, you can trust God for his grace to be revealed in you and bring glory to his name. It doesn't matter who you are or what you have because Jesus is calling us to deny ourselves and take up the cross and follow him. It doesn't matter who you are because we must be made all things to all men. When you have denied yourself, it is much easier to adapt to strange cultures and customs. Paul said:

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save

some." *I Corinthians 9:22*

We should never depart from the truth or lower the standard of righteousness. We relate to them in their weakness, but we cannot lower the standard of morals or holiness. We can wear a pigtail or a long gown and eat what they eat and sleep in a hut or an igloo, but we cannot partake of their sins. Jesus took on himself the likeness of sinful flesh. (Read Romans 8:3) But he did so without ever sinning once.

The message we take is the Word of God it cannot be compromised. Don't prepare a Bible

that ignorant people can read, but prepare the ignorant to read the undiluted word of God. We cannot compromise the truth because it is the truth that will set them free (See John 8:31,32). God gave us the inspired word of God, and he preserved it pure unto this day. It is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). If you love God and you lay down your life for the sake of the gospel and do everything you can to get this blessing to the last tribe on the earth, then you will truly enjoy this NEW SONG. 📖

Meet the Board:

The Personal Testimony of Web Loy



I grew up in a home where righteousness was connected with family honor (always told the truth, kept your word, did good to others, etc.). Religion of any sort was not discussed. I had attended a few Sunday School classes, but I can't recall ever

being in a church service. After I was married, my wife, Alga, went regularly to Sunday meetings. We lived close enough that she could walk. Sometimes I would take her and pick her up after church. Mostly I went hunting or fishing. My occupation at the time was photography; and my studio was located in downtown Bend, Oregon.

It was about this time that my younger brother Mel asked me the question, "What is the reason for your existence?" He never gave me the answer and said I should "figure it out for myself." Many had preached to me, but I didn't pay any attention to what they said. Nor do I recall anything that they said to me. Mel's question, however, bothered me. I was about to turn 40, and I was in debt. I had a wife and five children. What was life all about? I picked up a book that I found at home *Evolution or Creation*. (My wife, I learned later, had left it and others for me.) I read the first two chapters, and for the first time I was confronted the the reality that there was a Creator. I had always said that I believed in God, but now that became real to me. I was

aware that the Bible said God created man. So the Bible must have the answer to my question. I picked up a Bible and began to read.

In Genesis I found that after Adam had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he hid himself in the garden. Then God came looking for Adam. My impression at the time was that he and God were used to having conversation about the day's work. Now Adam was afraid of God because he had sinned. I suddenly became aware that I was a sinner. While I had been created to have fellowship with God, I had never once talked to Him or given Him any place in my life.

It was at this time that God sent to me a man that explained the Gospel to me—how that Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary and that the only begotten of God the Father died in my place on the Cross for my sin and now was risen from the dead that I might have fellowship with Him. For the first time I heard it. I surrendered my life to Jesus, asking Him to be real to me. I can still remember His first command, "Do not take the name of the Lord in vain." It wasn't long until I realized that along with the command came the power to obey. I found myself tongue-tied, at times unable to speak. I then realized that I previously had a foul mouth, and this was the start of the new life that God promised in the Scriptures.

I now found that I enjoyed telling others about Jesus. I started testifying to my customers and others. My business prospered in spite of the fact that others said that my talking about Jesus would drive away customers. Over the years I have found Jesus to be faithful to all He has promised in the Scriptures.

The Gift

By Blanche Tadlock



The moment of death is a holy, sacred moment! But, I did not always understand this to be so—especially when death arrived at my door on February 27, 2006. I thought I was prepared for that day. Orville and I had

talked about the day of our deaths for many years. Having faced life together for 43 years, of course we had hoped to go through death's door together. We knew chances of that were slim—unless the Lord came first! We often told each other (and anyone else who would listen) that we believed “death to be life's greatest adventure!” However, pulling Orville's lifeless body from the hot tub on that early February morning was neither adventurous nor holy. In fact it seemed as if my very being had suddenly been sucked from me. In my journal for that dreadful day I wrote, “I lost my life today.”

In the moments, days, weeks, year that followed, I read every book given to me on death, heaven, and grieving; but they did not help. I reminded myself of all the scriptures that Orville and I had quoted, memorized and even comforted others with: *“To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”* (2 Corinthians 5:8); *“Precious in the eyes of the lord is the death of his saints”* (Psalm 116:15); *“...death is swallowed up in victory”* (1 Corinthians 15:54).

So what was my problem? Why couldn't I live out what I truly believed? All I could do was cry and agonize in body, soul, and spirit and feel every moment the “sting of death.” Orville had shared at many funerals how this “sting of death” spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15:55 had been removed by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. And even though neither of us knew that that February morning was Orville's appointed day (Hebrews 9:27) to die, I knew he was so ready.

He used to sing a song to us about his death called “I Got on My Travelin' Shoes”:

“Death came a-knockin' on my door
And asked me if I was ready to go—
And I said, “YES! YES! YES! YES!
Cuz I got on my travelin' shoes!” (Salvation!)

I KNEW Orville was experiencing the ultimate victory; but was this victory only for him? Was I to be left in this mournful state floundering around in the “valley of the shadow of death”? He had been my great love since I was 15 years old, and the absence of his physical presence in my life seemed too great to overcome. I so desperately needed God's comfort as my grief was affecting my children and all those around me.

It was when I realized that I was rejecting God's comfort that my journey out of that valley started. Gently, lovingly God led me, revealing to me what an awesome, holy, glorious moment it was when God called Orville from this physical life. Orville was forever freed from his body of pain, sickness, the cares of life, and battles with sin.

I began to understand why Ecclesiastes 7:1 says “...the day of death is better than the day of one's birth.” Orville met the Savior face to face, and it was a sacred reunion for him—a gift.

What? A gift? A light of revelation broke over my soul; next to salvation, death truly is one of God's greatest gifts for the believer. For death sheds all that is flesh for all that is Christ! Orville was safely home! And my gift—the Father's hand of comfort—was laid upon me, giving me inexpressible peace and the sense that “underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deuteronomy 33:27). Those arms are full of support, provision, comfort, and strength! His tenderness is inexpressibly sweet as He leads me safely home! 🙏





The Dry Ground from which the Root Comes Forth

By Steve Montgomery



Mount Sinai is also called in the Scripture by another name: Horeb. Though the two names—Sinai and Horeb—refer to the same place, the etymology of the word Sinai is unknown, while Horeb means “dry ground.” As I looked at those words in a Bible dictionary the other day, they seemed to leap from the page. I thought of Isaiah 53:2, where the Lord Jesus is said to grow up like a “root out of dry ground.” What a dry ground God had provided through the Law of Moses! What stark contrast to the law given by Moses was the grace and truth that came by the Lord Jesus Christ! (John 1:17).

But there is another aspect of this that we need to consider: the Law is the place where the Root breaks through. And it is the dry ground of the law that provides the best background against which the Branch can stand out, easily seen and admired by all who look.

It is uncommon that the law is presented today in the preaching of the Gospel, yet the law was the tool designed by God to bring men to the Gospel. Romans 3:19-20 states:

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Note that Paul states that the purpose of the law is not to bring salvation. No man will ever stand just before God by means of the law of Moses.

This does not, however, mean that the law has no purpose. The principal purpose of the law is to shut men’s mouths, to leave all the world clearly and manifestly guilty before God.

It is not for nothing that the law was written in stone. When I compare my behavior to others, I am using an elastic yardstick and a subjective application. I judge others by their actions, while I judge myself by my motives—or the motives I claim. I am the final verdict on my own behavior and therefore have no difficulty finding myself “not guilty.” This is what Proverbs 21:2 means when it

tells us: “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.” When, however, I am forced to look at the law of God, written inviolably in stone, my self-congratulations fade and my self-justification vanishes like smoke in the wind.

Paul tells us in this passage that all the world, every man, woman and child, is under the law. He also tells us that the law brings the knowledge of sin. We note that he does not say “sins” only, though that would also be true. The first work of the law is to show us our deficient behavior—our sins. Sins are incorrect actions which can be numbered and listed. When first we encounter the law of Moses, we are made uncomfortable because we see that our actions fall short of God’s requirements. We purpose to do better, to change, to be more careful. This is the knowledge of *sins*.

As time passes, however, something begins to happen. We fail in our purpose to improve. We decide to try harder, and we fail again. We become discouraged, then strengthen ourselves with new resolve to keep the law, to obey the Ten Commands. And yet, we still fail.

We discover that while, with our mind, we serve the law of God (we agree that it is correct and true and just), we find another law working in our members, a law that is contrary to the law of God. The good that we want to do we don’t do, but the



Eduardo declares his faith in Christ.

evil we don't want, that's the very thing we do! We delight in the law of God mentally, but we find that there is that other law warring against the law of our mind and pulling us in the opposite direction: into captivity. The discovery that we cannot keep the law, the discovery that there is something deeply wrong in our very nature, is the discovery of *sin*. Sin (singular) speaks of a nature, something in us much deeper than our behavior. And coming to a knowledge of sin leads inevitably to the realization that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, which we can do to save ourselves. When Paul expresses the horror of this reality, he puts it this way: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Gone are the cries of "What shall I do?" "How can I manage?" "Which program or method or experience do I need?" The "what" and "how" and "which" have become "Who?" as the law has brought us to the end of believing we have the resources to save ourselves.

That is the work of the law! It shuts our mouths in our self-satisfied opining and brings us to the realization that we are in desperate need of a Saviour!

Again, it's the Apostle Paul that reminds us who the law is for:

"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust" (1 Timothy 1:8-11).

The law is good; it is the good and adequate and correct tool when it is used legitimately. The legitimate use of the law is its application—not to the man who is righteous and justified by faith in Christ—but to the lost, the man who is outside of Christ. Paul clearly follows the Decalogue here, naming the commandments by their antithesis. The law is designed to make men confront their own sin. It has no power in itself to save, but it shows men the problem and, by contrast, shines the light on the Gospel of glory.

The law shows men their sin. The Gospel shows men the glory of God. But to see clearly, to even look for or be cognizant of the glory of God, it is necessary first to see our own lack of glory, our helplessness and need.

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 we read a summary of


what the Gospel is: "...that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

For someone to understand the personal significance of the Good News, that person must understand that he or she is a sinner and what sin is—the tool God has provided is His law, written in stone. Thus it is that Paul said to the Gentile churches in the region of Galatia that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24).

Acts 17:30 says that God "now commands all men every where to repent." In Acts 20:21 we are told that Paul preached "to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Luke 24:46-48 presents us with some of the final words of the Lord Jesus before His ascension:

"Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

In each of these, repentance is set forth as an integral response to the message of the Gospel. Yet how will a person know what to repent of if we do not lay out the law of Moses, the Ten Commandments, that they might see their sins?

When God desired to give to the children of Israel a picture of the living water which the brokenness of Christ makes available, He did so at Horeb, the very "dry ground" where the law had first been given (Ex. 17). Just as the Root is best seen when it comes up in dry ground, the water is best appreciated where there is thirst. As we explain the Good News to others, we need to be certain they understand their sin and their desperate need for a Saviour; and the legitimate tool for that is the law of Moses, designed to show forth the glorious gospel of the blessed God. 



Praying for the believers after their baptism.



Missionary Reports



Ghana Trip Report Jerry Skiles

On the way to Ghana Cherry and I visited David Kangni (a board member of His Vision Mission of Ghana) in Germany. It was a joy to fellowship with him and his wife. Cherry and I were traveling to help a group of women from the Dagbani tribe of Northern Ghana. These women extract oil from the nut of an indigenous tree and needed help marketing their product to the lucrative markets of Europe and America. Shea butter has been gaining international popularity, and these women wanted help to obtain the greatest profits so they could meet the financial demands of school and medicines for their families.

My sister Sharon joined us in Ghana and contributed her experience to the endeavor. During the weeks there we had opportunity to interact with the women on such things as quality control, working cooperatively to facilitate marketing and safety issues. We also researched market and arranged marketing opportunities for them.

The highlight of the trip came at the end of our time with them. The chiefs and elders of the Dagbani tribe had decided to adopt me into the tribe and give me a chieftainship. The ceremony and pomp put me outside my comfort zone, but on reflection it caused me to reflect on many Bible principles. The following

the tribe all my family relatives were given the status due them because of their relationship with me. I was given the title of chief, but had to humble myself by sitting on the floor that I might serve “my” people better. They sat elevated on benches.

A singer/storyteller sought information from me so that he might compose songs of my history, songs




My sister Sharon joined Cherry and I in Ghana and contributed her experience to the endeavor.

of praise and honor. His work would enshrine my memory (good or bad) in the history of the Dagbani tribe. I was given new clothes that identified me as a chief in the tribe; and wherever I would go, it would be considered a dishonor to the tribe to not wear them.

I was given a new name. The tribal meaning translated is “improvement comes from a growing relationship.”

Hovare, my friend from the Loron tribe, had traveled to spend the time in Ghana with us. He left during the ceremony overcome with emotion. Afterwards when asked why, he said, “Jerry, you were with us for years; and we never honored you. You are with these people a few weeks; and they give you this.”

We finished the trip by meeting with Issac Toffah, another board member of His Vision Mission.

A team from SFMI will begin a training program in Ghana in 2008. Please pray for them as they embark on this missionary effort to strengthen and equip the saints for the work of the ministry. 



are some of the reflections.

I was adopted; all honor and responsibilities went with the adoption. With my inauguration into

Haiti Trip Report

Jerry Skiles

Our fellowship has been involved with Haiti for years, and the Lord opened an opportunity for me to minister there in October.

Haiti has had political and social unrest for years. I had heard and read about it, but during the trip I saw how it had affected and influenced the population. Haiti is a beautiful country. The potential of the natural resources exist, but they are rarely used. In all my travels I had never experienced a greater lack of trust among people as I found in Haiti. I wondered more than once if my hosts were overprotective or they knew dangers that I did not perceive.

As I worked and visited with people, it seemed that the people themselves were the greatest hindrance to development. I was fortunate to interact with a few that had vision and faith that God would help them overcome the fears and hopelessness that most Haitians succumb to.

A young, healthy man came up to me as I was walking along the seawall and said he was an orphan, hungry, and slept outside. He wanted help. He wanted food; he wanted to go to school; and he wanted shelter.




Just previous to his solicitation I had seen a school of fish in the ocean. I told him what I had seen. I explained to him that by catching fish he may never again have to solicit someone for his physical needs. The next day we spoke again; his attitude had seemed to change. He wanted to know how to fish. Who could teach him?

It is during encounters like this that I marvel and give thanks to the heritage of thinking that has been passed down to me. This young man was being confronted with new ideas and concepts that I had grown up with. I struggle with being frustrated that people do not see the opportunities that are so clear to me. Imagine seeing fish and not realizing that it could be caught and eaten!?!? Yet for many it is a novel idea. Imagine living in a land that can grow crops and yet be hungry? Proverbs 29:18: *“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”* People

in need are often looking in wrong places for their solutions. Populations around the world blame governments, people and circumstances for their problems. A few blame themselves.

The Psalmist David wrote: *Psalm 121:1-8: I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.*

David recognized and kept solutions simple. I like that. 

News from Ghana, West Africa

Jim & Fran Lucas and Tim Spurling

Please use this address whenever emailing Jim Lucas (hisvisionmission@yahoo.com). This is the only address through which he can receive mail. Here is the most recent letter from Ghana.

Greetings from Ghana!

When we left Central Oregon, it was snowing; and the roads were very icy.

Fred and Daniela braved the hazardous conditions and drove us to Portland on the eighth of January. We met there that evening with our son Rick, his wife, and son. At 4:30 the following morning Fred took us to the airport. Tim Spurling met us there, with his whole family to see him off.

Now we are sweating in the warm African sun. We have been here nine days. Our heavenly Father undertook, and we had a fine flight over—meaning no problems. It took a long time, and we were very tired; but everything went well. The first flight was to Minneapolis; that flight took three and half hours. We were in the airport for almost three hours; then we flew to Amsterdam—that took eight and half hours. We had a seven hour wait in the airport; then we flew to Accra, Ghana. Our friend Isaac Toffah and his wife Gloria were there to meet us. They gave us a very warm welcome, and Isaac is a customs officer so we went through customs very quickly. He said he had arranged a hotel close to the airport for us; that really was welcome news. After a long night sleep, Gloria then took us to the bus station. Fii, a young man from Tarkwa, was there to accompany us; and we waited about four hours for the bus. We left about three in the afternoon, and we arrived in Tarkwa about ten p.m.

Our heavenly Father manifested his grace in many ways. During our March 2007 trip several people were

saved. One of them is Fii (Friday); he is twenty-four years old, and he is growing in the Lord. Another one is called Emanuel. He works at the gold mine, and he is engaged to Maryann Kangni's sister. Her name is Comfort. Emanuel has built a house that they plan to live in but has insisted that we use it until David's house is finished. Not only did he insist we stay in his house, but he loaned us his car, a Suzuki. Because the kitchen is not quite ready yet, Comfort has been fixing food and sending it down to us with the young men that have been saved. Miller is a very energetic, young man, well known for his soccer skills. He comes and waits on us hand and foot. Fii also comes and Clement. These young men are hungry for the word of God and are servants at heart, and they are really looking after us.

We had a meeting Sunday evening, and two young men gave their lives to Jesus; one of them is Miller, the one mentioned above. The other one is called Derrick.

We have had a problem getting cash, but we opened up a bank account in town and think we can work around this problem.


We have been trying to get things ready in the apartment where we will be living. Since things move slowly in Africa, it can be a little frustrating if you expect matters to be completed quickly. Therefore, we are learning the blessing of patience. Since the internet in town is out today, I am putting this on a flash drive. I will carry it down Monday and send it. We are still trying to get high speed internet into the apartment and a local phone that should be done before too long.

We have really enjoyed the Ghanan food. They have a large variety, and all the dishes are very good. They cook with a lot of pepper sauce, and it is well seasoned.

The three of us now have a Ghanan driver's licenses. They normally do not issue them to foreigners; but because we are here with the mission, we were allowed to get them. It did take most of one day, but praise the Lord we have them.

There are quite a few people interested in Bible training. Please pray we will be able to get settled in and get things in order so we can start classes soon.

Take courage; Jesus is coming soon.

James, Francille and Tim 
hisvisionmission@yahoo.com

News from Atotonilco, Mexico

Len & Marcia Sali

We want to thank you for your prayers for Len and his heart condition. He is feeling much better now. He has adjusted the dose of his medicine and it seems to have helped. He still has an occasional episode of the rapid heart rate but not nearly as often nor as severe. He is back to feeling much like his old self, excited about the work in the church and in the agricultural

project. Thank you so much for remembering him! We take great comfort in knowing that we are part of the wonderful and mysterious family of God.

Prayer requests:

- * Len's continued good health
- * for our Uighur brothers who have been imprisoned, and their families
- * for the many new believers here—that they would stand firm and have courage
- * for Len as he prepares to preach and teach in Spanish
- * for Marcia as she prepares to teach a woman's study in Spanish
- * for the Westside team coming at the end of January
- * for the women's retreat in March

With gratitude,
Len and Marcia


This article was published last week in *Vida*, a locally printed and distributed magazine. The article talks about the agricultural project that Leonard Sali is heading up in this region.



“We are evangelical Christians and our desire is to help and bless Atotonilco and the Highlands in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Leonard and Marcia Sali are located in Atotonilco El Alto, where they are working with the church there. Leonard is heading up an agricultural project in cooperation with the local government. Along with Daniel Fontanez and Efrén Aranda, believers in the area, he is meeting with local orchardists and farmers to offer assistance and advice.

The Lord has opened many doors for the preaching of the Gospel as they meet with local farmers in their

fields and homes. This magazine article is simply one example of the impact the project is having. 

News from Mexico

Ed and Abby Drysdale

Dear Brothers,

I wish to be more like Jesus—to be able to show love to those without love, to give hope when it's been lost and to have the guts to reprimand the heretics. Most of all I desire to have the wisdom of Jesus, to recognize with which one I speak. Sometimes I feel like I'm giving hope to the heretics and reprimanding the desolate.

These past few months have been a struggle for my wife and me. We've come close to becoming the ones in need of hope. Time after time we have been able to start Bible studies with different people only to have them flake out. I believe this is our fourth time to have had all of our Bible studies flake out at once and have to begin completely anew.

We have been here a year. A year doesn't seem like a long time, unless you're in the desert. We have fellowship with the same six believers we started with (myself, my wife and our four children). We have struggled with making friends, developing relationships with school teachers, becoming a part of the community, and planting our flag. All of these have been made more difficult in that we cannot expect it to be reciprocated, not when surrounded by unbelievers.

The temptation to dust off our feet has been strong. But after having confessed our struggles to the Lord, he has given us direction with this question, "Can you face me today and say you have done everything you can for this land?" Our answer would have to be, "No." With that in mind we've been able to go back to the Lord to say, "OK, we'll move rocks, till ground and plant seeds." We won't stop until we can reply, "Lord, we've done all we can."

The land here is hard, weed-infested and rocky. It will require strength, substance, and the right tools to get the job done. Thankfully all of these are the responsibility of the Owner of the land to provide. He will give strength to those who clear the land, tools to those who till, seeds to those who plant and store houses for those who gather. We will know our job by what He gives us to work with.

It amazes me how discouragement and groaning lessen when we stop looking at the whole field and just focus on the row in front of us. As we've put this in action, we've seen this miracle take place in our hearts.

I believe that this year the Lord would have us be constant with evangelism, more vocal towards those who oppose the Gospel and show His love to all while clinging to His promise that we will reap a harvest.

We rely on your prayers, encouragement, support and fellowship more than you know.

We are presently planning an outreach through Grupo Impacto. They have agreed to send us a group of doctors for one day and a group of workers for a week. These brothers are going to work in the schools with us, doing some much needed repairs. We have been planning to work in one kindergarten and two grade schools. Our hope is that by reaching out to the needs of the people it will soften their hearts towards the Lord.

Since the laws of Mexico state that religion is separate from education, we have agreed not to do any evangelical ministry within the school building. Instead we have asked if we can give out invitations to an event outside of the school premises. All three schools agreed to have us until one of the men on the board of directors in the school our children attend began to spread false accusations about us. He convinced (or rather manipulated) the rest of the board to agree.

I was worried that when the word got out the other two schools would back out as well. Instead they told us they didn't care where the help came from. They understood that we are Christians. They also said that we weren't doing anything to get them in trouble with the law so people could say what they want.

Last night another man from the board of directors paid me a visit. He apologized for not having been at the meeting that got us kicked out. He asked us if we would still consider working with them if he could convince the others to change their minds. He was going to have another meeting with the board. If they agree to have us, we hope to work with them as well.

We would treasure your prayers for this outreach. We would like the parents and the school to work with us as a team. We hope that in working together we can build relationships with individuals. We also hope that they will be able to see our testimony and not have to take the word of others as to who we are and what we believe.

We need the Lord to provide people with the right skills for the jobs. We need the Lord to help us acquire the materials and tools needed. We need the Lord to give us favor with the authorities to get the various permission slips required. We need the Lord to provide boldness and wisdom to preach the message He has chosen for the people of Valle. We need the Lord to give us patience as we are being stretched. To put it simply, we need the Lord.

Upheld by His yoke, The Drysdale Family 

News From Mexico

Mike and Faith Ball

Greetings from Loreto, Mexico. On the 17th of November, Ethan Ross was born. He is a healthy baby. Faith is doing well. It seems like things have never gotten back to normal since his arrival. Both of our schedules have been knocked out of whack. A couple from Santa Maria, a nearby village, gave their

Continued on back cover

2008 Memorial Day Conference

Twin Rocks Conference Center

Greetings again, and welcome in advance to the Annual Memorial Day Conference of the Shield of Faith Mission International. This year is the 54th anniversary of the mission and the 46th annual conference. We are looking forward to a very special time with you and your family on the beautiful Oregon Coast.




We are preparing to welcome **Brother Moses Osho, Director of Ethnos Christian Mission of Nigeria** and alumnus of the SFMI Missionary Training Program (1981). Brother Moses will be the keynote speaker, and we have no doubt that what he will say will greatly impact those who hear him say it. Many encouraging things have transpired in Nigeria in the past twenty-five years; many spiritual battles have been waged and won. But the battle for Africa continues. I am absolutely sure that we will be stirred by what we will learn.

As many of you know, we are almost certain to max out the facility of **Twin Rocks Conference Center at Rockaway Beach, Oregon**; so we encourage you to register as soon as possible. Fill out the registration form on the next page and mail it or fax it to the SFMI office right away. If you have friends that you would like to encourage to attend, feel free to make as many copies of the registration form as you need and send them in ASAP.

As the conference grows, so does the need for an increasing number of **volunteers** to make light work of keeping everything functioning smoothly. Consequently, our registrars, Mike Williamson and Chrissie Wise, have submitted a list of jobs and responsibilities that are covered by volunteers. It is better that there should be too many than not enough, so if you find on the following list things that you would like to help with, please make note of your availability on your registration form or call the office number, **(541) 382-7081**, and leave a message for Mike or Chrissie.

Volunteer positions needed for Memorial Day Conference:

- Help set-up (arriving early)
- Books table set-up
- Nursery overseer/helpers for meetings
- Children's ministry overseer/helpers
- Youth ministry overseer/helpers
- Family campfire overseer
- Run the sound system (will have to arrive early)
- Recreation overseer/helpers
- Communion set up
- Communion servers
- Helping tear down, pack up, put away



Special Need
Please be thinking and
praying about
two new registrars for
next year's conference.
Could this
be you?

Annual Northwest Conference 2008 Shield of Faith Mission International

Registrars: **Mike Williamson**
and **Chrissie Wise**

Mailing address: **P.O. Box 144**
Bend, OR 97709

Phone: **1 (541) 382-7081**
Fax: **1 (541) 382-4471**

Twin Rocks Friends Campground Rockaway Beach, Oregon

May 23-26, 2008

How it works: Arrivals begin at 5:00 pm Friday, May 23. The first meeting begins at 7:00 pm. There will be no meal served Friday night. Please feel free to bring snacks. Saturday breakfast is our first meal, and Monday lunch is our last meal. We have spaces available for tents and RVs. There are family cabins and lodging for others. Bring your own bedding, or bedding can be provided for those in need. Twin Rocks Friends Campground is a **non-smoking** facility. Pets are **not** allowed. Copy as many forms as you need. Mail or fax completed forms to Shield of Faith office. We look forward to seeing you this year. **Register early!**

Family Registration:

Last name: _____ First: _____ Home phone _____ - _____ - _____

Address: _____ 2nd phone _____ - _____ - _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

E-mail: _____ @ _____

Spouse: _____ please include infants

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Child: _____ age: _____ Child: _____ age: _____

Circle Choices

Nights staying: Friday night Saturday night Sunday night

Accomodations: Room Tent RV

Meals: Saturday breakfast Sunday breakfast Monday breakfast

Saturday lunch Sunday lunch Monday lunch

Saturday dinner Sunday dinner


Special requests or needs:

would like to work with children's ministry would like to work with youth ministry

Please mail or fax completed form to the Shield of Faith Office as soon as possible.

Missionary News, continued from page 13

lives to the Lord about a month ago. Please pray for Toño and Juanita. Manolo is giving them discipleship studies in their home. I now have studies, which I conduct on Saturdays, with a young couple in Villa Garcia, Roberto and Angelica. They were led to the Lord a year ago or so. I met them as I was preaching in the street market there. That is one of my activities that I have not gotten back to regularly. The group that I was going with from Aguascalientes stopped going there.

We are starting Saturday seminars on marriage starting February 2. Manolo and I are doing the teaching. By the time you read this in the mailing it might be over. We plan to have them through the month of February. Another item is that a church from Monterrey has taken over writing articles in the local newspaper every other week. The pastor, Mario, lived here as a kid and has a burden for the people here. The owner of the Loretense is also the owner of the local cable television network. He is allowing Christian programming on his channel. Right now they are sending video with teaching on creation vs. evolution. Praise the Lord for this. This is either free or for a minimum fee. Please pray for these items. 


Bible-Expo News and Prayer Items

François Marcoux (Torreon, Mexico)

We are presently in Mexico on another Bible-Expo Tour. The first exhibition is planned for this coming weekend in a big mall here in Torreon called Galerias Laguna. This is our third time there. They have always been very receptive for us to set up the exhibition on their premises, which is not the case everywhere, unfortunately. We are still waiting for a confirmation from another mall and a university from this area.

After Torreon, we are planning to go to Monterrey, Leon, Guanajuato, and Cuauhtémoc, and possibly one or two other yet undetermined places. This would bring us till the end of March, when we plan to return to Canada.

We appreciate and value your prayers for these outreaches, which permit us to explain the Gospel to literally hundreds of people, that God would open hearts and minds, but also the hearts of those in administrative positions to give us the proper permits, as we do encounter opposition and delays. That the Lord would also strengthen the local saints that come and share their faith with us.

We would also ask prayer for Marcel and his family as they plan on joining us next week, that the Lord would protect on their trip from Canada to Mexico. 

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.

Cover photo by Renee Voll

Shield of Faith Mission International

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