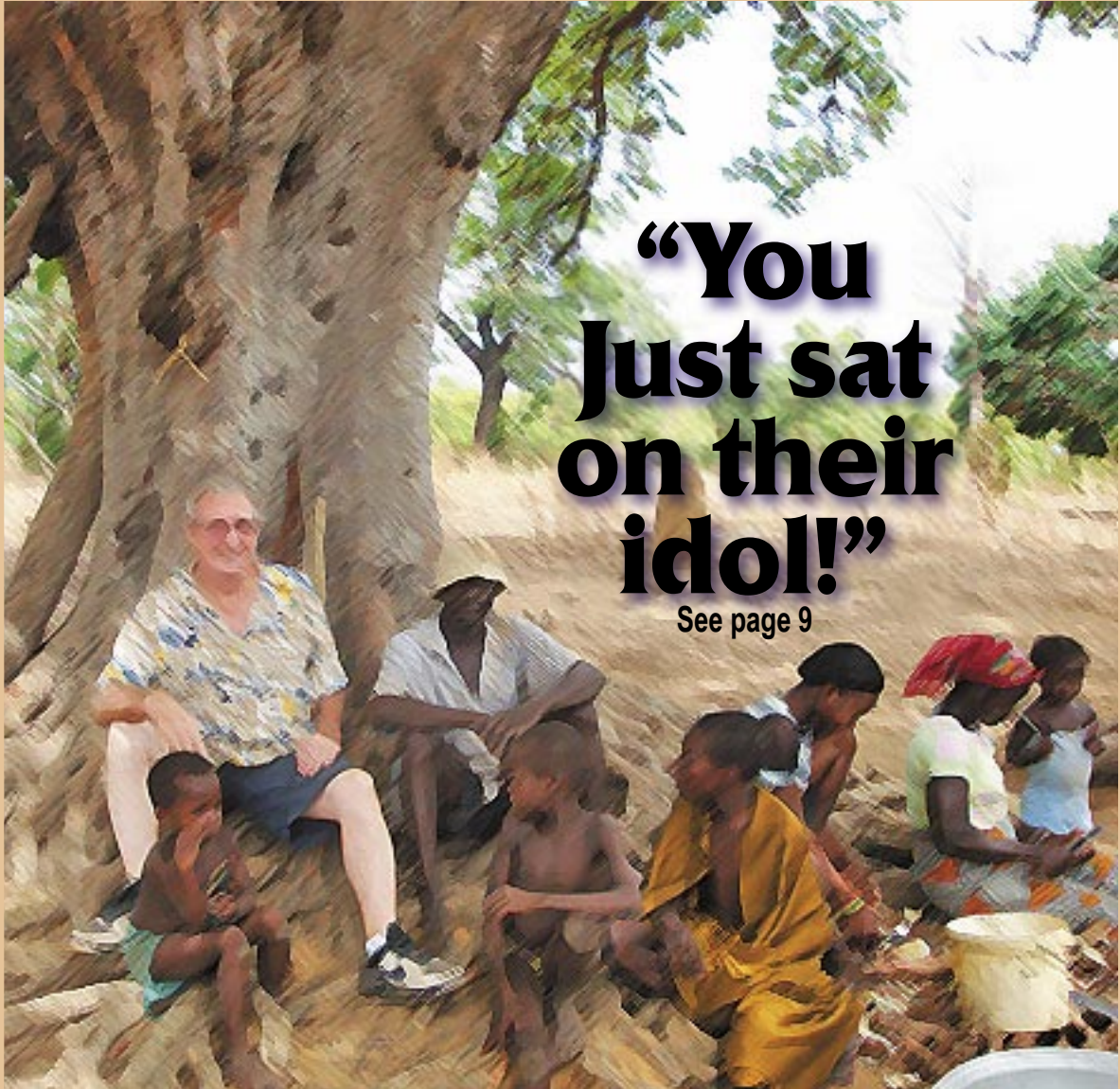


SHIELD OF FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL

SFMI

Prayer/News UPDATE

Fulfilling the Great Commission Through Establishing New Testament Churches



“You Just sat on their idol!”

See page 9

May/June 2009

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Election	P. 3
Meet the Board	P. 5
Are We Commanded to Tithe?	P. 6
A Measure to Reach Even unto You	P. 8
Missionary Reports	P. 9



From the President's Desk

Words, Words, Words

Someone has said, "Give the people a new word and they think they have a new fact." As I looked over Dick York's lead article in this issue, I thought of that and also of a corollary: He who controls the definition of a word controls the debate. For that reason, it is essential that, as part of the renewing of our minds, we let the Scripture define the words that it—and we—use to describe spiritual truths. Words and phrases such as "life," "death," "good works," "light," and "dark" are radically reinterpreted by the Scripture, and it is the Scripture that establishes their true meaning. This is especially true of words of such doctrinal significance as "predestination." Dick York's insightful article points us to an understanding of this word and concept in the context of the whole counsel of God.

Similarly, Jim Lucas takes time in this issue to deal with tithing, giving, and a willing offering to the Lord. Since these words are often bantered about interchangeably, we do well to have a clear definition of each. For that, it is necessary once again to go to God's "dictionary" and let it, the Bible, define and re-define these words.

In fact, thinking about definitions and meaning, we realize that a great part of evangelism and teaching is a matter of re-defining words for our listeners: sin, repentance, faith, grace, holiness, saint, even the very word, "God." Paul, in his Mars Hill message to the pagan Athenians (Acts 17:16-31) began re-defining the word "God," telling them what God is not and what God is, even telling them of which God he spoke. As you read the missionary reports in this issue, remember to pray that the messengers of the Good News in many places may be anointed to hold forth the Word of life in the words of the Word.

Steve Montgomery

Women's Retreat in Mexico

Every year, the chain of sister churches in Jalisco sponsors a Women's Retreat that lasts a full day. The ladies breakfast together, lunch together, and study a topic from the Scripture together. This year, over 100 Christian women gathered to receive teaching on the theme of Resolving Conflicts. There were



women from both churches in Arandas, from the church here in Atonilco, from the churches in La Barca, Jiquilpan, Guadalajara, Santa Fe, and San Jose de Gracia, as well as women from Valle de Juarez and Tototlan. Suzanne Hale spoke, with Linda translating.

Both the teaching and the fellowship were subjects of thanksgiving among the women in attendance.



WE CAN USE YOUR OLD EYEGLASSES IN MEDICAL OUTREACHES IN MEXICO.

AN OPTOMETRIST IN THE CHURCH IN ATOTONILCO WILL GIVE THEM TO NEEDY PEOPLE WHO COME TO HEALTH FAIRS AT THE CHURCH.

In villages and ranches where health care is limited and money is tight, we have found that a medical outreach, a Health Fair that includes a gospel presentation, is an effective tool for reaching people for Christ. We can use your old eyeglasses to help needy people at the same time that we turn them toward a heavenly vision.

Bring your used or out-dated glasses to the Memorial Day Conference and we will make certain they get into the hands—and on the eyes—of people who will also listen to the message of Good News! SEND YOUR EYES TO MEXICO!

Election



By Dick York

I implied in a recent article that false teachings are often supported by an erroneous definition of the terms upon which they are based. The credibility of such doctrines in the minds of those who are convinced by them is enhanced by their longevity. Numerous schools of thought were introduced early in the history of the church, many of them by heretical intellectuals who are now considered to be among the “church fathers.” Although many of these questionable or patently false doctrines are old, they recycle themselves and take their place among the trends that come and go: seldom mentioned for a while, they rise to prominence again and seem so noble that they certainly must be among the fundamentals of the faith. When young believers who are reading their Bibles hear these doctrines for the first time, they sound strange to their ears and contrary to what God has been showing them thus far. But since they are coming from people of theological stature or who have been saved longer than they, confusion comes. After the aforementioned article, I received a written question from a young believer asking about “Election.”

“Is it true,” the writer asked, “that God has predestinated many to be lost and for them there is no hope because no atonement was made for them?”

Election is a doctrine that really gets twisted. In recent years, there has been such emphasis on this subject that it has become a kind of movement causing confusion and even some division in the church. The confusion is over the issue mentioned. If God arbitrarily chose some to be saved and arbitrarily condemned the rest, that seems to contradict the scriptures that declare God’s love for all men and say that He is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”¹ Other scriptures proclaim a similar message: “[God our Savior] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.²...the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe...³ And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”⁴

Those who preach that God predestinated some to be lost and that there is therefore no way for them to repent or be saved reconcile these verses to their

doctrine simply by modifying them to mean “not willing that *any of the elect* should perish.” “God is the Savior *of all the elect*....The propitiation for the sins *of the elect throughout the world*.” But we must read the scriptures as they were written; we are not authorized to modify them.

Four things are fundamental to the confusion about predestination, the first being an understanding of what that predestination is based upon; the second being how one understands God’s sovereignty; the third, man’s free will; and the fourth, how we understand the depravity of man.

1. Predestination is not the same as “predetermination,” which would mean that God decided and that’s the end of it; there are no other factors. But Peter said we are elect “*according to the foreknowledge of God*.”⁵ Foreknowledge means that God knew something before it happened, not that God *predetermined* something and then made it happen. Paul agrees with Peter when he says, “For *whom he did foreknow*, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...”⁶

Time is like an island floating in eternity. From God’s eternal perspective, being high above it and looking down, He can see all sides of the island at once, the east coast and the west coast. If the east coast is the beginning and the west coast is the end, God can see it all at once. Being eternal, God sees yesterday and tomorrow at the same time. One thing He *has* predetermined: all who are in Christ will be saved and conformed to the image of Jesus. Now He can look forward and know who will choose Christ and who will not—and all who are in Christ, He has predestined to be conformed to His image.

2. “Sovereignty” is not a Bible word, but it’s key to the thinking of those who mishandle the doctrine of election. God is sovereign, of course; He is the supreme ruler of the universe. That doesn’t mean (as some would suggest) that He is the only one who decides. In His sovereign wisdom, He has given man a will and freedom to choose. This in no way impinges upon God’s sovereignty or negates His supreme authority.

3. Free will. Two things God requires of man: first, to love God and his neighbor. Since love is a choice, that would be impossible without freedom

of will. Second, God requires obedience. Without the option to disobey, there would be no such thing as obedience. Both of these require a free will.

4. Depravity. One of the tenets of Calvinism is “The total depravity of man.” Its proponents interpret this non-biblical term to mean that man is totally “dead,” incapable of thought or any kind of self-determination. He is therefore unable to do anything: he is incapable of decision and thus cannot change his mind (which is what repentance is) about anything. However, that is not what the word “depraved” means. Depraved means morally debased, corrupt. That is certainly true of man, but that doesn’t leave him without conscience or the ability to decide or repent. If that were the case, God would most certainly not have sent His prophets to call morally depraved Israel to repentance and to “*Choose you this day* the way of life or the way of death.”

It is true that Jesus said, “No man can come to me except the Father draw him,”⁷ but Jesus also said, “If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me.”⁸ God, in His love, put in all men the knowledge of God,⁹ and wrote His testimony in all of creation, making all men without excuse.¹⁰ Then, by His mercy, He reconciled the whole world to Himself¹¹ by making Jesus a ransom for all.¹² For this reason, Jesus is the Savior of all men (“to reconcile” means that He has taken out of the way every barrier that would prevent all men from being saved, i.e., He has cleared the way. That barrier was sin, which He took upon Himself and put to death with Him on the Cross. This was for the whole world).

Because no man could save himself or come to God on his own, God is graciously drawing *all* men. Why, then, are not all men saved? Because man has a will, and by his will, he resists the drawing of God and refuses His offer of grace. So, although it is true that man cannot be saved by his own will, he will be lost by resisting God’s will. Jesus is the Savior of all men, specially of those who believe. Every man who goes to hell will go there in spite of the fact that he had a Savior, and his ticket to heaven had been purchased for him. Many (all) are called; but few (only those who believe) are chosen.

Calvinism, the name by which this particular brand of “election” is generally identified, is based on five tenets, forming the acronym TULIP.

T ... Total depravity, in the lexicon of Calvinism, means total inability to do anything. The

subject can not decide any thing, be remorseful about anything, or repent of anything until God chooses to regenerate him. Until then, he is dead. As has been mentioned already, this is contrary to the obvious fact that God commanded all men everywhere to repent,¹³ and Jesus told unregenerate men to repent or perish.¹⁴ Why would He have done that if there was in them no power to respond?

U ... Unconditional Election means that God has predetermined who will be saved and who will be lost. Man does not have a free will or any options. Some were created to be saved; others were created to be damned. This contradicts the

scriptures we have already considered, as well as many others that indicate that God loves the whole world¹⁵ and that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.¹⁶

L ... Limited atonement

means that there was no atonement made for those who were predestinated to be condemned. Jesus died to atone only for the sins of those whom God loved and chose to be saved; for all others there is no remedy. If that were the case, then why did God command Ezekiel to “say unto them, *As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*”¹⁷ It is because of this expressed compassion that the apostle Paul wrote, “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all.”¹⁸


I ... Irresistible grace means that if one is chosen to be saved, that person is without power to resist when God, by his Spirit, draws him. But that seems inconsistent with much of what we read in Scripture. I will cite two examples, the first from Jeremiah and the second from the book of Acts. Jeremiah preached to a people that God loved and that He sought to draw to Himself, saying, “And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not.”¹⁹ They resisted His grace. Several generations later, Stephen addressed a new

Whatever you hear, and from wherever you hear it, measure it against the written word of God. Because a doctrine is old does not mean it is true. Most errors have been around a long time.

generation of the same beloved people saying, “Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”²⁰ Furthermore, we have that tragic scene depicted in Matthew 23:37,38. wherein Jesus, weeping over the city, cries, “O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

P ... Perseverance of the saints simply means that those who are indeed born again of the Spirit of God have received eternal life and shall never perish. This point seems to be consistent with Scripture. Eternal life is, obviously, eternal. Everlasting life lasts forever. John the Baptist said, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”²¹ This is often abused by applying it to everyone who has made some superficial “decision” for Christ or has engaged in some other formula or ritual purporting to be a saving rite that did not include repentance and faith.²² But when one has truly believed and by faith has been born again as a son of God, Jesus has promised that nothing shall pluck him out of

the Father’s hand,²³ and that He will raise him up at the last day.²⁴

Whatever you hear, and from wherever you hear it, measure it against the written Word of God. Just because a doctrine is old does not mean it is true. Most errors have been around a long time. The Word of God is old, and it is true. It is also simple and straightforward. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth,²⁵ so as you read, ask Him to teach you, line upon line, precept upon precept. He has promised, and He will do it. 

ENDNOTES

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 2 Peter 3:9 | 13 Acts 17:30 |
| 2 1 Timothy 2:4 | 14 Luke 13:3,5 |
| 3 1 Timothy 4:10 | 15 John 3:16 |
| 4 1 John 2:2 | 16 Romans 10:13 |
| 5 1 Peter 1:2 | 17 Ezekiel 33:11 |
| 6 Romans 8:29 | 18 1 Timothy 2:5,6 |
| 7 John 6:44 | 19 Jeremiah 7: 3 |
| 8 John 12:32 | 20 Acts 7:51 |
| 9 John 1:9 | 21 John 3:16 |
| 10 Romans 1:20 | 22 Acts 20:21 |
| 11 2 Corinthians 5:19 | 23 John 10:27-29 |
| 12 1 Timothy 2:6 | 24 John 8:39,40 |
| | 25 John 16:13 |

Meet the Board:

Where Can I Go to Flee from Thy Presence? The Testimony of Ed Newby



“Where shall I go from your spirit? or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, you are there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall your hand lead me, and your

right hand shall hold me.” (Psalm 139:7-10).

Among my earliest memories are my parents taking me to Sunday school and church. As a consequence, I heard the gospel at an early age and intellectually believed it but did not spiritually

embrace it. When I was twelve years old, I went forward at the urging of my Sunday school teacher. I was aware of my sinfulness before the Lord and knew that I needed a savior, but I wasn’t ready to call Him “Lord.”

That took nine more years, and it seemed that wherever I went during that time, the Lord placed reminder after reminder in my path. I kept running into Christians. During my sophomore year of college, I became friends with a Christian classmate. One day in the library, I was reading a particularly funny (at the time) essay on how ludicrous the idea of Creation was. I was laughing, and my friend asked what was so funny. “Listen to this,” I said, and begin to read a particularly “hilarious” section. When there was no laughter, I looked up and saw a sad look on

Continued on page 7



Are We Commanded to Tithe?

By Jim Lucas

I am asked this question often. My reply is “no, He does not so command us.” If you should ask me if I tithe, my answer would be “yes, my wife and I tithe.” We do not tithe, however, because we think it is required of us but because we choose to. In 2 Corinthians 9:7, we find what it is that pleases God: “Every man according as he purposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” Many zealous preachers are insisting that you *must* tithe, and they take offering after offering. Many of them speak more about money than they teach the Word of God. Jesus didn’t say, “If you love me, collect a lot of money.” But He said “if you love me feed my sheep.”

They usually read from the Book of Malachi verses 3:7-10:

Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

Then they proceed to say that if you are not giving God tithes, you are a thief robbing from God.

The truth is they are not teaching the whole council of God. The Prophet Malachi was not speaking to born-again Christians but to Israelites who were living under the Law of Moses. Most pastors today readily say we are not under the law of Moses, for Christ Jesus came to save us from the curse of the law. This is explained in Galatians 3:8-11:

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the

curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith.

They seem to forget this when it comes to money. They want to go back to the law to try to enforce the need for giving offerings and tithes to God instead of trusting the Holy Spirit to move His people to give of their own will, cheerfully. We are no longer under the old covenant. In the New Testament in Hebrews 10:16,17, it says. “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

Those who seek to be justified by the law have fallen from grace (Gal. 5: 4). The people of Israel were indeed robbing God and were under the curse of the law. The judgment of God was upon them and their land. If they would repent and obey God, He would bless them. If one chooses to try to keep the law, he may try, but he must remember how many times he has failed to keep the law. If we go back under the law, we have to keep *all of the law*, and if we fail in one point we are guilty of all (See Galatians 2:3 and James 1:10).

The reason there is such a temptation for pastors to insist that we keep the law is because under the law, the priests, who were of tribe of Levi, were taken care of by all the other tribes. In fact, the other eleven tribes were *commanded* to take care of the priests. That, of course was a good thing if you were a Levite and if the people were walking in obedience to God.

The law was a schoolmaster that would show us how sinful a people we are: “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet” (Rom 7:7); “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:24-26).

The law was weak because of the weakness of man. Sinful man cannot be saved by the keeping of the law because it is not in his heart to do the will of God: “Knowing that a man is not justified

by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16).

When the gospel of Christ is preached in Spirit and in truth, the sinner is transformed into a new creature by faith in Christ Jesus. What we could never do under the law has now become our new life, because our Father writes in our hearts the desire to walk with Him. If our leaders have left the way of faith and want to put us back under the law, I must say “No, excuse me, but I will follow Jesus, for I know without faith I cannot please Him” (Please read Heb.11:6).

Let us pray for a revival in the church so that the way of faith is restored. We don’t want to go back to the law—we must go forward, following the faith of Christ with all of our hearts.


We need true shepherds and not hirelings. Those who come into the ministry simply because they want a good job or profession and expect to get paid are hirelings. Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep” (John 10:12- 13).

Those who are truly called of God walk by faith and trust God to supply all their needs; they seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the things that they need are added unto them (see Matthew 6:33). Those who are called of God are men of faith, and men of faith do not beg. King David said, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” (Ps 37:25). How can I tell you to trust God for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life if I cannot trust God to supply my earthly needs? Is that the example that you want?

All believers are called to trust God and learn how to give, for it is more blessed to give than to receive. We need to follow the faith of our Father Abraham, who gave a tithe unto God. He lived four hundred and thirty years *before* the law of Moses came. He *gave* the tithe, but there is no record that God ever *asked* him for a tithe. Abraham gave it voluntarily. Please read Genesis 14. In the book of Acts we see a good example of true Christianity in action:

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. (Acts 4: 32-35)

When men of faith are following in the footsteps of Jesus, others will do the same. If we want to see the grace of God in action, we must not try to enforce the law, but we must live lives that demonstrate our love and faith in the our Lord Jesus Christ. 

Where Shall I Go to Flee From Thy Presence?

continued from page 4

his face. “Ed,” he said, “I’m not a scientist, but I know enough to realize that the account in Genesis is far simpler and far more believable than evolution.” Although this reply probably wouldn’t rate very high in the eyes of the world, it was like a knife in my heart. Much as the Lord used one stone from a shepherd boy’s sling to kill a giant, so the Lord used my friend’s simple words to slay my giant of intellectualism.

Still, I ran from the Lord for nearly two more years. Wherever I went, however, the Lord had a witness there for me. I was at a drinking party one evening, nursing a beer along. My father was one of the most successful anti-drinking proponents I’ve ever met. I didn’t particularly care for the flavor of beer, but drinking was what you were supposed to do at a drinking party, so I usually sipped one beer for the entire evening (except for what I could secretly contribute to a nearby houseplant).

This evening, I was sitting across the room from a more dedicated drinker. He must have been watching me, for at one point he blurted out, “You really don’t belong here do you?” He was right.

Eventually, I developed a relationship with a woman who was involved with the occult. One day I found a “baggie” with a burned substance inside. “What’s this?” I asked, little prepared for the answer. “It’s a spell,” she answered. The longer I remained with her, the more disturbing things began to happen.

It was during this time that I made the acquaintance of Jim Miller, who was hired for the summer at a plant where I was working. We were teamed together to operate a machine that sliced fir boards into slats, which would eventually become kite sticks.

During the time that I was working with Jim, he often witnessed to our fellow workers. He didn’t

Continued on back cover



A Measure to Reach Even Unto You

Steve Montgomery



“Another parable spake He unto them: the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Matt. 13:33).

This parable has produced a plethora of interpretations. I would like to explain what I believe this parable teaches. Before we seek to understand the application of this story, let’s consider the Kingdom of heaven.

The phrase “Kingdom of heaven,” which appears only in Matthew’s gospel, is synonymous with the Kingdom of God. A look at some of the parallel passages in the Gospels establishes this:

Matthew 4:17—From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 13:31—Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed...

Matthew 13:33—Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened

Mark 1:15—And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Mark 4:30-31—And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? [It is] like a grain of mustard seed...

Luke 13:20-21—And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

These are only a few of many parallel passages demonstrating that the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of heaven are synonymous.

What is the Kingdom of God? Luke 19:12-15 gives us this:

A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return...

But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom...

The nobleman goes away *to receive a kingdom*. His citizens send the message “We will not have this man *to rule over us*.” Nevertheless, the nobleman returns, having received *the* kingdom, and sits in judgment.

When the nobleman left to receive a kingdom, he did not go to receive a new territory or take the throne in another place. He received authority to reign *where he had been*. So to “receive a kingdom” here means to receive *authority to reign*. The meaning is not a place or territory but an *authority to rule*, and the sense of the Kingdom of God in the Bible is the *reign and rule of God*.

When Jesus walked on Earth, the Kingdom had drawn near, and the opportunity to submit to that Kingship was at hand (Matt. 4:17). To enter His Kingdom, i.e., to come under His Kingship authority, one must be born again (Jn. 3:3-6). Jesus preached the good news of the Kingdom—the kingship—of God (Matt. 4:23) and taught His disciples to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). He told them to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33) and called His followers “children of the Kingdom” (Matt. 13:38).

The Kingdom is the kingship rule of God over those who willingly accept that rule, so by extension, also the company of those over whom He rules. Thus, the Kingdom is a present reality, with a future, greater revelation. This Kingdom grows each time someone genuinely believes God and receives through the Cross and resurrection forgiveness and new life. The Kingdom will be finally, fully declared at the Second Coming of the King (Matt. 16:28).

We now look at the three key elements in the parable of Matt. 13:33:

- Leaven
- The woman
- Three measures of meal

Continued on page 13

Missionary Reports

Africa

Jerry & Cherry Skiles

Greetings;

I got back on schedule from a good trip to Ghana and Togo. I was able to get to the Dagomba tribe, (that is where they made me a chief) for a brief stay. I rode a 125 cc motorbike in Ghana, put over 2,000 KM on it. It is a nice way to travel: slow but steady. I've told the story about traveling through butterflies with my 4x4, smashing the beautiful things all over my windshield. The Africans, walking and riding their bikes, never harm the butterflies. Well, the little 125 allowed me to flow among the butterflies safely—well, I may have heard one thud on my helmet....

I met Ed Enns at Tarkwa, where we saw Jim and crew. It was encouraging to see the young recruits with their zeal, hard at it. There were people in training and individuals responding to the salvation message.

We then headed to Togo and met with Emanuel Kangni. We had several opportunities to minister in Lome, and then we connected with Nat from Ethnos Mission. He took us around Togo, and we visited some missionaries and churches he knew.

I tried to connect with Hovare but didn't see him. I went to the border and talked to a man who knew of us. That was a providential meeting.

Jerry Skiles

Ghana, West Africa

Jim and Fran Lucas

Jesus is Lord!

“You just sat on their idol!”

This is what my interpreter said to me. We were in the northern district, where we traveled to check out unreached tribes. Francille and Janelle made several loaves of banana bread and sent them with us—this and some medical supplies were given to different chiefs in four different villages. In one village we found the chief sitting under a shade tree. We presented the gift to him, and he was very pleased, so I began to share the gospel with him. He was interested, so after about ten minutes of sharing I asked him if he would like his people to hear this message. He said yes, so I suggested that he send a messenger to invite the people, and he did.

While we were waiting, I decided that I would like a picture with him, so I sat down beside him at the foot of the tree. There was a flat rock there, so I sat on it. It broke, and it turned out that this was one of their idols!

When the people gathered, we preached about God our Creator, and how we are the work of His hands and



how wrong it is for us to worship the creation or things that we make. There was another larger idol standing just behind the chief. I wasn't going to say anything about it, but the Holy Spirit wouldn't let me ignore it. I told the chief that if he wanted the blessing of God on him and his village, he must destroy that idol. One young man spoke up and said that he would destroy it; the chief said in a very convicting voice that if he did, he would go crazy.

But these men *could* destroy it! I had destroyed one already and nothing happened to me. I told him that I would be glad to destroy it. At first he seemed almost willing but later said no, it was his father's and he couldn't destroy it. Some day soon, Lord willing, it will be destroyed, and the people will come to Jesus.

Our trip was a very informative time. We were gone for about six days. We found the Gonjar tribe, which is quite large, to be unreached. Most of them are Muslims, but some are idol worshipers. The Birifor is also a very large tribe, with just a few Christians among them. Through a brother whom we had disciplined in Tarkwa (John Kwame), we met Peter Tungjie, who is a Birifor and a very fine Christian man, who invited us up to teach disciples.

So much has happened in the past months! The Voetburgs have returned home, and that has been a big change. Skip was a lot of help in so many ways, helping teach the disciple classes and the evangelism programs. The absence of the Voetburgs has been felt by many in the community. I have missed Tate or Brooks coming up from time to time just to give us a hug. I miss the times we spent in prayer in the mornings. However, we have also received others coming over to help in the ministry. John Burwell and Austin Ball have joined our team, and they have been a great blessing. Their enthusiasm and

zeal is encouraging—they are developing their ministry of the Word and the preaching of the gospel. They have been a good addition to the team. Tim Spurling and Clement have been enjoying having more young men to work with.


We have seen Tarkwa saturated with gospel literature. We have about 14 gospel tracts that Skip and I have written. These tracts carry messages that deal with a variety of doctrinal errors and at the same time bring in the gospel. People readily receive them and read them, and we hear many good comments about them. They are often asking for new ones. We have several good “fishing holes” where we go and evangelize. The people are accustomed to our coming and come out to hear the Word of God. We have five such places scattered throughout the community.

There have been several conversions, and most of the ones we are discipling are coming from these fishing holes. The disciples are multiplying; we are now working with the sixth group here in Tarkwa. Several of the men we disciplined are now helping with the teaching. Matthias, Clement, and Austin are helping me here. Our Heavenly Father has sent three up to the northern region, Tim Spurling (from Washington), John Burwell (from Montana), and John Kwame (African) to make disciples for five weeks. The needs up there are great. After the five weeks, we will reassess regarding the situation and try to determine what the will of our Lord Jesus is regarding future ministry in the area. It seems that the work is going on well with the disciples in Togo, as well as in the Volta region of Ghana.

Francille, Janelle, and I will be returning to the States in June. We have been praying for someone to come and help in the work here, and we are glad to report that Mike Ball and family announced that they are coming in August. Please be praying for them. They still have six children at home and it will be a big endeavor to transfer them from Wyoming to Ghana. Having families on the mission field is a good thing; they will be a good testimony of a godly family unit.

We want to thank all of you who pray for us and support us in the work our Lord. Jesus will reward you for your labor of love.

In Jesus,

James and Francille Lucas 

Valle De Juarez, Mexico Ed and Abby Drysdale

Dear co-workers,

There are so many things to report and so many different venues this letter can take that I'm not sure where to start. We are home after a long visit with my Dad. I have been so blessed to have this time with him. I know the Lord led us in this, even though at the time I felt guilty for spending so much time away

from the ministry.

Guilt—it is something I have gotten accustomed to. It seems that the enemy has seen fit to pester a lot of those in ministry with this constant feeling of scrutiny. Are you doing the work of the Lord? Are you doing enough?

What is the work of the Lord? Is it evangelism, preaching, and teaching? Is it visiting the sick, helping those in need, or befriending the lonely? And what, or better said, *who* qualifies as the work? Is it the unsaved or new believers? Is it family or children? If you have answered yes to all of these questions I would agree. It is all of this—that is where the guilt comes in! It is impossible to do them all, all of the time. Therefore, one is always being set aside to do another. We have spent a couple months playing “catch up” since we've been home, in all of the areas that were being neglected while we were gone.

Every February, a group is formed called Grupo Impacto. They are men from California and many regions of Mexico who come together to reach out to the area surrounding Guadalajara. Doctors, chiropractors, dentists, nurses, contractors, electricians, plumbers, and many other professionals (both Mexican and American) volunteer for this event. They willingly take one week off from work, pay for their trip, and give whatever gifts the Lord has blessed them with. This group is made up of over 80 brothers and 10 churches. They team up with churches in the area and spread themselves out between the ministries. Their hearts are to show the love of Christ through their work.

In the four years I have worked with them, I must say that their love is evident. They come with willing hearts to do what they are told, they work long, hard hours and leave exhausted. But from every time that I have worked with them, we have had an increase in the church after their departure. Many might think that this increase is due to the “benefits” given, but that hasn't seemed to be the case. Those who have come have been few, maybe one or two. Yet they have been sincerely interested. The young man that came as a direct result of the first year is still faithfully attending the church in Atotonilco. Since then, his parents have gotten saved and are faithful. His mother came to help us this year here in Valle with the same Grupo Impacto.

Last year was our first time to have Grupo Impacto here in Valle. Out of that event, we had three families begin to attend a weekly Bible study. Prior to this, we hadn't had anyone be faithful to a Bible study. They have now been attending for over a year! These same three families now helped us in this year's outreach. They opened up their homes to host those who came to minister. They made food, attended the evangelistic events, and helped in other small ways.

This year seems to be no different. The work done this year was accomplished by a medical team, who gave free medical attention to those in need, plus a


construction group, who put a bathroom in the facility that has been provided for these events. The workers also consisted of about 30 brothers from Atotonilco and Arandas who came to help in the administration and evangelism. Everyone who wanted to see a doctor had to first fill out a questionnaire and then listen to a gospel presentation. Over 150 people heard the gospel and were given a New Testament.

I am now busy getting back with these 150 people. It's been three weeks since this event, and I haven't made much of a dent in this stack of questionnaires, but I have been able to find a few good contacts. I have been stopped on the street, invited to tacos, and asked into homes. I have been asked to come back when the whole family can be present to listen to the gospel. Some have had tears in their eyes and have asked me to please let the doctors know what a blessing they have been. It's not about the multitudes that received help. When Jesus walked this earth, many followed Him because of the blessings He gave. There are blessings that come from following Christ and some will be drawn only to that. But there will be a few who will see past that and see Jesus in all of His glory. We are now trying to weed out those few.

I ask that you be praying for us during this time, that the Lord will help us to see through those who are time wasters and that we will recognize a genuine heart, and that they will be guarded against the enemy.

With Love, the Drysdale's

If you want to see more pics. go to facebook and look us up under Abbydrysdale@yahoo.com

Contact us at (541) 306-3987 we would love to hear from you. 


Mexico
François Marcoux

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

We have just come back from Mexico last week, mainly from Torreon, where we were able to build two biodiesel (BD) processors in order to be able to produce our own BD on our next trip this summer, Lord willing. I have been making BD here in Canada for three years, which helps reduce fuel costs for our trips to Mexico. We do have the sad news to report that yesterday, brother Marcel Ouellet, the brother who made the Bible Expo and with whom we minister on our trips has just lost his house to a fire that started in the chimney. Marcel had barely finished building it! But thanks to the Lord, the family is safe, *as well as* the Bible Museum, for the most part, and the Expo Bible bus. A two-week Bible Expo was scheduled, beginning in Quebec City in two shopping malls, but, preceding night we were helping Marcel and Mireille

put up the Bible Expo in the mall as if nothing had happened! Marcel is not deterred one moment from presenting the exposition as scheduled.

It is so amazing to see God's hand in all of this. I have seen much opposition to this ministry since I have been working with Marcel for four years now, and it has always been an encouragement to see the determination and perseverance in so many trials to forge ahead with the Lord. We are praying and planning another Expo Bible tour this summer in Mexico with a small team of four or five young people. Please pray for the Ouellet family, as well as the Lord's direction, provision, and protection on the roads and in Mexico, as drug-related crimes are on the rise.

In Christ's name and service,
François and Nohemi Marcoux 

Atotonilcho, Mexico
Steve & Linda Montgomery

Dear Highland prayer partners:

Each year during Spring break we have an evangelistic outreach in some part of the region. The churches from Guadalajara, La Barca, San Jose, Santa Fe, Jiquilpan, and other places will come together this year from April 6th to 11th in Arandas to work with the church there, evangelizing house to house, in the parks, in the jails and any other place where we may have an open door. Each evening we will be showing evangelistic films in three different neighborhoods and publicly announcing the Good News. Jose Luis and his family, back from Morocco for a short visit, will be with us for the week also.

What we need is intercession. If you will pray just five minutes each day for this event, God will give fruit in the Highlands.

Here are some suggestions. Pray for:

1. The attendance from the various churches. Not everyone can come for the entire week. Some will come the first days, some the final days. Pray that the Lord will stir everyone who can or should come to step out in faith.

2. Literature. The Lord graciously provided 3,000 Gospels of John through the church in Loreto. Pray for the good use of this literature and for other tracts.

3. Impact. The church in Arandas is seeking to start a church in the neighborhood of Mexiquito (Meh-hee-KEE-toh).

4. Devotional teaching. Each morning, there will be a 45-minute teaching time with the whole group.

5. Strength and boldness. After the devotional time and prayer, we will divide into teams to go out into 3 different neighborhoods. We will go house to house, marking off the area on a map as we go. The

next day, we will return to those homes where we had good contacts and then go on to new houses. Midday we go back to the headquarters and eat lunch together. In the afternoon, we go to parks or any place where we can talk with the people. Some will hold open air meetings, others will hold children's classes, and many will engage people in conversations. The campaign is Monday through Saturday. With the high heat, many will need physical strength to keep on.

6. Peace. Pray that we will not be greatly impeded by opposition from the RC religion nor from the authorities that do their bidding. Pray for open doors and grace in the eyes of the people. Pray that, when necessary, the Lord will blind the eyes of those that oppose, that they be unable to stop the outreach. It is especially common that authorities attempt to prohibit us from showing films or holding public meetings.

7. Safety. Traveling to and from Arandas, walking the streets each day, exposure to heat and different foods—all of it can cause problems.

Thank you for standing with us in this effort.

Steve & Linda Montgomery 

U.S.A.

Mike and Faith Ball

Dear saints,

We are writing you from snowy Wyoming . It has been snowing here all day after snowing throughout the night. Right now we have no vehicle that will get around in the snow so we are housebound. Our van has been broken down for three months and the Suburban that we were using in the van's place is broken as well. We finally got the van in the shop, but they have not been able to get the transmission fixed. They keep finding something else wrong with it.

We have been out of Mexico for four months now and are enjoying our stay here in Douglas. When we wrote you last we were thinking of going out to Bend, Oregon, to help out in the training program for Shield of Faith. We decided that the need for us was not great enough to warrant us moving out there. I did go there the first of March to teach for a week. I enjoyed that very much. Besides the teaching, which I always enjoy, I was able to spend an entire week with our oldest, T.J. He is doing well and has been blessed by the training time. He is involved in evangelism and a ministry in the nursing home. I also was able to see my niece, Kaylene, who is also in the training program. That was a blessing for me. She and T.J. have grown in the Lord.

We now have been led of the Lord to go to Ghana, Africa. As you know, Austin has been there since January. Jim Lucas, who started a training program there a year ago, is coming home this summer. He has asked us to

consider coming there to direct the training center. Right now there are three young men who are working with Jim and Fran in training nationals in discipleship. These are either new believers or long-time believers who have never been discipled. The course lasts for five weeks and includes four hours of teaching a day and evangelism activities. In the future, we pray that there will be disciples who will be trained to be missionaries to the tribes in Ghana or nearby countries. We have determined that God is sending us there to help in this work.


We plan to leave sometime in August after making a trip to Mexico to visit the brethren and take a group down there to help out with some work on the church building in Loreto. I have been working for a plumber for two months and will continue to work there till the end of May. We need to go out to the Memorial Day conference in Oregon to visit with the family who just returned from there. In June and July we will be visiting churches that support us and helping out doing some work on Mike's sister-in-law's basement here in Douglas .

Things are going well in Loreto. There have been problems with sin in one family in the church, but other than that, things have been going well. Eighteen people have been attending Bible study directed by Manolo in the housing area where we lived when we were there. These are unbelievers. Two people were baptized a couple of months ago from Villa Garcia, where we had been giving Bible studies for the last year that we were there, as well as a couple more people from Mastranto.

Here are some prayer requests. The Lord provided us a house to stay in a few days after arriving in Wyoming, but the owners are returning the first week of May, so we need God's provision for a place to stay for three or four months. Also, we ask you to pray for finances for our trip to Ghana . Each ticket will cost around \$1,500, and there are eight of us going. We need to see the Lord working for us to receive our visas. We would like to be able to get a volunteer worker visa rather than a tourist visa. We also need to see the Lord put together the group that we will take to Mexico this summer.

The family is fine, working hard to finish up the school year. Borden will graduate from high school this year. Feilynn is taking Driver's Ed. at the high school here. They look forward to going to Africa. Chantel and Angelina aren't so excited about it. Viana and Ethan, of course, live for each day, never worried about tomorrow—a good picture of what our faith should look like.

We pray that each of you is trusting in our Lord as well, enjoying the blessing of being transformed into His likeness.

Your servants and His,
Mike and Faith Ball and family 

Leaven

Many have been troubled by the use of leaven here, since leaven is used almost exclusively in a negative sense. Though Leviticus 7:13 and 23:17 use leaven positively, even these verses are generally understood to refer to sin. Nevertheless, this parable is using leaven positively, for the words of the Lord Jesus so declare: “The Kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven....” The Bible, on more than one occasion, uses the same figure with different meaning, as for example when it calls Satan “a lion” (1 Pet. 5:8), though the Lord Jesus is compared to a lion (Rev. 5:5). The Lord Jesus, to emphasize the continued, powerful growth of the Kingdom, uses a natural figure: leaven. That this is true is seen in the parable of the mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32), which also tells of the extension of the Kingdom. Luke links these two parables together when he writes, “And *again* He said....”

The leaven here is the Kingdom rule of God.

The Woman

The woman that carries the Kingdom rule of God and the message of that rule, spreading it where it has not been before is, I believe, the church, the bride of Christ (Matt. 9:15, Eph. 5:23-32). She has been charged with the task of spreading the Good News of God’s rule and the forgiveness He offers through the Cross and resurrection (Matt. 28:19-20).

The woman is the church.

Three Measures of Meal

The Gospel of the Kingdom is taken by the church into a place where it has never been, and the Lord Jesus gives here a specific amount, an area where it is to be placed: three measures. I believe that the Lord had in view here the local church and that the three measures represent that area where the local church takes the message, specifically, where the local church is *responsible* to take the message of Christ.

The Apostle Paul had a method that he explained in 2 Corinthians 10:12-16. He called it his rule, the “measuring stick” given to his team by God to measure rightly their efforts. In verse 15 he explained that rule:

1. To preach the gospel where it was not being preached.
2. To establish churches charged to reach the area around them, with the result that, as those

churches reach out to new areas, the fruit of Paul’s team would be increased.


Paul would establish churches in key cities of a province, charge those churches with reaching the towns around them, and go on to the next province. The churches thus established, following Paul’s example, would charge each new church established in a town to reach the villages roundabout, those villages taking the charge to reach the hamlets, the hamlets the outlying communities, and so on, so that each church would have its region of responsibility.

This rule explains why Paul and Barnabas, having visited only two cities in Cyprus and four in the province of Galatia, returned to Antioch from “the work *which they fulfilled*” (Acts 14:26). Paul spoke in Romans 15:19 of having fully preached the gospel (or, literally, having “filled up with the gospel”) all the region from Jerusalem in circles as far as Illyricum. When Paul was converted, the gospel was being preached in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and as far as Damascus. When Paul, therefore, was sent out, he began in the next province, so that from Jerusalem in circles as far as Illyricum, he and his team filled up the gaps. In each province as far as Rome, there were churches responsible to take the Good News to their region of responsibility. Paul set the Thessalonian church before other congregations as an example because, following Paul’s example, they were not only reaching their own province of Macedonia, but also the neighboring province of Achaia and even beyond (1 Thess. 1:6-8).

Paul received this method from the Lord (2 Cor. 10:13), and we see God endorsing this method when, guiding Paul away for a time from the next provinces after Galatia (Asia and Bithynia), He gave Paul a vision of a man from Macedonia. Not from Phillippi or Thessalonica, but from the *province* of Macedonia!

Paul taught the churches he established that they had a measure to fulfill, an area for which they were responsible. And in the parable of the leaven, we see the message of the Kingship of Christ planted by the church into a specific measure. The church taking the message of Christ’s victory to that geographic area for which they have taken responsibility.

“Another parable spake He unto them: the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”


Each church should ask, What is our “three measures of meal”? What is our region of responsibility? Are we filling it up? 



HELP WANTED

From all across the world comes the cry, “Come over and help us.” One pastor said of the church in Tanzania, “It is like Lake Victoria, exceedingly large and wide, but extremely shallow,” indicating that all over that nation—and indeed all over East Africa—there are multitudes who would call themselves Christians; but their knowledge of the Word of God, and their understanding of what it means to be a Christian is, at the very best, minimal.

That is not true only of East Africa but of the whole continent and of other continents as well. From Pakistan comes word that “We need teachers;” from Asia and the Middle East, the same cry reaches our ears. There is a famine for the Word of God. Where are the preachers, the teachers, the evangelists?

We are convinced that the Lord has spoken to more of His people than have responded. If you are one whom the Lord has called to launch out to minister the Word to the needy multitudes, we would ask you to join with us to address these many calls for help. It is time to answer, “Yes, Lord.” We would like to help prepare some teams of workers to fill some of the voids around the world. 

**If you are interested in future training, write:
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PO Box 144 • Bend OR 97709

or email sfmi@sfmiusa.org

Phone 541 382 7081.



Meet the Trainees



My name is T.J. Ball. I was in Nebraska, working at a summer camp, until August, 2008. When I was done there, I moved to Colorado for a job that was waiting for me. Because I was not sure what I should do in the future, I was praying that God would show me if He wanted me to go to the training

program. I received an e-mail from my parents strongly encouraging me to consider going to the training. When I read that, it clicked for me; I knew that this was the answer to my prayer. I had several different jobs and living situations between then and getting to the program, but I still knew that God wanted me here. I set out for Redmond, OR, at the appropriate time, and God has been providing for me and blessing me immensely through this program. I'm praying about where He'll have me go when I'm done with this training.



Alexandra Bonanno—I am taking the training program because God told me to. I didn't want to come to the training. Really, I didn't like the idea at all. Sometimes what we want isn't what God wants, though. I struggled with letting go of "my" plans and "my" will until last year's Washington conference. The LORD

showed me that I need to be in *His* will, not my own. I finally gave it to God and told Him that I would do whatever He wanted me to do, no matter what. The LORD provided all that I needed to go. He has answered prayer after prayer, and I believe He is going to continue to answer prayer! He is so faithful.

Kaylene Ball—I began praying about coming to the discipleship training in 2007. In the summer/



fall of 2008, I began seriously considering the possibility of coming to the next training the following January. God provided and opened doors in obvious ways, and I started making plans toward coming. Most of all, I had peace that the timing was right and that this was the way that God

would be most glorified with my time. I needed these six months to refocus my heart on Him and am using this time to seek His face concerning His purposes for my future and learning more of His ways. I have felt a burden for sharing the gospel for several years, but I sometimes struggled sharing Christ with co-workers and friends. I came with hopes of learning more about reaching the world for Christ. I'm excited to see how He uses this training in His bigger plans for my life and the lives around me.



My name is Samuel Spurling. Seven months ago, I was challenged by my brother to be "striving lawfully," seeking the Lord's guidance for my life; so I began to pray for His leading (honestly then, not expecting an answer). I had wanted to visit my brother Tim in Ghana,

so I was praying about that. He and my Dad both encouraged me to seek the Lord about going through this training program before I made that visit. The Lord confirmed through two brothers at the September conference that I should go through this discipleship training for the purpose of living and sharing here and also in Ghana. I rededicated my life to the Lord and was baptized, and God has been faithful in leading me and showing me daily the things in my life that I need to put off in order to be more conformed to His image. I praise the Lord for His incredible mercy and grace in my life! He is truly wonderful and greatly to be praised!! 🙏

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Where Shall I Go to Flee From Thy Presence?
continued from page 7

often confront me, but I happened to be present at most of the conversations he had with others and heard the entire exchange. One evening, another worker came up to me and waved a gospel tract under my nose. "Beware," he warned, "your co-worker is handing these things out." I took it from him, read through it quickly, and then handed it back. "But this is true," I said. He shook his head at me and went off to do his work.

At the end of August, Jim quit and went back to his position at Central Oregon Christian School. For myself, the "disturbing" things I had mentioned began to increase. One evening, things all came to an head. This woman with whom I had a relationship manifested another personality and began telling me all the things that she had been doing. It was the most disturbing and fearful time I have ever experienced. I became aware of my helplessness and my inability to change circumstances.

When I went to work that night, my mind was so wrapped up in my problems that I walked right past several coworkers who greeted me and later asked why I had ignored them. I sat in the rear of the break room, thinking, "What shall I do...what can I do?"

The start of our shift was marked by a bell ringing.

I didn't hear it that night. When I finally looked at the clock, it was five minutes past time to start work. I walked into the supervisor's office and said, "I can't go to work tonight. I need to talk to a pastor, a priest, or maybe a psychiatrist. The most horrible thing has happened." Without batting an eye, the supervisor told me, "Go talk to Jim Miller." I had ridden my bicycle to work, so he even drove me to Jim's house. I worked a graveyard shift and it was now past midnight. I knocked on Jim's door, and he got up and let me in. I poured out my story and asked him, "Do you think this woman is possessed?" "I don't know" he said. "But I do know that you can't do anything to help. What you *can* do is surrender your life to the Lord Jesus Christ... or you can go back home." I thought about how this choice would drive away most of my friends. Then I thought about my present state and said, "I'm not going back." I knelt down, repented, confessed my sin before the Lord and received Him as my Lord and Savior. As I began praying, His peace swept over me and the fear was gone.

Since then, the Lord has led me. I haven't always followed his directives at the moment of instruction, but I have learned that it is better to obey. I have learned that there is no place where I can go to flee from His presence. That is no longer a challenge—it is a blessed assurance. 