

SHIELD OF FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL

SFMI

**Prayer/News
UPDATE**

Fulfilling the Great Commission Through Establishing New Testament Churches

The Reprieve Seems to Have Expired: Now What?

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From the President's Desk

Love the Lord

*His Person, His People,
His Word, His Work*

We are called to love four things supremely: the Person of God, the people of God, the Word of God and the work of God.

Loving the Person of God: Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matt. 22:37). The key word is “all.” Learning to love the Lord like that is a job of more than a lifetime. Note that we are to love Him more than His blessings, more than His help, more even than heaven. It is God Himself who captures our heart, thoughts, and strength.

It is my prayer that my article on page 8, “Who Is This Jesus?”, will refresh your appreciation of the Lord Jesus, the Creator, the God of Heaven and Earth.

Loving the People of God: A corollary to loving God is loving what He loves. In 1 Jn 3:14, we read that an evidence of true conversion and source of assurance is that we love the church: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” In Eph. 1, Paul identifies loving the believers as a clear fruit of grace received:

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints...” (Eph 1:14; see also Col. 1:4).

It's difficult to love the Head without loving the Body.

Jim Lucas masterfully calls us to love “All Saints” in his column on page 6.

Loving the Word of God: The Psalmist declared, “Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold” and again, “Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness” (Ps. 119:127, 159). A deep love for and fascination with the Bible is an inevitable fruit of regeneration, the certain consequence of love for Jesus Christ: “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words...” (John 14:23).

In a time of anxiety for many, Dick York calls us back to our true shoring: the Scripture. Read his clarion call “The Reprieve Seems to Have Expired: Now What?”, beginning on the next page.

Loving God's Work: The words, “For God so loved the world...” (Jn. 3:16) are among the most powerful in the Universe. They were the motivator for Paul, who said he endured all things for the elect's sakes that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 2:10). He told the Corinthians, “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” (1 Cor. 9:22). Paul's love for Christ caused him to “seek and save [or bring to salvation] the lost.” As you read reports from around the world, you'll find yourself praying, rejoicing, thrilling at what God is doing because those that love Christ love His work.

As with each issue, I am again thankful to you for taking time to read, consider, and pray about and for the things in this Update. We appreciate you!

Steve Montgomery

The Reprieve Seems to Have Expired: Now What? **By Dick York**



In the Jan/Feb, 2005 issue of the *SFMI Prayer/News Update*, on the occasion of President George Bush's second inauguration, I wrote a piece called "America's Reprieve." Because there were those who, for one reason or another, held a negative view of George Bush, that article generated some adverse reaction from a small number of people. However, as things have progressed, it seems it is time to revisit the subject of America's fading glory and uncertain future. I will start by quoting at some length from the aforementioned article.

The American people—at least a majority of them—have breathed a collective sigh of relief. There are dissenters...but a major part of the populace was not willing to venture any further into the dark waters of socialism, secularism and permissiveness. As a result, instead of following indecisive would-be leaders in the direction of European one-worldism, we have slowed the plunge to national disaster by staying the course for another presidential term....

In Europe, President Bush has few friends in high places; indeed, America has few friends. And it is partly because, as one French official put it, "Mr. Bush wears his religion on his sleeve." As a matter of fact, though, that is not the case. He doesn't flaunt it, but neither does he hide it; as he said in one of the debates, "It's who I am."...

[M]uch of the world is offended by the appearance of Christianity in our national politics. And what's more, many in our own nation are

offended that God is acknowledged in our public life.

But it is not true, as some would have our latest generation of school children believe, that America, from the beginning, was not a Christian nation....

John Quincy Adams wrote: "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this; it connected in one dissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity...from the day of the Declaration...they (the American people) were bound by the laws of God, which they all, and the laws of the gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledge as the rules of their conduct." He also declared, "So great is my veneration for the Bible, that the earlier my children begin to read it, the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society."

President George Washington said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports...and let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion...We ought to be persuaded that the propitious smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself has ordained."

It is the legacy of these men that has elicited God's blessing upon us. But it was inevitable, as time went by, that there should be erosion of this

nobility, which puts in danger both the freedom and the prosperity with which God has blessed us....

Patrick Henry wrote: "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!"

People from every corner of the globe look across the seas and envy America. They want what we have but fail to understand what produced it—even homegrown Americans fail to understand what has given them such privilege.... The tranquility, justice and morality that [the gospel] produces are under attack from within and without.

The fruit cannot long remain when the root is destroyed. The benefits of the Gospel that our forefathers advocated cannot long be enjoyed if the foundations are abolished.

Nearly five years have gone by since the beginning of President Bush's last term of office and the writing of the article from which I have just quoted. Many things have transpired in the world to make us realize how quickly things around us can change. Inevitably, George Bush's two terms of office came to an end. Then, from obscurity came a man of whom we know almost nothing. His birthplace and even his citizenship present us with a measure of uncertainty. He came to us out of the darkness, promising change but carefully concealing what the changes would be.

Some were astute enough to ask, "What kind of change?" But their voices were not acknowledged.

It seems that America is bad, and any kind of change would rescue us from the curse of our forefathers: those naïve framers of the Constitution; those men so out of step with the way other nations govern themselves. So a vocal contingent of the populace joined the

chorus, "Change, change, we want change! Down with our myopic, old fashioned ideas that separate us from other nations and other systems! Away with the shackles that have restricted our moral freedoms and acknowledgment of a Christian God that is a relic of some outdated superstition. Let's have change!"

It is true, of course, that corruption and disobedience to God's word in many areas of public and private life have badly defiled the appearance and reputation of our free society—things that would be corrected by repentance toward God and a return to our founding principles.

This man's view of America is cynical and negative, certainly not in keeping with the views of the men whose quotations appear in the above excerpt.

Whereas Patrick Henry believed this nation was "founded...by Christians...upon the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ," Mr. Obama has assured the Islamic infidels who seek our destruction that "America is not a Christian nation, never was, and never will be. In fact," he states, "it is probably the largest Islamic nation in the world."

Whereas John Adams thought that the glory of the revolution was that it bound the principles of civil government to the principles of Christianity and that the Bible is the manual for good citizenship, Mr. Obama's infrequent and uncomfortable references to Scripture reveal his appalling ignorance and disregard for it. Watching the not-so-gradual unfolding of the practical application of Mr. Obama's Marxist doctrine enhances the realization that, on this course, the government of this once free nation cannot long continue as a friend or even a benign adversary to the church. Change is coming rapidly, and in all of it we see the revelation of what Jesus and the prophets spoke concerning the last days.

We are nine months into the first unsettling year of Obama's agenda to change America. What will the next three years bring? As we sink into the abyss of global socialism, it is


Change is coming rapidly, and in all of it we see the revelation of what Jesus and the prophets spoke concerning the last days.

unlikely that any amount of political activity will turn it around; but perhaps if the church were to earnestly seek the face of God to grant a further reprieve on our downward plunge, he would do it. Whether that should happen or not, it is time for God's people, who are called by His name¹ to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might; to put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day.² It is time to lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross....Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.³

But that opportunity may come, that day may be in our future as it has been for many



around the world in this our generation. Look up, American church; change is coming; things will not continue as they have been in the past. But in the coming struggle we must bear in mind that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.⁴ Our enemy is not flesh and blood, but spiritual wickedness in high places.⁵ We do not have guns; we have a sword—the living Word of God. If we are not in the Word, and the Word is not in us, we will be naked and unarmed before our enemies no matter how conservative or politically astute we might be. The only antidote for darkness is light.⁶ “It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life.”⁷

Whether there will be a further reprieve or not, your redemption draweth nigh.⁸ “He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he (Jesus) is pure.”⁹ 

Endnotes

- 1 2 Chronicles 7:14
- 2 Ephesians 6:10,11, 13
- 3 Hebrews 12:1-4
- 4 2 Corinthians 10:3,4
- 5 Ephesians 6:12
- 6 Ephesians 5:8-13
- 7 Philippians 2:13-16
- 8 Luke 21:28
- 9 1 John 3:3

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled (2 Corinthians 10:4-6).



All Saints

By Jim Lucas

Our Lord Jesus has brought to my attention the importance of having a genuine love for the people of God. Our brother Philemon had such a testimony. Paul spoke of it in his letter to him.

“Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints” (Philemon 1:5). We may boast of our love for God, who we cannot see; but if we fail to love those of the household of faith, whom we can see, then our profession of faith is found wanting (*see* 1 John 4:20). When we love the saints, it will be demonstrated by the “faith that we have of Christ,” who is in them; or is the Christ in you more capable than the Christ in them? Paul trusted the Lord to make Philemon even more effectual by encouraging him to acknowledge every good thing that was in him in Christ Jesus (*see* Philemon 1:6).

Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit, says: “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). Doing good unto all men is good, but it is especially good to even suffer for the saints. Paul rejoiced in suffering for the things that were lacking in the Body of Christ in order to fill up that which was lacking (*see* Colossians 1:24). If we fail to suffer for that which is lacking, then all the members will suffer until someone is willing to lay down his life for the Body of Christ.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

Let us meditate a moment on Paul’s prayer for the saints in Ephesus:

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:14-19).

It looks to me as if we shall never know the breadth, length, and height until we are rooted and grounded in love and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and then we can be filled with the fullness of God.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Yep, that describes me quite well; the more I learn about me, the less I have to offer. At one time, I was wise and ready to put the saints in better condition. Then I discovered that our Lord Jesus isn’t looking for wise or noble people to give this grace to but to him who is less than the least of all saints—not just the least, but *less* than the least.

Paul explains why he was given the grace to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ:

Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:7-9).

If God is to receive the glory; He will choose seemingly the most unlikely candidate to do His work, he who is less than the least of all saints, if men are to see the fellowship of the mystery, which is Christ in you. The one who is less than the least is the one who will not distract the glory of God with his own glory.

Let’s go back to the verse in Ephesians 3:19: “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Beloved, doesn’t that challenge you? It does me, to know that the love of Christ is by far the greatest thing that could ever happen to anybody. Some have been filled with the Spirit and have spoken in tongues; some were filled with the Spirit and spoke the word of God in boldness. But unless we know the *love of Christ*, it

is nothing; to be filled with all the fullness of God we must know the love of Christ.

Love is the fruit of the Spirit, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22). Notice it doesn't say fruits but fruit. Love is the fruit; and joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are all found in love. In Romans 5:5 we read, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." This gives me great comfort and hope because Christ, who dwells in me, has sent His comforter, and has shed abroad His love in my heart by His Holy Ghost. Now, He has brought to our attention the importance of loving all saints, and "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

And He is teaching us to "speak the truth in love, and grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). Once we grow up unto

Him, then we begin to benefit from the whole body. Not only do the individual members benefit, but the body will also be complete and bring great pleasure to Christ, our head: "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16). In order to illustrate this, let's look out into the desert and picture, for a moment, a man walking a great distance in the blistering heat. He finally reaches a well, but there is no vessel to draw out the water. He looks around and finds a portion of a broken vessel; he quickly scoops it into the water and manages to bring a few wonderful drops to his mouth. Then he begins to look around for more pieces of the broken vessel. I know that Jesus enjoys the little pleasure that He is able to get from this miserably small portion of the Body of Christ. But let us reach out and seek for more fragments so they can be molded together by the grace of God. The wonders of His love will bind us and make us a vessel fit for the Master's use. He will then partake with us from the waters from His

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Who is This Jesus?

Steve Montgomery



The church in Colossae was suffering under a Judaistic gnosticism that challenged basic tenets of Christianity. Their principal attack was on Christ Himself, whom they considered a sub-god sufficiently distant from the Creator to be able to defile Himself by contact with material things, which, to the dualistic gnostics, would be impossible for a perfect God. Paul responds in Colossians with a simple theme: “in Him.” That phrase, or its corollaries, appears 24 times in this epistle, where Paul presents a clear declaration of the Person of Christ. Look at nine assertions about Christ from Colossians 1:15-18:

1. He is the Image (v. 15). John 1:18 states, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him.” Speaking of the Father and Son, John states that in all history, all that may be known of the Father has been and is seen in Christ. “Image” is “a precise reproduction in every aspect.” As Hebrews 1:3 states, He is “the express image of [God’s] Person.”

2. He is the Inheritor (v. 15). The Watchtower claims this verse shows that Jesus is the first created being. However, this does not say “first created” but first-*born*. Since this cannot refer to His incarnation and since no birth process brought the Word into existence, “firstborn” here means more than simply “first engendered.” The inheritor, the natural ruler, is the meaning. There is none above Him.

3. He is the Maker (v. 16). First Corinthians 8:6 affirms that “there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” Genesis 1 says God created all, but verse 26 reads in plural, “Let *us* make man....” God is not speaking to

angels here, for Isaiah 44:24 declares, “...I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*; that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*.” To whom, then, was He speaking? To Himself! God is eternally existent in three Persons, and the New Testament pulls the veil away to show the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

4. He is the Purpose (v. 16). All things were made *for* Him. Christ was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), His crucifixion planned from the beginning. Ephesians 1:9-10 tells us that God’s will is that in this final era all things be gathered together in Christ. All the promises, prophecies, histories, and hopes and stories of the Scriptures have their fulfillment in Christ.

5. He is the Priority (v. 17). That is, He comes before all else; He is the first, the principal, the priority of all creation. There is only one way to give glory to the Father: by confessing Jesus Christ as our Lord (Phil. 2:10-11).

6. He is the Sustainer (v. 17). “Consist” means “holds together, cohere.” Jesus Christ is the unifying power of the cosmos, holding all things together by His word (Heb. 1:3). Second Peter 3 warns that one day He will speak and the elements themselves will melt. Carl Sagan, an atheist, named his TV show *Cosmos*, a Greek word meaning “order, harmony; the world as an orderly system.” Jesus Christ is the Orderer. “Universe” means “single spoken word,” and one day soon, He who made the universe by His word will speak and “the heavens shall pass away” (2 Peter 3:10).

7. He is the Head (v. 18). Not simply as CEO; He is the head of the body, so that all commands, all orders proceed naturally

Continued on page 16



Missionary Reports



Africa (Loma Tribe)
Jerry Skiles

Hovare told me on the phone to be prepared for the suffering in Bwaybiye. The last time I had been in the tribe was right after the failed harvest of their stable grain crop. Grace Bible Fellowship had sent a large gift to help alleviate the food crisis. On my arrival, I was greeted with warm appreciation for the gift. People said it literally saved lives, but there still was a list of people who had passed away. As I walked through the village, there were some people in good health and some who would be candidates for poster pictures for a famine relief program. I was asked to look at a man who was losing his sight; the white film over his pupils looked like cataracts. A woman showed me her swollen foot with a large abscess. A young girl was losing her sight. A small child had a bad ear infection. A man had been bitten by a snake a couple days earlier, and he did not have money for the vaccine. I checked him, and he looked okay. People came asking for work so they could buy food. Africans often say, "I warned you." I thought of Hovare's phone call.



I had some of my own difficulties getting to the village. I had fallen while riding my motorcycle on pavement in Ghana. The rainy season made the roads very difficult to navigate. I had to cross a flooded river in a narrow canoe while I was standing holding my motorcycle. I fell with my motorcycle into a flooded



swamp, dumping my luggage in the water. I had money, but in the village there was not much selection for food other than corn, yams, and rice. I began to pray while in the village, "Lord, tell me you want Cherry and me to be here." I prayed this simple prayer for a couple days and told Hovare that I did not get an answer. He said, "God wants you here." I said, "God hasn't said that to me." I then told Hovare that I had always had trouble getting those verbal confirmations from God. What did happen is that a simple Sunday School story

came to my mind: the story of the good Samaritan. One of the principles of the story is that if you can help...you should help! I have no doubt that Cherry and I can help somewhat in improving the living conditions here. The second part of the parable is that the help came from a Samaritan. When I look around at the really righteous men that I respect, I often feel like a Samaritan. I don't


feel that I pray enough; I don't study the Bible like I feel I should; I don't evangelize a lot. I love Jesus and the salvation He has given to me. I love His creation.



to him, he assured me of his full support. His second in command made phone calls, and I met with various others leaders of the rebels. They all wanted to see positive relationship and improvement in the area.

I was able to get work started on the village school. Two of Hovare's children (Loron) may start teaching the children in the Loma tribe in preparation for the government teacher who will come after the work is completed.

At the beginning of my trip, I was able to see the SFMI missionaries in Tarkwa, Ghana. It was good to see the Mike Ball family settling in and to see the other young men faithfully ministering in Ghana. Pray for God's leading as they make decisions for their future ministry. Pray for their health, protection and safety as well.

*In Him,
Jerry Skiles* 

Ghana Ministry
John Burwell for the team

Dear Saints,
This is just a little report telling what the Lord is doing here in Ghana . We have been really encouraged to see the Lord working in each of our lives personally and as a team. The Ball family has arrived and have been here for over two weeks now and are settling in quite well. It is really a blessing having an older man join the work here and having Mike's experience as a missionary. We have really enjoyed the whole family. It is nice to have younger children around here again and to have Feilynn playing guitar with us and Mike on his mandolin. MaMa Faith has been cooking lunch for us guys, which has been awesome! We used to eat



I like animals; I like growing things; I like the outdoors. I like good times with good friends. I don't like to hurt physically or emotionally. If you understand what I am saying, the question is, "WHY be in the tribe?" I guess the only logical answer is that I believe there is more to this existence than what comes our way in our years on this earth. Of course it makes sense, if we remember the Lord and His eternal Kingdom.



just rice and stew, but since MaMa Faith arrived, we have had spaghetti, oriental chicken, pigs in a blanket, chili dogs, and much, much more. She and her girls are wonderful cooks, and it has really been fun having them here!

Everyone is healthy, by God's grace! I was in bed with malaria for a few days but have

recovered and am feeling strong once again. Please keep the Balls in your prayers that they would remain healthy and that they would stay clear of the malaria, especially the younger ones.


The U.S. Embassy in Ivory Coast had spoken to the warlord of the area on our behalf, so when I spoke

Our ministry is seeing a few changes now. On Mondays we were going to Bankyim, but now we have moved down the road to a village called Akyempim. We found a good place to open-air preach there so maybe in the future we will begin to have open-air meetings in that village. On Tuesdays we still go visiting the saints from our fellowship here in Tarkwa whom we haven't seen in awhile. On Wednesdays we are still having a service over in Camponasi, which seems to be growing, slowly but surely. On Thursdays we have been going to Tebrebe and having a good time but not having very many people for the meetings, so you can be in prayer that the Lord would do a work in the hearts of those people. Friday is just a witnessing day. We've been praying about preaching on the local FM radio station once a week, so please pray that the Lord would lead us in this decision.

Kumar is one of the men we disciplined here in Tarkwa. If you remember from Austin's former reports, he was the one whom we met on our first visit to the North, and he was going to commit suicide because his mother had died. Tim and I had the opportunity to share the Gospel with him, and then he decided to come for our five-week discipleship course. After finishing the course, he decided to go to the Volta region and join another former student from the course with preaching the Gospel in the Volta. Well, I just recently visited him and was saddened to find that he has joined the Jehovah's Witnesses because they are providing him with a home and money for food. Apparently, he was out of money and on the verge of death with malaria when the Jehovah's Witnesses stepped in and helped him. He feels that since they helped him, he should join them. We do believe he is saved and don't think the Lord is finished working with Kumar; but I do ask that you please keep him in your prayers. We trust that Kumar belongs to the Lord, and so we leave him in the Lord's hands.

We are currently looking into buying a small van so that we can go to our witnessing spots a little more efficiently. Please be in prayer that the Lord would provide us with an inexpensive yet quality vehicle.

Well, that's all for now. Pray you are all doing well.

In Jesus Name,
John Kwame 

News from the Lucas Family *Jim and Fran Lucas*

Beloved Prayer Warriors,

The following is a praise report: our Heavenly Father is doing great things! I do believe our Father is calling us into the work that he has prepared before the foundation of the world. He has made it very clear that the vision to take the gospel tent around the

United States is His desire, and He is confirming it in so many ways.

He, of course, has been testing us in this. For example, Francille and I, after returning from Ghana, took our Buick, which has served us for trips to Mexico and many miles of traveling and left with two of our grandchildren, Michel and Brandon Chugg, to travel to Texas that we might spend some time with our three children and their families that live there. We made the trip down with no problem. After arriving in Austin, however, we were driving around the city and the transmission started acting up; and it became obvious that our car was on its last leg. We rented a car to come home and left the Buick to be disposed of by my son Steven.

This left us without a transport, and the Northwest Conference was coming up. It worked out that my daughter Shannon was out to visit, and I rode with her to Bend; and then Brendan Booher offered to give me a ride with him to the conference. I am sure that all those who were at the conference will agree that our heavenly Father met with us in a very special way. While at the conference one brother asked me how I had gotten there. This is how he came to know of our need for a car. I had previously promised to come by their home in Montana to visit. He asked me if I still planned to come, and I said, "Yes, Lord willing." He assured me that I could ride home with his family from the conference and that he had to go to Oregon anyway to install a chimney and could take me home.

On the way to Montana, we were passing through Spirit Lake, Idaho and all of a sudden my brother turned around. I asked him if he was lost, and he replied "No, but I saw something back there I want to look at." It turned out to be a car for sale! He had been praying for the Lord to show him a car in good condition. The car was quite old but in excellent shape—a 1990 Olds Cutlass, that had been owned by an elderly lady, and it only had 62,000 miles on it. He bought it, and now we have a very nice car. I hope you realize that we only looked at one car, and the odds of finding a car in that condition are very low. Surely, our Lord Jesus is great!

Our fellowship in Missoula was beyond description. We had three other families that had come from the conference plus some of the saints from Missoula. One brother shared a word on humility. Then people began to pray; the Holy Spirit came on the young people, and they began to confess their sins, weeping and calling on the Lord Jesus to forgive them. The adults also began to weep and confess their sins. It is very difficult to explain the blessing of the presence of God! The prayer meeting lasted four hours or more.

The next day, we had great liberty to pray off and on throughout the day; then, that evening, we met together again for fellowship, and the Holy Spirit was speaking great wisdom through the saints, mostly


the young people. Lord willing, on another occasion I will try to share some of the things that our Lord revealed to us.

My brother informed me that his cousin had been asking about Francille and me and wanted me to come and visit him. He gave me his new address in Oregon, and I went by his place on the way home. We were having good fellowship, and I was sharing about the vision of taking a tent around the USA, and he responded quickly, saying that he certainly thought that our Heavenly Father was directing us in this vision.

Nothing had been said concerning the things that would be necessary to carry out this ministry, but my brother said, “You will need a truck to haul the tent in.” It turned out that he gave us a very nice U-haul truck! It has a 26-ft box on it. It has a diesel engine that was overhauled 17,000 miles ago. This is a great provision, because we will be able to keep all the equipment safe and dry. Besides, it is exactly what we need to make our move to Arkansas!

Great darkness is coming upon America, but our Father promised that “when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him” (Is 59:19). Let us pray for this standard to be raised up. Let’s also pray for the anointing of John the Baptist to be upon us that Americans might be prepared for the return of our Lord Jesus.

Lord willing, we will make our move to Arkansas the 27th of October. Daniela and Fred (daughter and son-in-law) have offered to help us. They will be driving their car down and towing a trailer. We would appreciate prayer for this venture.

Thank you for praying,
James and Francille 

Ghana

Mike Ball Family

I finally have the computer to myself so will write of our experiences the first two weeks and my impressions. We are very satisfied with the house. In the areas of water and electricity, we have it nicer here than we did the last three years we were in Mexico. Despite the heat and humidity outside, the house is actually cool with the numerous ceiling fans in it. A lot of the time we do not have hot water, but many times at 6 a.m. there is hot water to take a shower. With the humidity, a cold shower is just the thing, especially after a basketball game.

Most mornings are full of different chores, reading and studying for me. Yard work, walking into town to the market, or some other “honey-do” thing are the chores to be done here. We hope to begin the next training session on Monday. I have been doing a lot of reading and meditating to be ready for the classes.

I feel the need to have God make the teachings fresh to me. I have been doing some reading on Christ’s calling us to suffering in preparation for reigning in His kingdom. That, coupled with some reading on the Anabaptists and how they suffered at the hands of the religious of their day, has made me wonder how much I really know about being a follower of Christ.

From 4:00 p.m. on every day but Sunday, we are either preaching door to door or having a meeting in the open air. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, we have meetings in front of a house in an area where the guys here have already evangelized for an extended period. There are believers in each of these areas who attend the meetings. In one of these places, one of the brothers has grown enough to be able to teach a little. One of the places where we evangelize is the university. This is a fantastic opportunity. All of the students understand English, as their classes are in English. We travel quite a bit by taxi or on John’s motorcycle. When we go to Tarkwa, we walk, which is a mile or two at most. When I get back, my shirt is wet with sweat, more from the humidity than the heat. It is much hotter in south Texas where we lived at one time.

We have had two group outings so far. After one week, we went to a nearby mine, where the owners built a kind of a club for the workers. They will let anyone use it for free. It has a big pool, picnic area, basketball and tennis courts—a very nice place set up in the hills, with a lot of big trees around. There is a lot of gold in this area. Actually, this country is very rich in natural resources. People here live much better than many people in Kenya and Tanzania. The other outing was taken this last Friday. We travelled one hour by bus to coast city of Takoradi. We spent a few hours on the beach, which had pretty nice waves, but the water was kind of cold. They say it is usually much warmer. The purpose of the trip was to buy beans at the store where they sell stuff that foreigners look for. The beans they sell here are really small and don’t cook up very nicely. We saw several things there that will be a nice treat to buy for our family after a few months here.

My impressions of Ghana are that the people here are very open to spiritual discussions. It seems, from what people say, that the churches are full of “worldly believers” and the pastors are greedy. It sounds as if they have their own interests at heart. I see the need to preach what true discipleship is and what it means to truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. For those Christians who think it wrong to preach repentance to the lost or wrong to preach the Lordship of Christ to the lost, come visit here, you will see the results of that kind of “evangelism.”

Some other impressions: once again I can see the selfishness of man’s nature. With an honest and upright government and one that truly had the best for their people at heart, this country would be a very

prosperous country, with its gold, minerals, and oil. The people here are kind and helpful, except for the merchants; who are a greedy lot and want to take the “obrunis” for as much as they can.

We have a prayer request for us here. We have an opportunity to preach on the radio here. Pray that God will give us direction. Many pastors and “self-proclaimed prophets” are on the radio, and they preach miracles and healing and then ask for money. The gospel and sound teaching is lost in the mess. I would like to do the sound teaching so that Christ and the Cross may be proclaimed, but we want God’s direction on this. If He is not in it, then we shall not be either.

The family is all fine. Viana made friends the first day with those she now plays with every day. Ethan has the run of the yard all day. Everyone is adjusting well. That’s all for now.
Love to all in Christ,

Mike Ball
mikeball@bigfoot.com 

Nigeria, Africa

[Larry Montgomery received the following report from Nigeria.]

Hello Papa,

Greeting to you in the name of our Lord Jesus. How are you, Sir? How is Mama and your Kids? Thanks for the support and the leadership roles you have been playing for us. Bro Moses Osho gave me \$50 for the care of Bro James. We really appreciate the support and prayers. To God be the glory for His mercies and His everlasting Love: Bro James passed on to rest in the Bosom of our Lord Jesus. He told the nurses in the hospital that he will like to go home. The nurses, not understanding what he meant, thought he wanted to be discharged, but the next morning some brethren from Baaki village went to visit him in the hospital. After they left he slept, and that was it. We thank God that we believe he is resting, and he is neither in pain or in sorrow, but he is full of Joy.

We made the burial arrangement in Nigeria, calling his children to come over to Nigeria. The brothers in Nigeria were scared of taking his body over to Benin Republic, but, by God’s grace which gave me courage, I led the team to his village in Bante. On getting to the village, the villagers refused us entry into the village, insisting that we have to do some rituals and sacrifices, which I insisted that we will do no such thing. We were outside the village border till 3:30 a.m. until God took control, and we were allowed to enter.

Well, to cut the whole story short, they allowed us to enter and start the burial arrangement. He was buried the next day, and, on that day, God took Glory

for Himself: 150 people gave their lives for Christ kneeling by Bro James’ coffin, and wept aloud to God for repentance. Two people also came out to give their testimonies on the Life of Bro James in their midst. We thank God for all that happened, for we know all things work together for good to them that love God.

My wife has been a little bit strong; I also have been trying to work and live by faith. Please continue to pray for us. Thanks, and God Bless.

*In His Love and Bound,
Nath & Felicia Abimbola*

Valle De Juarez, Mexico Ed and Abby Drysdale

It’s that time of year again, where you try to sum up everything that has happened in a few important paragraphs. It’s difficult to write when the merry-go-round is still going. Slow down, stop, stand, swoon, focus, THEN walk. Ok, here goes!

There have been many changes in this last year. We have had more and more people added to Friday night Bible study. It has been so neat to see the Word of God spread and interest built. We are still waiting to see it take “real roots” in their hearts. Sometimes we come away from a meeting excited about what’s been said, and at other times we are very discouraged with the lack of understanding.

We are very excited to report that this year we have seen many actions in the life of Doña Raquel that have led us to believe that she has given her life to Christ. She has announced to her friends and family that she is walking away from the Catholic faith. She has made a trip to Mexico City to mend a broken relationship with her daughter, and she has begun to read Scriptures at home. We are hoping to see her take the step of faith in baptism this year.

Her husband, Don José, still needs to see the importance of having a relationship with Christ Jesus.

There are others who are still attending regularly such as Alejandro and Judith, Ricardo and Lety and Flor—yet we don’t see very many changes in their lives. This would be very discouraging if we didn’t

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have others joining the meetings. The group has doubled in size this last year!

Misael and Claudia, along with their two small children, have begun to attend. We invited them to come, and they have been faithfully attending for the last three months. They are from Tepic. Misael has a brother there who is a Christian. They have been impressed with the transformation they have seen in his life. They show a lot of interest and sincerity in their search for the truth. They have even brought Misael's mother with them to Bible study and Sunday service when she comes to visit.

Luis and Ana have also, for about a month, attended the Friday study. They have three children. They live in Mazamitla. Ana comes from a very religious background and has taught catechism to children. Luis is a professional artist and is open to many ways of thought. He seems to know that he is missing "something" in his life. We were very encouraged when we found that the very same hotel, of which they are managers, was where the leadership conference was scheduled. We believe that the Lord has set this up for a purpose. Please be praying that they will be ministered through this.

Mario and Maira are another young couple we are ministering to. They are recently married and have a baby girl. Maira has had Christian influence in the past and seems to want to come regularly. They are struggling in their marriage. Maira's two sisters, Miriam and Paulina, also come at times. I'm not sure where they stand.

There are others who come, but they aren't faithful in coming. Just with those who do come faithfully, we found that we had outgrown our living room, so we rented a space downtown to meet in. The Lord has blessed us with a meeting hall that gives us plenty of room to grow. We have also been able to set up a homeschool/kid's classroom there as well. Even though the landlady can be pretty "delicate" we have been very blessed by having this meeting place.

On a personal note, it has been a year of valleys and rolling hills. The lack of fellowship has taken a toll on all our family members. For this reason we have spent longer periods of time away when renewing our papers. We have spent a month both in California while visiting my Dad and a month in Texas visiting Abby's family. We have really enjoyed these times, but it does make it harder to come back. We are praying that we can begin to feel more and more encouraged without having to look "outside" of Valle de Juarez.

This year (this week to be exact) we have added another person to our team. We had been praying that the Lord would provide a young lady who would be willing to come down and help us teach our kids. Abby has been struggling with teaching

and with discouragement all through the year. We thought it would be a good thing to have a teacher. We spoke to three different ladies about coming down, but none of them seemed excited at this wonderful opportunity. I began to think that it just wasn't going to happen for this year and decided to prepare Abby for the inevitable job of teaching. Abby broke down in tears and said, "I can't. I just can't." What to do? It was September 1st. Here's how it went:

We heard that Jim Lucas knew somebody, who knew Mike Ball, who knew Priscilla LaVallee, who has a heart for Mexico, who, by the way, helps teach special-ed classes. We decided to give her call.


Priscilla was excited, so I repeated the question (thinking she couldn't have possibly understood this wonderful opportunity): "To make sure we are on the same page, let me re-state what we have agreed to. We are asking you to leave your home, family, and paying job. We are asking you to come teach our four children (kindergarten to 6th grade levels), without pay. We are asking you to stay with a Mexican family with whom you will have a hard time communicating, who also have two "not-so-well-behaved" small children. We would also like you to help out with children's ministries. AND we would like you to start in two weeks. Did you say, YES?" That is how Priscilla LaValle came to Valle de Juarez. We didn't know her; she didn't know us, but the Lord has knitted us together in such a way that we know it's His provision.

Because of the quickness of this decision, she has come willingly, with no support or savings. We have figured that she will need to have about \$150 a month. She is willing to teach English to help with costs, but I would hate for her to be spread too thin. I also feel responsible for her. At this present time we couldn't afford to fully fund her needs ourselves. Please pray that the Lord will provide for her needs.

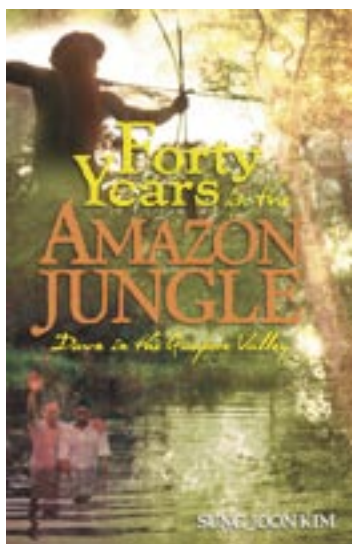
We were also encouraged by a visit from Richard McDaniel. He spent two weeks with us and helped us by building a closet, shelving, and a door at the meeting hall. He accompanied me to meet with many different contacts. He met individually with most who are attending Fridays and Sundays. It is a blessing to have him see the work here. We hope that this will help to give the church in Bend a feel for the work and a heart for the people.

We are encouraged to see God's faithfulness to us. He provides for ALL our needs everyday. He supplies us with encouragement, strength, patience, and love. He clothes us, feeds us, and shelters us. He is worthy of all honor!

Praise His name.

The Drysdale family 

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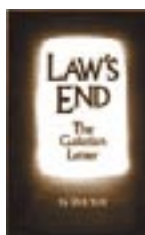
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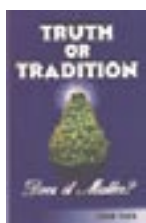
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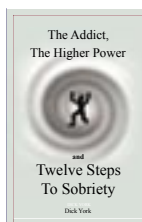
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Who is This Jesus? continued.

from Him. As Bible commentator Lightfoot says, He is “the inspiring, ruling, guiding, combining, sustaining power, the mainspring of [the church’s] activity, the center of its unity and the seal of its life.”¹

8. He is the Source (v. 18). He is the beginning, the fountain and source from which all life, and, more especially, all True Life, proceeds. Acts calls Him the Prince of life (Acts 3:15), and the word “prince” is translated “author” in Heb. 12:2. Jesus Christ, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, is the Author and Source of your life! In Revelation, Jesus is called Alpha and Omega, First and Last, beginning and end (Rev. 1:8, 11; 22:13). What revelation we gain reading Isaiah 41:4, “Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah, the first; and with the last, I am HE” (See also Is. 44:6, 48:12). Jesus Christ is Jehovah.

9. He is the Firstfruits (v. 18). The hope and history of every believer is in Christ, who is our life (Col. 3:3-4). He is the the

Maker of all things, and He is the Maker of the church. He is the Source of all life, and He is the Source of life for the church. He is the Firstborn of all creation, and He is the firstborn from among the dead. He is the natural ruler over death, since death could not hold Him, and His victory over the tomb is our victory also. Just as He defeated death, so we also have defeated death in Him. Just as He raised physically from among the dead, so we are risen together with Him (Eph. 2:6) and so also will we one day have our physical bodies raised and transformed to be like His glorious body (Phil. 3:21)!

Who is this Jesus? Creator, Source of life and Purpose of all being. He is the perfect exegesis of the Father and the perfect Saviour of the Body. He is the First and the Last, the One who holds priority over all things. In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and He is to have in all things—in everything we do and purpose and think—the preeminence. 

1. J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*.