

SHIELD OF FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL

SFMI

**Prayer/News
UPDATE**

Fulfilling the Great Commission Through Establishing New Testament Churches



Where Are the People Who Are Valiant For the Truth?

See "What Really Happened" p. 6

September/October 2009

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From the President's Desk



What Happened at Pentecost?

Jim Lucas asks us in this Update, “What really happened at Pentecost?” While his article does a masterful job of answering that question, the question might also be the theme of this entire issue.

What happened at Pentecost?

Lives were transformed so that those who were prisoners to habits and addictions were set free and those whose decisions were constantly made on the basis of what they could justify or get away with moved into a new Kingdom, where the measure was not, “What’s wrong with it?” but rather, “What will most please my King?” In Ezekiel 11:19 we read, “And I will give them a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I shall be their God.” While this promise was given to Israel, it clearly finds its fulfillment also in changed lives in every nation. Dick York deals with an example of this change of motive in his article, “To Drink or Not to Drink.”

What happened at Pentecost?

Lives were transformed so that young people need no longer grow up rebels, and parents and children can serve together, brothers and sisters work side by side, brethren from diverse backgrounds minister across age gaps, empowered by a life lived in Spirit and reality. The Prophet Malachi told us that the fruit of Pentecost would be hearts of fathers turned to their children and those of the children to their fathers (Mal. 4:6). Read Nate Montgomery’s article about a Summer’s youth camp to hear about transformed families ministering together.

What happened at Pentecost?

Joel prophesied of Pentecost that God would pour his Spirit upon all flesh – sons, daughters, young men, old men, servants, handmaidens – transforming people from all nations into His messengers. The testimonies in this issue, testimonies from around the world, witness to the fulfillment of Joel’s words.

What happened at Pentecost? Read ahead and see!

Steve Montgomery

“Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, [living in such places] as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country and every land of their birth as a land of strangers....They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time, surpass the laws by their lives....They are reviled and blessed.”

From the book, *The Pilgrim Church*, by E. H. Broadbent, concerning the relationship of a second-century Christian to the society around him.

To Drink or Not to Drink, That Is the Question



By Dick York

“I am not a drunkard.” That was the declaration of a man whose attachment to alcohol was creating a serious strain on his family relationships. “There is nothing wrong with a few drinks,” he said. “The Bible doesn’t say that a Christian can’t drink a couple of beers. A drunkard is one who lives on the street and can’t work or support his family because he is falling-down drunk. That is not me.”

Perhaps a more accurate definition of a drunkard may be “one who values his drink above issues that should be of much greater importance to him.”

It is an unfortunate fact that, in general, evangelical Christians today take a much more liberal view of drinking than has been acceptable in the past. The price of this change of heart has been extremely costly to the spiritual condition of the church. It is symptomatic of a much deeper problem eroding the effectiveness and the message of those who profess to be believers in the Word of God and disciples of the Lord Jesus.

As “believing” becomes more academic and less life-changing, the focus of many of those professing believers becomes more *legalistic* and less sensitive to the voice of the Shepherd. Whereas the concept of holiness in the past was reflected in a lifestyle of spiritual discipline and self-denial, those who now argue for the new “liberty” that a more “enlightened” theology has introduced to evangelicalism would do so on the basis of legality, i.e.: “The Bible doesn’t say I can’t drink.”

“Is it legal or not?” is not the question; all things are lawful, but all things are not expedient. The real question is, “Is it edifying or not?” The next question is, “Edifying to whom?” To me or to those whose lives I touch: my spouse, my children, the saints with whom

I interact, and anyone else within the sphere of my influence?

The mandate of Scripture to everyone who names the name of Christ is “Let all things be done unto edifying.” That goes beyond what I do in the meeting of the church; it goes beyond whether I think it is legal for me to drink beer or not (although it would certainly include that). The way I live the Christian life is not about me. As a matter of fact, if I am in Christ—and if being in Christ means the same thing to me as it meant to the apostle Paul—I am dead, crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20). Jesus prescribed for those who would be His followers, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

Of course, no man can make another deny himself. Self-denial, by definition, is just that. It is not imposed by someone else. It is embraced because of a desire to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus, but it is not without purpose. Jesus laid down His life *for His friends*; He loved His church and *gave Himself for it*. We, too, are called upon to lay down our lives for the sake of others.

Some folks talk about *free grace*, but in reality, grace is not free. Although *we* have received it freely, the cost is incalculable. In order for us to have received God’s grace, He had to first send his Son to the Cross. Jesus had to deny Himself, laying aside all that is inconsistent with humanity, humble Himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2: 6-8). Only to you and to me was it free. Now that we have been saved by grace, we, in turn, have been called to manifest that grace to those beyond ourselves. There is no promise that that won’t cost us something; the cost is self-denial.

Some folks confuse self-denial and

obedience with *legalism* and, in doing so, invoke the latter to avoid the former. Legalists, like lawyers, find ways to legally achieve their own self interest rather than submit to an outcome that does not satisfy the desires of their own flesh, as did the drunkard quoted in the first paragraph of this essay.

Legalism manifests itself in two ways: the first, of course—and the one that comes most readily to mind—is trying to be saved or to gain merit by keeping the law of Moses, or trying to be made righteous by performing a good work of some kind. The second is the invoking of legal documents to justify self-serving, or citing the lack of any legal prohibition in the Bible of the things the flesh seeks after to satisfy itself. The fact that there is no prohibition is construed as permission.

If I defend something, it obviously holds a place of importance in my thinking. I would defend the Gospel, for example, because it is important to me; the Word of God is defensible because it is important. If I defend my actions without regard for the effect they may have on others in order to preserve my “right” to do that which satisfies me, that, obviously, is what is important to me.

All things indeed are lawful; but when it is pointed out that my liberty to do what I do is a burden to those who are affected by my action, I then have two options: to defend my lifestyle on some legal ground or, for the sake of the other party, take up the cross, which is Jesus’ stated requirement.

We must be careful not to disregard or modify what Jesus has said, “If *any man* will come after me, *let him deny himself*, take up his cross *daily* and follow me” (Luke 9:23). This is no light thing. These words came out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. From where He spoke them, He proceeded to the Cross, where He died for every man. It is to the Cross that He commands us to follow Him. And what would that mean to us today? How would we apply such counsel to our present

circumstance? It is well illustrated by Jesus’ own conflict in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was there that the battle between the flesh and the Spirit was waged and the victory won.

It is easy to forget that the Lord Jesus, in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was also flesh and blood. He had a human will. His flesh recoiled at the prospect of the Cross. In agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, He pleaded with the Father, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” That was the cry of His human will. The flesh does not embrace death lightly; there is a will to survive. But Jesus’ next words were, “Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.”

And He surrendered Himself to the Cross, where His flesh was put to death. That was the whole point of the incarnation: “The word became flesh” that He might die (Hebrews 2:9).

Although Calvary was the *culmination* of the Cross, Gethsemane defines it. Jesus denied Himself (“not my will”), took up His Cross (“but thine be done”), and willingly embraced His Father’s will, the result being that because He did not save Himself we were saved. Because the flesh was crucified, it no longer has power over us. Consequently, we now have the option to please our flesh or to please the Lord by losing our lives for the sake of others. Jesus told a rich young ruler, “Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come follow me” (Luke 18:22). He was instructed to surrender what served the desires of his flesh. Without denying himself, he could neither have treasure in heaven nor be able to follow Jesus.

Grace is not meant to excuse the indulgence of our flesh, because if we live after the flesh, we will die (Romans 8:13). Grace is God’s gift of empowerment to us so that we can deny our flesh and pursue holiness, manifest the life of Christ, and thereby edify the church and encourage others to walk victoriously.

Grace is our teacher. The apostle Paul,

Christ is our life. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. The world, therefore, will not encourage us in our faith; it will not build us up.

in his letter to Titus, explained it thus: “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; *who gave himself for us*, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and *purify unto himself a peculiar people*, zealous of good works” (Titus 2: 11-14). That’s what grace teaches us and what we must be willing to learn.

The Apostle John applied that teaching and put it in perspective when he said, “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked” (1 John 2:6).

Jesus denied Himself and went to the Cross for our sakes. Now whatever the issue might *seem* to be, it must be understood that the life that we now live is not ours but His. Alcohol, then, is not the real issue; it is a matter of the will. Every one of us must face his Gethsemane: “Will I please myself? Or will I deny myself, take up my cross and, for the sake of others, follow Jesus? “Whatever the issue is, it may be lawful, but is it

expedient? Does it edify?”

To deny myself or not to deny myself, that is **the** question! 🙄

2009 Campamento de Musica Pajacuran



The 2009 Campamento de Musica Pajacuran was held from August 9 through August 15, 2009 in Pajacuran, Michoacan, southeast of Guadalajara. Some 50 students and 15 staff participated in this week-long camp.

Meet the Board:

All These Things Were Swept Away

The Testimony of Jack Ring

It was a night in 1967, and I had come to an end – one of several that would mark my life. I was twenty two and in my first year of medical school. Becoming a doctor was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. But I was at the end of a lifelong nightmare. I had been trying since childhood to live the Christian life and was forced, at last, to admit failure.

I had done everything humanly possible. Raised in a devoutly Christian home, the son of a pastor and evangelist, I had been surrounded by God and the Bible. From childhood, I had an earnest desire to please God. I had read my Bible through and was baptized at age nine. I was active in youth group, led evangelistic

Bible studies, and participated in evangelistic campaigns. I had rededicated my life to Christ more times than I could count. Once I prayed all night, hoping to be rid of my sinful nature. I had even “led people to Christ” using the four spiritual laws. But now I could no longer pretend that the things Christianity espoused were true of me. They were not. I had failed.

As I considered my options, I felt that my only recourse was to start over – wipe the slate clean and experience “whatever was out there,” honestly, and without preconceptions. I would taste, touch, handle, see, and hear whatever crossed my path. I would search for meaning

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What Really Happened

By Jim Lucas

For many the Pentecostal is valued to be a very rich spiritual experience. If, indeed, they have had a true Pentecostal experience, I would agree. The day of Pentecost was a very special day; in fact I don't believe we have seen another day like it since. There are people all over the world claiming they have had a Pentecostal experience. It is amazing that so many people are making this claim without ever really looking to see what actually happened on the day of Pentecost.

Let's go to the Scripture and see what happened: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). The disciples were all with one accord, in one place, waiting for the promise Jesus had given them. "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). We should not overlook the fact that they were all with *one accord* and in *one place*. God is pleased when His people are of one accord, He says in Philippians 2:2: "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

He especially likes it when the saints are praying in one accord (see Acts 1:4). To be in one accord, they must agree. Jesus said in Matthew 18:19, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Unfortunately, this praying "in one accord" is not present in most of the gatherings of the ones who are claiming the Pentecostal experience. When the Pastor says, "Let's pray," they all start praying at once: one is praying for his wife, another is praying for healing, another is rebuking the devil, others commence to speak in unknown tongues. It is not possible to agree with what you haven't heard, and how can you know what people are praying when they all pray at the same time? "How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned

say amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" (1 Corinthians 14:16). This is why we are to wait on one another. We are to have respect, one for the other, and listen to their concerns if we are to agree with them, and say "Amen." We should pray by course, that is, one at a time. "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret" (1 Corinthians 14:27). "For ye may all prophesy one by one that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (1 Corinthians 14:31). If we are praying, speaking in tongues, or prophesying, we are instructed to do it with understanding:

For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God; I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. (1 Corinthians 14:17-19)

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples were praying in one accord; and in Acts 2, verses two and three it says, "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Have you ever seen this? Have you ever heard the sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, or have you seen the cloven tongues as of fire sitting upon all that were present?

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (v.4). Please take notice, it does not say that they all began to speak in *unknown* tongues but in *other* tongues. There is a gift of speaking in *unknown* tongues, but that is not what

happened on the day of Pentecost. They spoke in *other* tongues, meaning they spoke in the languages of the people; and as they spoke, “the Spirit gave them utterance,” not all at once but by course. “And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” (Acts 2:5-8).

Peter then preached Christ unto them: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).


Let’s compare this with what is happening among those who are claiming a Pentecostal experience today. They all pray at once— therefore, there is no praying “in one accord.” There is no rushing mighty wind from heaven, no tongues of fire sitting on them. No one understands anything; and, instead of multitudes of people repenting of their sins, few are getting saved because little light is given. This is why Paul says by the Holy Spirit we need to be *men in understanding*. The Holy Spirit condensed the message of God for us into a few words through the Apostle John: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). When people are left with no understanding, they remain in darkness.

Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life,” when we don’t walk in the light, we fail to walk in the truth. If we say we have had a Pentecostal experience and it is not true, that is a serious problem.

We know that God is able to give the same blessing that he gave on the day of Pentecost. If, however, we are claiming to have received the same blessed experience and we haven’t, why should He give us what we are already claiming to have?

Where are the people who are valiant for the truth? Doesn’t anyone love truth anymore? King David said, “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shall make me to know wisdom” (Psalm 51:6). If we fail to love the truth, we are bringing condemnation upon ourselves (See John 3:19). Don’t say that you must follow the teaching of your church, for too often church groups have gone astray. The church must follow Christ Jesus, her head, who is full of grace and *truth*.

We should not love the gift more than the One who gives the gift. To do so is idolatry. Spiritual pride has blinded the eyes of many. They receive a gift, and they think they have arrived. They no longer hunger and thirst for righteousness. It is time to humble ourselves and pray like King David did: “Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee” (Psalm 51:9-13).

May the Lord Jesus bless you. 

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. —Acts 2:3-4

The Terrors & Victories of a Youth Camp

Nate Montgomery

I asked my son Nate to write about his recent experience directing a high school camp. I think you will find his story interesting.
Steve

Shiloh Bible Camp celebrates a youth event every year, and my church has always been involved. This year they invited me to help direct the camp. In the past, camp has not been an area where I have chosen to be involved. Frankly, my perception of camp has usually been faux-spirituality, boy-girl romance silliness, and not much more; so the idea of directing the camp sounded about as interesting as a root canal.

Nevertheless, by the time high school camp started, I had managed to recruit six guys and two ladies to help make high school a success. You might know some of them: Silas and Simon Newkirk, TJ Ball, Joel Cummins, Nathaniel Chapman, Dean Bonanno, Alexis Bonanno, and Becky Johnson.

These poor volunteers had no idea what they were getting into. I had never been to the camp, never directed a camp, and had no idea who was going to be attending. I recruited these individuals at the SFMI Memorial Day Conference with a highly motivating sales pitch: “Hey, how would you like to be a cabin leader at a youth camp?” Before camp, we had communicated via e-mail and telephone. The team knew to be prepared to share with their cabins a devotional each day around the theme of “Heroes of the Bible.” They also knew to be flexible. When camp started, we barely knew each other. A brief staff meeting, a time of prayer, and then we were off!

Here, however, is the testimony of God’s grace shown through these workers: despite the paucity of preparation, the impact of these eight people cannot be underestimated. Each member of this team demonstrated the love of

Christ in practical and palpable ways.

Every morning after a staff meeting, we had a 7 a.m. “polar bear swim”— followed by a day full of activities. The speaker, Floyd Schneider, spoke twice a day teaching through the life of David. Dean Bonanno led us on a daily hike each morning, followed by a group activity with an object lesson. There were plenty of games and some great free time, but I would like to share the impact of these cabin leaders. I had been warned about campers with bad attitudes, campers constantly challenging and breaking rules. This year was, however, different. The cabin leaders developed relationships with their campers, led by example, and demonstrated their love of God in actions. By the final day, the people in the kitchen, the executive director, and almost every other adult had the same question: Where are these guys from? Where can we find more? They commented on things like the impact on high schoolers of watching Dean and Alexis, father and daughter, minister together, the relationship between the Newkirk siblings, and TJ’s calm yet assertive way of encouraging others. When camp was over, rather than the young people crying over each other and promising to write, they were all waiting to spend a few final minutes with their cabin leaders. These leaders touched lives with the love of Christ!

As believers, we may see an activity such as camp as a flaky “spiritual candy bar,” simply a fun time with a little “God talk” thrown in. The spiritual substance that Floyd Schneider gave was substantive, but it would not have been successful without the reality lived out before them by their cabin leaders. This camp was a mission field. Those cabin leaders were the missionaries. As they lived their walk with God in plain sight, of all these

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Missionary Reports

West Africa

Jerry and Cherry Skiles

During my last trip to Ghana, Ed Enns and I spent considerable time ministering together and talking about ministry. We had worked together in the Ivory Coast since the mid-1980s until the civil war. He worked with the unreached Komono people, while I worked with the Loron and Loma tribes. Our wives and children are about the same age; we had even ministered together in the same small fellowship in Durkee, Oregon, in our pre-New Tribes days. We have a lot in common. We are friends.

Ed had to force himself to submit to New Tribes' rules about not entering the rebel area of Ivory Coast, while I, working with SFMI, had liberty to come and go at will. He was the first New Tribes missionary to return to Burkina Faso and start ministering again. He has guts. It was always a joy to see Ed and his wife, Patty, as I passed through Burkina Faso.

In March 2007, we surveyed Ghana and Togo together with Jim Lucas and the David and Marian Kangni. Ed and the Kangnies contacted the unreached Kamara people. During this time, the foundations for His Vision Mission were laid. Ed and I desired to use our experience in helping train men preparing for cross-cultural mission to the unreached people groups. We saw potential in the African believers' ability to reach the unreached people better than the white man could.

In the past couple of months, God has opened the door to do what we both desired: to be involved in training serious-minded Africans preparing for reaching the unreached. Moses Osho came and spoke to Ed and me. Moses granted us not just a hand of fellowship in that task but a warm African embrace. David Kangni recently spoke of his desire to leave Germany and commit his full effort to training men for the ministry. He is excited about partnering together with us.

God moves men according to His good

pleasure, and He has given Cherry and me a mutual desire to once again move to West Africa. We are planning on returning together in January of 2010. We will still be working in the Loron and Loma tribes but will take advantage of the opportunities in Nigeria and Ghana, as well as other West African nations.

The Ball family will be in Ghana working at His Mission along with the young men from the training, and we expect David Kangni to join in the team work. Moses Osho is encouraging a short-term team to minister in Nigeria with him early in 2010. I am talking to some individuals about this opportunity.

The Lord gave me the honor of becoming a chief among the almost unreached Dagomba tribe in Ghana. I am looking forward to being what they once named me in the near future—"Chief of Hope."

Cherry and I have a lot of readjusting to do. I am amazed at how quickly we have anchored into America and its possessions. Pray as we disengage from the U.S. and as we prepare to reengage into Africa.

It is our desire to restart the Loma School; some funds were given for that. I am hoping to begin that task soon so that young Loma children can learn to read and write. Pray that God gives me wisdom for when and how to proceed.

Pray that God grants His Favor and Blessing upon each family and individual who are preparing to partner together for the sake of reaching the remaining unreached people in West Africa. May He lead us in love, grace, and wisdom.

Jerry and Cherry Skiles 

Valle De Juarez, Mexico Ed and Abby Drysdale

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Updates and News are supposed to catch your interest and make the front page, right? Well...it should at least be new! But as Solomon said, "There's nothing new under the sun," and

here there are no exceptions.

I'm champing at the bit to tell you that the day of salvation has come here to Valle de Juarez. I'd love to say we have baptized the faithful. But it won't be today. It can be difficult at times to write these updates, for we can't see the results.

"Trust the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." Isn't that what we are preaching to the unsaved? Isn't it the same thing the Lord requires of us—to walk by faith? So how do I update on what I can't see? I can't. Therefore, I will just write what is going on and ask you to walk by faith with me.

We rented a church building because we had begun to outgrow our living room. After much prayer we felt led to rent this place right downtown, even though it is much bigger than we need. There are so many improvements needed for this building so that it can be used as a permanent place of worship. The most pressing need is a roof, because the present one has many leaks. The landlady says she has no money to invest. She wants us to do all the improvements by paying at least fourteen months rent in advance. At the same time, she told us she already plans to raise the rent in ten months. The answer seems so simple—find a new place. There are very few willing to rent to a Christian organization. If we were to give up this place, we would surrender our public stand for Christ and go back into "hiding." Does that mean we just let this landlady walk all over us? Maybe, maybe not. We need the Lord's guidance. What makes this decision even more a walk of faith is that since we have rented this new building, the new people who were attending on Fridays are no longer coming.

We were so excited when we met a Christian couple from the next town over. We have started a Wednesday night Bible study with them. We envisioned their standing by us in the work, partaking in the Lord's supper, and worshipping Him together. Sadly, some of the excitement has decreased since fellowship is not a priority for them.

We have started two other Bible studies apart from this one. One study is with a young couple named Misael and Claudia. They have

two young boys. They seem to be a very sincere and responsible young couple. Their interest seems to be genuine, but their knowledge of God is very limited.

The other Bible study is with a man and his wife in their sixties, Juan and Alicia. Their married son, Juan, joins us as well. This family is very poor. They live on the outskirts of town in a small shack. They hang on every word. Their growth will be limited as they are all illiterate.

I've also met with another young family. They are neighbors of Juan's. We met them through the work done at the kindergarten a couple of years back. They also are a family who struggles with everyday living. They've had very little education. They have five small children. One has MS. They listen intently when I come to visit and are very friendly. We haven't started up any formal Bible study.

All three of these families are too new to really know where they stand.

As for the ones we'd told you about before, I'll mention the ones still attending. The rest at this time, for one reason or another, are not receiving the gospel at this present moment.

Don José and Doña Raquel—they both are joining us on our Wednesday Bible study. They have also continued to meet with us on Friday nights although I have begun to notice a lack of interest on José's part. He attends—sometimes he listens.

Doña Raquel, on the other hand, has responded with a lot of positive feedback. She is coming to Wednesday, Friday and Sunday services. She is reading a copy of *My Utmost for His Highest* that I gave her. She looks up the scripture verses it quotes. She is very limited in her reading ability, so she reads a small portion, then re-reads it over and over.

She has told all her family, friends, and neighbors that she believes she is going to change religions. She has encouraged the young ladies to find God while their children are small, not to wait like she did. At times she seems so close. I'm not really sure what is holding her back from complete surrender.

Judith and Alejandro—They still come on Fridays. Alejandro is not convinced that Jesus is the only way. He believes that He was a good

person and someone we should try to imitate. Judith is convinced that Jesus is the way for everyone who has a need—if *everyone else* would just believe it and walk in it, her life would be complete. They come regularly, as long as something more important doesn't come up. As I see it, God is about third on the list.

Ricardo and Lety—They are second only to Doña Raquel in faithfulness in attending Friday nights. They listen; they agree and they are always helpful. Something, however, is missing.

Flor and daughter Azyadeth—Flor is a single mother we met while working with the kindergarten. At the time, she was a roommate to the schoolteacher. Since renting the church building, she has begun to attend regularly, both Friday and Sunday nights. She says she has never heard much about God. She is discovering Him for the first time. She is learning that He cares about her everyday life. She has a long road ahead. She has a bad reputation to overcome (which, like most reputations, appears to be 80 percent falsehoods and 20 percent truth). She has to learn to be a mother—a good mother—to her daughter. She is showing much promise by applying things that she learns to her life. She is moving out of the house she is renting from a single man to find her own apartment with her daughter.

These are the faithful. These are the ones the Lord has given us to work with. We've rented a building where we hope to establish a church. Can we do that with what we have? No, they must first be saved. We cannot build on faulty foundations. It is imperative that they come to know Christ for all the new ones coming in see them as "the church."

It seems as though the Lord is asking us, through the renting of this building, to make a stand, to walk by faith, and to put into practice what we preach. But I must admit that this big, huge, empty building has just made the feeling of being alone more obvious. It accentuates our need for fellowship. It deepens my frustrations with myself for not explaining well enough and my irritation at them for not understanding. We are struggling to remain happy and content. We are battling with ourselves in our own lack of faith, in our own inabilities. Praise the Lord, we

SFMI Update

are struggling. We haven't given in, but we are being tempted with discouragement.

*Walking with Him,
Ed, Abby, and the Drysdale Tribe*

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. 🙏

Atotonilcho, Mexico Daniel and Mari Fontánez

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21). In our last update, we requested prayer for Mari's ministry to the children in Alameda. Well, the Lord has done more than we asked or thought. Not only that, He also blessed us with a small pizza-selling business! That was another awesome (*exceedingly abundant*) answer to prayer. In addition to that, short-term teams have been down who have been a huge blessing to us and to Los Altos. Here's a quick summary of what's been going on.



ALAMEDA:

As is clear from this picture, the Lord sent help in the form of a U.S. citizen named Miriam Kercher. She's from the state of Oregon and is staying with us in Atotonilco. Miriam arrived VBS-ready from the States. We took advantage of that, and the first VBS was held in Alameda.

Mari, Miriam, Tere, along with other women and youth from the local church, worked hard at teaching Bible lessons, songs, memory verses, crafts, and object lessons.

They did all that without mentioning the setting up, tearing down, cooking, cleaning, face-painting and all the rest of the stuff that goes on at a VBS.

There was an attendance of about 13 to 15



kids every day, excluding the kids from the local church. The event was held at Tere's house and their share of the street outside the house from the 13th thru the 17th of July. The lesson plan was based on a week-long gospel presentation, beginning with the love of God, covering sin, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and ending with obedience and living for God. We are grateful for Miriam, Tere, and her family, the youth, and everyone else who participated in this effort. It was a blessing!

PIZZA-RIQUEÑA:

The Lord has also blessed us with a pizza business. To be frank we were in an economic bind. We weren't making ends meet. Mari suggested that we sell pizza using my recipe and



our oven. So we began to pray about it and discussed how it could work. To make this short we were thinking of doing it all from our house and in our common household oven. But the Lord, in His awesome answer to our prayers, provided a location, a pizza oven, a better crust recipe, experienced guidance, and much more. So, we're selling pizzas every Sunday from 2 to 10 p.m.

SHORT-TERM TEAMS:

The team from Prairie City was here from July 2nd to the 8th. We were able to share the gospel and the love of God together with them in a Health Fair outreach. We visited Rancho Viejo, San José de Gracia, Rinconada de Cristo Rey, and San Ignacio Cerro Gordo. Although it was a short-term team, their efforts will have long-term effects.



Bethel. We were with them from the 20th of July thru the 25th for the 5th Annual Campo de Verano (VBS) held by the Arandas Baptist Church. Mari and I helped teach the older kids (4th graders and up) again this year. We had an average of 50 kids in our group almost everyday that week.

As you can see in this picture, Mari is almost due. Please lift us up in prayer concerning that. She had her baby shower a few weeks ago



In closing, we ask that you continue to pray for us and all that we are involved in. Pray for the jail ministry, the evangelistic Bible studies, and music ministry. Pray for Maguey and for Freddy. Lift up before the Lord our pizza business. Pray for Mari and Miriam. They will be involved in a couple more VBS in the Atotonilco area. Thank you all for the prayers, the support, and for releasing part of your congregation to come and minister down here. Be blessed.



*With love in Christ,
Daniel and Mari Fontáñez* 🌍

Ghana, Africa in a Flash Mike and Faith Ball

Greetings to all our brothers and sisters,

Last time we wrote, we were looking forward to seeing how the Lord would provide for us to go to Ghana, Africa. We have been blessed to see His hand leading and providing for us each step of the way. We had planned to leave around the end of August. The Lord has provided for us to buy our tickets, and we are

Another short term, long term effect team we had a chance to work with was the group from



U.S.A. for Jesus!

Jim and Fran Lucas

Before leaving Ghana, I was praying for the Lord to show me what he would have us to do in the way of ministry. In short, our Father has put on my heart the desire to take the gospel to every state of the U.S. making disciples. I want to have a gospel tent and set it up for a period of time in each state that our Lord indicates. Please pray for this ministry, for we cannot be fruitful without prayer. Pray for the provision of the tent and equipment needed to carry on this ministry. Pray for faithful people to help. I think we need about eight to ten people, and I would like to see the Lord Jesus add more people as we go, as we will need to leave people to follow up on any new groups of believers in each place.

Our Heavenly Father has directed us to purchase a home in Rogers, Arkansas. Arkansas is a lot more centrally located and should prove to be a much more practical place to live than Oregon, if we are to take the gospel to every State.

The greatest need right now is prayer warriors. We will be fasting and praying in each location where we go for three days and nights. We will divide the team into threes and pray for twenty-four hours. We are requesting all of our prayer warriors to join us in fasting and prayer during these times. We will try and keep every one informed of the dates and prayer requests.

Our Web site will be: www.usaforjesus.org. Our e-mail will be james@usaforjesus.org

Francille and I have our home in Christmas Valley up for sale, please pray that it would sell. We would like to move by the end of October or the first part of November, God willing.

If you would like to participate in this ministry, please write to the e-mail address above and we will put you on the warrior's mail list.

*In Jesus,
James and Francille Lucas*



scheduled to fly out of Denver on September 1.

But to bring you up to date, we have been traveling a lot, trying to see as many people as possible before we leave. We have enjoyed touching bases again with many that we hadn't seen for quite a while. We also squeezed in a quick trip to Mexico, leaving Douglas on August 5 and returning August 16—quite the whirlwind trip, and a crowded one, with the family plus five extras traveling in our van! It was good to see the brothers in Loreto and see how they continue to faithfully witness to those around them.

We are excited to be going, and Austin tells us he is anxiously awaiting his chance to show us around. We have had the privilege of talking to him through Skype (he shaved his beard!) and hope to be able to stay in touch with many of you that way, once we are there.

We covet your prayers for safe travels and for settling in, once there. May God continue to bless you with an ever-increasing knowledge of Himself.


*In Christ's love,
Mike and Faith and the family Ball* 🌍

Please Note: The Update is sent free upon request to all wishing to receive it. The cost of \$9 per year per subscriber for this Update is covered by the freewill offerings of God's people. The Update is also available by email. Please send your request to sfmi@sfmiusa.org.

Terrors and Victories, continued from page 8

young people were ministered to in an almost breathtaking way.

So I want thank these eight missionary soldiers for their service, thank their families for loaning them to the camp, and thank Shield of Faith for connecting me with them through the Memorial Day Conference. Several of them attended the SFMI Discipleship Program, so I want to thank that program for the impact it has had on their lives.

I also want to present a challenge—a challenge I received. Maybe going to Mexico, Africa, Australia, or Siberia is not the Lord's direction for you at this time or perhaps forever. Ministry, however, is not a closed door. How about you and your family choosing to minister together in a setting where your personal relationship with the Lord is on display in a completely new way? How about choosing to follow the example of these eight servants to show the love of God to needy people in a clear and practical way? A camp, a rescue mission, a day-care center, a retirement home, a youth center and a dozen other venues await our willingness to serve in Christ's name. 

Meet the Board, continued from page 5

wherever it could be found. I left medical school, my family, the church, and the life I had known for twenty-two years.

For the next several years, I traveled, observing, experiencing everything I could. I studied philosophies and religions, from Theosophy to Hinduism to astrology. I read many “sacred books” and went through rituals with Native Americans. In my mind, my search for spiritual reality justified every expression of “freedom” that I conceived. I began to think I had arrived. I had blended elements from all my experiences into my own spiritual “mix and match” path to enlightenment, and I had concluded that the evidence of this enlightenment was unselfish love for one's fellow creatures.

Then, out of the blue, the next “end” hit me. It was as if an unseen hand reached inside me and tore away the curtain of my soul. I

saw what I had really become. It was ugly and frightening. What I had considered deeds of “unselfish love” seemed now to be merely hypocritical acts designed to make me look good in the eyes of my “fellow travelers.” Behind the curtain I saw only pride and self-gratification. I felt vile, horribly guilty, and increasingly afraid. Death, judgment, and eternity seemed to hang over my head. Twenty-five years of empty searching left me with a feeling of hopelessness.

As I considered what to do, I was inexplicably and strongly drawn to consider the life and words of Jesus. A few days later, I found myself on my knees saying, “God, if you exist—and I think you do, I'm going to read the words of Jesus. And if they are Your truth, I want You to show me supernaturally. If You do, I promise I will do whatever You show me.”

For the next few weeks I read the words of Jesus. They had a profound and unexpected effect on me. Though I had heard the Bible all my life, it was like I was hearing for the first time. I had many questions – logical hoops I expected God to jump through if I was going to believe what I was reading. But in the end, all these things were swept aside by what happened on a certain night that summer of 1970.

I had finished reading the Gospels, and the scenes of the crucifixion were fresh in my mind. I was especially troubled by one thing Jesus had said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It didn't compute. I had seen in my reading that Jesus really was unique. He was singularly sinless—unlike me—and He always seemed to know what was really going on. So how could He mistakenly believe that God (whose mind He knew best of all) had forsaken Him? On the other hand, how could God forsake His sinless, obedient Son? As I considered this, it seemed that I was transported to the crucifixion in my mind. The darkness was palpable and evil. I was overwhelmed as I contemplated the scene. Then in my mind I heard words—not from the Gospels or anything I had recently read, “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.... But he was wounded for our transgressions... All we like sheep have gone astray; we have

Continued on back cover

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turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Suddenly I understood that God had indeed forsaken His Son because He was contaminated with my sin. I realized that God was speaking to me and that He had been all along! I was overcome with the unimaginable love of Jesus. A few minutes later, I surrendered myself to Him. That night I understood three things. One, that Jesus had made me absolutely clean in the sight of God and I was at perfect peace with Him. Second, that Jesus was real and present and was communing with me. Third, that I owed Him such a debt of love that I had no choice but to give myself to Him for whatever He would ask of me.

Since that time, I have been finding out some of the things He wants me to do. Though I have not always been faithful to obey, He has always been faithful to keep me – just as He promised. 🙏



If you look carefully, you will find Jack standing with the believers of Baaki in front of their church building.

