

SHIELD OF FAITH MISSION INTERNATIONAL

# SFMI Prayer/News UPDATE

Fulfilling the Great Commission Through Establishing New Testament Churches



## Opportunities for Ministry

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# Editorial Notes

Our cover shows a baptism in India. We received the photo courtesy of Samuel Singh, with others on page 7. The growth of the church in India continues despite increasing persecution and the bitter opposition of Hindu Nationalists. It is another reminder that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church (Matthew 16:18).

These new brethren are also evidence of those who have chosen the narrow way and the “strait gate” spoken of by the Lord Jesus Christ. Dick York discusses that choice and the “options” in his article “Two Gates, Three Options.” A blessed hymn contains the words:

Face to face with Christ, my Savior,  
Face to face—what will it be,  
When with rapture I behold Him,  
Jesus Christ Who died for me?

Jim Lucas writes of the blessed privilege that believers have. We will one day look upon the face of Him “who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

In response to some requests, we are beginning what we hope will be a regular and up-to-date column with opportunities such as a trip to Ghana in January with His Vision Mission.

On page 9, Richard McDaniel gives a report on recent additions to the Training Center, including the starting date of the next one to be offered.

David writes in Psalm 19, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork” (v. 1). In a short devotional, Dun Gordy points out that this “handywork” embraces every aspect of God’s Creation.

Finally, this issue includes a full selection of reports from missionaries with both the praises and prayer requests that are the result of the people of God exercising the privilege of prayer. Though we may not be on the foreign field, it is wonderful to know that our prayers may have an impact beyond our imagination in these distant places of the world. May the Lord encourage us with these things.

**A Note from Dick:** It is our pleasure to introduce to you Gretchen Virk, the newest addition to the SFMI staff. Gretchen’s is the voice you will be hearing on the telephone when you call the SFMI office from now on. For some time now, Chrissie Wise has worked in our office on a part-time basis and has done a wonderful job, but when she was not in, there was not always someone available to pick up the phone when it rang. This proved frustrating for some when business could not immediately be transacted, or when they could not get their questions answered. We thank Chrissie for the service she provided; and we are also thankful now to have Gretchen aboard on a full-time basis. We are excited about having a full-time office staff; it will make a difference in the service we can provide. Please meet

Gretchen Virk (left in photo).

Hi! My name is Gretchen Virk. My family, Alec (age 16) and Alyssa (age 12) and my husband, Ricky, a professor at Central Oregon Community College in the Health Sciences Dept., have lived in Bend, Oregon for over 10 years now. I met my Savior at a young age, and he’s brought me through many trials, doubts, and fears, and I am so thankful for his grace! It reminds me of this verse from a beloved hymn:



Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come;  
‘Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far  
and Grace will lead me home.

In August, I was on the SFMI website when I saw that they were praying for a secretary. My heart jumped; so, I began to pray. I was inclined to the office secretary job because the mission field has had a pull on me for many years. Shield of Faith has been in my vocabulary since my Uncle Jack Ring announced to our family that the Lord had called him to Nigeria a few decades ago. To supplement our family income while simultaneously serving the Lord in this way seemed too good to be true! I truly believed that this position could only be mine if it was the will of God. From my perspective, I desire and have the ability to do it; my husband is approving, it fits with our family schedule and needs; most importantly, it allows me to serve the body of Christ with the giftings he’s given me. This part is thrilling for me personally!

Finally, I have had the privilege to be trained by Chrissie Wise. I know I could never fill her shoes in my own strength and aptitude! I can already see how she has truly been a wonderful blessing to all of you! I trust, since God has called me to do this, that he will equip me for the tasks ahead! Your patience and prayers for me in the coming days will be greatly appreciated! I look forward to serving you in the days ahead and am so thankful to be part of the Shield of Faith “family”!

**Addenda: Missionary Contacts.** One of the visitors to our recent general board meeting asked if he could get the contact information for those on the field. As organization policy, we don’t publish any of the addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses of missionaries, associates, or board members. We would ask you to contact the SFMI office (541-382-7081 or [sfmi@sfmiusa.org](mailto:sfmi@sfmiusa.org)) if you desire such information. We definitely want you to contact and encourage all those who are affiliated with the mission. Many of the missionaries have United States phone numbers, even though they are serving abroad. 📞

# Two Gates, Three Options



By Dick York

I recall talking, several years ago, to a very fortunate pilot who had made an extremely tricky emergency landing on the country road in front of our house. Without power, he had maneuvered his little airplane over and under the several telephone and power lines that spanned the road to a successful landing. It represented no little skill on his part, which he readily acknowledged. But to my suggesting that perhaps the Lord's mercy also deserved some credit, he stiffened. So when I asked him where he would spend eternity if it had turned out differently, he pointed to the sagebrush and said angrily, "Right there."

He, like millions of others, gave no thought to eternity and was not seeking eternal life; nor was he concerning himself with being accountable to a God who, in his mind, doesn't exist. But the rest of humanity, for the most part, believes that there is *probably* a God and that *more than likely*, life after death. To some, it is a minor issue, to which they give little thought; to others, it is a serious matter that motivates them to do something about it. So when Jesus, preaching the Sermon on the Mount to a multitude of people, addressed the issue, he urged them to enter in at the "strait" gate saying,

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets....<sup>1</sup>

It is probable that not all who heard his urging took his counsel; but if they did not, what were their options? Everyone has three. There are two gates: a wide one and a narrow one; the third option is to stay where you are—to continue in stubborn unbelief and disregard for

the soul's eternal welfare. Such was the case of our skillful and incredibly "lucky" pilot friend. Some would say that he was on the broad road that leads to destruction, while those who profess to know Jesus and call themselves Christians are those on the narrow road. Not so.

He was certainly on a path to destruction if he continued on his course. However, for many who profess to be Christian, Jesus is saying something ominous. Anyone, to enter into either gate, that must decide to move; they will choose a gate they hope will lead to a happy end. Only a few will opt to look for and find the "strait" gate; and even many, who are directed to that "strait" gate, will choose instead to enter the wide one, where they can travel conveniently without the necessity of giving up their personal preferences. They will discover, ironically, that the broad road leads to the same destination as that of those who shunned entering at all! Listen carefully to what Jesus said. It's simple; it's important.

"*Enter ye in at the strait gate!*" Why? Because the other gate is wide and leads to destruction, and many choose it. Why do they choose it? Because the gate that leads to life is too "strait." Those are Jesus' words: "The gate is wide; the way is broad, and it leads to destruction; and many go in thereat *because* strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life; only a few *find* it." The language indicates a deliberate search.

It seems that those who enter into life are those who seek the **way**, the **truth** and the **life**, as Jesus said, "Seek and ye shall find." This, then, is not a matter of casually stumbling upon eternal life while disdaining what God has spoken. Jesus said that those who seek

find. But it is apparent, from what Jesus said, that the many who enter the wide gate do so after observing that the strait gate is too narrow for them. Also, there are porters along the way who encourage them to enter the wrong gate. Jesus called them false prophets and warned us to beware of them. They would encourage us to enter in through the wide gate because it is so much easier to access. The way is broad; it affords comfort and will accommodate a lot of baggage if you want to bring it with you. Purportedly there are few trials and little sacrifice. It is obviously the highway of choice because it is apparent that the majority has chosen it—it's the freeway. Unfortunately, it leads to destruction.

The broad road has deceptive signs along the way that declare it to be the road to heaven; they even bear encouraging messages that seem like sound doctrine—messages from the Bible that make sense to the intellect but are divorced from the contexts that modify them. Some of those signs make us comfortable with the sin from which we should have repented, explaining to us that “grace” excuses sin—God has no requirements. Once you have been persuaded by someone to say the “sinner’s prayer” and have said “uh-huh” to a few questions concerning what you believe about Jesus (no matter that you disregard the commandments of God and the instructions of his Word and continue in sin, and nothing has changed within or without), you are saved. After all, it’s a big tent: God is not willing that any should perish.... Repentance, they say, was a message for Israel or for another dispensation. We have no sin. Jesus took care of that when he reconciled the world to himself.

The broad road is a religious road, and its travelers are diverse. Not all are careless and presumptuous; some indeed are meticulous and even legalistic and quite opposed to the licentiousness of those fellow-travelers just

described. But they embrace what is common to almost all religions—they seek, by the power of their own flesh to perform what is written in the law, or what they deem to be righteousness. Their satisfaction and comfort comes from the conviction that their works are what is required and that they will earn heaven by their own merit if they simply keep the law to the extent that they are able.

The travelers on that broad road represent the two extremes we have just described and many variations in between. The “strait” gate repels both equally but for opposite reasons.

For the licentious and distorters of grace, it is too “legalistic” and restrictive. It requires more than just “believing” academically. For the truly legalistic it

seems too lawless. Jesus said, “I am the **way**, the **truth** and the **life**; no man cometh unto the Father but by **ME**.” That’s why it’s a “strait” gate. There is no tolerance for any additions or subtractions—**none!** It is not Jesus plus keeping the commandments. Jesus is “*the end of the law for righteousness.*”<sup>2</sup> **He is** “*the righteousness of God without the law.*”<sup>3</sup>

It is to be understood that righteousness does not come by even the most strenuous effort to keep the law. The law does not (because it cannot) produce righteousness; it simply condemns sin. How, then, is righteousness produced? By Christ in you! The Spirit of Christ produces righteousness. The righteousness that is described by the law becomes evident in those who walk in the Spirit,<sup>4</sup> but we can’t do that until we are born of the Spirit. That is why Jesus told Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again,”<sup>5</sup> i.e., you must be born of the Spirit. “If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”<sup>6</sup>

If men could be saved by keeping the law or even by keeping the law plus acknowledging Christ—as long as law-keeping was part of

**...the road is not restrictive at all; on the contrary, it is filled with pleasures at God’s right hand.**

the equation—then certainly Nicodemus would have been saved without being born again because he was a Pharisee (a law-keeper) and he also believed that Jesus came from God.<sup>7</sup> Jesus acknowledged that the Pharisees taught the law and were right in the legal sense when he told his disciples, “All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.”<sup>8</sup> Even Nicodemus, with an apparently right heart, could not be saved by the law. He had to be born again.

Romans 8:1-4 addresses those who would pervert “grace.” The **righteousness** of the law **is fulfilled in them** that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Grace does not excuse sin. It produces righteousness. Jesus came to save His people *from* their sins, not *in* their sins. So, not only is the gate strait, but the way is narrow. It is restrictive in that it does not include that which appeals to the flesh; but if we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh—in which case, the road is not restrictive at all. On the contrary, it is filled with pleasures at God’s right hand.<sup>9</sup> Jesus told a parable about the sower who went forth to sow. Some of the seed fell by the wayside, some on stony ground, some among thorns, and some on good ground. Of the good ground, Jesus said, “...that on the good ground are they, which *in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience.*”<sup>10</sup> The Apostle Paul exhorted, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”<sup>11</sup>

The Scriptures teach us that there are things that accompany salvation.<sup>12</sup> Jesus, in the foregoing paragraph, called it “fruit,” the evidence of life within. Just as the fallen Adamic nature makes itself evident from the time of our natural birth, so the new nature demonstrates evidence of new life from the beginning.

The Bible teaches us that “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.”<sup>13</sup> This defines the narrow road, and it is

only entered through the strait gate. Few find that gate because it is *a person* to whom we surrender, not a creed that we learn, a religion we embrace, a law that we keep, a lifestyle we adopt, or even a doctrine to which we academically subscribe. Jesus said, “*I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.*”<sup>14</sup> And since the angel told Joseph that Jesus would save his people *from their sins*<sup>15</sup> and Peter confirmed it when he said Jesus would turn you *from your iniquities*,<sup>16</sup> with which John agreed when he said that Jesus was manifested to *take away our sins*,<sup>17</sup> it seems evident that salvation is not just an escape from hell but a deliverance from sins.

So there are our three options: **unbelief**, which is the state of the world at large;

**The wide gate** and the broad way leading to destruction, which is academic belief without repentance, encompassing a large percentage of professing Christians; and

**The strait gate** and the narrow way that leads to life, which is those who having heard the gospel, through repentance and faith have embraced it and received eternal life in Christ.<sup>18</sup>

Faith is trust, not simply academic acknowledgement of a fact. “Faith in” translates into “commitment to.”

## Endnotes

- 1 Matthew 7:13-15
- 2 Romans 10:4
- 3 Romans 3:21
- 4 Romans 8:1-4
- 5 John 3:7
- 6 Galatians 2:21
- 7 John 3:1,2
- 8 Matthew 23:3
- 9 Psalm 16:11
- 10 Luke 8:15
- 11 Romans 13:14
- 12 Hebrews 6:9
- 13 2 Corinthians 5:17
- 14 John 10:9
- 15 Matthew 1:21
- 16 Acts 3:26
- 17 1 John 3:5
- 18 1 John 5:12 



# Face to Face

By Jim Lucas

This expression speaks volumes—the very best communication, with no mediator and no veil, open and personal.

Exodus 33:9-11 says, “As Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the *LORD* talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand *at* the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man *in* his tent door. And the *LORD* spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.”

The people worshipped the Lord, but from a distance. The Lord spoke unto Moses, however, face to face! Moses had a personal, upfront relationship with our Creator. This is understood, but the following scripture may seem to say that this relationship did not exist.

And Moses said unto the *LORD*, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation *is* thy people. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth. And the *LORD* said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the *LORD* before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I

will shew mercy. And he said, **thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.** And the *LORD* said, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen (Exodus 23:12-23).

This is a marvelous portion of scripture. The Holy Spirit is teaching us how we can have a face-to-face relationship with the Almighty. We have this amazing example of how we should be praying. “If I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee” (v. 13).

We have been told that we *have* found grace in his sight; and most of us have this as our basic doctrine for salvation. Satisfaction of this knowledge alone is not the grace that is intended for us, but unless we hunger and thirst for this grace to be revealed, we cannot truly know God. Without a full-hearted desire and a genuine pursuit of this grace, we cannot boast of faith. Faith without works is dead. Faith in a doctrine does not bring life-changing grace. *What* you believe is not as important as *whom* you believe. If you believe the promise of him who cannot lie, you will live with expectation of this grace, and it will bring the life-giving change that is desired. Many have not, because they *ask* not—they really could not care less. They are content with a doctrine that merely soothes the conscience but cannot purge it.

Moses insisted that the presence of God go with him. The grace of God is nothing less than the presence of God. Only in his presence can the grace of God be found. The mere knowledge of grace does not bring grace, but the pursuit of his presence will. Moses desired to see the glory of God. I believe this is normal conduct for one who loves God in word and deed. God was

pleased with his request, and Moses was told, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee.” But then he was told, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”

This seems like a contradiction; but, no, it is simply a condition that is recorded for our sakes. Remember Moses had already been meeting with the Lord face to face. This is the same requisite that Jesus gave to his disciples, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself (be willing to die to self) and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). The wages of sin has always been the same: separation from God, death. Until we die with Christ, we cannot live with Him.

Moses was told, “There is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen” (Exodus 33:21-23).

This is where most Christians are: in Christ, covered by the hand of God. Faith in the death and resurrection of Christ brings the covering and the reconciliation. We then are sanctified and brought into the holy place. There still remains a veil into the holy of holies, which is taken away when we by faith enter into the fellowship of His suffering and the power of his resurrection; and then we can know him.

All has been provided for us in Christ Jesus. Now it is for us to act upon our faith and surrender ourselves to the Cross, for the way of the Cross leads to the holy of holies where we can communicate face to face. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and *having* an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised)” (Heb 10: 19-23). 🌐

SFMI Update



## Opportunities For Ministry

Here are some upcoming ministry opportunities for which we'd like you to be in prayer. We also want to extend an invitation to any of the men to pray about joining us for one of these endeavors.

**January** (exact dates unknown)—trip to Ghana for seminars with His Vision Mission

**Contact person:** Tim Spurling

**February 15th-29th**—Trip to India for conference ministry, teaching, disciple-making, and evangelism.

**Contact person:** Richard McDaniel

Prior to the India trip, Jack Burwell will be going to Bangladesh to survey the site in preparation for his family's move there for ministry. Please be in prayer for that. There would also be an opportunity for someone to accompany him.

If you have an interest in being part of one of these ministry teams, please let the SFMI office know (541) 382-7081), and we can connect you with the right person.





# TRAINING CENTER

The Shield of Faith Mission training program has been a mainstay of the mission for many years. This started out as a nine-month missionary training program, which was intended for those who had some maturity in the Lord and who were headed out into ministry. In recent years, we have had a lot of younger people who were wanting discipleship come to us, and we decided that we should work with the ones whom God has sent to us. Consequently, the emphasis changed from *missionary* training to *discipleship* training. That really wasn't a big change for us, as the two run pretty much on the same course. Out of those whom we have trained recently, we are seeing about twenty-five percent continue on to be engaged in a mission field somewhere.

I'd like to make everyone aware of some recent changes that we've made. First, we are changing the start date from mid-January to the first Monday in March, which in 2012 will be March 5th. We would like to receive all completed applications by January 17th. The second big change is that the program will be lengthened from six months to nine months. The current six-month program will continue as it has been with the full slate of teaching plus much practical application. At the end of that time, which will be the first of September, we will send the trainees by twos back to their home churches, where they will work for six weeks in one of their churches, then six weeks in the other trainee's church. This time will be used by them to disciple others, with a curriculum we provide, and evangelism on their home turfs. It will also give the trainees the opportunity to strengthen their home churches through the ministry they impart. The girls in the program, because their roles are different, may

have something tailored for them.

We see from the Scriptures that it is the local church that sends out workers, and we want to abide by that. Consequently, we look for the approval of the elders/leaders of each church before accepting an individual into the program. We will also need the cooperation of the churches in the last part of our program when the trainees return to their home churches for ministry.

Another opportunity for you to consider is that we want to take the training program "on the road" and come to your church for a segment of training. When we do that, we go with trainees and instructors to a locale and continue our scheduled training classes along with evangelism. The local church is then free to join in on the teachings or any of the activities. The details of that can be worked out with the individual churches, but we can come for as few as three days and as many as ten days. We are looking for places to do this, so please let us know if you'd like us to come, and we will try to schedule it into our program.

Right now there are many opportunities worldwide for ministry. "The harvest is ripe, and the laborers are few." The time we have left for ministry is getting shorter and shorter. I believe we should take advantage of the open doors we have. If you have a certain field on your heart or would like to join with one of our field teams, you have opportunity to train with us for such an endeavor. If you are looking for a deeper walk with the Lord and just want discipleship, that's what we are about also. Our contact information is on the front of this newsletter. We'd love to hear from you.

Richard McDaniel, Director of Training 

# *Frost and the Grace of God*

by Dun Gordy

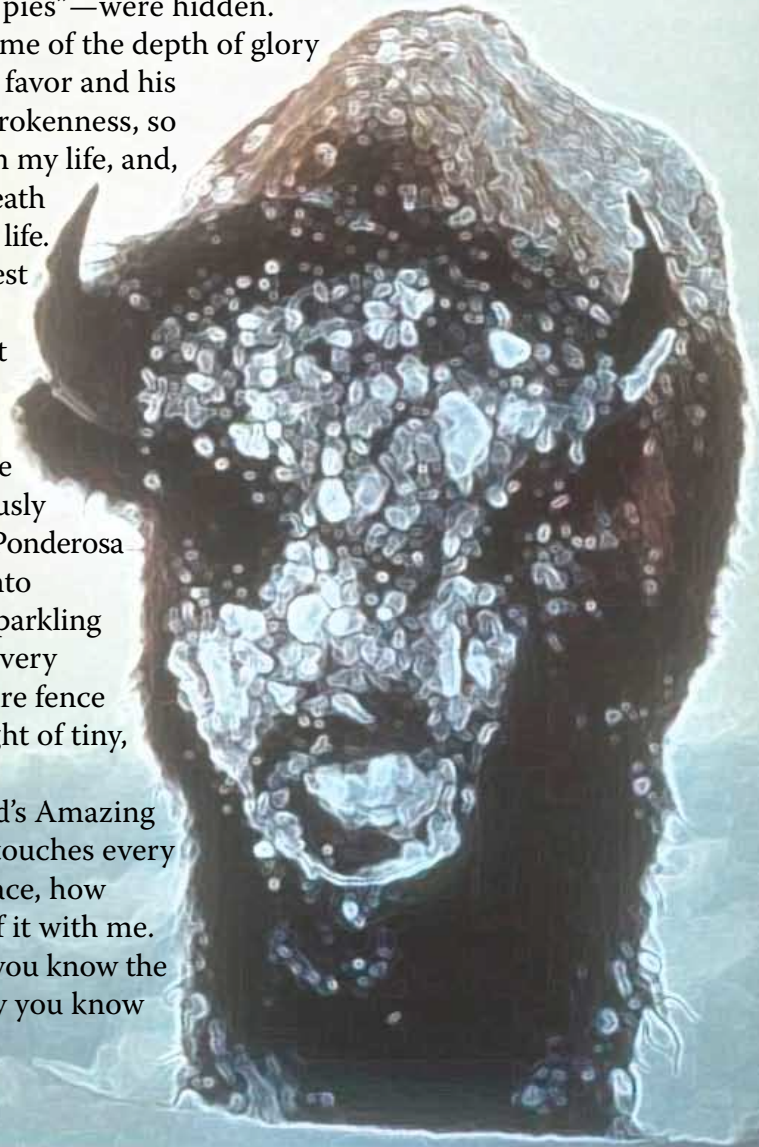
Maybe it was because the full harvest moon was so glorious last night; even the scattered clouds abandoned the sky, leaving our morning beautifully clear. And because it was so cold, the Creator spread his blanket over the landscape—his blanket of frost.

As I enjoyed the beauty of the morning and the beauty of God's wonderful Word in my hands, I was struck with how much this touch of his handiwork illustrated his grace. Frost! It covered everything with one unmasked-for blanket of beauty. The broken limbs, the dirty windshield, the rusting tin on the barn roof were now covered and hidden from view by God's frost; even the leftover evidence of the cows that were now moved to winter pasture—the stinking “cow pies”—were hidden.

How much this frost reminded me of the depth of glory of our Lord's Grace! His unmerited favor and his lavish love have covered so much brokenness, so much dirt, so much rust and ruin in my life, and, thankfully, even the foul smell of death from so many worthless deeds in my life.

The frost is heaviest in the deepest shade at the bottom of the gulch. Looking back, it seems to me that it took extra grace to cover the worst of my life. Then came the morning sun marching triumphantly over the eastern ridge and bursting victoriously through the evergreen limbs of the Ponderosa pines. Its warmth turned the frost into glistening dew. Its brilliance hung sparkling droplets on every pine needle and every stalk and blade. Even the barbed wire fence seemed to be sagging with the weight of tiny, glistening diamonds.

So the warmth and glory of God's Amazing Grace, through the gift of his Son, touches every extent of needy lives. “Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound....” Sing the rest of it with me. I'm sure you know the tune. I hope you know the words. But most importantly, I pray you know the SON!



# Missionary Reports



## Rogers, Arkansas James and Francille Lucas

Our Lord Jesus has heard your prayers for us. Thank you for standing with us.

With Jack Burwell and family back in Salina, Kansas, following up on the ones who turned their lives over to our Lord, Roger Cobb and I went to Thermopolis, Wyoming.

The ministry there was encouraging but much



different from our other outreaches. Our heavenly Father provided an air conditioned building for us so that there was no need to set up the tent. My cousin John's son Luke is a Christian; he and his wife Valery helped by getting the building for us, putting an ad in the paper, and announcing the meeting in their church. We used the building for four days and had two meetings a day, with a pretty good turnout, especially in the evenings!

Roger and I went door to door daily and were privileged to preach to some hungry souls and to minister a word of encouragement to quite a few Christians. We met a very mentally alert ninety-six-year-old who was quite ready to talk. I spoke to him about "good old boys" who have gained respect in their communities through good works and acts of kindness but have failed to do anything about their sin problem and therefore will not find entrance into heaven. Surprisingly, he agreed and continued to listen. He understood everything and seemed to be very honest; but after hearing the gospel, he was quiet for a long while; then he said, "No, I will just sit here and wait and see what happens. I have always tried to do my best."

I assured him that wasn't good enough. He admitted that he was stubborn. I explained to him

that stubbornness is as witchcraft, but he insisted on just waiting. We finally left him a gospel tract with my phone number and told him that I would be praying that his bed would be too short and that God would make him miserable until he surrendered his life to Jesus.

He looked at me very intently as I said, "If you get too miserable, call me."

He said, "I will."

He hasn't called yet; but please pray for Paul—that God would give him a taste of hell so that he will repent of his stubbornness.

When we finished our last meeting Sunday night, they urged us, "Be sure and come back." We agreed to return next spring to do some seminars.

Praise the Lord.

Yours in Jesus,

James and Francille

## USA Jack Burwell

A desire to hear from God and a willingness to act on what we hear has been a recurring exhortation brought to the team by our heavenly Father over the course of our travels. God has used a variety of means, people, and settings to remind us that this is his work and that our methods and programs are simply not adequate to accomplish the work. The SFMI Spokane Conference was used of God to speak to us (and others) about our need to be heard in, and to hear from, heaven.

Brother Les Garrett spoke to God's people about the need to humble ourselves through fasting if we desire to be heard in heaven, referencing among other verses 2 Chronicles 7:14 and demonstrating how often in the Scriptures we find men humbling themselves before God by fasting. Brother Garrett went on to underscore the need to *give* ourselves to fasting and to prayers, without unnecessary distractions. We realized that although we have fasted for three days at the beginning of every outreach, we had not truly *given* ourselves to fasting and prayer; instead we have gone about our normal activities, such as erecting the tent, seeing to printing needs, and door to door or street

ministry, and a plethora of other things while not eating. I don't think our fasting was without benefit, but I do realize that it was not what it should have been. It had become to some degree an exercise that merely added rigor to our regular busyness.

Having heard from God with regard to our fasting, we decided that not only would we fast for three days at the beginning of our outreach, but that we would *only* fast and pray for the first three days; and then we would begin our outreach to the people *after* we had, without distraction, reached up to our heavenly Father.

We set up our tent on a large lot that brother Frank Stangel had secured prior to our arrival. Our outreach coincided with the county fair, so it was certain that we would be seen by many as they attended the fair, and lots of foot traffic would be available for opportunities to share the gospel one on one and to preach on the street. Though our tent and signs could not be missed by the masses that drove by on the way to the fair, there were very few that turned aside or returned from their pursuit of amusement to hear what God had to say to them. Still there were, as always, a few who came to hear and to bless us, with fellowship, prayer, or a meal. Truckers, hitchhikers, gospel singers, and local pastors were among those who came; but our most frequent visitor was a 13-year-old boy named Luke, who came by many times looking for work so he could earn a dollar or two. Luke has learned to ply people for money. Although he is in school, he is functionally illiterate and seemingly has little supervision outside of school. He told me that he has ADHD and is in a special class. I must confess that because of his age and his dogged efforts to get some money every time he came, I failed to look at him as one of those that we asked God to send. Thanks be to God, I did eventually see Luke in that light, and Frank and I were able to spend some time with Luke in the Scriptures. Please remember Luke in your prayers, that he might be able to read, understand, and obey those verses we shared with him and see the promises of God associated with them. Luke lives in an environment that is becoming increasingly common in our day, ravaged by alcohol and neglect, in which loving care, patience, and discipline have been replaced with mindaltering drugs.

Many of you may already know that our beloved brother James was called away from the outreach to tend to his brother Paul, who had suffered a severe heart attack. God, who knows all things, spoke to James through Larry Gallegos's teaching about the importance of ministry to family just prior to Paul's heart attack; so it was with rest and confidence that he left us to go and

minister to his family in Las Vegas. Roger Cobb remained with us.

In James' absence, brother Larry Gallegos and his wife, Peggy, stepped up to help us with teaching, witnessing at the fair, going door to door, and feeding us very well on a couple of occasions. Larry and Peggy were able to minister to a group of Mexican men who were working for the carnival company at the fair. They were living in a semi-trailer filled with bunk beds and with a small hot plate on which they fixed their meals, no AC, and, of course, all were working for very low wages. They had been away from home for seven months, and one of the men confessed that he was struggling to stay away from drinking and to remain faithful to his wife during his long absence from home. One of the men, whose name is Alfredo, came to the tent the following morning. Alfredo can speak very little English, so after our Bible study brother Larry shared the gospel one on one with Alfredo. Alfredo was able to understand and appreciate the gospel but realized that obeying the gospel would cause some real problems for him back home. In a subsequent meeting in their home, Larry and Peggy were able to share more extensively with Alfredo: and they telephoned his wife in Mexico and declared the gospel to her as well. Although there is some understanding there, both Alfredo and his wife are reluctant to obey because of the likely persecution from family members and friends in Mexico. Pray that they might be able to make a worthy estimation as they count the cost.

While witnessing in the fair, Frank Stangel found a tent in which a local brother was sharing the gospel with fair attendees. This brother, named Steve, had been kicked off the fairgrounds the previous year for preaching; and so this year he purchased a vendor's lot and set up a tent in which he shared the gospel with people. He was severely understaffed during the 4-10 p.m. time slot and so invited us to join him, which we did. We were able to sit down in the tent and share at length with many people who came inside to take the "good person test." There were mockers and seekers and just plain curious, but to all the gospel was plainly declared.

It was in Steve's tent that I met Johnny, a young man who has been sober for fourteen months but still struggling to be free from the influence of friends and family still trapped in that lifestyle. We talked at length about many things; but when I spoke of the certainty of death and the subsequent judgment, Johnny told me that such thoughts scared him and he did not like to think about them. He wanted to change the subject; but when I showed him that he was simply hiding from something that he knew was coming,

because he knew he could not stand in the judgment, he acknowledged the folly of hiding his eyes from the fact that he must die and be judged by the judge of all the earth. I told him that there was a way to escape the wrath that he knew he was under, and he seemed eager to know more; but his friends spotted him sitting there with me and came and urged him to go along with them, which he did, as he apologized to me. It was easy to see that he was torn between the approval of his friends and hearing more of the eternal life, which is in Christ Jesus. So it is with so many whom we beseech to be reconciled to God. So it will be until that great day of the Lord. Brothers Wes and Tim Spurling, along with Naomi, were there to help with much of the outreach and were able to devote a great deal of time to working in Steve's tent, while others hit the streets or went door to door.

Our heavenly Father provided a place to park our trailer and an open home in which we were able to prepare meals, find rest, comfort, and fellowship. We have been thoroughly blessed by the hospitality of God's people in our travels, and we are ever thankful for all the prayers and hospitality of God's people.

*May God Bless you all with the choicest of blessings.*

*Brother Jack Burwell* 

## **Valle De Juarez, Mexico** **Ed and Abby Drysdale**

As we approach the end of this year and reflect back on what has transpired, some of us might ask, "Did we accomplish what the Lord wanted us to do? Did we faithfully serve him with the abilities he gave us? Or did we squander lost opportunities?" If we examine our hearts, we know, and the Lord knows, the answer to those tough questions. I imagine all of us have to admit that we have disappointed the Lord in some way or another this past year. Nevertheless, we can take courage that he is able to sustain us. His Word says that he is faithful even when we are faithless. He also states in Philippians, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."


Looking back over this year, there have been good and bad times. I wouldn't trade this rich experience for anything in the world. Our goal was to proclaim the gospel in this town and the surrounding areas so they would be without excuse when the Day of Judgment comes. We had teams from the States as well as brothers here supporting us with a lot of evangelistic outreaches. During these out-

reaches we endeavored to leave a New Testament in each household. With much anticipation, we went to work following up on the contacts but saw very little fruit here in Valle. However, we are meeting with three families from the campaigns. Salvador and his girlfriend, Miriam, have been meeting faithfully with us for awhile. He has now been sharing his new found faith with his friends at work. He had asked one of his friends, "Where are you going to be after this life is over?" His friend was clueless; and Salvador said, "If you don't repent and ask Jesus into your heart, you will end up in Hell." Last night, he was so animated in telling me what he had read and what the Lord is showing him. I had recently shown the video *Faith in Crisis* to him as well as to Miriam's mother. Her mother, Chewy, was so shocked by it that she wanted to watch it again. It was a real eye-opener for her because she didn't know what the Catholic doctrine taught. Pray for them because they need to take a stand in baptism. We would love to see them start coming regularly to church since they are meeting only with us in our house.

I have had a tug on my heart to take the gospel to the smaller ranchos and pueblos tucked in the mountains. There is a town called Santa Maria de Oro, which is about two hours away. Misael and I are going on Sundays after service to pass out New Testaments and preach there at the Plaza. Last week, we showed a movie at the main plaza; there were around thirty or so watching. We ran into a young man, Alfredo, who showed a real desire to know the Scriptures. Pray that we might be able to follow up with him as well as this other family that James Lucas and I met five years ago. They are Rudolph and Maria, who remembered us going door to door five years ago. They are in there mid 50s and seemed to be very attentive to the Word. They go to church regularly and might even be saved but are a little confused. Anyhow, pray that they will seek the truth and follow the Lord no matter what the cost is.

Thanks for laboring with us and upholding us in prayer. May the Lord Bless you!

*Praise the Lord!*

*Ed and Abby Drysdale* 

## **USA** **Mike Ball Family**

Hello to all. We are still in Glendo, Wyoming. We went to Mexico in March, as we wrote in our last *Ball Bearings* just before we left. We were there for five weeks. The Lord definitely went before us and opened the way. With the violence that occurs at

times on the highways we travel, I was hoping that we would not get stopped by the police or the Feds. The Lord gave us our desire. On the way up, we had to stop very briefly at one army checkpoint. I was very thankful for that due to what is happening on the highways lately. I did not want to even slow down in the remote areas.

We are glad to report that we found, for the most part, the brethren growing and some prospering in the Lord. We had been concerned for them because of some false teaching from Marcial and another brother concerning the return of the Lord on a specific day in May and the departure of the Holy Spirit from all local churches since 1996, or some year close to that. Marcial had also demanded that the elders resign, believing that there should be no leadership in the congregations.

I was encouraged by how God had worked in their midst and how the brethren had seen through the errors of Marcial's teachings. The elders took Marcial's demands concerning leadership seriously enough to examine the Scriptures and seek the Lord. They went through all this without consulting me, by the way, which means they came to their conclusions on their own as led by the Spirit. I was especially encouraged by this. I heard about these things three weeks before leaving for Mexico. One of the elders had resigned by then, and I assumed that he had resigned as a result of Marcial's teachings. Upon arriving, I discovered that he hasn't been influenced by Marcial but had resigned because of some spiritual problems in his own family. I would ask you to pray for Juan José and wife, Myrna, and their two teenage girls. The problem seems to be a lack of genuine commitment to the Lord on the part of Myrna and the girls. They attend the meetings but seem quite attached to the world and its vanities.

Anyway, back to the elders and their conclusions. They decided that they were to remain as elders and that leadership in the local church is ordained of God. They rejected the false teachings on the Rapture and the departure of the Holy Spirit. Thankfully, the entire congregation rejected them except for one brother, who left the congregation along with his wife and two children. The worst thing about Pedro's leaving is that he went to most of the brethren individually and tried to convince them, with some pretty harsh language, that the Holy Spirit was not in their midst. Probably worse than that is that Santa, Pedro's wife, has suffered much for lack of fellowship. Because of how Pedro had spoken to the brethren, some found it hard to make the effort to visit them. While we were there, we encouraged them to pray for and visit them, especially Santa.

The entire year of 2010 has been filled with trials for the brethren. Manolo, the elder elder, had a pancreatic attack and almost died. He spent a lot of time in the hospital since the operation on his pancreas, after they discovered infection outside the pancreas. After leaving the hospital, he spent many months in bed. During all this, Marcial was bothering them with his teachings. I was so encouraged by Manolo's growth through the testings. He testified that God really spoke to him while he was in bed. God provided for their hospital bills in a way that can only be attributed to God. Through all these things, God has knit the brethren together in love. They seem to be a closer unit.

God has also seen fit to add to his church several souls. Many of the brethren are quite active in preaching Christ. We are so thankful to God for this. While we were there, fifteen were baptized. Some of these were adults who were new to the gospel, and some were children of believers in the congregation. It was especially exciting to see the young man in the congregation, Javier, who is a fourth generation believer. His great-grandma was the first in his family to believe, probably in 2003. Her daughter, Martha, soon came to the Lord; and then one of her granddaughters came to the Lord as a result of the grandmother's funeral. Soon, all of Martha's five children (all adults) converted to Christ. Eventually two of the sons-in-law also converted. Javier is the oldest of Martha's grandchildren, and he is the one who was baptized.

We also witnessed the baptism of some of our former neighbors. While we were still living there, Manolo had tried so hard to get some Bible studies started with some of these families but never could. Just before we moved from Mexico, he started having studies with one family in their home. They came to the Lord; and then, one by one, other families started attending that same study. Now about four families from that area where we lived have come to the Lord.

One example of how the Lord worked in Manolo during that year of sickness is that Manolo has always been involved in politics. For many years, this has been a source of conflict between his wife and him. His testimony to me during this last visit was that during his sickness the Lord took away all desire to be involved with politics! His only desire is to spend his time preaching the gospel and teaching the Word. While we were there, he was giving a Bible study just about every day of the week in Loreto and in nearby villages.

I'd like to share one other testimony of a sister in the church congregation. Ofelia came to the Lord shortly after we moved to Loreto in 2005. Just shortly

before we arrived, her husband had left for the States and has, since then, abandoned her and their children and has another “wife” and family in the States. Eventually, he began pressing her for a divorce, and she refused; but I believe they finally got one. While that we were there in March, we visited her and told her we were encouraged that she was not seeking to marry again. We have seen so many instances where a divorced sister will immediately look for another man, without too much discernment or concern whether he is a godly man or not. We have discouraged these from seeking other men, but with Ofelia we had never broached the subject because she had never shown interest in another. So we commended her for her commitment to the Lord and her children, and we just wanted to share her response with you as it encouraged us so much. She said she was married to one man and that one man was the only one she would ever be married to. She told us that she could never accept him back into her home since he has another “wife;” but, at the same time, she sees him as her husband and the one and only man to whom she will ever be married. We were so impressed with her response because it seems to fit so much with what Jesus expressed concerning this matter: that they are one flesh and will always be so in God’s eyes. She was not looking for any loopholes in the Scriptures concerning this matter—she was content with the one man that she had joined together with, and she did not need another to take his place. I know that the Holy Spirit taught her this because we never directly taught her those things. That is one of the most encouraging things we can see in the believers that they are being taught by the Spirit themselves.

During our five weeks there, Mike taught every Saturday evening and Sunday morning. Mike is thankful that the Lord gave him utterance in the teaching of the Word every weekend. We were able to spend time in the homes of each of the brothers in Loreto and most of them in Aguas.

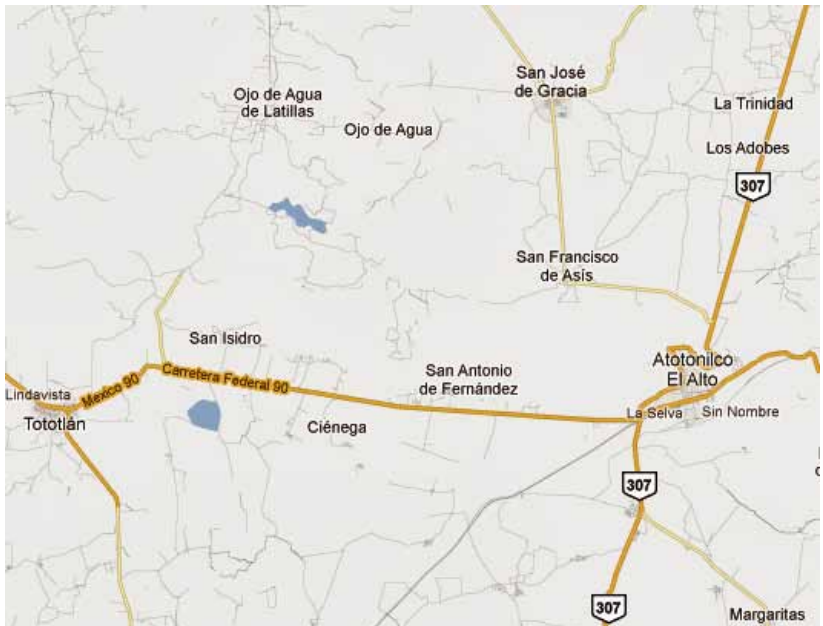
Since that trip, we have not done anything special. Mike has been working construction; T.J. is between jobs right now; Austin is in Oregon, working after helping with the training program until its end in July; Borden is in his third year of college at the University of Wyoming; Feilynn has graduated high school and is working as a CNA at the senior center in Douglas; the younger ones

are homeschooling, except Ethan who keeps us all entertained. Chantel has a chance to babysit for a newborn as soon as we get back from Mexico and is excited to do that.

At the time of this writing, we have another trip to Mexico planned for two weeks in October. We might be travelling over to western Mexico, so we would appreciate your prayers concerning all of the driving.

*In Christ,  
Mike and Faith and family* 🐶

### **Atotonilco, Mexico** **Steve and Linda Montgomery**



*The above is a map of the county of Atotonilco and some of the adjoining counties.*

The church in downtown Atotonilco is doing well. Because of the size of the group (around 100 each Sunday), we have difficulty fitting into the building we rent. Three men are functioning as elders, and we are preparing to officially recognize elders before the end of the year. We hope to have representatives from Household of Faith in Dallas join us for that.

The assembly in San José de Gracia is struggling, with little growth and little impact on the community. There is a clear need for fresh vision lest they fall into the “fortress mentality” of simply assuming that no one really wants to hear the gospel and that our job is just to keep holding on until Jesus returns.

Cucarachas continues as a weekly Bible study. It is difficult to see this group becoming a church, because at present there are no men.

The works in Maguey, Fonapo, Tototlan, and San Joaquin are new and are very encouraging. We anticipate seeing churches established in these communities.

We continue with evangelistic outreach to the town of Atotonilco and have received a number of teams from churches that have captured a vision for working with the churches here to reach this area. We are also very encouraged with how the sister churches in the various towns throughout Jalisco have worked together this year. We have been involved in events, projects, and outreaches with them and they with us.

Linda and I are fine. We are in our new home, which is still far from finished but is livable and a real blessing to us.

*Steve and Linda* 

### **Atotonilco, Mexico** **Daniel and Mari Fontanez**

At the beginning of the year, one of our supporting churches sent out a questionnaire that challenged me to consider where I was and where I was headed in ministry. I had to think through everything that we were involved in and decide on what we would focus most of our effort. It was obvious to me that the Maguey church plant should be our focus; and as time went on, the Lord made that even clearer. The rent for the large and comfortable house we had been living in was being paid for by another ministry. Well, it turned out that the funding for the rent was confused in a huge web of miscommunication. At the end, the money for the rent was cancelled; and we were faced with a forced move. The obvious choice was to move to Maguey. The houses there are a lot smaller, but it's a part of town where the rent is cheaper; and it's where we were going to focus our service. It's funny how the Lord forced that move on us. We would not have left the other house without his "guidance." It's great that we can trust in his infinite wisdom.

A few weeks before we had to move to Maguey a team from Yakima held another Health Fair there, and God gave us seven new contacts that developed into evangelistic Bible studies in Maguey. We were already having to go there several times a week, but with these new Bible studies it was almost all week. So to move there became even more obvious.

Also, at the beginning of the year, God answered one of our heart cries. He brought Miguel (Mari's brother) back into a right relationship with himself. This also created a domino effect that has brought joy after joy and blessing after blessing.

After his return to Christ, a Bible study was started in Tototlan (where Mari's family lives). Through the Bible study, Eduardo, another of Mari's brothers, came to faith in Jesus; and her mom and Miguel got baptized the same day. Other non-believing family members have been stirred up and are attending the Bible study and the Sunday meeting at Atotonilco. I believe that God is at work not only in Mari's family but also in Tototlan. We would really like to see God plant a new church in Tototlan. I see Mari's family as the seed for such a church.

So, how did all this lead us to Central Washington for four months? I mentioned already that a team from Yakima had come down to Mexico for a Health Fair Outreach. Well, one of the team members was the Missions Pastor for West Side Church. He stayed with Mari and I while there. He asked us about our problem with the house, our financial situation, and our goals for that year. To make a long story short, when he left, he told us that he was going to see how West Side could help us. So one day he called and said that we should come up to Yakima. They would pay for everything; they would have a house for us; they would help me get a job in order for me to save some money for my Mexican visa; they would provide some ministry training and an opportunity for me to share about the work in Mexico and maybe pick up some supporters along the way.

After prayerfully considering the offer, I realized that God had answered my prayer. I had as a goal for this year to at least start the process that would lead me to a permanent residence visa in Mexico. It was clear that the Lord had prepared a time for my family to be in Yakima, Washington. So, here we are at the end of our trip. It has not been what I expected; it never is anyway. Nonetheless, it's been an awesome ride. Mari coped like I wouldn't have imagined. I was picturing that I would arrive everyday from work to a wife with swollen eyes from so much crying. I prepared for her to beg me to take them back to Mexico. I had inspirational speeches for those moments already brewing in my head before we even left Mexico. I didn't need any of them. She made better friends than I have and was sad to think about leaving them. We've received teaching in things like preaching, discipleship, music, and children's ministry—things we've learned and will take back with us to Mexico. It isn't what I thought it would be, but it's what God purposed it to be. We go back to Mexico with renewed strength and desire. We are excited to put into action the things we've learned.

There are still a few months left in this year, and during those months Daniela will turn four

*Continued on back cover*

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*Missionary News, continued from page 15*

years old; and the reality of school will have hit our family for the first time. We want to home-school, but we don't really know how that's done, especially in Mexico. During those months, we want to put into action a new approach to children's ministry in Maguey. We want to build closer relationships with the kids and also strategize on how we may reach their parents through them. We want to start something like an Awana in Maguey to reach older kids. We want to more intentionally get involved with the youth group in Atotonilco and also reach out to lost youth because we see that our area of influence is with the younger generation. The team God has given us in Maguey needs more leadership on my part, better teamwork, and a clearer vision. God has also connected us to a ministry that wants to set up a business in Maguey that could potentially provide financial support. We need to see God lead our steps in this. I believe

that God desires to see a church in Tototlan, and the Bible study there has potential to fulfill that. Mari's family needs to begin seeing themselves as a church and to function as such. These are just some of the things we need prayer support on. So as you pray for us, lift these things before the Lord.

*Thank you for standing with us.*  
*La Familia Fontanez* 🌍



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