



Family Missions Company

# SERVE

Summer  
2011

## Calendar

Mission  
Formation  
Our Lady of the  
Bayou  
Every Wed. @  
6:30pm

## Mission Trips

## Events

Summer School of  
Missionary  
Evangelism

Faith Camp  
July 11-15

World Youth Day



## Simplicity Speaks

 By: Odillio Alvarez

In his encyclical letter "Mission of the Redeemer," Blessed Pope John Paul II wrote, **"The missionary who, despite all his or her human limitations and defects, lives a simple life, taking Christ as the model, is a sign of God and of transcendent realities."** This has been a comforting thought for our family as we strive to live out our first mission assignment, more aware with each passing day of our own need for a Savior and of the reality that we can do nothing of value without Him. True simplicity, when lived in the name of Jesus, has the ability to change hearts and help convert lives.

Early on in our journey into missions, we were drawn to the idea of living a simple life, inspired by the reading of the late Father Thomas Dubay's, *Happy Are You Poor*: "If we wonder why, despite the millions of us who follow Christ, the world has not long ago been converted, we need not look far for one solution. We are not perceived as men on fire. We look too much like everyone else. We appear to be compromisers, people who say that they believe in everlasting life but actually live as though this life is the only one we have....This is where factual poverty comes in. Few things in human life demonstrate as rapidly as one's way of life what he is and what he really stands for. Talk is cheap; lived example is not."

Our first attempt at simplicity was about three years ago when we wanted to sell our seven bedroom home on two acres and move into a more common three bedroom home on a regular-sized lot. We were ecstatic to have a buyer for our home in a timely fashion and to find a nice new home within walking distance to a Catholic Church where we intended to attend Mass daily as a family. We were confused and disappointed to find out only two days before the closing date of the sale that the buyer for our home was denied his loan. We could not understand why something that had seemed so much in line with God's will would fall apart, after all we were planning to use the extra money we would save on our new mortgage to give more to the Church and to different charities, etc. It wasn't until we heard a particular Sunday sermon that we started to grasp what God was trying to tell us. The Gospel was about not being able to serve both God and money, and the priest used an example of a chameleon to explain what many Christians try to do. He said that like a chameleon whose eyes can each focus on two different objects at the same time, Christians try to focus on God and material things simultaneously. The problem is that God designed neither our physical eyes nor the eyes of our hearts to be able to accomplish this. Our eyes were made for Him alone. Upon hearing this, a wave of guilt set in as we thought about all of the material things that we had hoped to buy for our "simple" home. With the money from the sale, we planned to buy new furniture, a more modern television, home décor, etc. In His infinite mercy, God saved us from ourselves, and has since shown us that we had not even the slightest grip on the word "simplicity." (over)

Most Americans who come to Camiguin Island in the Philippines stay at one of its resort hotels and never have to encounter the reality of the much less luxurious lifestyles of its people. The average island

resident lives in a small, often one-room home constructed entirely of bare wood and bamboo. The ground beneath can be seen through the cracks of the floors, which have no other covering. With this basic construction, ants and mosquitoes crawl freely as though it were outdoors. Beds are usually thin mats put down on the hard floors. Other furniture consists of simple, hand-made wooden benches, or perhaps a few plastic chairs. Considered fortunate are those who have running water inside, and this without a water heater. Only a very wealthy few have washing machines. Absolutely no one owns a dryer. A complete stove/oven is unheard of except in the bakeries. More common are two-burner, gas tabletop stoves. Even these are used sparingly, as the cost of the gas to operate them is too expensive for some. They save the stove for rainy days and otherwise cook outside over a fire. Air-conditioning is completely non-existent except for window units in a few of the city office buildings. In all of their simplicity, these homes are well-cared for by their owners, who are up before 6 AM sweeping their steps and small yards of dust and leaves. We have been humbled, too, to witness the clothing of some of the women at Mass. It appears that they wear the best shirt and skirt they own, regardless of if they match at all.

Needless to say, we were not exactly prepared for all the challenges that come with so simple a life, and we have found ourselves grumbling on more than one occasion. However, when we remember in whose name we are here and consider all that He left for our sakes, we rejoice again, especially when we witness the fruit of our sacrifice. When the Filipino people learn that we are from America and that we are not tourists seeking to be pampered, they are surprised and even touched. One Sunday during Mass, Father Joe introduced our family as being like Abraham who left everything, even his very roots, to follow God. He explained that we had left our lives in America to help preach the Gospel and live in community with our fellow Catholics on Camiguin Island. Afterward we were approached by a woman who had been moved to tears by our story. She explained to us that she was living the opposite. She was originally from Camiguin but had moved to California some years ago in search of a "better" life for her family, to whom she sent whatever money she could to help pay for college educations, etc. She happened to be home for a visit during this time. She was touched by the fact that we would choose the simple life.



As Christians, we must live in the world but we are not to be of the world. Our joy is to be found in God alone, not in external circumstances or things, no matter how good they may appear. Blessed Pope John Paul II goes on to say in his encyclical, **"But everyone in the Church, striving to imitate the Divine Master, can and must bear this kind of witness (living a simple life); in many cases it is the only possible way of being a missionary."** We may not all be called to foreign missions, but by virtue of our baptisms, we are all called to bear witness to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Does your life prove to your family and neighbors that He is the King of your heart, that you have no other gods besides Him? Or do you "look too much like everyone else?" This present world is passing away. Live your life as if you truly believe it, and you may find yourself being followed to heaven by a crowd!

**"For we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it. If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that." 1 Timothy 6:8**

## Missions Is The Hardest Thing I Ever Loved....

By: Sidney E. Savoie III

There's a common misconception in our world today that Love is synonymous with good feelings and easy times. And while good feelings and easy times can sometimes be indicators of a season of God's grace in our lives, they are not the be all and end all of the Christian life. When we look in the Bible, from Adam to Moses to Jesus to the Early Church, we see lives of sacrifice. Whether God tests us as he did with Job, or whether we are persecuted for our beliefs as were Jesus and the early Christians, we know that the path to salvation is not an easy one. The first half of Isaiah 49:4 says, **"I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity."** I do not mention these things to discourage you. I mention them to encourage you. I don't want you to lose heart as soon as things get tough. I don't want you to think all is lost when tough times reappear.

As I sit here in our mission house in St. Lucia, reflecting on my first three and a half months as a foreign missionary, this is what comes to me. As a matter of fact, the title of this very article is a phrase that popped into my mind when reflecting on how to describe life as a missionary. What is so hard about being a missionary? The first thing that comes to mind is family and friends. As good as they are, and as much as they are a blessing in my life, God has called me to the sacrifice of being far, far away from them for the next 2-3 years of my life. Then there are all the small luxuries of life in America. I can't go down the road to Meche's donuts. There's no boiled crawfish readily (or ever) available. Sometimes we don't have hot water. It's never cold, which on the flipside, means it's always hot. On a more serious note, we face a nation that struggles mightily with promiscuity and a breakdown in the family unit. We face churches that are dwindling in numbers. Many of the youth are surrounded by poverty and affected by gang violence and other types of crime.

On a personal level, missions is hard because I actually have to look at myself for who I really am. In this sense, missions is kind of like a cross between a mirror and a microscope. God is stripping away the layers, helping me to get to know the true me, for better or for worse. In a nutshell, I've come to discover that I can be a grumpy recluse who is selfish and can't be bothered.

However, lest you think missions is too hard, I must also mention the amazing things about life as a missionary. The first thing is that God provides. The second half of Isaiah 49:4 says "yet surely my right is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God." I experienced this truth in bits and pieces over the years on the many mission trips and pilgrimages that I participated in. Never did I lack for funds or any other necessity. And now, as a full-time missionary I get to experience that all the time. Even if it's at the 11th hour, God ALWAYS supplies me with the money I need to travel or buy supplies. Many times His providence is not only sufficient but also abundant! Whether it's through my benefactors back home or the generous people of St. Lucia, I am never lacking anything I need. Never.

Another tremendous blessing of being in missions is seeing how God raises up servants to be our co-workers in the vineyard. With all the difficulties of getting adjusted to being a foreign missionary, living in a foreign country, and coming face to face with all the problems here, I was beginning to get discouraged. I just couldn't see how there could possibly be anyone who would carry the torch whenever our time here is done. However, God has slowly revealed that there are amazing servants here who are willing and ready to work right along side us. There's the lady who feeds the poor and fosters orphans. Our pastor and his driver give us rides since we don't have a car. Our friends in the community (who oftentimes are poor and in need) bring us food and cook for us. Young adults from the community have become regular visitors at our mission house and are beginning to help us plan bible studies and other ministries. Our Archbishop, Robert Rivas, will often take time to serve guests their meals at various diocesan events. If I had more space, I could give you many more examples.

One thing I never realized about missions was that my relationships with my family would actually improve. Kinda seems silly when you think about it. Lemme move thousands of miles away, and not see my family for months and months at a time. Yeah, that'll work. But it's so true. In the absence felt both by me and my family members, God is filling our hearts with a special grace. That grace is to be able to endure the sacrifices so that we can receive the blessings. Never before have I had such a good relationship with my parents.

The last thing I'd like to say is directed towards those out there who are unsure or discontent. Like some of you, I used to wake up every morning discontent. I would either think "Do I really have to go to class today?" or "I wish I didn't have to go to work." Even when school was good or work was not causing me stress, I always had that thought in the back of my mind that "there's gotta be more than this". Though you may think I'm crazy, I want to advise you to hold onto this, pray about it, meditate upon it, and think about it. Take this discontent, and instead of letting it make you bitter or hopeless, let it motivate you to seek out what God wants for your life. Allow God to use the tragedies in your life, the moments where you are shaken to your very core, to draw you closer to Him. God's has given me the grace to be able to do these things, and I do not regret it at all. Since my very first day of missionary training, and every day that I'm in the mission field, never have I awoken with dread or discontent in my heart. I know that I'm where God wants me to be, and that brings a joy and surety to my soul that is almost indescribable.

Brothers and sisters, please keep me in your prayers and be assured of mine.

**"The Lord called me from the womb and He said to me "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (taken from Isaiah 49:1-6)**

One exciting thing that is happening here at Family Missions Company is our development of a year round Youth Program. God has been putting all the pieces into place for many years now, and He was only waiting for us to say "yes" to Him. I have

always had a passion for ministry, growing up in a missionary family gave me an understanding of the desperate need that the world has for evangelization. At the age of fifteen I helped coordinate Faith Camp for the first time (a week-long Summer

camp for junior high aged young people), this was a profound experience for me. I felt like a square peg in a square hole, it was the perfect fit. Each Summer following I have always anxiously awaited Faith Camp and have since become the head coordinator; and because God is so good He has allowed Faith Camp to grow under my leadership.

For the past couple of years I have felt God calling me to expand the Faith Camp operation. So first we trained new Faith Camp Coordinators in a totally new program - the CIT program, Coordinators In Training. These are young people who have a deep passion for serving God, and more gifts than I could ever have hoped - God was so obviously moving in this decision to train new Coordinators. While Faith Camp has always been associated with Family Missions Company in the sense that those who have run it have been the sons and daughters of Frank and Genie Summers, we weren't officially tied to FMC in a meaningful capacity. So I knew a crucial step for Faith

# Number the Towers, Consider the Ramparts

**Ps. 48:13-15** By: Frank Summers

I want to recall some of the sources of inspiration which have formed and sustained my spiritual life and given direction to my journey with Jesus, from my encounter with the Lord at home alone in 1973, to this day. I was born and raised in a Catholic family, in the Catholic culture of Abbeville, in Acadiana (south Louisiana). I attended Catholic schools (Mt. Carmel, and Spring Hill College). Then I fell away from God and religion. By 1973 I had graduated from the university with degrees in law ( a law degree from Tulane, then studies in legal philosophy, international and comparative law at the University of London, King's College, and at Columbia in New York). Genie and I were married with one child, and I hadn't been to church in ten years. Our marriage was on the rocks and we were on the verge of a divorce. This personal crisis opened my life to God. I wasn't looking for Him. The night the Lord saved me, I was at home alone in agony and tears, my life was an empty mess; He came to me and offered me His love, and I cried out, "Jesus, save me. If you have a plan for my life I want it because mine isn't working." I phoned the priest in the middle of the night and went to confession. Msgr. Martin told me to read 1 John 1 & 2 for my penance - I read the whole epistle - Scripture is the Word of God!

From that day, I "devoured" the Word of God in Scripture - I can't live without my daily encounter with the Lord in personal prayer and Bible reading (*Lectio Divina*). Genie and I attended Mass the Sunday after my conversion (Msgr. Mouton was pastor), and we never miss Sunday Mass. I always encounter Jesus there: in the midst of His worshipping people, in the prayer and singing, in the Word read and preached, in the Eucharistic body and blood.

Genie and I have walked with Jesus together - we minister God's grace to one another. We joined the Charismatic prayer group (Abba Prayer Group) in our parish (St. Mary Magdalen Parish). There we learned to sing God's praises and to expect and testify to His work in our lives; we heard the testimonies of many others. We were exposed to laity serving the Lord, teaching the Word, and operating in the charismatic gifts - all of us were baptized in the Holy Spirit! We were brothers and sisters in community together, filled with joy and love. Genie and I visited the large Charismatic Covenant Communities and observed and were inspired and blessed by their lives in the Holy Spirit: we visited the Community of God's Delight in Dallas, the Word of God Community in Ann Arbor, the Alleluia Community in Augusta, and others.

Then in 1975 we were sent out from St. Therese Church (Fr. Calais) to serve as missionaries with the Marists in the Tonga Islands; from there we went to Pago Pago, Mexico, Colombia, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Micronesia.... During our first years in mission, we met Ralph Martin in Fiji, where we joined with him to pray for South Pacific priests and nuns to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In Pago Pago we lived and served with YWAM, in their charismatic, Spirit-led, seat of your pants evangelism. Back in the States and then into Latin America, we lived and worked with Fr. Rick Thomas of Our Lady's Youth Center/Lord's Ranch in El Paso/Juarez, with Msgr. Carlos Talavera in *Justicia y Alabanzas* in Mexico D.F., with the *El Camino Comunidad* in Cite, Colombia (and visited with *Minuto de Dios* in Bogota). Along the way we met and visited with the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and stayed a while at Prayer Town



Emmanuel near Amarillo, Texas. We were in Puebla at the time of the CELAM Puebla conference in 1979. Beau and I were in the crowd of millions at the *Basilica de la Virgen de Guadalupe* when Pope John II visited, and we received holy communion and my missionary cross was blessed by him. I followed his papacy and teachings religiously.

Our years in Latin America made it clear that one of the Church's greatest works is the work of building a Kingdom that is just, and that we are called to make a preferential option for the poor - as missionaries we have usually lived with the poor. My love for the poor was fed by reading The Catholic Worker paper and books by Dorothy Day.

In the Philippines we worked in the Charismatic Renewal and formed a Couples for Christ chapter. We fellowshiped with Sword of the Spirit communities in Manila and Cagayan de Oro. The brothers and sisters in our Couples for Christ community in Malaybalay later became a Sword of the Spirit community (*Ang Buhing Pulong*).

Of course, we've shared our lives and the cultures and faith of all the peoples we lived among and served in missions, and heard the preaching and teaching of their churches and communities, and participated in their religious practices. We attended their Masses, retreats, conferences, and gatherings.

Between missions we would return home to Abbeville: and with the Listi and Bernard families and Ms. Eula, we helped form a small covenant community - Open Door Community - and set up and served in the parish Christian Service Center. Then we helped form the parish Family Life Communities. And we fellowshiped with the Open House/Holy Ground Covenant Community near Lake Charles. For years our family joined with other families in Lafayette for charismatic prayer; we simply referred to ourselves as the "Saturday night prayer group." Two of our children attended Franciscan University at Steubenville, and we remain close to FUS - a good number of our missionaries have been alumni of FUS and the University regularly sends mission groups to work alongside our missionaries.

During all this time we have been invited to speak and share with innumerable faith communities; we conduct retreats; people seek our counsel. We have learned something from all of them. I can't list every source of inspiration and influence. I have probably forgotten some and may not have recognized others. I was influenced by every person I talked and lived with, especially

(Continued from page 4)

(Continued from page 5)

Genie and my own children and our missionaries and close friends everywhere (like the Donald and Cheryl Romero).

Today, we live at Big Woods Mission, in a rural area outside Abbeville. Genie and I are founders of **Family Missions Company** ([www.fmcmissions.com](http://www.fmcmissions.com)) and receive and train and send out and oversee Catholic lay missionaries from throughout the United States (and a few from foreign countries), who go out to serve around the world. We all evangelize and live among the poor, announcing the Good News, building up God's Kingdom, helping in every way we can. I have my office at Big Woods, and Genie and I are close to our seven children and 14 grandchildren. From Big Woods Mission we are invited to give talks in all sorts of settings - Genie and me and our children and our missionaries. We even give mission appeals at Sunday Masses, and Lenten missions in church parishes. Genie is looking for a publisher for her second book. We have just begun operating Our Lady of the Bayous Youth Center and Retreat House.

Speaking of books, all along the way I have been reading books that are recommended to me by faithful friends and acquaintances and the Holy Spirit. Some of the most influential writings have been the old NEW COVENANT magazine covering the Charismatic Renewal - the CATHOLIC WORKER paper - the Vatican II documents, especially "The Church", "Divine Revelation", and "The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" - the *Puebla Document* - Ralph Martin's CRISIS OF TRUTH - THE RATZINGER REPORT ( on false doctrines and practices in the Church) - the Encyclicals and writings of John Paul II, especially *Familiaris Consortio* (on the family), *Ut Unan Sunt* (on ecumenism), and *Redemptoris Missio* (on foreign missions) - *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* - and Rainero Cantalamessa's SOBER INTOXICATION OF THE SPIRIT.

I am writing this from our mission base in General Cepeda, Mexico. There are six full-time FMC missionaries living here, and we have brought 24 new ones here for several weeks of training. At General Cepeda, we receive short term mission groups from church parishes and universities and faith communities around the United States; they work alongside our missionaries.

The Lord has been so good to me. Thank you for your love and prayers! Please continue to pray for us and carry us in your hearts. Share the missionary journey with us!

## Congratulations!

*Kristen Istre &  
Jonathan Weiss*



Congratulations to another missionary couple! On All Saints Day this year Kristen ( Intake 2006 ) and Jonathan (Intake 2008) were engaged! They are planning to be married sometime this summer in Texas. Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage.

*Mr. & Mrs. Papuzynski*



Congratulations to two of our FMC missionaries! John-Paul Papuzynski (Intake 2008) and Sheila Agresta (Intake 2005) who entered into the Sacrament of Marriage on November 27, 2010.

The wedding was a very spirit-filled time where many missionaries gathered sharing in their joy.

*Bridget Kobring &  
Erik Martin*



Congratulations to Bridget and Erik. After spending a month in Ghana on mission they began their courtship and are now engaged. Bridget has recently moved to Covecrest, in Georgia to be closer to Erik during their engagement. Their wedding is set for April 30, 2010 in Clayton, Georgia. Please keep them in you prayers as they prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage.

*Marissa Grace Van Vickle*

Congratulations to the VanVickle's! Marisa Grace was born on \_\_\_\_\_ and was baptized at Holy Cross Catholic Church on \_\_\_\_\_.



*Therese Regina Brown*

Congratulations to the Brown Family on the birth of their newest little Baby Brownie! Therese was born on November 1, 2010 she was 8lbs 1 oz., and 20 inches long.

# You Are Called

By: Abi Eckstine

In so many places the call to missions is just a word. Missions. A far away place somewhere in China or India. But this view is misguided. Missions, whether it be to foreign countries or in your own parish, is a universal call.

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold I am with you always, to the close of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20*

This call, not just to the first apostles, but to all of us. In fact it is more than a call, it is a command. As Catholic Christians we have a duty to share the Good News with all. To give people of every race and color the hope of a better life, if not now, then in the next.

Now this might sound intimidating, and it is. On earth now there are 7 billion people, and only one-third of them have heard the Gospel. This should not scare us away from the task; but make us anxious to start. What did Jesus say at the end of his instructions? He said, “And behold I am with you, even to the close of the age.” Jesus said he will be with us, guiding us, sending his Holy Spirit to us, helping us with this call.

Yet not all are called to foreign missions, some people are called to give life and renew the message already heard in their parish and hometown. And some people are not able to go to another country. But this does not give them the excuse to do nothing and simply sit in the pews on Sunday.

Believe it or not all people are called to go deeper in their spiritual life. Jesus longs to know each of us personally! He wants to love us, and He wants our love in return. But how can we know this love and passion if we only visit Jesus on Sundays for an hour or so? Once we get to know our Savior more, we are filled with joy, and we want to share this joy with others. This happened to me, I grew up in a strong Catholic family, and still, I did not have a personal relationship with God.

So I drifted away, but when I came back I was so at peace and so happy that I wanted to share it with others.

But how can we get to this place of happiness? Its simple, just start with visiting Jesus. He loved us so much, that He makes himself so available it's hard not to find Him. Search out a church or chapel, and spend time with Him! Jesus goes to great lengths for you and me. If you already have a prayer time, then you are doing great. Now continue on this path, read the Bible every day, read the lives of the saints, grow deeper in your relationship with Jesus. And don't worry; God will call you to something.

If you are not called to be a foreign missionary, then you are called to do something at home. St. Therese is the perfect example and a great model for those who have ministries in their towns. She felt called, but because of her health she never left her convent. But she did something so vital to mission work: she prayed and she encouraged those on the field with her letters.

This job, the job of praying is so important! The work of evangelization is nothing without prayer. We must remember that although a missionary's plant and water, it is God who causes the work to grow.

So, start now, get your daily prayer time down. Once you have that, seek out the Lord's will. Start something, or get involved with ministries in your parish. If you want to start something, but aren't sure what, here are a few simple examples:

- Get involved with a your group, or start something for the youth in your parish.
- Get to know some missionaries and tell your parish about them, fundraise for their needs.
- Start a prayer group or a Bible study.

These are just a few of many things that you can do. So bring them to God and let him guide you. Maybe you have listened to this and have felt the call to missions. John Paul II in his encyclical Mission of the Redeemer, Chapter 6: “Without witnesses there can be no witness, just as without missionaries there can be no mission activity. Jesus chooses and sends people forth to be his witnesses and apostles....” This call is a large and holy task. And who better to go than you and me? You might be thinking, “well, I can't do this, I'm not capable!” The answer is, no, you are not capable. It is only with the help of Jesus Christ and His mercy and love that you will be capable. Bring this to prayer also, search out different groups, and remember, no matter what, **YOU ARE CALLED.**



Abi Eckstine is the 15 year-old daughter of Mark and Lora Eckstine. She is pictured with her family, second from the left on the top row.

# Important Lessons

By: Sarah Carroll

My time in General Cepeda has been a time of growth and learning. I've learned new things about my self and things that break my heart. Our first week here we had a seminar called "Life in the Spirit". During our seminar we learned more about the holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. On our last day of the seminar, we were prayed over for the holy Spirit to pour down on us and to give us the gifts of tongues, healing, prophesy, wisdom and other things. While I was prayed over, two people had visions. It's amazing that God can speak to someone in a vision to tell someone else something. Sorry if that sentence was slightly vague! While the praying went on, I could feel the presence of the Spirit in the room and emotions were definitely high. Just about everyone was crying. It was truly a moving and amazing experience.

We didn't really start going to the ranchos (small villages on the outskirts of General) or on home visits until the second week. For my first home visit, we visited a lady named Maria. She has a little more money and a nicer home than most of the people we visit, but she is very sick. When we got there and she was lying in a bed all covered up. She actually spends all her time in bed these days. When we got there, she had a bandage on her big toe, so during conversation Breanne (the missionary leading my group on home visits) asked her what happened to her toe. Maria's daughter had to answer for her because Maria didn't know what was wrong with her toe. Maria's daughter took the bandage off to show us. Maria has gangrene. It has caused her to lose her right leg and the flesh on her big toe. She will probably also lose her left leg.

To make a long story shorter, before we left we asked if there was anything that she would like us to pray for. She asked, "Can you pray for this world that we live in, for peace in the world?" Wow! Was I shocked at her prayer request. Here is this lady who is confined to her bed, probably in so much pain everyday, and instead of asking us to pray for healing from gangrene or healing from her suffering, she asked for us to pray for world peace. Breanne brought to mind when we left, that she asked us to pray for a world that has already forgotten that she exists; a world that doesn't care about her at all. This experience was definitely an important lesson. It reminded me that I need humility and that I also need to think others more important than myself. Life doesn't revolve around me, nor is it about me; it's about what the Lord can use me for to better His kingdom.

We visited several ranchos the second week, but one sticks out in my mind. This rancho was really far away. It took about forty-five minutes to get there. Odilio, Sidney, and I gave testimonies without really being prepared to share. Come holy Spirit!! After we gave testimonies one of the men that lives in the rancho stood up to share a testimony. He shared how his parents raised him to have great faith in the Lord. He also shared that the Lord takes care of them. When he was talking he said how some days they go without food, but the Lord always provides. This statement broke my heart. Here I am, an American that considers myself to be living in Gospel poverty, but I eat at least three meals a day. Through this man's testimony, I realized that having three meals a day isn't a necessity, but rather, a luxury. I also realized that in missions so many of the people I come in contact with are going to have physical needs like medication, money and food. I know that I am not always going to be able to provide for their physical needs, but I can always provide for their spiritual needs. If they know the Lord, they will have everything.

I know that life in missions is going to be the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. I also know that it is going to stretch and grow me more than anything else I could do. I am looking forward to my first year in missions and the wonderful ways the Lord is going to bless me through the people He leads me to.



Intake 2010 Ladies

## Join the Mission

The works of Family Mission Company are done by the inherent power of God's Word, the hand of God, and by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. We expect signs, wonders, and miracles, and we receive them everyday.

We also depend upon the prayers of many people who have caught the vision with us; and we use money that our benefactors give to this work: money that meets the needs of the poor; money that allows our missionaries to travel to and live at the ends of the earth; money that allows us to administer our affairs and to publish this newsletter.

**Join the mission with us! Please pray and consider contributing to the growing needs of Family Missions Company. We know that God is NEVER outdone in generosity.**

# We're Running A Marathon, Not A Sprint

By: Sidney E. Savoie, II

When I started hangin' around FMC last year and getting to know the missionaries, I had a sense that I was also called to be a missionary. One of the things they told me was that Intake was going to be a life-changing experience. I thought to myself "Ok, I know I'm not a saint. But, I am prepared to follow the call to be a missionary. How much can this experience really change me?" My pride was causing me to put up blinders. For those of you who don't know me well, I confess to you that my principal weakness is impatience. Sometimes it manifests itself as an inability to be available for the present moment and receive the blessings God has for me at that moment. At other times, it manifests itself as a lack of patience with others. I also struggle with waiting for God's timing instead of working on my own timeframe.

Last year when I started hearing the call to be a missionary, I had also just ended a relationship. I was faced with the hurt of a failed relationship. The last thing I wanted to endure was heartbreak and the slow process of healing. But I needed to be shaken up so I that I could learn how to turn to God in time of need. Unbeknownst to me, that failed relationship was the catalyst for the strongest conversion experience I'd ever had in my life. My prayer life and my faith grew in leaps and bounds because I finally realized that I needed to rely on God.

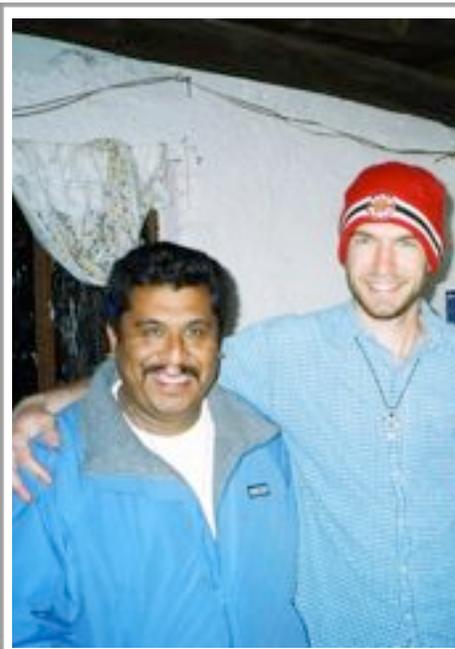
One of the ways God helped me to heal was to re-introduce me to FMC. In my years of involvement with youth ministry and college ministry, I crossed their path many times. And at this juncture in my life, I needed a Christian community that I could connect with. I started out by going to Mission Formation every Wednesday night. Then I began to attend the Monday night bible study. Before I realized it, I was at every FMC event I could possibly attend. Then in November of last year I was able to go on a short term mission trip to General Cepeda. There are simply too many blessings from that trip to write about. Suffice it to say, though, that this was when I got a firm sense of God calling me to be a foreign missionary.

The problem now was that it was only November and Intake 2010 did not start until the following September. How was I going to be able to wait that long? How could I possibly go back to the "same ole same ole"? A new sense of desperation set in. Why, after going through the healing process of a failed relationship, did I now have to experience another setback? Why do I have to keep waiting and waiting? Yet again God was using this opportunity to strengthen me in my faith.

Over the following 10 months I continued to grow in leaps and bounds. God showed me many areas where I could improve and He also poured many graces into my life. Slowly but surely, he was beginning to prepare me for missions. When Intake finally started, I was the most joyful I've ever been in my whole life. All the heartbreak, all the slow and sometimes painful growth, and all the waiting was validated. It was well worth the wait. And let me tell you my brothers and sisters that Intake has indeed changed my life. God has worked wonders in my life and blessed me in so many ways. As our time of missionary training draws to a close, I eagerly (and patiently) await all the amazing things I will witness as a foreign missionary.

I leave you with a Bible passage that has given me much hope, and I ask for your prayers.

*"Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be*



# My God Is Able

By: The Alvarez Family

*“If today you hear His voice, harden not your hearts.”*

Because three weeks of training takes place out of the U.S., one requirement for entering Intake for Long-Term Missionary Work with Family Missions Company is to have a valid passport. For a family of eight this can be very pricey. When we heard the Lord calling us to mission life, we had an idea of how everything should fall into place for us. We felt sure that if the call was real then there would be a certain order to the way things would happen. Having always lived on one income, a savings account was never a reality for us. We knew that in order to be able to afford the cost of eight passports along with the other expenses related to Intake we would have to first sell our house. When we put our home on the market we felt certain that it would sell immediately because the call on our lives was so clear. As the date for the start of Intake drew nearer and our house had not sold, confusion set in and we began to doubt. If we could not sell our house, how could we be missionaries? Without a steady income, we would not be able to keep up with our mortgage payments, and we definitely would not be able to afford any extra expenses.

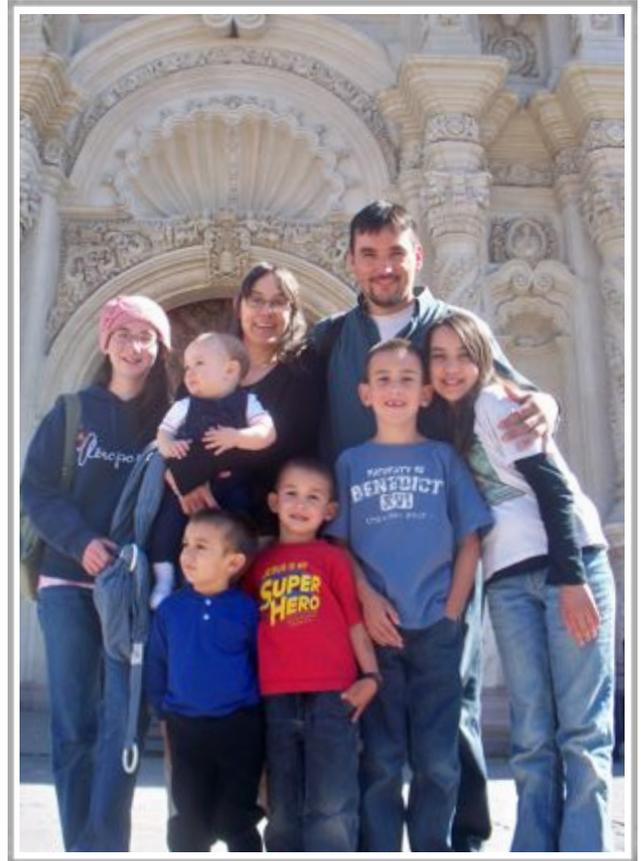
Then we unexpectedly came into a small sum of money from a free gift of shares in the stock at Odilio's place of work. We felt that God wanted us to use this money to start the process of applying for passports. The first step in this would be ordering copies of certified birth certificates for each member of the family. When we called to rush the order we were told that while we could place the order, there would be no way of knowing if or when it would actually be sent out, as the entire system was currently shut down - an even unprecedented in the history of the Kansas Bureau of Vital Statistics! We placed the order and left the outcome in God's hands...maybe this was just not His timing for us.

The date to pack and leave for Intake was upon us. Our house was still unsold, and we had yet to apply for passports as we were still waiting for the copies of our birth certificates. Our desire to enter FMC was stronger than ever, but was it God's will? We felt we needed wise counsel, which we sought from a trusted priest. When we confided to him our desires and our doubts, he assured us that God was calling us despite our circumstances. He made us see that it was we who had put the conditions (of selling the house and having the money) on our call and not God! This was a joyous relief for us! Now, would FMC accept us without our passports? Yes! They agreed that we could continue the process during Intake, as we would not be traveling to Mexico for two more months.

We moved to Big Woods and arranged for the birth certificates to be sent to our new Louisiana address. As the date for our trip to Mexico drew closer, our birth certificates finally arrived; but now we faced another dilemma. The application process for passports could take up to six weeks and we had only about three weeks left until the date of departure. Our only option seemed to be to expedite the process. This would take only two weeks but it would be almost twice as expensive! As we looked into the matter further, we found out that it was a possibility that our children - who are all under the age of 16 - may only need a birth certificate in order to enter Mexico if traveling by land, which was our intention. We called the Mexican border to confirm this. Now we would only have to expedite two adult passports. We felt a great peace. What a blessing for us!

No sooner had we arrived across the border at the Customs Office, however; when we were informed that our children could not be given visas because they did not have passports! We explained that we were assured before our trip that because they were under the age of 16 they only needed a certified birth certificate. Apparently we had been misinformed. They would not issue visas to the children. Once again we were left to wonder at God's plan... why would He bring us this far for us to be unable to participate in one of the most important parts of the missionary training - the hands-on experience of working with His people in another country, giving testimonies of His love and being strengthened for our missions by His Spirit in an upcoming, "Life in the Spirit" seminar? After relaying the news to the others in our group, including Mr. Frank, the FMC director, we were given two options: either we could turn around and head back to Big Woods alone, or we could continue the trip and run the risk of being caught without the children's visas, in which case we would be deported. Odilio felt that God was saying, "Keep going, don't stop!"

We continued the trip, praying to our King as we neared the final checkpoint. One of the "seasoned" missionaries who was riding in our car told us that vehicles are randomly stopped at this point and we may be asked for our visas. The two other vehicles in our caravan passed through before our - both with green lights. When it was our turn, the green lights changed to red and we were ordered to stop! As we pulled over to wait for an officer, our children in the backseat - as if by divine inspiration - began to sing a song they had recently learned from another of the new missionaries, "My God is able, He is able, I know my God is able. I know my God is able to carry me through." That the other carloads of missionaries before us passed without trouble and we were stopped was no coincidence to us. We felt that whatever happened would be God's answer to the question that had been looming over our family since we started



Intake two months before: Was He really calling us to be His missionaries of love and hope in foreign lands despite all the reasons that seemed to say He wasn't? We would soon know His answer. We waited calmly, submitting everything to His hands. The inspection, which was a mere opening of doors without any requests for documents, was a sign of God giving us His Green Light to "keep going" on the road to foreign evangelization! Against great odds, Our God is very able to carry us through!!!

### **In Loving Memory Of**

Mrs. Cleo deGraauw

Earl & Violet Ashley

Amanda Judice

David Long

Juliette Kaufman

Fr. Norbert Lickteig

Gerald Stroze

Mrs. Singsie Dubois

Mr. Raymond Perry

If you would like your loved ones to be written in our Memoriam Book, which is kept in the Chapel and remembered in our prayers and Masses, please contact us at 337.893.6111 or e-mail us at [office@fmcmissions.com](mailto:office@fmcmissions.com)

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### **FMC Needs**

Volunteers for multiple projects including maintenance, mail-outs, cooking, etc.

Small tractor for mowing Big Woods, or a volunteer with a tractor

Special funds for missionaries' student loans

Parishes that will invite the Ananias Project

Mission translators for short term trips

### **Go, You Are Sent**

by Genie Summers

### **The Ananias Project**

Missionary CD

# \$10

S/H will be added to each order

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Director

Genie Summers  
Vice President

Elizabeth Edwards  
Bookkeeper/Database

James Franke  
Short Term Missions

Sarah-Kate Rabalais  
Missionary Coordinator

Sarah & Kevin Granger  
Development Director

Hope David  
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John Paul Summers  
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