



Family Missions Company

# SERVE

Winter  
2010

## Calendar

Mission  
Formation  
Big Woods  
Every Wed. @  
6:30pm

## Mission Trips

Ecuador Trip  
Jan. 6-16

Short Term  
Mission Trip  
Reunion  
TBA

## Events

March for Life  
Jan. 21-25

Valentines Dance  
February 12

FMC Spring Gala  
May TBA

Run With A  
Mission  
June TBA

Faith Camp  
July 11-15

World Youth Day  
August 8-22

If you have any questions  
about events or trips,  
please contact our office.



## Unless You BECOME Like Children

By: Susanna de Almeida



We have been super-blessed this Intake to have with us 16 children from the age of six months to 15 years. FMC has always been unabashedly family-inclusive. During community prayer, as the children played quietly in the middle, and babies cried, and mamas nursed their babies under blankets, we were told "If you can't pray with children around, FMC is NOT the place for you!"

As a single, it was a blessing to see that serving God is not something you do best on your own. Some people think the best way to know God is to cut yourself off from people, and meditate completely alone in a desert. Although there certainly are times when you need to retreat and pray on your own, I think God teaches us so much about Himself through community - the people around us, and especially the kids. He used them to bless me and to teach me something about serving Him. They were not a hindrance to loving Him, but a help.

For one, I got to experience that affectionate unconditional love and acceptance of God through the many, many hugs I received. Every time I entered a room, I would be greeted with cries of "It's Susanna! Yay! Come sit by me!" Or a bunch of girls would jump on me and smother me with hugs. I knew I was loved.

I was inspired by their enthusiastic and joyful worship. They sang songs of praise with gusto, danced and clapped. Every now and again I would find a few little children together in the chapel, kneeling down before Jesus, eyes closed and hands lifted up. During community prayer times, they would all thank God: "Thank you Jesus for my green flip-flops," prayed little Vincent. I joined Bridget, 4, and Becky, 2, in the chapel at General Cepeda to pray and say the rosary, of which I was told the first deca-mystery was the Sign of the Cross, and the second was the Appearing of Mary to the little children. I obviously have so much to learn!

Another beautiful thing to see is the uncomplaining service that they give. After every meal, the older girls would sweep the floor, and not once did I hear them complain about it. They were always available to each other and to anyone who needed anything - a massage, an errand run, an audience, a dance partner, or a goodnight kiss.

They were always so eager to learn, to know and love Jesus better. I guess that's what Jesus was talking about when He said, **"Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."** (over)

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So God was the one who called these children to this Intake, and He is the one who is using them as His missionaries. They are not just an extra, but an integral part of the mission team.

Here's a chance for you to get to know them a little - I interviewed most of them so that you readers could get an idea of just how awesome the kids of Intake 2010 are:

### **What is a missionary? What do missionaries do?**

**Bridget, 4:** Love.

**Sammy, 5:** Missionaries tell people that God made you and He makes everybody. They tell everybody that they should go to Mass on Sunday.

**Rachel, 7:** They help the poor. They pray for people if they're sick. They give people food.

**Abram, 7:** Missionaries preach the word of God. They help people.

**Esther, 9 and a half:** They bear sufferings joyously. They smile at everyone they meet.

**Meredith, 10:** They try to have a prayer time every day. They try to love God more. If you love others, that's an example of how they should be. God is love, He loves us, so we should do the same and try to love God and others.

### **What do you like about being a missionary?**

**Annie, 5:** When we first came here (Mexico), I liked this place. I was happy and I am still happy.

**Esther, 9:** I like going into unknown places.

**Meredith, 10:** I like that since we've been here... well, before I didn't have a personal prayer time every day. When I was at church, when I heard the readings that tell you to go and preach the good news and stuff, and I always felt that I should do that. Now that I'm here I feel like I'm glad that I'm doing what God's telling us to do.

**Maddie, 12:** I like always turning to God for whatever we need. I like hearing the other missionaries talk about their past life and stuff like that. I look forward to going to a new place, and seeing how their Mass is like our Mass even though they're halfway around the world.

### **Did you learn anything this Intake?**

**Meredith:** I didn't know that the devil couldn't read your thoughts. I didn't know that Catholic families could be missionaries.

**Peter, 11:** I didn't usually pray an hour before, but now I try to.

**Mia, 12:** We now have to have a daily prayer time every day - us kids. I guess I've read more Scripture and know more of the Bible.

**Ellie, 13:** I can tell the difference between a life having a prayer time and one without a prayer time - I just feel really happy after I finish my prayer time. Like in the morning when I wake up, I start the day by making the sign of the cross and dedicating my day to God. Ms. Stacie said that she did that, and I wanted to follow her example. Also, people say all the time that God came down to save us, but I've only lately been thinking about that and what it really means and how we need a lot of missionaries.

### **How can you personally be a missionary?**

**Bridget:** By giving lots of stuff to the poor. We're gonna teach the poor about God. Lots of stuff about God.

**Annie:** I can help the people and love them, by giving them new clothes, not ripped old clothes. I can play with them and give them candy.

**Esther:** Doing what God said - feeding the poor, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison.

**Meredith:** Make friends with people in the place I go. If nobody likes them or is friends with them, I can be friends with them.

**Maddie:** By singing praise songs in their language at prayer meetings, even though I don't think I have a good voice. I could pray over people who need prayers so that people can see that even younger people have faith.

## **Life is Beautiful** By: Teresa Reardon

As I was walking to visit a family we serve, I was not expecting the Lord to bring me to the most beautiful house in General Cepeda. The moment I walked into the house, it felt like the most beautiful house I've ever seen. In my mind I knew it wasn't but in my heart it felt as if I hadn't seen anything more beautiful. After I left, I told my mission partner, Breanne, how I was moved by the beauty of the house and she agreed.

The house is a single room for a family of five. The inside is blue with simple decorations of Our Lady and Jesus. There is a place for the family to sit, eat, and cook, as well as one bunk bed and an out-house. They don't have running water or electricity. They live in extreme poverty and life is difficult for them. The father doesn't have steady work, while the mom, Perla, has a job cleaning that she goes to at 2 a.m. Before Perla got work she came to the mission house begging for help. I asked her how she was and what we could help with, and she said with tears in her eyes, "We just don't have enough money." That week we were able to give Perla two days of work.

Often times you encounter things in missions that are contrary to what the world says. Things that challenge that world's definitions and answers regarding wealth, happiness, family, love, and suffering. Our world says a beautiful house is large and lavishly decorated, but I have seen what the Lord thinks is beautiful. It is a house filled with love for Him and one another. Despite their suffering, Perla's family is always joyful and grateful for the blessings in their life.



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The other day we were visiting them and they were eating pecans. Perla offered us some, and when we left she gave us the whole bag. It is an example of true generosity to give something that you love and can't afford for the happiness and fulfillment of others. I am truly blessed by this family and all they are teaching me about what really makes life beautiful.

# When God Calls, You Better Pick Up the Phone

By: John Paul Summers



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 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 the world has for evangelization. At the age of fifteen I helped coordinate Faith Camp (a week-long Summer camp for junior high aged young people), for the first time. 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 now have 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 (Coordinators In Training) program. 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. So I knew a crucial step for Faith Camp was to have it operate under the umbrella of Family Missions Company. This enables us not only to be sure that we have Spirit inspired direction for the future, but also to expand our operation with the resources of Family Missions Company. For a long time Faith Camp was constrained by our limited capacity at Family Missions Company's Big Woods facility - while it was always tremendously blessed and powerful, the number of young people that we could reach had been limited to about 80. But the Holy Spirit continued to move in Faith Camp, and this past year we decided to move locations to a larger camp

facility nearby, this enabled us to reach almost 140 young people, plus staff! Faith Camp has nearly doubled in one year, more young people were reached, our leadership was completely blessed, and it was a total blessing to Family Missions Company as well! This was a clear sign to us that God was moving in powerful ways.

Since completing my Bachelors studies at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, I had felt a strong call to Youth ministry, and was working as a Youth Minister full time at St. Bernard Church in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana. God was working, confirming in me that He wanted my full attention, not just to be a summer project but to be fully committed to Him in all that I do. This past summer while working as a Youth Minister and also preparing for Faith Camp, the Lord opened the doors and put it on my heart to come and work with Family Missions Company full time. The tremendous success of Faith Camp, nearly doubling in size, was a strong affirmation for me that God was calling me to expand our outreach to Youth, while working under the direction of Family Missions Company. Having experienced many other youth ministries, and having been a youth minister in a parish, I knew that the ministry God allowed me to do in Faith Camp was radical, a special kind of ministry, and I was giddy at the thought of being able to work in that way year round.

Since starting my FMC position in September, the Lord has opened many doors for me, and for Family Missions Company. We are now working out of a facility that can host fifty or more people for a retreat, without having to interrupt operations at our main office at Big Woods. We had our first ever FMC Family Conference; it was a powerful reminder for the families that Christ desires to be at the center of their personal and family lives. We also have planned a March For Life trip (Washington D.C.), homeschooler's retreat, and a World Youth Day trip (Madrid) for our first year as a full time Youth Ministry program.

It is so clear to me, and all of us at Family Missions Company, that God is doing powerful things here state-side, especially with the Youth. What a tremendous blessing it is to be able to live a life where we follow the direction of the Holy Spirit and are privileged to build the Kingdom of God! This has been a test of Faith for me, as well as for my wife and new son. But the rewards of being in the service of the Lord are immeasurable. I hope you will pray for me, and my family, that with the support of your prayers Family Missions Company can reach out to the youth in a powerful and meaningful way, calling them to true holiness, and a radical life of faithfulness and service to Christ and His Church.

**Please consider making a generous contribution to our new "FMC Youth Ministry".**



# Number the Towers, Consider the Ramparts

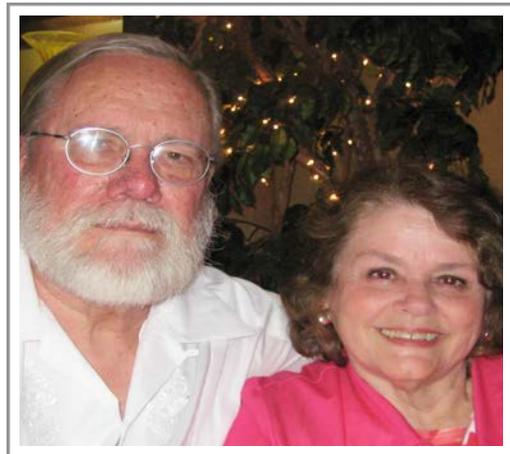
**Ps. 48:13-15** By: Frank Summers

Let me 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 (J.D.), then studies in legal philosophy, international and comparative law at the University of London, King's College (Lm.), 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. 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.

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.... On our way to Tonga, we met Ralph Martin in Fiji, and 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, straight forward 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* at the Secretariado Social of the Archdiocese of Mexico D.F.; with the *El Camino Comunidad* in Cite, Colombia (and visited *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 Paul II visited; 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 fellowshipped with Sword of the Spirit communities in Manila and Cagayan de Oro. The brothers and sisters in our Couples for Christ chapter in Malaybalay later became a Sword of the Spirit community (*Ang Buhing Pulong*).

Of course, we've shared the lives and cultures and faith of all the peoples we've 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. I made a Cursillo. We helped form the parish Family Life Communities. And we fellowshipped with the Open House/Holy Ground Covenant Community near Lake Charles. For years our family joined with other families in Lafayette for weekly 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

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influenced by every person I talked and lived with, especially Genie and my own children and our missionaries and close friends everywhere (like 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 who come from throughout the United States (and a few from foreign countries); we go out to serve around the world, evangelizing and living 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. And FMC has 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 recommended to me by faithful friends and acquaintances and by 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, tendencies, and practices in the Church) - the Encyclicals and writings of John Paul II, especially *Familiaris Consortio* (on the family), *Ut Unum Sint* (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.

## 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 and their families 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, Georgia, to be closer to Erik. Their wedding is set for April 30, 2010 in Clayton, Georgia. Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage.

### *Births & Baptisms*

Congratulations to the VanVickle, and Summers, and Brown families who all welcomed new additions since the last SERVE.

From left to right:  
Elliot Summers  
Marisa VanVickle  
Therese Brown



# 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, is 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.

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 lives. 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 loves us so much, and 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. 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 missionaries 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 youth 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 your ideas to God and let Him guide you. Maybe you have read 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 their 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, search out different groups; and remember, no matter what, **YOU ARE CALLED!**

# Important Lessons By: Sarah Carroll

My time in General Cepeda has been a time of growth and learning. I've learned new things about myself 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, prophecy, 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) 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 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 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 all 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 Our Mission- Be Generous

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, to 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 time frame.

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 by and bounds because I finally realized that I needed to rely on God.

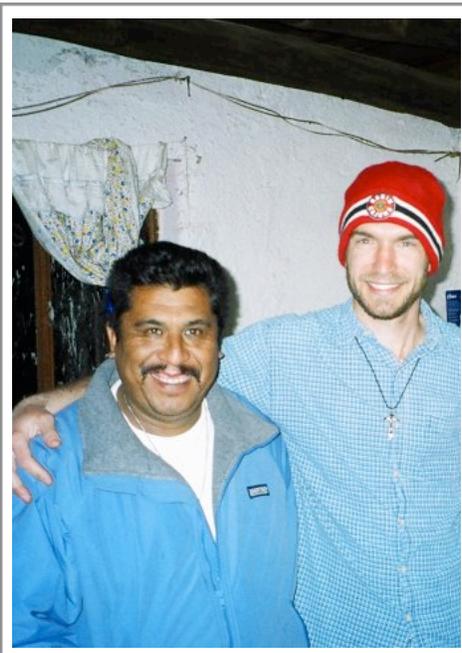
One of the ways God helped me to heal was to re-introduce me to FMC. In my years of involvement with youth ministry and college ministry, I crossed their path many times. And at this juncture in my life, I needed a Christian community that I could connect with. I started out by going to Mission Formation 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. The Lord 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. Now 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 patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near." James 5:7-8*



# My God Is Able

By: The Alvarez Family

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

Because three weeks of our missionary 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 event 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 came. 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 - might 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 certified birth certificates. 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 not to be able 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 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 might be asked for our visas. The two other vehicles in our caravan passed through before us - both with green lights. When it was our turn, the green light 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 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 of 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 had started



(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

Intake two months earlier: 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 another 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!!!

# Our Lady of the Bayous Retreat House

Take a look at some of the new things happening in FMC!

## Retreat Cost

**1 Day Of Reflection**  
**\$25 per person**  
includes 1 meal

**Weekend Retreat**  
(1 or 2 nights)  
**\$35 first night**  
**\$15 second night**  
**per person**

Includes 1 meal for first day  
And 3 meals for following days

## Contact Information

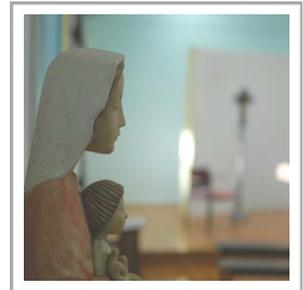
**John Paul Summers**  
Retreat Facility Manager

Phone: (337) 893-8855  
Email: johnpaul@fmcmissions.com

## Family Missions Company Retreat Center

Family Missions Company, a Catholic ministry that preaches the Gospel and serves the poor and Church throughout the world, now has a fully functional retreat house that can accommodate up to fifty people!

- Sleeping arrangements for up to fifty people.
- Inside and outside meeting areas.
- Full audio and visual set up.
- Chapel with the Blessed Sacrament.
- All food is included.
- Peaceful location with beautiful oaks.
- Lead your own retreat, or we can plan the retreat and arrange for speakers; we can also plan retreats and events in Spanish.
- Retreat leader and Priests stay and eat free.



“ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever.”  
Isaiah 40:8

# Make An Eternal Difference

Family Missions Company is beginning a new ministry of honoring loved ones. A gift to Family Missions Company in honor of your loved ones helps to bring the eternal legacy of hope and love found in the Word of God to the poor and forgotten around the world.

While flowers eventually fade, the lasting joy that our mission work creates by sharing God's Word - as well as food, clothing, medical care, and shelter for those in urgent need - truly makes a n eternal impact on countless lives.

Please consider helping us get the news out about this service and tell us if you or someone you know is interested in a memorial donation packet including donation envelopes, sample cards, and a display board. Please contact our office.

A card will be sent to the bereaved family, to acknowledge your donation.

In addition the deceased will be placed in our *In Memoriam Book* in our chapel, remembered in our daily prayers, our community Masses, and in our SERVE newsletters.

*FAMILY MISSIONS COMPANY HAS RECEIVED A DONATION IN MEMORY OF*

*Beverlee Gremillion*

*FROM*

*The Smith Family*

She will be added to our Memorial Book and remembered in our daily times of prayer.

## In Loving Memory Of

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)

## FMC Needs

Small SUV for Mexico

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 for musical performances

Additional Funds

Sound equipment for Our Lady of the

## Go, You Are Sent

by Genie Summers

## The Ananias Project

Missionary CD

# \$10

S/H will be added to each order

## Do You Need Speakers?

Conferences, Retreats, Seminars,  
Parish Missions

### Contact Us

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## FMC Staff

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Director

Genie Summers  
Vice President

Elizabeth Edwards  
Bookkeeper/Database

Hope David  
Executive Secretary

Sarah & Kevin Granger  
Development Director

James Franke  
Short Term Missions

Sarah-Kate Rabalais  
Missionary Coordinator

John Paul Summers  
Youth Ministry Coordinator

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