

Pastor's Brief

The Cross of Relationships

Volume III, Number 1

March 1990

Letter

Moving toward works from foundations of grace

Dear Saints:

Praise the name of Jesus.

This is the first Pastor's Brief you've received since last year. Through December we worked diligently on the booklet explaining Lexington Christian Fellowship. I hope you have had time to work through the booklet and have a better grasp of our vision.

Since the first of the year, we have had so much going on it would be impossible to recount it all. Rather than write full stories about each happening, page seven is devoted to short clips about things that have happened and what is coming up. Be sure to read it carefully.

In the area of teaching we have been continuing in Romans. Last year we spent a considerable amount of time discussing grace as it is explained in the first part of Romans. This year, we are moving ahead cautiously to understand the works that true grace will produce in our lives.

It is our understanding that people who comprehend grace will become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. This conforming is in the area of service, character, and specific ministry gifts. It is with great caution that we move ahead in understanding our various services (ministry) to the body. We do not want emphasis to move away from relationship or grace. However, it is in the context of functioning together that we can grow in our knowledge of His grace and our relationship one to another.

To help us better understand our own part in the vision, Joe Anfuso will be with us during the last weekend of April. Joe has worked with several local churches in helping their members to identify more clearly how they can serve. We are "prayparing" toward that weekend, believing that God will help us all give ourselves more fully to the vision He has given us.

Speaking of prayer...Several members have expressed a growing desire for prayer. The Thursday morning prayer time is continuing to be fruitful. If you can make it to the meeting you will be glad you did.

The body is doing well. People are growing. We are growing in love one toward another. We are growing in our relationship to Him. In this issue, Judy Greer shares some of the dynamics that were involved in her own struggle to be more vulnerable. This is one of many stories of how God is tearing down our walls and helping us to love one another. Be sure to read it. It will help you. (Thanks for sharing Judy.)

Standing with you in Christ,

Billy

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Pastor's Brief

This newsletter is produced by Billy Henderson and Robert Hartley for members and friends of LCF. It is intended to clarify the vision of this church, as well as encourage and instruct.

Missions: who, how, when and where

"Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the Gospel."

This bit of scripture has been used as much as any to give the wrong direction to sincere Christians.

Most believers have heard some appeal based on this verse known as the great commission. Because it is the Father's heart that all men would know Him, we respond emotionally to the call to "Make Him Known". Many young believers have been convinced that they have been "Called to the mission field".

For some, that call is real, and they should go. But what happens with so many is that they are responding to the call of God to make Him known to the uttermost parts of the world. Since the call is real they must respond. Unfortunately, Christians have been taught only one response. If you feel called, then become a traditional missionary.

Since the traditional model, complete with pit helmet and binoculars, is not God's only plan, many people miss the rational and right response to world missions. For some this means trying and failing. For others it means living under the condemnation of, "I was called and I didn't go."

At LCF we take seriously our call to do our part in reaching the world.

Here are some principles that may help free you from condemnation so that you can respond freely to the conviction of the Holy Spirit

Missions should originate from the local church.

The practice for many today is to decide to be a missionary, go to Bible school, get commissioned through a board, travel around raising money, choose a place, and go.

We believe that those going to establish a new work should be sent by a body of people who know them and can confirm their call. As a man grows up in a local body, his life can be known and prepared to withstand the trials of establishing a new work.

Also, if a man is sent from a local body, he becomes an extension of that body's ministry. They are committed to him and to his work.

A lot to one place is better than a little to a lot of places.

Many churches have a bulletin board of people they support. Sometimes a church of 100 will have 15 or 20 different pictures on the board. That can be O.K. They might truly be friends and committed to all of those works. At the same time, it could only mean that they want to be able to say that they support that many works.

For LCF, we have adopted the attitude that we want to get involved slowly with works in other countries on the basis of true friendship. We want to be joined together with

men of like heart who we can lay our life down for freely. We don't want to commit ourselves to so many people that we cannot walk together with them.

At this point we feel God has given us clear direction in committing ourselves together with Pedro Basilio in establishing the work in and around Ayutla. There seems to be great anointing on our involvement with the work there. Pedro is truly a friend with many of us, and we are convinced of his life.

We expect the growth of our missions outreach to coincide with the growth of the church. As our base grows, we will be able to better sustain more outreach.

Who should be a missionary is not a valid question.

For many the question is "Who should be a missionary?" The real question is, "How should missions be accomplished?" When we talk about bringing the Kingdom to other cultures, we should be thinking of establishing the church in those places to help establish the Kingdom. That makes the question, "How do we establish churches in foreign lands?"

That question is not simply answered. As a matter of fact, for any one region, it cannot be answered by anybody in Kentucky. The key to establishing a church in any given area is generally locked up in the culture itself and the men God has chosen to open that particular culture to the Gospel. What that means is that you cannot go to a place with any old pattern and force those people into it.

So as those who are called to actually go and be part of planting a new church seek God, we should be asking, "How should this come about?", "Who should be a part of the team that goes to establish the new work?", "Is there a local man there that can lead the work?", "If I am called to this mission but am not called to go, what is my part?"

The question is, "If we as a body are called to reach this area, what part should I play and who else should I labor with in this call?"

Some men have special callings to establish churches.

In any church planting situation, God has gifted certain men to make it happen. That tends to validate the question, "Who should be a missionary?" In this sense of the question, we are asking, "Who has God given the ability and insight to establish a new church?"

This question is answered more easily when everyone who feels called does not have to feel the only office is that of being the leader of the new work. Also, coming from the context of a local body gives help in discerning who really is called.

As we continue to press into Him, He will show us who, how, when, and where the next situation will be.

Relating to Mexico

During Pedro's time with us last month, he gave us a better understanding of the way he is wanting to build in his area. This report should help you understand and be able to pray more clearly for the work there.

Ayutla is the market city where Pedro lives. Within a days walk from there you can find the 15, or so, villages which are home to his particular tribe/family of Mixtecos. You will also be able to reach about the same number of Mexican villages in the same area.

Ayutla is only 3 hours from Acapulco by bus.

The first church, with about 30 believers is being established among the people in Tepango and San Martin/Yivi Ndaa. At the same time, Pedro is building relationship with the people of Ayutla and will hopefully begin a Spanish speaking church in town. From this base, we hope to see all of the villages which speak his dialect reached. At the same time, if doors open, Pedro can work with groups of Mexicans in other nearby villages.

Right now the greatest need is for Pedro to find the men and women with the heart and call to be strong servants and leaders in the establishing of the local churches. We need to especially pray for those who have not received the Lord yet, but are called to be a part of the Church.

Also, we need to pray for Pedro that he would have the wisdom to gather these people and help them begin to establish the Kingdom in their own lives.

It is exciting for us to have been in Ayutla while initial relations were being established with people in the town. It is also a great honor to be able to serve Pedro in his call to this place.

On this page you will find a map and a list of all the Mixteco villages Pedro hopes to reach. Next to the names of the villages, you will see the amount of time it takes to reach these villages (mostly by foot) and the number of people in each village.



Missions (continued from previous page)

Pressing into God is essential for moving ahead.

As in all things, missions must result from our daily life with God. It cannot be pursuing a vision without His Spirit. It cannot be pursuing an office without His presence. It cannot be succumbing to outside pressure without inside witness.

God is fully able to communicate His will and purpose in these matters to His people. We just need to listen.

Please keep the map and city listing as a prayer guide.

City	Distance from Ayutla or Tepango (hours walking)	Population (Approximately)
Ayutla		20,000
Tepuente	1:30	500
El Charco	3:00	500
Ocot Amarillo	3:50	400
Ahuexutla	2:30	500
Coapinola	5:00	600
Ocotlan	5:00 - 6:00	700
Tres Cruces	7:00	500
Concordia	8:00	700

City	Distance from Ayutla or Tepango (hours walking)	Population (Approximately)
Kyahuitepec	8:00	500
Platanar	3:30	500
Tierra Blanca	1:20	50
San Antonio	:50 (20 min. by truck and 30 min. walking)	500
Yivi Ndaa/San Martin	:30	40 - 50
Candelaria	2:00	500
Coxcatlan San Pedro	2:30	500
Avocachague	1:30 (by truck)	500

The Cross of relationships

by Judy Greer

When I became a Christian I applied all my strength to working my tail off for God (on my terms, of course). You see, I'm a strong person: I can carry my own weight; I don't need help; I can handle it.

But that is not what our loving Father wanted. He wanted me to die so that He could live and work through me. All of my "strength" had to go: It just got in the way of God's ultimate plan for my life. He wanted to replace it with His strength.

Sound easy? For me it was the hardest experience I have ever faced. You see, it meant I must give up control over my own life.

I, like many people, had problems with rejection. To protect myself I built up a strong cover to the extent of orchestrating my own rejection. Since I trusted no one, no one could truly know me. As a result no one could receive me for who I really was. In response, I would strengthen the very walls that separated me from others.

Becoming a Christian did not automatically change this pattern in my life. As Charles Solomon puts it in his book, *Handbook to Happiness*, I went from being a sinner to a "selfer". Yes I was "saved" but I was still encased within myself. God was still able

to use me, much to my utter amazement, but nowhere near the extent He could use a vessel that was truly and totally His.

So how do we go from being "selfers" to being Christ-like? In one word; death. We must embrace the cross and die to ourselves. For me this meant giving up control over my own life. On paper it doesn't seem like such a hard thing to do, but I could not do it. I was consumed by fear, immobilized by fear. I just couldn't do it.

Usually this process of embracing the cross involves suffering. Just as Christ had to embrace the fact that He was going to have to lay down His life and die on the cross (in great pain) we must too.

It is sometimes hard for us to relate to an actual cross. Few people in our time have ever actually died on a wooden cross. Our crosses are often unsuspected sources of pain. As a matter of fact, most people who finally realize what the cross in their life is only do so by a revelation from God Himself.

What God was asking me to do began to become clear

through my relationship with a few people. First on the list was my husband Gregg. After him my pastor, Billy Henderson would be listed. But the person most significant in helping me see what I needed to die to was Brenda Henderson, my pastor's wife and a dear sister.

Brenda and I had developed a fairly good friendship over the years. But about a year and a half ago Brenda confronted me with some of my selfish ways. Because my whole self worth was based on who I was (not on the fact I was a daughter of God), I couldn't receive the criticism. It blew the self-made Judy out of the water, along with our relationship.

Few people in the body realized it, but at one point we could not be in the same room, even during meetings, without there being a tenseness between

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us. Eye contact was avoided.

My immediate inward response was fear. Outwardly I threw up a screen of protection. Confusion set in and for the next 15 months I would struggle with what God was trying to reveal to me—"I needed to die to my independence based in fear."

My immediate inward response was fear. Outwardly I threw up a screen of protection.

(continued)

Confusion set in and for the next eighteen months I would struggle with what God was trying to reveal to me, that I needed to die to my independence based in fear.

I don't think anyone, including myself, knew what was

I needed to die to my independence based in fear

going on during those first few months. Having mastered the art of hiding, I had even hidden from myself. Fortunately, God has experience in bringing His children to the place of the cross.

In the following year, God stripped me of all my strengths. Everything I had put my self worth in, my talents and abilities, were gone. I had no desire for them. I am surprised that my family didn't starve because I had no desire to cook for a long time. My ability as a cook was one of the many things in which I placed my self worth.

God brought me to a place where I was totally raw. I didn't know who I was, what my talents and gifts were, just empty. Yet in the midst of that I still fought for that last shred of control; I could not let

go. I built a wall around myself, my fortress to keep myself from being hurt more. The sad thing about the walls we build around

ourselves is that they keep out the good; the relationships that God has called us to, and let in the bad; all the lies of Satan and his gang who were out to utterly destroy me.

During this time Gregg and Billy began to get involved to help me see what was going on. Of course when it came down to it, I was not willing to open up fully to my own husband, much less my pastor. I systematically shut off the possibilities of being touched by the people who would be best able to help.

I was immobilized. I didn't know how to help myself and in my pride and stubbornness I couldn't ask for help, so I just hoped people would notice and help me. This went on for months. I prolonged my suffering by building my walls higher and thicker instead of dying to myself, and embracing the cross.

But my time in Gethsemane was on it's way. The Bible says that Jesus sweat great drops of blood when He was in the gar-

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den. This perfect God-man suffered as He embraced in His Spirit what He was called to do for the sake of all mankind; die. In the

same way, as I began to realize that God was calling me to die to self so that I could serve others a great battle raged in me.

He embraced in His Spirit what He was called to do for all mankind: die.

The breaking point came when Brenda and I opened the situation up to some of the other women in the church. Until this point, I had kept enough of the blame on Brenda so that I did not have to break.

During that time together with other women who were committed to me, God gave me the grace to put away my pride. I was able to be seen for who and what I truly was. My walls were able to come down.

I really did not know what to do as my walls began to crumble. Those sisters ministered to me each step of the way as God

healed some very deep wounds, broke some long entrenched spiritual strong holds, and brought those walls crashing down.

Most importantly, these women helped me see that my life of self had been based in a fear of rejection. It became obvious

to me that I had built patterns into my life because I feared I was not outwardly attractive to others. I would even walk a mile out of my

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way to avoid passing complete strangers that I thought might reject me.

These women ministered the love of the Father to me and my walls began to melt. I began to release the bitterness I had devel-

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oped toward others who I had caused to reject me or from whom I had just felt a rejection that wasn't there.

This time of loving confrontation was the beginning of restoration for me. I knew from that point on I was going to have to make daily choices to die. To embrace humility and selflessness as the situations arose, and that it would be through this process that I would cease to be a "selfer" and become Christ-like, a vessel that God could use according to His purposes and by His methods. The old walls were down and the foundation was being laid to build the new walls of Jerusalem (the walls of peace that would let in only the good and keep out the bad). Just as it took Nehemiah and his gang 52 days I knew it would take time for God and I to build the walls, building with one hand and holding the sword in the other.

It was not even one half hour after the ministry took place that I was experiencing a severe attack on my thoughts by the enemy. All I could do is sing over and over in my mind the old songs of praise to keep from grasping the evil thoughts. But they were too

strong. What I failed to realize is that the enemy still had a foothold in my life. You see, through the year I had harbored terrible thoughts about Brenda. I had chosen to believe the lies of Satan and they had taken hold, and had

given the enemy a real handle on my life.

After a restless night of sleep Catherine John, who had been among the women who had met with me, called. She told me that there was one thing I had neglected to do in establishing a good foundation to build from. I had neglected to thank Brenda for persevering with me and ask her forgiveness for all that I had thought.

Here was my chance; I could continue in my old pattern of pride or I could take the opportunity to embrace humility, go to this sister and thank her, from my heart, for being used of God and having the courage to speak into my life, and ask her forgiveness. I took the opportunity. Immediately a huge

weight I had been carrying for fourteen months was gone. I felt light and free. It was and is wonderful.

I know that I am just beginning; the healing of my emotions will take time, but the wall is being built and God will reveal to me who I really am in Him and who I was created to be.

I am excited to see exactly who that will be. I also know that daily I will have opportunities to embrace the cross, to die to my own desires and whole heartedly take on the vision of our church; to form relationships that go deeper than any the world has ever known; relationships that will truly draw a hurting people to a loving God.

It is through this process of dying I will give up the control I have held on to and let God take control. And, it is through this dying that I will really begin to see the love God has for me. It truly is a miracle. ■

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What Happened?

So much has gone on in the last few weeks it would take a book to describe it all in detail. So, here are some highlights from the first of the year.

MEXICO TRIP

The Missions team returned from Mexico on January 7th. The following week, we showed the video from Ayutla and Tepango. The team had participated in the baptism of the first believers in the villages of Tepango and San Martin. They also made friends and contacts for starting the church in Ayutla. The foundation for Pedro's house has been laid and we have hired a man to continue the construction (Juan Vasquez is going to continue the work).

We need \$5,000 (That's three zeros, not two) to finish the project.

FRIENDS FROM COLOMBIA

Bob Stricker and Dan Barraco from Christian Fellowship of Colombia, were with us February 9-12.

In addition to sharing Saturday and Sunday nights, they spent time answering questions like, "Where do we go from here?" or "How do I know what my part is?"

The overall message they left with us was that we were moving along O.K. However, we should be prepared for stretching times to come. Also, we were encouraged to be willing to wait and let God do what He wants to do rather than to have our own agenda.

If you missed the Saturday or Sunday night meetings, tapes are available and suggested.

PEDRO AND SEBASTIAN

Pedro and Sebastian visited with us February 12-18. They stayed in the guest room at the office and visited with quite a few people while in town.

Pedro shared with the whole body Sunday the 18th. Not surprisingly, his word dealt with unity and oneness between our bodies. It was refreshing for many of us who did not make the Mexico trip to renew our friendship with Pedro.

CONCERT OF PRAYER

About a dozen members of LCF attended the Concert of Prayer, February 26. Concert of Prayer is a prayer meeting for churches to come together in the city.

The worship team from our church was asked to lead worship. It was a real opportunity for them to minister to some other churches.

Most of the folks who went sensed a true anointing on the time of prayer, and plan to attend again on March, 26.

NEW HOUSES

Joe and Lee have moved to the

north side of town. Bill and Catherine have just bought a new home and will be moving in the next month. Nathan and Kim have just bought land and are planning to build. Curt cleaned his room.

HOME SCHOOL SUPPORT GROUP

We did research for the last home group support group meeting in the area of college admissions. Without exception, every state university that was contacted spoke favorably of past experience with home schooled children and expressed an openness to recruiting more.

What's happening?

CHARLES SIMPSON - Sunday, March 18.

Charles Simpson will be with us during our Sunday Evening Service, March 18. To facilitate his schedule, we will be meeting at 6:00 rather than 5:00.

We are especially privileged to have brother Charles with us. Be sure to pray toward this time together.

JOE ANFUSO - April 27-29

Joe Anfuso, the director of Forward Edge, will be with us on these dates. Forward Edge is the Missions Group we are planning our short term mission to Nicaragua with.

Joe is a special brother and will be a pleasure for everyone to meet. While here, he will be conducting a seminar on identifying your special giftings that will help you serve the body best.

Joe is committed to the local church and is gifted in strengthening members to fulfill their part of the greater vision.

NICARAGUA HERE WE COME

Billy is helping to coordinate a trip to Nicaragua. The team will include people from around the country. We will be working with a local church under the

direction of Bob Trolese in Nicaragua. Much of the work will be with the orphanages run by the church.

Prayerfully consider being a part of this team. Contact the office for more information.

GETTIN' SOME EDGYECASHUN

Billy, Jimmy, and Rick will be attending a basic doctrines class in March. They will be traveling to Colombia to attend classes March 19-22.

They will have to leave after the service on Sunday, the 18th. Pray for their time of study and travel.

HELP FOR HOMOSEXUALS

We are co-sponsoring a meeting on campus directed at helping homosexuals as well as training Christians to minister to this special area.

Si Rogers will be speaking and has a powerful testimony.

The meeting will be April 19, at 8:00 p.m. in room 230 of the Student Center.

Pray for other local churches involved that we would all be able to integrate those who need help into the Kingdom.

March

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 5:00 pm Worship at Woodland	5	6 Children's Church 7:30	7	8 6:00 am prayer	9	10
11 5:00 pm Worship at Woodland	12	13 Billy's HF 7:00	14	15 6:00 am prayer Jimmy's HF 7:00	16 Gregg's HF 7:00	17
18 5:00 pm Worship at Woodland Charles Simpson, Special Speaker	19	20 Children's Church 7:30 Billy, Jimmy and Rick in Columbus	21	22 6:00 am prayer	23	24
25 5:00 pm Worship at Woodland	26 Concert of Prayer 7:00 Student Center	27 Billy's HF 7:00	28	29 6:00 am prayer Jimmy's HF 7:00	30 Gregg's HF 7:00	31

Pastor's Brief

Lexington Christian Fellowship

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