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DOING GOD'S WORK, GOD'S WAY, FOR GOD'S GLORY

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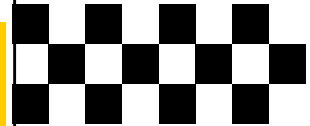
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Psalms 98:1-3 declares, "Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done MARVELOUS THINGS; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory. The Lord has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the NATIONS. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH have seen the salvation of our God."

My friend, if all people from all the nations are lost without a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ; and if the LAW is the instrument which God uses to deliver the 'bad news of the true knowledge of sin' to their souls; and if the message of the GOSPEL is alone the power of God unto the salvation of their souls; and if the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit; then that love should compel us to **"Go and make known the 'bad news of God's broken law' and the 'good news of God's blessed salvation' to the ends of the earth!** People all over this world are perishing, living their lives under the wrath of God. There is only One way of salvation for them; only one Name given under heaven by which they may be saved. God is calling for messengers to be involved in voluntary sacrifice to deliver God's Word to the hundreds of millions who have never heard a "rightly divided" Word of Truth! We, as followers of Jesus, are left in this world for the purpose of sharing the bad news of our terrible problem and the Good News of God's tremendous provision, through the message of the Cross. God the Son has left the glory and majesty of Heaven. He has lived a perfectly righteous life. He has laid down His life, as the substitutionary sacrifice for rebels who deserved His wrath. He has risen from the dead and been exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high! Glory to God in the highest! The Christmas story of the incarnate God and the glorious redemption that has been wrought by Immanuel should "sound forth" from our lives and our lips. This text of scripture proclaims that **our God has done marvelous things** in the Person and Work of His Son. The Prince of Peace has won the victory over sin, both the penalty and the power of it. He has utterly conquered death, which is the daughter of sin. He has won the battle over the devil and all of his foul spirits. All three of these powerful foes have been vanquished by the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords! Jesus Christ, **the right hand and holy arm** of God has accomplished this great victory, by bearing our sins in His body on the tree. He ALONE appeased the wrath of God and satisfied the justice of God, by presenting His sinless life as the substitute. He ALONE has fully paid the wages of sin on behalf of every 'repenting and believing sinner'. Amazing love; how can it be; that God, my God, should die for me! The Father declared His total acceptance of the work of His Son on the cross and has declared Jesus to be Lord and God, by raising Him from the dead! God has exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name. If we have Jesus Christ as our supreme pleasure and treasure, then surely his great love demands that we take the Gospel to every nation, every tongue and every people group, **in order that all may see the salvation of our God!**

As we come to the close of 2008, I am celebrating my 99th opportunity to take that glorious gospel outside of our nation. The Lord has opened many amazing doors for this "former rock and jazz drummer"! It has been a tremendous privilege to be His instrument, through which the Lord has made known His salvation in over 20 nations on 4 different continents! I am personally overwhelmed with gratitude, when I think of all the wonderful opportunities the Lord has granted me, to personally proclaim the salvation of our God!

DECEMBER 2008



Upcoming Schedule

- Jan 6-9—IEP
Gastonia, NC
- Jan 11-14—Open Door
Baptist, Tuscaloosa, AL
- Jan 25-28—New Life Baptist,
Longview, TX
- February 8-11—Magnolia
Springs, AL
- February 15-18—
Crossroads Baptist,
Rogersville, AL
- February 22-25—First
Baptist, Killen, AL
- March 1-4—Mt. Moriah,
Easley, SC

Bro. Garry Morrison and I, once again, experienced the supreme pleasure of teaching 310 church planters, home cell group leaders and lay leaders from the province (state) of Holguin, Cuba. This has blossomed into an annual conference that is held at the First Baptist Church, Holguin, a city of over 250,000 people. Only 13 of the 310 in attendance had previously studied "*Christ-Centered Evangelism*". So this was a golden opportunity to INFECT, not only those in attendance, but the 1,000's of people that they will teach and reach, with a "JESUS-FOCUSED GOSPEL". As always we began with 8 hours of doctrinal foundation, before arriving at the practical application of the 'Christ-centered' gospel message. We spent the first 4 sessions in 2 Corinthians 2:12-17. I challenged this group of spiritual leaders that if they were going to do God's work; God's way; for God's glory, they must learn to '*Focus on their position in Christ*'. Then we spent one session teaching the reality that "we are to be the '*fragrance of the person of Christ to God*', as the primary audience; and then to all of those that are brought within the sphere of the influence of our lives, as the secondary audience. One of the most powerful and fruitful sessions was the 3rd session, which concerned the spiritual reality that we are called to be '*faithful to the precepts of Christ*'. We are commanded to use God's means to carry out God's mission. We have no right to concoct our own humanistic methods and our own diluted messages. We have absolutely no right to attempt to do God's work with our own ways. We have no right to invent our own human techniques and tactics to try to accomplish what, in reality, can only be accomplished by a supernatural work of the Spirit of God! Even in the 'closed-doors' of communist Cuba, America's "man-centered messages" and "man-concocted gimmicks" have slithered into the church, in past years. Some of the particular leaders in attendance had adopted an evangelistic message from an American ministry that centered on HEAVEN, instead of a gospel message that focused on JESUS! As we took the congregation through the gospel encounters, using the Book of Acts and revealed that those encounters in the 1st century church never mentioned heaven, but rather they always focused on the Person; the work; and the terms of Jesus- a "*holy hush*" fell among the leaders. By the gracious working of the Holy Spirit, they came to realize that some of them had unwittingly become guilty of witnessing about a PLACE, instead of obeying Jesus' command to witness unto a PERSON! There was deep and thorough conviction and contrition among the attendees. As we shared the biblical focus of a 'Christ-centered message', we sensed that the Holy Spirit was opening the eyes of His people to return to a JESUS-FOCUSED gospel message. Friends, it was absolutely awesome to see the Holy Spirit expose all human methods and messages that had been invented by men; and bring these leaders back to a scriptural focus of God's methods and God's message. These leaders was already living a Jesus-focused life; they were already involved in passionate and persistent evangelistic intercession; they were already manifesting a willingness to be involved in voluntary sacrifice and even suffering, for the salvation of souls and the glory of God. This entire group of leaders has been thoroughly and continually involved in 3 of those 4 means. But some of them had drifted away from a "Jesus-focused" message and had adopted some "man-centered" gospel messages. But our great and glorious God brought a sense of reformation revival into that conference, as we walked through the teachings of this workbook! Glory to His Name!

FAITHFUL TO THE PRECEPTS OF CHRIST

A Few Testimonies

Juachin and Celza Alvarez, who are church planters testified, "*We thank God for this unique blessing that He has given us, through this particular teaching on 'Christ-centered Evangelism'. Bro. Ed, I first want to thank God for your wife Dianne, who made you the target of her evangelistic intercession for the salvation of your soul. She never imagined that the response of God to her request would not only bless you with salvation, but would bless us immensely in Cuba, over these last 12 years. She never realized that God was going to enrich our spiritual lives and open our spiritual eyes, concerning "Christ-centered Evangelism". This week has been a specific answer to prayer for me. In the past my evangelism has been focused on the "felt-needs" of sinners. I would tell them that if you will receive Jesus, he will give you Peace; Jesus will give you Love; Jesus will Provide for you; Jesus will give you HEAVEN. I would see people make "professions of faith", but when they began to find troubles, tests, tribulations, disappointments and persecutions, they would be offended and then fall away. I have realized that I have been presenting the Word of Truth incorrectly. I had been failing to present the "bad news of their terrible problem" by presenting the Law of God. But you have taught us that it is "by the Law that the knowledge of sin comes."! You taught us that we must present the law, in order that a person might be convicted by the law, convicted by the law, so that a person might see the guilt of their sin against God! They must see themselves as a living offense to God; and they must experience conviction and contrition. Then they will hunger and thirst for the Good News, resulting in an authentic conversion. We have learned that we must be faithful to use God's means to carry out God's mission, and then leave the results for God to accomplish in God's timing.*"

Another brother and sister testified, *"We must repent for taking strategies from men, before passing them before the filter of the Word of God! It causes me great pain, when I think about the people that I have led into a false religious experience; but they have now fallen away. They are walking around this province, thinking that they are saved, when they are in a worst condition than before. Oh God, have mercy on us for our errors. I give thanks because God has used his servants to bring us His Word, that corrects us and instructs us in His paths of righteousness. The days of Martin Luther came to my mind, as you mentioned the false method of giving human assurance by presenting a 'spiritual birth certificate'. He had to fight the Roman catholic plan of salvation, that gave paper indulgences and absurd penances as their false methods of salvation. Just like Luther, you have called us to be captive to the Word of God; and to return to do God's work, according to God's Word. We thank God for your lives and the impact that you have made on our lives, for the glory of God. Our Lord has given us the true and correct weapons of the Word of Truth."*

Once again, I was also able to bring the provision for an entire year of support for 13 church planters in the Holguin province. Faith Baptist Church provided the funds for \$20 a month of support. Additionally, through your generous gifts, this ministry was able to give \$10 a month support for each of the church planters. What a tremendous privilege it is to be God's channel of blessing to support these men. Also, we provided the transportation, meals, and lodging for the entire conference. We give glory to Jehovah Jireh, who is our provider! A gift of \$900 was given for the completion of the church building at 3rd Baptist Holguin. We were also able to print 2,000 of the "Christ-centered Evangelism" gospel tracts, for use by the leaders who attended the conference. We are so thankful that the Lord allowed us, once again, to be a channel of blessing to the born again believers who live in these very difficult, oppressive and destitute conditions. Brothers and sisters, you are a major part in what God has accomplished in these 23 foreign mission outreaches to the eastern half of communist Cuba. There are so many other stories of "one-on-one" witnessing opportunities to lost people and "one on one" ministry to believers, that it would literally take a book to complete them all. We have already received invitations to return to the seminary for a conference next June; and return to Holguin next December. The Lord is doing marvelous things in Cuba. The Lord Jesus is gaining victory after victory in the lives of Cuban souls! In addition to the numerous things that were taking place, 13 medical students from Bolivia attended every session. They were so encouraged and excited about the training. Upon the conclusion, you guessed it, they asked, "Would you consider traveling to Bolivia to teach these truths?" As always, I responded, "I will certainly pray".

RUSSIA—PASTOR'S CONFERENCE

I entitled the workbook that I recently taught to pastors from all over the northern half of the Russian Baptist Union, ***"The Key to Supreme Happiness and Spiritual Prosperity!"*** When you walk through the streets or take the subways in the larger cities, like Moscow and Saint Petersburg, you cannot help but notice the sadness and emptiness in the eyes of the Russian people. You can travel the entire subway system and NEVER see a smile on their faces. They seem as if they are just going through the motions of existence, with no hope, no joy, no peace and no happiness! When communism fell, paganism swept in like a whirlwind. Alcoholism, drug addiction and prostitution are epidemic. It seems that the society has attempted to fill the gaping void, which was left through decades of atheism, with materialism and paganism. But they have not found the happiness and prosperity; they have found only more unhappiness, emptiness and vanity! The gnawing void in their soul seems to be much more evident to the human eye. Yet, the invitation to a "saving relationship" with the Lord Jesus Christ is an invitation to come to know 'supreme happiness and spiritual prosperity'! The gospel invitation is an invitation to light, life, and liberty to those who are living in the spiritual darkness, death, and bondage of sin! So it was with great gratitude and joy, that I had the privilege of teaching these foundational keys to 'supreme happiness and spiritual prosperity' to 70 pastors from all over the northern half of the Russian Baptist Union. There was great liberty to preach, and a sweet and pliable attitude among the pastors, from the very first session. About 20 of the pastors were new faces, which did not attend last year. Not only was the Lord doing a mighty work in our lives, through the explanation and application of the Beatitudes; the Lord was also giving them a hunger and thirst for expository preaching. In the past years under the oppression of communism, Baptist pastors had no training. They had a passion to lead their flocks, through the example of their lives, but they had no experience in how to 'feed their flocks' through the exposition of the Word. They had a desire and determination to be a faithful servant of the Living Word, but they did not know how to be a faithful steward of the written Word. Continued on page 4

The only thing they knew to do, was to find a Bible topic to speak about and then string together a few verses from the Bible on that particular topic. It was apparent that the Lord was using this time to demonstrate the supreme value of 'verse by verse' exposition of the Word of God. Also, our hour by hour journey through the Beatitudes was challenging this group of shepherds concerning the fact that their most important task was their private preparation and public proclamation of the Word of God. God is calling each of these pastors to be: 1. Detectives—by searching through the passage before them. 2. Explorers—by digging for hidden treasures and precious jewels from the passage to share with their flocks.

We are so thankful for Travis and Sue Barfield, who are full-time missionaries to Russia. They were instrumental in the organization of the conference and the completion of the workbook in the Russian language.

A pastor from the Northeast Region testified, "We have known the Beatitudes in a superficial way, but they have been revealed so mightily to us this week, that the entirety of our minds and hearts have been embraced by these truths.. This conference has caused serious thinking in our hearts. God has revealed to all of us the "high calling" that we have to live out these truths; and He has helped us to examine ourselves, to see if we are in full accordance with this high calling. These Beatitudes have been displayed before us in such beauty, that I have never seen before. All of the pastors are excited and encouraged. I am also very thankful, that since our first conference last year, God has been moving in the lives of the pastors. In our pastors' meetings the conversation has been more concentrated on the Word of God, instead of other things. We will return to our flocks to share these glorious truths that we have experienced and embraced.

Alexsej Vasiljevich, the director of pastoral ministries for the entire Russian Baptist Union testified, "We have already instituted "Christ-centered evangelism" with many of our pastors, after your last conference in St. Petersburg. We have found that since your first conference with us, the pastors have a far greater desire to talk about the Word of God and the things of God. We have had many Americans come to Russia since the fall of communism; but the vast majority of them have not truly preached the Word of God, like we have experienced this week. This is exactly what our pastors need. God has worked in a tremendously powerful and practical manner, through the exposition of these fundamental and essential truths. Our pastors are saying that they are amazed, excited and profoundly rejoicing in what God has accomplished in us and what God is going to accomplish through us. Please, continue to return Brother Ed. You are teaching us how to think systematically, doctrinally and devotionally, at the same time! The Lord is demonstrating how "bible exposition" is to take place, both in the pastor's study and through the proclamation from the pulpit of a faithful preacher of God's Word. We have had Americans in the Moscow and the Northwest Region, but we have never been impacted so powerfully and personally! Some professors have come and attempted to speak over our heads. Others have come with a diluted message of the Word of God, but these teachings have been both doctrinal correct and extremely practical and challenging."

Pastor Valery, my interpreter – (heavily involved in the Good Samaritan Ministry, which is a Christian Bible based alcohol and drug rehabilitation Center in Vyborg, Russia) – writes, "I have translated for many pastors and preachers from America, but I have never experienced such a powerful and practical exposition of the Word of God. When I think about how God has condescended to reveal Himself to us through these teachings, it overwhelms my soul. I think it was a great blessing for key leaders of the Baptist Union in the North-West district of Russia to be at these teaching sessions. I know that these teachings encouraged and stimulated our desire to know the Bible better; and to be more obedient to God and to His truth. I was reminded that compromise in doctrine or in holy living is always a disaster. There have been so many new things that I've learned about the Beatitudes. I have never had such an in-depth study of them, although I have led Bible studies on this subject, many times in the past. Thank you for your love and encouragement. I will be praying for you while you minister in Cuba."

One pastor and his wife from the Ukraine traveled 30 hours to the conference and 30 hours back home, all by train. Andre and Ola were so hungry for the truths that were being taught. They were so very receptive and excited about the truths of God's Word. They told Valery that they have a great desire for me to travel to the Ukraine and teach a Bible conference at a Christian Bible Institute. They are seeking to organize a conference exactly like the one in St. Petersburg. This may well be God opening yet another door for me; so we are going to seek God's face in prayer and see if the Lord will give us the peace to go to the Ukraine. They are preparing and praying about taking steps toward that possibility.

THANK YOU

We like to include some testimonies, in the newsletter, to give you an idea of just what a great blessing you are to so many . The Lord has used your prayers and financial support numerous times to answer specific prayers and needs that arise from these mission opportunities. We are always in awe of your love, your prayers and generosity, coming alongside to partner with us in all that we do. What a blessing it is to know that the Lord has placed people like you in our lives, that love Him and have a desire to take His Good News not only to places in the United States, (which is a mission field in itself), but to the uttermost parts of the world. What a joy to be in the family of God and be on mission with Him.

We pray that this coming new year will be one that is filled with supreme happiness and spiritual prosperity in your life. We are living in days of turmoil. We see wars and hear rumors of war. Economic chaos is permeating the world markets, while national leaders are going in and out of office. Decadence pervades our nation's morals, while the majority of our churches are asleep at the wheel. Yet, in the midst of it all, we can be encouraged. Our God is on the throne. No one will topple His Kingdom. His economy is not in jeopardy. Take heart, dear friend; and let us be found awake, serving the Lord. OUR GOD REIGNS!

Ed & Dianne Lacy