



Ferguson Report



Vol. 5 No. 4

"Go ye unto all the world"

April 2008

Primed for Summer

All is well at the Ferguson's home with all the kids back home for the summer. Of course Sarah's summer with us will be short since she's getting married on the 19th of July. It looks like my schedule will remain busy throughout the summer with extension short courses to teach and presentations to give. Seth and Nathan will be working together in the fields "scouting" cotton and beans for local farmers. Nathan still has a couple more weeks before he's out of school for the summer. Sarah has just been hired by a caterer in Jackson. Jeremy, her fiancé got a job helping take care of the grounds at Freed-Hardeman University while taking a break from classes. And Mary continues to work for a chiropractor in Jackson.

In the last report I had just returned from Ukraine. In a little more than a week later I was up and out again on my way to Panama to teach homiletics in the Bible School of the Americas. Denton Landon was already there teaching in the graduate program. We had a great class of 23 bright students all of whom were eager to learn. Denton and I shared cooking and dishwashing duties. We didn't even make each other sick with our cooking. Amazing! Although Conrad Pender my translator thought my super-duper-spicy-hot chicken & rice casserole was a bit hot since all we had were cayenne and black pepper and a packet of chili mix for seasoning!

After returning from Panama the North Jackson congregation hosted their spring gospel meeting with James Jones. We enjoyed and profited from every one of his lessons. I thought he did an exceptional job in his lesson on "The Heart of Judas" and "Being Careful to Keep Our Love from Growing Cold." And of course, we always enjoy the timely lessons from both of our preachers, David Powell and Brian Giselbach.

The following week I conducted a gospel meeting at the Bells congregation from Sunday to Thursday. The elders asked me to speak on the subjects of "Is it our Christian Duty to Vote?" "Giving," and "Have We Lost our First Love."

Several weeks ago I began a "trial run" of writing a daily devotional thought (Mon – Fri). Some of you who are on that email list probably recognized some of the above topics in some of the articles. One of the reasons I started writing these short lessons was

to attempt to give back to so many of you who have been so gracious to my family and our work.

The real highlight for me this year will be taking place at the Chimala Bible College with our first graduating class. We have ten students graduating with the Bachelor's of Biblical Studies degree from the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver. These men have worked very hard not only in appreciation to those who have sacrificed to support them during their time of studies, but also in their desire to serve God and their fellowman in carrying the gospel throughout eastern Africa. More will be said about the graduation in next month's newsletter.

Howell

Do Not Blame God If You Have Nothing To Give

[Editors note: Occasionally, I run across an article that "jumps out" at me because it says something so obviously true but is so "against the grain" of current thinking. With the ever-increasing gasoline prices, I can't help but wonder if God is trying to remind us that He will not continue to bless us forever if His church collectively continues to fail to recognize our fiduciary responsibilities in relationship to the furtherance of the gospel by means of financial liberty and blessings unprecedented in any period or in any nation in the history of the Lord's church. --Howell]

Do you limit what you do for the Lord by what you have and can spare today, or do you give and do a greatly expanding work by projecting what you could do even if you had to borrow all or a part of it?

Most people borrow to buy television sets, or furniture, or cars, or appliances, and almost all of us borrow from mortgage companies to buy our homes. Very few ever borrow to have money to give.

So long as elders and individuals give only what they have on hand, that can be given without interfering with our present lifestyle, we will continue doing almost nothing. Many elders borrow to build and maintain property. Individuals also do that. Not many of us will borrow to give.

When Lewis Foster was living, he went with me to lending institutions many times to borrow up to \$50,000.00 to send to help a Christian school in need. Lewis has gone to his reward and we do so often thank

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God for his faith and his good works. He served so well as president of our Foundation for many years.

Most of us have objectives or desires to do many things—to buy another quarter section of land, or to give our children a college education, or re-carpet our home. All of these, plus many others, might be good within themselves. Most of our objectives, like these, are good unless they keep us from developing objectives for the Lord.

I talked to a brother in the church who had asked me how he could help us in Spanish Literature. I told him we needed \$18,000.00 to buy twenty tons of paper. He responded, “I will buy you 20 tons of paper.” And added he might be able to do it again before the end of the year. He explained – “we try to do more every year and on faith commit ourselves ahead several months at a time.” He is a fellow who, for years, has given very generously and obviously has a great relationship with heaven. His giving ability increases every year. People who are past fifty and have nothing to give, have failed in their giving to show faith in God. Luke 6:38 tells us that if we give, we will receive gifts back far in excess of what we have given.

When we get old, we are spiritually the sum total of our thoughts through the years of our lives. Financially, we are the sum total of the way we have used the blessings of God on our lives. If we have nothing to give when we are elderly, it is because we

misused the blessings of life God has showered on lives through the years, by consuming them all on ourselves.

Why should God prosper us, if we demonstrate to Him that we are not trustworthy? I believe our ability to give, never exceeds our demonstrated practice. If we have shown a generous unselfish nature, we will always be able to find a way to give more each year than ever before. Our giving ability grows year by year, if we are faithful givers. This is a sound biblical concept.

If we want to be able to support worthy projects liberally, make that aspect of our Christian lives our number one project. Soon we will find ourselves giving up our appetite for extravagant personal things. We will thrill at seeing God work with us and through us and really enriching our lives. We will enjoy actually searching for more things to do for others. There will always be a way to respond to urgent appeals.

There are very few congregations accomplishing as much in reaching souls for Christ as the brother who is going to help us buy paper to print tracts. He drives an inexpensive economical car and supplies all of his personal needs in an ultra-conservative way, but I really believe he gives more than any hundred men I know and much more than many congregations I know. I am grateful for his wonderful example.

--Dryden Sinclair