



an  
ecumenical  
charismatic  
missionary  
Christian  
Community

March 2008

# *The Word of God* **NEWSLETTER**

What happens when we sustain prayer day and night?

## **A Dwelling Place for His Presence**

*For 3 days in February the meeting room was converted into a 'tent of meeting', a place set aside for our shift in the County-wide 40 Days of Prayer. Day and night brothers and sisters filled the room with worship and lifted up Washtenaw County to the Lord. The walls filled up with graffiti, the overflow of hearts soaking in the Spirit. It was wonderful! Here are some reflections from participants.—Editor*

### **Pressing through the opposition**

I'm glad I participated again this year. I am still amazed at how the Lord just lays His hand on me and leads me in prayer as soon as I enter the prayer room. There's a real anointing on the whole endeavor, and the time flies.

I definitely experience opposition beforehand, and I think the Lord allows it to test me. The hardest thing is just 'not feeling like it.' I think that's why the Spirit's presence and faithfulness impresses me so much. As soon as I start to pray it's like getting out from under a blanket into fresh air.

Martha Balmer

### **What is God hearing?**

It was a pleasure and a privilege to take part in the prayer vigil. My prayer time

last year was so good that I'd been looking forward to this year's, and I wasn't disappointed at all! I certainly hope this will be an annual event.

Everything went very well. Reading the prayer petitions in the black bowl was very moving. It gave me more of a

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### **INSIDE**

**40 Days of Prayer  
Vigil**

**Report from Rome**

**That's my King**

**Hosanna**

**And More ...**



*'...bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints. Rev 5:8*

*Churches and ministries from across Washtenaw County joined together for the second annual 40 Days of Prayer from Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday, each taking a 3 day shift. The focal point of the prayer room for The Word of God was the large bowl full of the intercessions and petitions of the saints from across the County. As each church or ministry starts its turn in the vigil, the bowl is passed on and added to until Palm Sunday when all the prayers are poured out before the Lord at Hosanna!*

Seems to me ...

## Freedom

We are working really hard at training Roscoe, and if the truth be told, he is working pretty hard at it, too. Sit, wait, OFF, leave it, heel, OFF, drop it, take it, OFF ... there is a lot to learn for such a tiny head and a 3 second attention span! But it is worth the investment because the result of discipline is not subjugation but freedom.

Puppies naturally equate freedom with doing whatever they want, whenever they want and wherever they want. But this isn't the pathway to freedom. This is the pathway to the frustration and wrath of their owners. It's the pathway to being chained up or locked up whenever company comes over. It is the pathway to never being taken on a walk or on a car trip. It is the pathway to bondage, not freedom.

If Roscoe can successfully learn to obey our will rather than his own, the world opens up for him. He gets taken on walks and on trips in the car. He gets to meet and mingle with our guests. He gets to play with us until he or we drop. Who knows, he might even get to do something useful like collect up all his toys at the end of the day or do the dusting or something!

Of course, puppies are not the only ones who are naturally inclined to equate freedom with total self-determination. Our culture is full of this attitude, and it is not only 'out there', it is definitely 'in here' in each of our hearts. Now Jesus promised, 'If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed' [John 8:36], but of what did he mean?



He means freedom from all the works of the Evil One, as we have been learning through the Unbound conference and ongoing prayer ministry. Not just current attacks, but the lies and distortions and limitations that Satan has built up over a lifetime of assault.

He means freedom from the power of sin and the punishment due or sin. Freedom from a just judgment against us and the compelling power of sin to draw us into wrongdoing again and again.

He means freedom from being 'slaves to sin', but also freedom now to become 'slaves to righteousness'. To be free like the Son, who only did what he saw the Father doing.

When we embrace the freedom of the Son then we get to walk with God. We get to be involved with Him and his guests. We are not locked away or pursuing a course that leads to wrath. Walking by the Spirit rather than our own self-determination (i.e. the flesh) means that we experience the true freedom of the sons of God.

We have begun to see a remarkable thing with Roscoe. It seems that the more he is trained to obey, the more he is inclined to obey! Slowly his little doggy heart is getting inclined toward our ways. One sign of this came about quite unexpectedly. He was outside barking (one of his favorite things) and didn't come in when called. Barb picked up his leash and went outside in the hopes (lots of luck) of catching him. Instead, Roscoe took a look at the leash and slowly walked over and lowered his head to be hooked up! We never taught him to do that, but it works every time! Deep down he is realizing the pathway to freedom lies in obeying.

Let's listen when the Spirit says 'OFF, follow, heal...' and enter into the freedom of the Son.

40 Days of Prayer [continued]

*It is good to*

sense for what God sees when he looks at the county and what he hears every day coming up not only from this county, but from the world at large. Most disturbing of all, perhaps, is what God doesn't hear: the prayers that don't get said because people don't know that anyone will hear them and/or do anything about them.

The 40 Days Prayer Vigil is a wonderful event - both for the people who take part in it and for the people they pray for! I hope we can build more on it and improve it.

John Whiting

### God is able to save

Blessed be God for what He is doing through this 40 Days of Prayer. I got the encouraging word that "Our eyes are not able to see all that God is doing in this County". As Mother Teresa said, 'What I do for the people is just a drop in the bucket compared to the needs.' God is so able to save, all we can do is try to be faithful in speaking and serving people through thanksgiving for the goodness of God. P.T.L.

I received this word during my prayer time: While giving thanks to God, we are more and more released to speak about him to non-



MissionChrist prayed through the night Friday and then many brothers and sisters took up the baton, often praying for a few hours or coming back on different days. Almost everyone was amazed at how the time flew by as they waited on the Lord. Together we were being a dwelling place for God in the Spirit.

## *give thanks to the Lord*



Each evening from 7 to 8 during the 40 Days of Prayer the host church or ministry held a prayer time open to anyone in the County. Not many folks came, but each night there were a few from other groups who joined with us to life up a united voice to the Lord.

believers and serve. It is good to give thanks to the Lord. Psalm 92

Speak out more. Yes Lord.

Paul Woodward

### **A different room during the vigil**

We just want to thank The Word of God for providing the prayer room. This year it was just very compelling. Jim and I were able to fit more time in than last year. Each time was special. We attribute that to all the prayers that had been said before we entered the room. We've both been in that same room for other activities. We find that during the prayer vigil the room changes. For both of us it is like entering "Holy Ground". Our spirits get calm, we become much more focused and the time goes by very quickly. We have come to look forward to our time spent there during the 40 Days of Prayer. There is so much that happens during those 40 days.....most of it, I'm sure, we aren't even aware of.

You know, in talking with the Lord, I said, "Father, Israel had Samuel to cry out to you to rescue them. Who do we have?" The answer came quickly....."You have your brothers and sisters. I certainly am listening to the concerns you have all cried out to me. Continue seeking me....I am listening."

Maranatha -- Come Lord Jesus.

Judy Marks

**Good is what God is ---**

**no exceptions!**

*God has ascended amid shouts of joy,  
the LORD amid the sounding of  
trumpets.*

*Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing  
praises to our King, sing praises.*

*For God is the King of all the earth;  
sing to him a psalm of praise.*

*Ps. 47:5-7*

God loves each of us more than we can possibly imagine. Help us all, Father, to open our hearts to accept your love. Fill us, please, with your Holy Spirit so that our hearts will overflow.

**Let the fire of your Holy Spirit fall upon us and change us in new and unexpected ways**

*Though you have not seen him,  
you love him. And even though  
you do not see him now, you  
believe in him and are filled with  
inexpressible joy for you are  
receiving the goal of your faith,  
the salvation of your souls.*

**1 Peter 1:8-9**

**LORD I BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL CAUSE THE SEEDS TO GROW.  
HELP ME TO CLEAR THE LAND SO IT HAS ROOM TO FLOURISH.**

*Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the  
alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in  
the land tremble, for the day of the  
LORD is coming. It is close at hand--*

**Joel 2:1**

## *'The bread in Italy has a very hard crust' —*

### **Marsha's Spiritual Report**

Up until now, we have visited churches and seen things like Michelangelo's statue of Moses, SOME things in the Vatican Museum (can never see them all), and a private chapel inside the papal apartments completely covered by mosaics in 1990's by western and eastern artists (rarely seen by tourists) --very beautiful, ecumenical, and full of biblical symbolism. So far I have learned that I need to carry another pair of shoes at all times to rotate them. Peter probably learned more than that.

During Christian Unity Week, we attended a lecture by a German Cardinal who was very clear on what good ecumenism is (need to focus on Jesus and not compromise the Gospel). We also participated in the ending prayer for that week led by the Pope in one of the St. Paul churches here. Most people stood on chairs to see the Pope when he came in and left, but I didn't since I already knew what he looked like.

We are staying in the guest quarters of the Irish College, the residence for Irish priests and seminarians who come to Rome to study. They also house non-Irish priests at times ....and are mourning the loss six months ago of an Iraqi priest who stayed here and was killed when he went back to Iraq and of a priest in Kenya who stayed here until a few months ago and was killed a couple weeks ago during the current rioting. Study in Rome can sound like pleasant "ivory tower" business, but it does involve people who are willing to risk their lives for the Gospel.

There is plenty of time here to pray and read Scripture, so that part is a nice perk to being away from home.

### **Marsha's Cultural Report**

I will now share some cultural things about Rome, so those who are interested only in the spiritual aspect of our time abroad should stop



*The cottage on the grounds of the Irish College where the Williamsons are staying is very nice, but must have been designed for 7 foot Irish Giants!*

reading here.

Having been here for two weeks now, I will list some cultural differences I have become aware of, followed by my reflection and concluding explanation/commentary for each particular item.

1. Although our place is quite roomy (2-bedroom, 2-bath, a study, a living room, a dining room), our kitchen is smaller than either of the two bathrooms. This is because Romans think it is more important to be clean than to eat.
2. A very small chicken costs about \$ 5.87 US dollars, a liter of bottled water costs about \$3.00, a bottle of name-brand wine costs about \$2.48, and regular wine costs \$1.46. This is because Romans think it is more important to drink wine than to eat food or drink water. (Apparently this all has something to do with their national economy being based on wine and needing to keep the economy strong.)
3. TV shows in the evening (which are a great way to improve our

"listening Italian" as we watch dubbed-in "CSI," "Law and Order," etc.) are listed to start at such times as 9:10, 9:15, 9:40, etc. This is to help people to avoid the need to channel surf. You can start one show and if you don't like it, you haven't missed the beginning of another show. (All of this would work great if the shows actually started and ended during the times listed, but a Roman TV guide is meant to be a "potential" or "suggested" listing and to be flexible -- like the Italians and all their guidelines, including traffic laws.)

4. One nice thing about TV shows here -- if you can guess the right time it starts -- is that all the commercials are only on the half hour. I counted 16 once. This means you have a good bit of free time in the middle of a show and can take a shower (remember how important that is) or go open a bottle of wine (to help the economy) and not miss any of the show.
5. Bread in Rome has a very hard crust that Italians really love. They have practiced eating it since childhood, so they are pretty good at it. However, it can



*Here's the kitchen. Maybe Italians would rather go out to eat!*

## **—and other insights from the front**

be hard for adult foreigners to jump in and be able to do it. (Peter thinks its fun to keep trying but I don't.) This also encourages outsiders to drink more wine since that is easier to do than eating their bread.

6. Italian food is not like Italian-American food. Restaurants give really small portions of pasta, they charge extra for some of their break-your-teeth bread, and their pizza has a very flat, very hard crust with hardly anything on it (except for one kind that comes with an egg on it). This is all because, again, Italians think it's more important to drink wine than to eat, and they don't want people to become too distracted by food.
7. Buying fish at the market is expensive since you also get charged for the heads and the innards that have not been removed. As I noticed the last time we lived here, I never realized how ugly shrimp are with their little heads on. (Amazing that someone ever took a look at a shrimp with its head on and actually considered it might be good to eat!) Fish is presented to customers this way to discourage eating much of it. I believe this is also for the reason listed above.
8. In the last two weeks I have seen a total of 3 empty parking places throughout the city. This helps explain the huge amount of traffic in Rome, since everyone has to stay in their cars and keep driving as they look for a parking spot. I was privileged to be a witness once to a car with three ladies who did find a place to park. They came out of the car clearly overjoyed as they all spoke and gestured simultaneously for about three minutes. (In Italy several people can talk all at once and still follow what everyone else is saying.) There's no real way to



*The little plaza outside Peter and Marsha's cottage—spring is on its way in Rome already.*

tell how many days these poor ladies had been looking for a spot to park, but they all looked very tired....You could see the exhaustion as well as the joy on their faces....I was glad to able to be a bystander to observe such an important event.

That's all for now. Although I am happy about what I have learned so far, I am sure I will become even more sensitive to other nuances of Roman culture as I spend more time here, and I will definitely pass that on to you.

### **Peter: I really am here to work!**

Many of you have already Marsha's colorful observations about life in Italy. She felt it was time for the straight man in our routine to stand up, so here I am!

First, the weather is great. Sunny in the 50s during the day and in the mid 30's at night. We already have violets and other little spring flowers poking up. We hear that the winter is hard in Michigan this year, so I won't prolong this part of my report. We do find it rather cool to go out at night. When Marsha missed a lively teaching on the

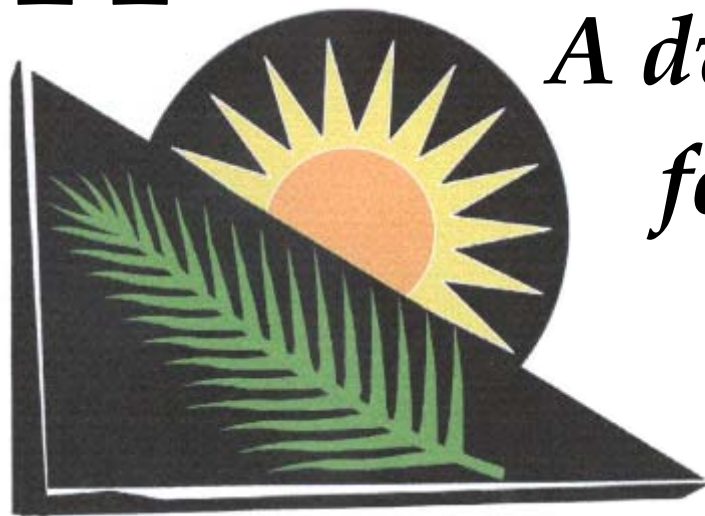
Beatitudes given to a full church on a Friday night, one of our Italian friends lent her a fur coat for evening expeditions. I'll try to include a photo.

My sabbatical work is going decently well. I sent off an article to the New Catholic Encyclopedia on Catholic exegesis since Vatican II that was very well received. I am also working on the final revision of a commentary on Ephesians and making good progress; that is my main sabbatical project and I would appreciate the help of your prayers. I've also been busy making preparations for the launch of the commentary series, the Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture—finalizing format decisions, making marketing plans, seeking endorsements, and securing authors for the volumes not yet assigned. My fellow editors in this enterprise are Mary Healy and Kevin Perrotta. Please pray that the Lord make this series fruitful in helping Catholics to get into and get more out of the written Word of God.

One of the high points of being here has been the people we've been encountering. Perhaps the one I'm happiest about is Elena, the Italian attorney who lent her fur to Marsha. I met Elena when I was in Rome the early 90s and saw her again in the mid 90's and often talked to her about the Lord. She was always interested, but it seemed that the seed was falling on the kind of soil where it springs up quickly, but withers when difficulties arise. It was a great pleasure when she tracked us down and invited us to the teaching on the Beatitudes and then to a charismatic prayer meeting last Tuesday. The Lord has brought other Christians into Elena's professional life and they have watered the seeds that I and others had planted.

Well, I think that enough for now. We'll see if I succeed at sending some photos! You are in our prayers, keep us in yours! Thanks.

# Hosanna 2008



*A dwelling place  
for His Presence*

- Multi-denominational ●
  - Multi-ethnic ●
  - Multi-generational ●
- BUT ONE LORD!***

***Sunday, March 16, 5-6:30 PM***

***Pioneer High School Auditorium,***

***Stadium & Main, Ann Arbor***

- **African-American, Euro-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans & Internationals, and more!**
- **Evangelical, Pentecostal, Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Charismatic ...**
- **Young, old, women, men, children**
- **Churches & ministries across Washtenaw Co. from Chelsea to Ypsilanti**
- **A mosaic of worship styles & expressions making one grand celebration**

***Come and join us!***



**An offering will be taken up to defray expenses for the event**

# ***Do you know Him? That's my King***

***Dr. S. M. Lockridge***

He's the King of the Jews  
He's the King of Israel  
He's the King of Righteousness  
He's the King of the Ages  
He's the King of Heaven  
He's the King of Glory  
He's the King of Kings  
He's the Lord of Lords,  
**That's my King, I wonder,  
Do you know Him?**

My King is a Sovereign King  
No means of measure can define  
his limitless love  
He's enduringly strong  
He's entirely sincere  
He's eternally steadfast  
He's immortally graceful  
He's empirically powerful  
He's impartially merciful  
**Do you know Him?**

He's the greatest phenomenon  
He's God's Son  
He's a sinner's Savior  
He's the centerpiece of civilization  
He's unparalleled  
He's unprecedented  
He is the loftiest idea in literature  
He is the highest personality in  
philosophy

He's the fundamental doctrine of true  
theology  
He's the only one qualified to be the all-  
sufficient Savior

**I wonder if you know Him today?**

He supplies strength for the weak  
He's available for the tempted and the  
proud

He sympathizes and saves  
He strengthens and sustains  
He guards and he guides  
He heals the sick  
He cleanses the leper  
He forgives sinners  
He discharges debtors  
He delivers the captives  
He defends the feeble  
He blesses the young  
He serves the unfortunate  
He regards the aged  
He rewards the diligent  
He beautifies the meager  
**Do you know him?**

He's the key to knowledge  
He's the wellspring of wisdom  
He's the doorway of deliverance  
He's the pathway of peace  
He's the roadway of righteousness  
He's the highway of holiness  
He's the gateway of glory  
**Do you know him?**

His life is matchless  
His goodness is limitless  
His mercy is everlasting  
His love never changes  
His word is enough  
His grace is sufficient  
His reign is righteous  
His yoke is easy  
His burden is light

I wish I could describe him to you  
He's indescribable  
He's incomprehensible  
He's invincible  
He's irresistible  
You can't get him out of your mind  
You can't get him off your hand  
You can't outlive him  
You can't live without him  
The Pharisees couldn't stand him  
But they found out they couldn't stop  
him

**Pilate couldn't find any fault in him**

**Herod couldn't kill him**

**Death couldn't handle him**

**And the grave couldn't hold him**

**That's my King!**



# Women's Breakfast Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup>

**9:00-10:30 am**

**The Word of God Meeting Room**

230 Collingwood, Ste. 150, Ann Arbor

- Great fellowship
- Inspiring sharing
- And Breakfast, too!

**See old friends, and  
bring your new  
friends and  
neighbors!**



# Join us in March

- 3/8 Women's Breakfast  
9:00-10:30 am  
The Word of God meeting room
- 3/16 HOSANNA, 5:00-6:30 pm  
Pioneer High School Aud.
- 3/29 Band of Brothers Breakfast  
9:00-11:00 am  
The Word of God meeting room  
230 Collingwood, Suite 150
- 3/30 Prayer Meeting, 4:30-6:00 pm  
Covenant Presbyterian Church  
5171 Jackson Road

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