



an  
ecumenical  
charismatic  
missionary  
Christian  
Community

May 2008

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

Why do I keep doing this?

## **Unbound: Freedom in Christ**

By Rick Rykowski

**A**t the “Unbound” conference in February, about 10 Word of God members were trained to help people find greater freedom in their daily walk with Jesus by praying and working through the five keys identified by Neal Lozano:

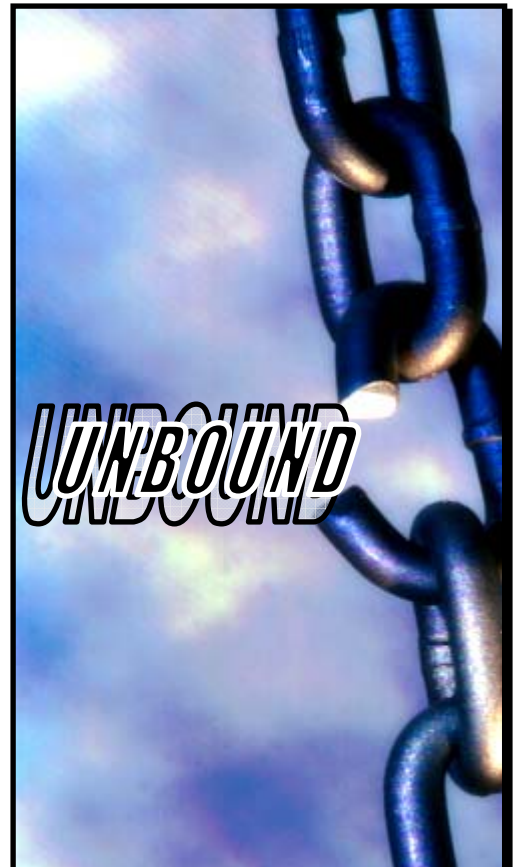
1. faith and repentance
2. forgiveness of those who have hurt us
3. renunciation of evil
4. taking authority over evil
5. receiving the Father’s blessing

Since the conference, about 20 people have been prayed with using the Unbound model. We’ll be hearing peoples’ testimonies at upcoming prayer meetings of the ways in which this kind of prayer has helped them.

Most people experience a lifting of a burden or some other sign that something “bad” is gone during prayer. But we also want to hear from folks how life has changed in the ensuing weeks.

### **What is the Unbound approach?**

In my own experience, God uses this kind of prayer in a way that is different from other models of prayer. First, the prayer session is confidential and the focus is on loving the person receiving prayer. This includes total acceptance of the person and the absence of judgment. About one out of four people I pray with says sometime



*In February Neal Lozano led the Unbound:Freedom in Christ conference. 350 people from The Word of God, Christ the King, Ann Arbor Vineyard and beyond received teaching on getting and staying free in Christ. A team of folks from the community were trained in Neal’s model of prayer and, under the leadership of Rick Rykowski, are available to pray with anyone seeking to walk in the freedom Christ has won for us.*

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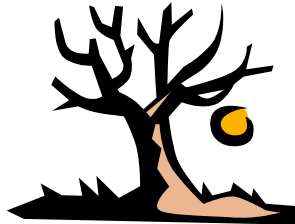
**Global Day of  
Prayer**

**And More ...**

Seems to me ...

## Life Within

Every spring here in Michigan we get to witness a miracle. One week the trees look dead, bare, stark, skeletal ... and they have looked this way for months, it seems like forever. Then within a matter of days, or certainly a few weeks, SPROING they burst out with leaves and are covered in a cloud of green. Just to dramatize the process some of them first drape themselves in blossoms of white or red or pink. They looked dead, but that was not the reality. In fact, there was life within them awaiting the moment to be called forth.



&

God has so created our world as to surround us with witnesses to unseen realities. The Bible is full the apparently dead bursting forth in life. Abraham & Sarah 'as good as dead', Israel destroyed and hauled off into exile, the Jerusalem church scattered by persecution, Paul 'dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed'.



And of course there is Jesus who actually was dead, but was raised to imperishable life. It is His imperishable life that is now within us:

*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God,*

Gal 2:20

This is why even if the church looks somewhat stark, barren, dead-ish, it is never dead. It bears within it the life of Jesus which not only keeps it alive, but is ready to burst out in flower, leaf and fruit.

&

You and I know that locally we are not currently in high summer when leaf and fruit is abundant. However we can continue to pray and wait in faith because the source of our life has not departed or diminished or been diverted. The life of Christ dwells in His church here in Washtenaw County ready to burst forth.

In this issue you can read of some little buddings, small signs of spring: ongoing release as people use the Unbound model of prayer for deliverance, MissionChrist folks learning to hear God's voice, a dwelling place for God and His little children being built in Ypsilanti. Small, but true signs of the life within.

There is a subtle transition in the spring. The trees go from starkly bare to being just a bit 'fuzzy'. Before you can even see buds or leaves without really close examination, you can still discern the difference from a distance as their outline softens with the swelling of the life within. It seems to me that around us Washtenaw County is getting a bit 'fuzzy'. May we individually, as a community, and as the church in our County yield to the Life within us so there will be a full flowering, leafing and fruiting.

Handwritten signature 'PLA'

*Unbound Prayer*

## *A Dwelling Place for His*

during the session that "I've never told anyone that before."

Second, Unbound is not primarily the kind of prayer that you receive, as much as it is prayer that you do. Getting free from our past is not just a one time event. It is a life-long activity. Going through the Unbound model trains a person how to take ongoing responsibility for their spiritual life, while at the same time helping them to do so. Going through Unbound prayer more than once is fine. But people find that after a prayer session they are more equipped to address many of the day to day fears and feelings that used to dominate them.

Third, the Unbound approach focuses on God. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that enables us to forgive people who have hurt us badly, even when we have carried the effects of those injuries for years or decades. It is the power of the Holy Spirit who removes the power of evil spirits over our life when we renounce them and cast them out. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to experience who we really are in Christ and His plan for us.

### **How can you get Unbound prayer?**

If feelings that you know aren't from the Lord dominate you at times or if you have sinful habits against which you can't make headway, maybe Unbound is for you. We will be praying with people regularly both before and after our Sunday prayer meetings. Please call either Rick Rykowski (663-9339) or Pat O'Connell (662-9890) to set up an appointment. If Sundays don't work for you, we'll find another time that works.

Let us pray that we all grow in our freedom to love God and our neighbor. ■

## *Thy Kingdom Come*

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*From time to time someone writes in response to a Newsletter issue or particular article. It is good to know that someone is out there is reading! Below you will find some thoughts from John Whiting on 'Thy Kingdom Come'.*

*If you have comments or reflections, please send them to me at*

*[phil@thewordofGodcommunity.org](mailto:phil@thewordofGodcommunity.org)*

*and we will get them in a future issue.*

*Phil Tiews*

The most recent Word of God Newsletter [April 2008—focus on Transformation] is unusually good, I think. It's challenging, thought-provoking, and encouraging. As often happens, my favorite part was your column, about the bonsai tree and the kingdom of God. I agree with your thought about "thy kingdom come" being a prayer for the flowering of something God has already planted in us.

Reflection: From a slightly different perspective, I think "Thy kingdom come!" is also a commitment of our lives to the extension of that kingdom. From that perspective, the Lord's Prayer resembles the form of a covenant, in which we commit ourselves to God and he commits himself to giving us what we need. (Yes, we're actually requesting things from him, but they're the things Jesus told us to ask for.)

I think it's significant that the things Jesus told us to ask for are the bare minimum of what we need for this world and the next. Jesus wants us to remember that God owes us nothing -- whatever we get is a gift. As you know well, our focus is to be not upon our needs or desires, but upon God, whose love far surpasses anything we can wrap our minds around. His kingdom flowers as we accept his love, put our trust in him, and join him in loving. The flowering of his kingdom will be wonderful indeed!

God bless you!

John Whiting

What is Fiji Night?

## *Warming up from the winter and heating up for transformation*



It had been a long, long, cold winter and folks were getting a little bit crazy. What better way to break out of the winter blahs than to have a South Seas party! In particular a Fiji Night.

Not only could we think fondly of warm places, but we could see the video about the hot things God is doing in Fiji and get our faith warmed up for Him to do similar works of transformation in our County.

After the prayer meeting on 4/13 we had a great South Seas-inspired pot luck [think lots of pineapple!] and then games. From sedate, Fiji trivia, to active, hula hooping. A surprising level of flexibility and coordination was on display! The kids had a great time, too, even if the connection with Fiji and their activities was a little harder to discern.

The highlight of the evening was the video about the amazing things God is doing in the nation of Fiji. In 2000 they experienced a brief coup d'état and social upheaval with ethnic divisions between native Fijians and citizens from Indian background who make up about half the population.

God used this turmoil to turn the churches to prayer and

repentance and unity in astounding ways. This led not only to a revival in the churches, but the election of Christian politicians and the start of a social turn-around. Many villages are turning to the Lord all together. In some of these places they are experiencing not only conversions, but healing and deliverance from witchcraft and evil spirits. In other places the land which has been barren for years is starting to produce again and even the fishing and the reefs are being restored.

Revival is also beginning among the largely Hindi ethnically Indian population. Efforts at ethnic reconciliation are also taking place.

On many levels Fiji is experiencing a transformation resulting from people crying out for the presence of God and God responding!

If your family or small group would like to view the video on the transformation taking place in Fiji, contact the community office. May God so move in our County!

***'Pastor Lee, what about us?'***

Pastor Lee Jordan has come a long way on his journey with Jesus. Born in in a 'holler' in the Tennessee hills in a home with no electricity, he grew up under the firm and loving formation of his Dad, a coal miner by day and a lay pastor all the rest of the time! A six hour hunting trip would include at least 2 hours spent in prayer giving thanks to God for His goodness. Although there were plenty of Jordan's at home, there were always other young people whose homes were a mess or who were just drawn by the faith and love of Lee's parents.

Lee tried coal mining for a time, in an era before face masks or much else in safe gear, spending long days on hands and knees in a four-foot high tunnel pulling out the coal loosened by an eight-foot long coal saw. When he decided that wasn't for him, he transferred his skills and his indomitable strength to digging tunnels under the Ohio River in Cincinnati. Later he became a builder and eventually owned a successful kitchen design and remodeling business.

Back in the 60's Lee came for a 3-day visit to Ypsilanti, and he is still here! He got involved in ministry through Faith Assembly. Over the years the neighborhood around the facility on Harris Road off Ecorse in east Ypsilanti, began to deteriorate as drugs moved in. When the church got too big for their building, he was initially delighted that they bought a bigger church just a block from his home in Belleville.



*From coal miner to tunnel digger to builder to pastor, Lee Jordan has followed Jesus through a lot of paths. But he shared with the Band of Brothers that the one constant has been that you can trust Jesus! He and his small church, Faith Assembly in*

*Ypsilanti are now in the midst of walking out a big vision—converting an old factory into a Worship and Family Center to provide a place of hope for their impoverished neighborhood. The Band of Brothers are going to help after the breakfast on May 31. Come and join us! Call Phil 994-3243 for details.*

But God had a different plan in mind for Lee and his family than moving to a comfortable new facility. They had supported orphans through various overseas ministries for years, when one night he had a vision of kids from the Harris Road neighborhood calling out, 'what about us, Pastor Lee?' He knew he could not abandon them.

With the blessing and support from the mother church, Pastor Lee and a handful of others stayed on at Harris Road and have ministered to their area, particularly focusing on children. The parents of these youngsters are all too often absent, either in jail, on the streets, or just not interested in them. It is difficult and heart-breaking ministry, but they have seen miracles along the way.

A few years ago a 28,000 sq. ft. factory just 2 doors down from the church came up for sale. As crazy as it seemed for a tiny congregation, they bought the building and for the last few years Pastor Lee and a few other helpers have been slowly converting it into a Worship and Family Life center, complete with recreation facilities. It seems a little like Noah building an ark — way too big for his own needs, but trusting that God was going to fill it with those he determined to save.

The Band of Brothers were inspired to hear Pastor Lee's testimony at our April breakfast and on May 30th we are meeting at Faith Assembly for breakfast and a work morning to help prepare that ark! Call Phil Tiew at 994-3243 for details on how to join in!



*With each passing month the Faith Assembly Family Center looks less like a factory and more like a beautiful setting for ministry to a blighted neighborhood. God has stirred up Pastor Lee and his small church to provide this sign that God has not abandoned their area on the east side of Ypsilanti. On May 30 the Band of Brothers are having breakfast at Faith Assembly and then joining in the labor of love for the morning. Call Phil at 994-3243 for details on how you can join us.*

## What happens when MissionChrist goes on Retreat?

### *God pours out His 'crazy' joy*

The Mission Christ retreat felt like a family reunion... except that I was getting to know my family for the first time! I have never been on a Mission retreat before—in fact I've only been coming to Mission for about six months—but I was so encouraged by everyone, and the whole atmosphere. There was so much amazing fellowship time with so many beautiful people loving God and serving each other.

On Saturday night, we worshipped together (for three and a half hours!!!) with a youth group from Lansing which was "retreating" in the next-door lodge. God poured out His crazy joy on me during that time, and He let others receive my joy just by touching or being touched by me. It was such a blessing to be able to worship with a roomful of complete strangers and still feel unity in the Spirit.

God used the whole event to reassure me that He won't let go of me—ever. Even when I head to college and the rest of my life-after-high-school, He'll still be just as real, and He'll only pull me closer to Himself. I am so grateful that He's building me up, and using such a great group of people to do it.

Bethany C.



*The MissionChrist retreat focused on hearing God in prayer — personal prayer and prayer with others. So, the young folks spent a lot of time doing just that! And when it came time to share on Sunday, they clearly had heard Him over the weekend, some for the first time.*



*There was a relaxed pace and format to the MissionChrist retreat this spring which really helped deepen the experience of community. This was very important since lots of new folks have been getting involved at Mission and were coming on their first retreat. God worked through the veterans in a great way to enfold them into the body.*

How MissionChrist is even impacting the University of Michigan

## *Gloria — Christians expressing unity at U of M*

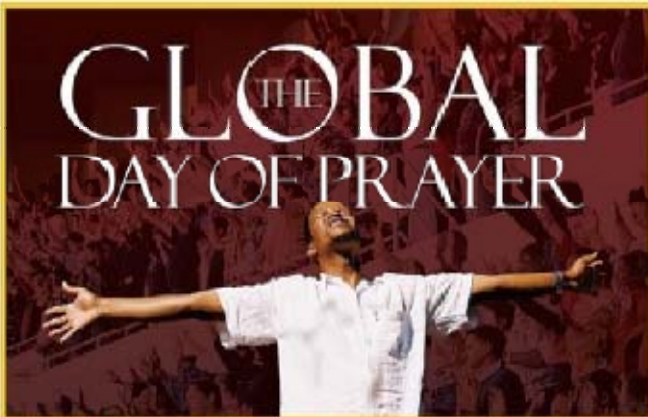
Billy Kangas and other current and former members of MissionChrist were instrumental in organizing 'Gloria', an ecumenical worship celebration at the University of Michigan in April. New Life Church agreed to host the gathering which brought students together from many congregations and campus ministries for a night of worship, sharing, and prayer with one another. As its name anticipated, it was glorious!

While many of the individual campus ministries have been flourishing recently, there have not been many recent attempts to bring those folks together for a more common witness. The young people involved in Gloria hope there will be more events in the future involving even more campus Christians. They hope these might move from worship together to serving together in some way to reach out in Christ's name.

Let's pray that the vision for ecumenical cooperation that the Lord has planted in them will bear lots of fruit on the University of Michigan campus.



*'Gloria', an ecumenical worship event organized largely by Billy Kangas and other former MissionChrist folks brought together students at the University of Michigan from many campus ministries to experience the Lord's presence and one another's love.*

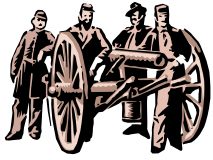


**Local Prayer & Worship Event**  
**Friday, May 9, 2007**  
6:00 p.m.  
**Washtenaw Christian Academy**  
7200 Moon Road Sallinc, MI 48176

**Sponsored locally by**

**Christian Law Enforcement Fellowship &**

**Many area Churches**



**Band of Brothers  
Breakfast**

**B 3 Service Day!**

**Sat., May 31—9 to noon**

**We are going to meet at  
Faith Assembly, 337 S. Harris  
Road, Ypsilanti for breakfast  
and then work on their  
Worship and Family Center.**

**Wear your work clothes!**

**Join us in May**

- 5/18 Prayer Meeting 4:30–6:00 pm  
Covenant Presbyterian Church  
5171 Jackson Road
- 5/31 Band of Brothers Breakfast  
Service Day  
9:00-12 noon  
Faith Assembly  
337 S. Harris, Ypsilanti
- 6/1 Prayer Meeting, 4:30–6:00 pm  
Covenant Presbyterian Church  
5171 Jackson Road

The Word of God  
230 Collingwood, Ste. 160-B  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103-3845

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