

Alive and Free

Newsletter

Winter 2005

Churches Do Come In All Shapes and Sizes !



This past month I took a church through the "Setting Your Church Free" seminar. My first question when I arrived, was "Why is there a church here?" as it was in the middle of no where. The roads to the church were not even on the map. The church was established in 1915. It has rich history, both positive and negative. The incredible part of this church is that just 3 years ago they brought their pastor on full time, although he had been their part time preacher for the past 17 years. They had a \$600,000 building project in the works with 1/3 raised. During these last 3 years they had doubled in size and were really excited about their future. Then the strongholds of the past showed up again. They had a breakdown in the relationships and a number of key families left, blaming the pastor and proving it doesn't matter if it is a large or small church, the attacks of the enemy will happen.

The challenging part of this seminar was the spiritual attacks that came during the seminar. In this place in the middle of nowhere, you would not expect to find such significant spiritual battles. However, that night I was wide awake praying for these strongholds to be revealed and broken. During my prayer I got the picture of 5

cabbages, yes cabbages. All night I prayed and all God gave me was this picture of 5 people, 4 of them received a head of cabbage at a good price but the last person got a bad deal for his cabbage and was upset about this. I had no idea what this picture meant and I was left wondering if we were to make coleslaw!!

It doesn't matter if the church is large or small the attacks of the enemy will happen.

The next morning I shared my vision with the church leadership. A church member of 60 years asked if I would repeat my story. After I did, he explained that the founder of the church was called 'Cabbage Bill' because he grew cabbages and was successful and generous. However, he remembered a story about 'Cabbage Bill' that his father had told him about how this cabbage farmer foreclosed on a farm of a member of the church. He did not know anymore of the story, but it wouldn't be a hard stretch to figure out that someone was probably hurt by this event.

God can even use 'cabbage

visions' to get to the root issues. I had the attention of the church leaders at this point, and they were able to see that broken relationships throughout their church history had been caused by people being hurt by others. This problem had divided the church too many times to count. As God gave them their prayer action plan, broken relationships was a key aspect that they renounced. They looked to God to protect them as they loved and forgave one another.

I love working with churches. It is exciting to see how God reveals himself to the leadership as they take time to pray together and seek God's plan for their church. He is faithful every time to give direction to their church. It is wonderful to be a part of these victories.

My next "Setting Your Church Free" seminar is in Mackenzie, B.C. from January 14th to 16th. As I talked to the pastor yesterday, he shared a similar story of broken relationships in his church. I wonder what their root issue will be? Thanks for your prayers.



Clay Bergen

Smith's Travels to Switzerland

We are back home safe and sound and very thankful for this experience that God has given us. We are very thankful for all our friends at home that were praying for us while we were in Switzerland and as we traveled. We also want to thank everyone who supported us financially and we are pleased to report that all our expenses have been covered.

We left Regina on Saturday, Oct. 16 arriving in Zurich the next morning. We spent the first two weeks in Frutigen with the Reber family assisting with small jobs in the Swiss Freedom In Christ (FIC) office and finalizing the Swiss German version of the workbook we used for the "Spiritual Protection for Your Children" workshop. We did travel to many destinations within Switzerland on various day trips.



Ed and Linda In Switzerland

Speaking through Translation We were thankful for six different translators who worked with us whenever we spoke to a Swiss-German speaking audience. We had been somewhat apprehensive about speaking through a translator as we had never done that before, but it was never a problem. We found that when we had to pause between each sentence, it helped us be more concise and to the point. This was necessary because a 4 hour workshop becomes 8 hours when everything is said once in English and then German.

Visits in homes We were blessed on many occasions with invitations to various homes for meals. In all cases we were warmly welcomed. Even if their English and our German were somewhat lacking, we could share of our experiences of God's provision. We serve a big God and He loves his people no matter where we live,

what language we speak, or the colour of our skin. It was good to be able to pray together and know that God does not need a translator to understand our prayers.

On our first Sunday, we attended church with our hosts, the director of FIC Switzerland, Roger and Sabine Reber and their family. Although the service was entirely in Swiss-German, we did recognize many of the songs and Roger spoke on the life of Joshua with the emphasis on God's command to Joshua to be "strong and courageous." This was the same theme we had heard in our own church before leaving Canada, we took that as God's charge to us and decided to move ahead in God's strength.

Telling our story A week later, we told our story in Roger and Sabine's church with about 150 people in attendance. Roger translated for us and many people came to us after the service and thanked us for sharing our story with them. After the service we were able to pray with several families and hear the painful events that had happened to them. We soon discovered there were many hurting people here just like there are at home.

Our 1st workshop November 1 and 2 was our first "Spiritual Protection For Your Children" workshop at the Bern International Evangelical Church (BIEC) which meets in a downtown hotel. It seemed like we were under a spiritual attack, as Linda became ill, and was not sure if she'd be able to do the workshop. We prayed about it and once we started the workshop Linda's fever broke. The attendance was not large but there were key people from several different churches attending and they were very enthused about the FIC message and purchased a lot of material for their church libraries.

Our 2nd workshop November 4th and 5th, we did our first workshop to a Swiss German audience of 48 people. After the workshop people came to us asking for prayer for their family situations. As we prayed, we sensed that God was revealing things to them that needed to change in their own lives to help bring them freedom in their families.

November 8th we left Frutigen for the town of Hombrechtikon, which is near Zurich.

There we stayed with Serge and Vicki Bagdasarianz who are still active with FIC even though Serge has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Please pray for them.

Third workshop On Saturday, November 13 we did a workshop in a church in Au. It was very well received. Ed felt ill the day before this workshop, but we prayed for God's provision and he felt better until after the workshop was finished.

Our testimony On Sunday, November 14, we gave our testimony at a church in Stafa and invited people to our last workshop in that church the following Saturday. For our final week in Switzerland we moved to the home of Urs and Gabriela Keller. Urs is the chairman of the Board of Directors for FIC Switzerland. Then our last workshop was at the Christhona church in Stafa with good attendance and a positive response from the people.

On our last Sunday in Switzerland we spoke in the ETG church in Stafa sharing how God has been faithful to us even in the hard times surrounding Cheri's death. Everyone was so appreciative of us coming to share with them.

Homeward bound We headed home on November 23 leaving a piece of our hearts in Switzerland with these wonderful people. We are so thankful to God for his faithfulness to us and for all the friends who were praying back home.



View of Thun from castle window

Toews's Return From the Philippines

We are so grateful to each of you who stood with us in prayer as we ministered in the Philippines this fall. Allow us to share a little of what God did while we were there.

Our first stop was at the large Golden City Alliance Church in Cagayan de Oro. Here we spoke twice on Sunday and taught about "The Steps To Freedom" in the evenings and took individuals through "The Steps" during the days.

Spiritual Attack On the fifth day we had the opportunity to counsel with the pastor and his wife who head up the deliverance team. One week before we arrived their only son was killed in a motorcycle accident. He was married with a wife and child, and was a believer. The parents were devastated and the enemy was accusing them making them feel that somehow



Grace with some members of a Filipino congregation

they were responsible. We helped them see where these negative thoughts came from and showed them how to deal with them. This church has asked us to come back and teach "Setting Your Church Free" and "Setting Your Marriage Free" seminars in November of 2005. Please pray about this opportunity for us.

A ferry ride That night we took an overnight ferry to Cebu City, where we taught for two days at Christian Community Church which is located on the top of a three story building and has no walls, just a tin roof (it rained while we taught!) We took several individuals through "The Steps" after teaching the materials.

"The Steps" Next we had the privilege of taking six students through "The Steps", while teaching at the VAST Alliance Bible College for two days. They were really determined and victory was evident especially in the life of a young man named Reuben. Then, on Sunday we were in the Joyful Alliance Church for a service.

A Prayer Advance Then we took an overnight boat ride to the island of Leyte to be the speakers at a prayer advance for the pastors and their wives who are church planting. They had some exciting stories to tell. Two of these pastors asked us to take them through "The Steps" after the next

event, which was back at the Joyful Church with a youth group. On the boat ride back we simplified "The Steps" down to eight pages which became the basis to work with the youth group. We had not been asked to do a youth event while we were planning our trip and so had no suitable materials.

A Youth Event This was a very exciting event because the students we had taught at the VAST Bible College became the facilitators for the youth who ranged in age from thirteen to early twenties. We did the basic teaching and then the students each took a small group and worked together in their own dialect. One young lady had been a child sponsored by World Vision and was now working part time with them and attending college. We took her and the two pastors from the prayer advance through "The Steps" on November 1-3. What exciting days! However, we both got very ill and from there we took a speed boat to a resort island and spent a week in a hotel recovering.

Family visit Then we flew to Brunei to visit Robert's nephew who is teaching there and has walked away from the faith. The Lord provided some significant opportunities to talk about spiritual things with him and his Thai wife.

Sorrow in parting Then we were homeward bound just in time to bid farewell to Grace's sister, Lois who passed peacefully into the presence of the Lord, four days after our return. The trip was difficult and we are very tired and would appreciate your continued prayers for recovery. Thank You So Much! God Bless!

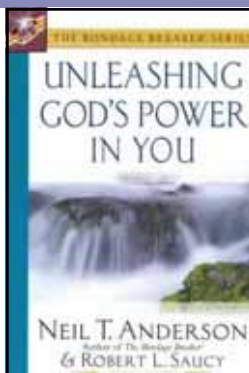


Grace speaking in Cebu



Grace and Robert receive a warm welcome

New Release: "Unleashing God's Power In You" by Neil T. Anderson



Our Price \$10

Holiness. Bad news, right? Doesn't it mean "suck it up, stop sinning, and get with the program"? Isn't it where God asks the impossible of you?

Not the case, says Neil Anderson and Robert Saucy. Try this definition: "Becoming everything our loving God created you to be." What could be better? And the authors have more great news about holiness:

- God started it because He wants you to be close to Him.
- He's going to bring it to completion in you.
- Everyday, He's giving you the chance to unleash His power so holiness can become real in your life.

To get to be a closer friend with God while moving away from anything that gets in the way—that's what becoming holy really is. It's what human beings were meant to be. And you can find out more in *Unleashing God's Power in You*.

I count all things to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Philippians 3:8

“Daily In Christ” Devotional by Neil & Joanne Anderson

This month's back page devotional comes from Neil and Joanne Anderson's daily devotional book called: "Daily In Christ" The following excerpt is taken from January 7th study and is entitled:

Understanding Who You Are:

"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God"
Romans 8:14

I enjoy asking people, "Who are you?" It sounds like a simple question requiring a simple answer, but it is really isn't. For example, if someone asked me, "Who are you?" I might answer, "Neil Anderson."

"No that's your name. Who are you?"

"I'm an American."

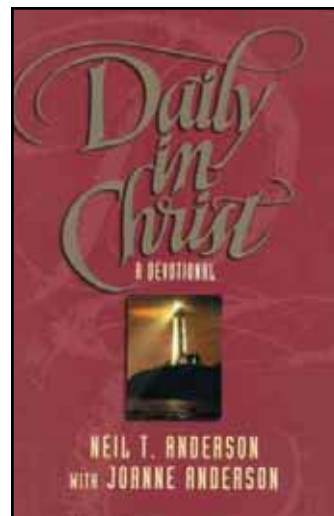
"No, that's where you live."

I could say that I'm five feet nine inches tall and a little over 150 pounds-actually *quite* a little over 150 pounds! But my physical dimensions and appearances aren't me either. If you chopped off my arms and legs would I still be me? If you transplanted my heart, kidneys or liver would I still be me? Of course! Now if you keep chopping you'll get to me eventually because I'm here somewhere. But who I am is far more than what you see on the outside.

We may say with the apostle Paul we "recognize no man according to the flesh." But, we tend to identify ourselves and each other primarily by physical appearance (tall, short, stocky, slender) or what we do (plumber, carpenter, nurse, engineer, clerk). Furthermore, when asked to identify ourselves in relation to our faith, we

usually talk about our doctrinal position (protestant, evangelical, Calvinist, charismatic), our denominational preference (Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Independent), or our role in the church (Sunday school teacher, choir member, deacon, usher).

But is who you are determined by what you do, or is what you do determined by who you are? That's an important question, especially as it relates to Christian maturity. I subscribe to the latter. I believe wholeheartedly that hope for growth, meaning, and fulfillment as a Christian is based on understanding who you are-specifically your identity in Christ as a child of God. Your understanding of who you are in Christ will greatly determine how you live your life.



Our Price \$17

Who is Freedom In Christ Canada?

What we Do

Freedom in Christ Canada (FIC) is a national, interdenominational organization based in Regina Saskatchewan. With an emphasis on Christian principles we help those struggling with addictions, depression, fear and anxiety. Our staff provide training and counseling through seminars, workshops and resources with an emphasis on equipping volunteers to do the same.

What We Believe

The Word of God is the authority by which we live. By understanding from God's Word the truth of our identity, position, purpose, authority and protection in Christ, we can reclaim our spiritual heritage. When Christians resolve personal and spiritual conflicts and understand their identity in Christ they are able to stop the cycle of sin and despair and live in victory.



FREEDOM IN CHRIST CANADA

Box 33115, Regina, SK S4T 7X2

Phone: 306-546-2522

E-mail: freedominchrist@sasktel.net

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