

# caleb

WINTER 2005 REPORT

## SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

As I conduct teacher trainings for village school teachers and manage the building of village schools in one of the highest and most remote regions of the world, I ask myself the question, "Is there spiritual transformation taking place, or is my presence merely another secularizing influence?" I am not at liberty to openly teach my beliefs during trainings; however, over the past three years I have seen a spiritual transformation take place in my local colleague. The kind of transformation I am speaking of is not a power encounter or an over night, night-to-day difference; rather a change similar to the opening of a bud into a flower. When or how did it take place?

I was sitting on the lawn with my local colleague, Sharla\*. Sharla had just switched off her cell phone after talking to her husband. She was angry: "I don't know if we will stay together much longer. I told him it's alright if we just get a divorce!" I have been married for ten years and know this particular scheme for arguing—see if he'll come groveling back to me if I threaten to leave. I knew Sharla had no intention of getting a divorce. She burst out into angry tears and asked me what I thought she should do.

\*a pseudonym



This mountain culture is not direct. When asked a rude, direct question it is all together appropriate just to smile and look away—avoid and hide. What should Sharla do? I thought a little bit and decided to break all the rules. “I think you are in the wrong. You have just threatened to break a vow you made to your husband, the vow to be married until you die. I think you should ask for his forgiveness no matter what wrong he has done to you.” She looked at me, horrified. “I have never apologized to my husband in the five years we’ve been married. Asking for forgiveness would mean being weak and losing face. For what it’s worth, I have never apologized to anyone in my entire life. I need to be strong or people will run over me.”

Breaking more rules, I said, “Forget your face! What’s more important, your face or your marriage?” We went on to talk about forgiveness and what it means. I told her that I would not be married today were it not for those three simple words, “I am sorry.”

Sharla disappeared for a few hours. When she came back she had tears in her eyes, tears of joy. “I said I’m sorry, and he said he loves me! It really works,” she exclaimed. That evening as we sat around eating supper, she kept pulling out her cell phone to receive yet another proclamation of her husband’s love via phone message.

Throughout the following year Sharla occasionally would tell me of the times she apologized to her husband. Her husband said, “I like it that you work for the foreigners. You have become a better wife.” I thought this was great, but how was I to tell her about the Son, the source of all forgiveness, in a way she could understand? I soon received a chance.

Sharla has a beautiful three-year old son, and was toying around with the idea of a second child. She had signed a paper at the birth of her first child stating that she would bear only one child, thus giving her total medical coverage for her first-born. She did some checking around and found out that she would need to pay a fine of around \$1,300 in order to have a second child. This was a hardship her mother’s heart saw as minimal in comparison to a second child. Sharla had been off birth control for over a year and was beginning to think it would be impossible for her to have a second child only to find out one day that she was pregnant! In the meantime she and her husband had taken out a large loan for a new home. Her husband was not happy with the announcement she gave to him with great joy. What should she do? My husband and I spent hours talking with her over options, and even considered adopting the child were she to keep it. In the end, to keep family harmony, she went along with her husband’s wishes and had an abortion.

About two weeks later Sharla went into the hospital to have her blood screened for AIDS and Hepatitis. She came to me in tears. Her blood showed that she had recently contacted Hepatitis B. She was sure it had happened during the abortion—the doctors had used the same instruments on all four women having abortions at the same time as her.

Sharla confided in us that she was beginning to wake up at night—heart pounding. She knew she had lost something that she needed to find. This sense of panic would hit her in the middle of the day or when her child would call her, “Mommy!” She actually had passed out twice, spraining her ankle badly. “What have I done?” she wailed. The only answer I knew was to share with her about forgiveness, so I started looking for a good opportunity. My husband and I were able to have a quiet breakfast with her one morning where we shared the only way out we know of—asking for forgiveness from the Father. She thanked us for sharing with her and said that the local way to respond to her situation was one of two ways—“Don’t think about it!” or “You brought this upon yourself!”

That evening I had the privilege of seeing Sharla receive forgiveness almost exactly one year after she had first learned to extend forgiveness.

Transformation is slowly taking place through my work in education in a similar ways as the Son’s life touched his disciples—through hours of relating over everyday issues.

*R.S. is a REACH alumnus who is working in a country that is closed to missionary activity.*

# ALUMNI HAPPENINGS

## DEATHS

**Camilla Joy (Graber) Lengacher** (R ’93), 34, died Monday, May 23, 2005, at Deaconess Hospital, Evansville, Ind., from complications of a cyst on her brainstem. Born November 6, 1972, in Fort Wayne, Ind., she was the daughter of Curtis C. and Carol F. (Knepp) Graber and the stepdaughter of Martin Graber. She was preceded in death by her father. She is survived by her husband, Gaylord Fabian Lengacher, whom she married August 5, 2000; and two children, Jaeden Kade Lengacher, 3, and Averi Wren Lengacher, 1. She was a member of Berea Mennonite Church, Cannelburg, Ind.

## BIRTHS

**Ken** (R ’94) and **Melanie Mohler** had a girl, Abigail Marie on Jan. 10, 2005. This is their second daughter.

**Aram** (R’98) & **Debbie DiGennaro** had a girl, Priska Louisa Esperanza DiGennaro, on September 20, 2005.

## MARRIAGES

**Maria Stoltzfus** (R ’99) and **Kerwin King** were married on September 17, 2005.

**Natalie Marner** (R ’03) and **Micah Miller** were married on July 30, 2005.

**Sarah Troyer** (R ’01, ’03) and **Jerrel Heatwole** (R ’01, ’03) were married October 1, 2005.

# PRAYER AND PRAISE...

Visit [www.send-me.org](http://www.send-me.org) for more pictures  
and updates from the 2005 REACH Teams.

## Praises

- Safe return of REACH teams from practicum
- Evidence of individual growth in REACHers

## Prayer Requests

- Team unity for the REACH teams
- Cultivating greater passion for the lost and greater world awareness for participants
- Continued provision for remaining finances needed for REACH Participants
- The REACH teams as they fly to their out-reach locations at the end of November.



## 2005 REACH TRAINING



# BETWEEN YOU AND ME...

by Davy Slabaugh, Director of the SEND Ministries Department

## Steps of Faith

Sometimes faith sounds so easy. All I have to do is listen to what God is saying, believe in his ability to carry out his promises, and go do what he says to do. The Bible is filled with inspiring stories of people of faith who heard God, took him at his word, and accomplished great things. How many times do we hear Jesus telling people, "your faith has healed you" (Matt 9:22). Or, the reverse is true, "And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith" (Matt. 13:58).

Faith seems so simple in theory but somehow becomes so complicated in practice. We take a step of faith in obedience to God's call on our lives then panic and second guess ourselves when things do not quite pan out as we thought they would.

We are inspired by our heroes of faith because we know the end of the story. It takes us minutes to read about God's call, their response, and the ultimate results of their faith. It seems so simple, so right to simply believe God and act on his call. The part we forget about are the endless days, months, years, even lifetimes that they waited to see the results of their faith. Even Abraham, one of the greatest examples of faith, took matters into his own hands when it seemed that God could no longer make good on his promise.

When we respond to God's call, it is essential that we persevere in obedience to his call on our lives rather than reacting to the perceived lack of results from our actions. In an age when instant gratification and immediate results are in high demand, patiently walking by faith may appear tedious and even foolish to those around us. Yet, it is only when we take steps of faith that we invite God to impact the world through us in his way and in his time.



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