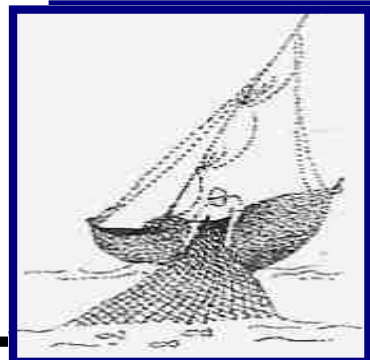


May — June 2006

The Gathering Net

"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst."

Matthew 18:20



Dear Saints,

I want to express my gratitude for the outpouring of notes, phone calls and prayers in response to my last newsletter concerning my emotional, mental and spiritual condition. The majority of the comments were encouraging and supportive.

Since the last newsletter other pastors and city leaders have called to receive help and ministry. I know that God does not waste any trial or suffering but uses it to benefit others. Also, some people provided me with books and articles from pastors/saints in the past who have also gone through the "Dark Night of the Soul" including Oswald Chambers, one of my all time heroes. These writings gave great revelation, understanding and comfort to me. So I want to share some excerpts with you so you might possibly understand where I have been in this season. I want to express that I am on the other side of that dark period mostly by the grace of God; and also because of your prayers, these readings, and a wonderful weekend of deliverance ministered by our dear friends, Mark and Susan Daley from North Carolina. In all honesty, I am not through the season yet. I am still void of the wonderful, precious intimacy of my Lord.

BUT it is not because of His unfaithfulness, but because He hasn't accomplished all He needs to do at this time in my life. He continues to mold my character into the conformity of His image.

As I share some of these writings with you, remember, I always thought I was pursuing God in a genuinely right way with what I thought was humility and hunger. I guess till the day we go home with Him we will continually be unaware of our "Blind Spots." That is why we have the Holy Spirit and, hopefully, others to assist us. So here are a few revelations that I received from some of the giants in the faith!

The Case and Cure of a Deserted Soul

By Joseph Symonds (a Puritan pastor) in 1652 A.D. p. 15

One of the following two evils befalls a man from whom God seems departed, and to whom the workings of the power of God are denied.

First, he may fall into **a spiritual lethargy**, being as one asleep whose spirits and senses are bound up so that he is in a shadow of death, neither hearing, nor seeing, nor tasting the things of God, and so is bereft of all spiritual joy and comfort. When a man is in a state of deadness, he is dead to all things that are spiritual and they, also, are as dead things to him. The promises that are fountains of life to a living man are as dry and empty cisterns unto him. Yea, Christ, heaven, and the love of God, though they are the food, the strength, the life of a man in a healthful state, are to the languishing soul as meat to a sick stomach. The glorious things of the gospel are to him as a withered flower or as a sealed book. He has no use of them.

The other evil is to fall into **a spiritual frenzy**. In the day of estrangedness from God, a man is often quite disquieted. Now, the remembrance of his former blessed days torments his soul with grief, and the fears of utter apostasy and irrecoverable declining from God vex the soul with fears and horrors. Yea, conscience may pronounce sad judgment upon him and conclude that he is a hypocrite, an apostate, and one under wrath. So that wither through insensibleness or unquietness of spirit, he who does not have his former vivacity and vigor of grace cannot have comfort in such a state.

Either or both of these may possibly befall a man at once. He may have outward straits and inward troubles at the same time, and this is the lowest pitch of misery that a believer can fall into.

Coming Out of the Darkness

"The Gathering" is a ministry of unity and reconciliation of the Body of Christ under the leadership of Pastor Carmen and Elaine Falcione, Montgomery, Alabama.

Abandoned to God - Dark Night of the Soul

By Oswald Chambers, 1897-p73

After I was born again as a lad I enjoyed the presence of Jesus Christ wonderfully, but years passed before I gave myself up thoroughly to His work. I was in Dunoon College as tutor of Philosophy when Dr. F. B. Meyer came and spoke about the Holy Spirit. I determined to have all that was going, and went to my room and asked God simply and definitely for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whatever that meant.

From that day on for four years, nothing but the overruling grace of God and the kindness of friends kept me out of an asylum. God used me during those years for the conversion of souls, but I had no conscious communion with Him. The Bible was the dullest, most uninteresting book in existence, and the sense of depravity, the vileness, and my bad motives was terrific. God showed me I was seeking "spiritual experiences" instead of seeking Him!

While others thought that everything was fine in my life and spoke of me as a saint, I alone understood the plague of sin in my heart. It was a lonely, undeclared struggle, much like Jesus' temptation in the desert.

The Philosophy of Sin, Problems You Face in Your Moral Life

By Oswald Chambers

Once you allow suspicion of God and of His goodness and justice to enter into your mind, floodgates of sensuality are opened. We mean by 'sensuality,' the life that draws its sustenance from natural surroundings, guided by a selfishly appointed purpose. We used to mean by sensuality gross awful and shocking sins; the word means that but a great deal more. Sensuality may be refined down to the thinness of a cloud. It is quite possible to be grossly sensual and spiritual. It is possible to say, 'I have one desire in being good, in being saved, and sanctified, a particular end of my own; that is sensuality. Once suspicion of God is allowed to come in, there is no limit to the flood of sensuality. Lust, too, is a word that the Bible uses in a different way. We use the word lust for the gross abominable sins of the flesh only, but the Bible uses it for a great deal more than that. Lust simply means, 'I must have this at once; it may be bodily appetite or a spiritual possession. The principle lust works on is, "I must have it at once, I cannot wait for God's time, God is too indifferent,' that is the way lust works.

Excerpts from Ministers Fainting FitsBy Charles Spurgeon (Preacher) 19th Century

The times most favourable to fits of depression, so far as I have experienced, may be summed up in a brief catalogue. First among them I must mention ***the hour of great success.***

When at last a long cherished desire is fulfilled, when God has been glorified greatly by our means, and a great triumph achieved, then we are apt to faint. It might be imagined that amid special favours our soul would soar to heights of ecstasy, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, but it is generally the reverse. The Lord seldom exposes his warriors to the perils of exultation over victory; he knows that few of them can endure such a test, and therefore dashes their cup with bitterness. Poor human nature cannot bear such strains as heavenly triumphs bring to it; there must come a reaction. Excess of joy or excitement must be paid for by subsequent depressions. Men cannot bear unalloyed happiness; even good men are not yet fit to have "their brows with laurel and with myrtle bound," without enduring secret humiliation to keep them in their proper place. Whirled from off our feet by a revival, carried aloft by popularity, exalted by success in soul-winning, we should be as the chaff which the wind driveth away, were it not that the gracious discipline of mercy breaks the ships of our vain glory with a strong east wind, as cast us shipwrecked, naked and forlorn, upon the Rock of Ages.

In conclusion, according to these writings covering hundreds of years, there is truly nothing new under the sun. My observation is that we saints of God have no idea what the journey of sanctification entails. I know this one thing that God is faithful His Word and will complete what He has started because of His covenant and His love for us.

Tucking myself into His sovereign grace.

Carmen

PS Don't miss our two "guest" articles this month about ministry ***The Gathering*** has been involved in around the country. I also wanted you to know each newsletter will now be posted to our website, so you can share it with a friend. Visit the website at www.thegathering.ws.

Florida Trip - Full of Surprises

By Bill Hurley

Over the weekend of the 4th of March, in what I expected to be mostly a commercial venture but what turned out to be to be an extremely spiritual adventure, Carmen and I had the opportunity to go to Florida to meet Jay Swallow, Cheyenne Chief and Apostle to some 300 tribes across the United States. Upon arriving in the Jacksonville/St. Augustine area we learned from Jay and his wife's research that there were two major gates to America through which "conquerors" had arrived. One was at Plymouth Rock where the English came and the other was at St. Augustine where the Spaniards entered.

Over time the British and the United States have shown a measurable degree of repentance and movement towards reconciliation, particularly with the bill that is now before the US Congress as an apology to the Native Americans; but never in the past has reconciliation been extended to the St. Augustine gateway. We came on this trip and invited Jay in order to continue our search for one of the remaining Timucuan Indians of which there had been 200,000 in the Florida panhandle. They were killed by disease brought over by the Europeans or slaughtered or imprisoned and/or the last one, in the 1800s was actually put on a boat and shipped to Cuba. We couldn't find one. Instead we found that a prison very close to St. Augustine called Fort Marion or Fort Matansis was the area that the US government *in all its love and kindness* had sent hundred and hundreds of prisoners, Native Americans, in shackles and chains, over 1500 of which were Jay's ancestors from the Cheyenne tribe. Interestingly, they were the survivors of the two massacres – (1) Washata Creek, a massacre that took place in Oklahoma and (2) the Dakotas' massacre, from which Jay's great grandmother actually was one of the few survivors. Needless to say, he's had a vested interest in coming down and was glad to have an opportunity to meet at the local restaurant with an intercessory group of 35 to 45, many of whom were pastors. As a result of Jay's words, in a subsequent meeting that they had, great repentance with tears broke out among the pastors, and sorrow for not realizing the destiny of that area and historical significance of that gateway. The pastors and intercessors were so moved by Jay's message that they asked him to come back and help them discover more about their area, which they had been blinded to before. They asked him to lead them in apostolic ministry to the lost.

In addition to all this, we attended the grand reopening of the oldest oceanarium in the nation, Marine Land, which houses the world's two oldest dolphins in captivity. My son, Billy Hurley, has the privilege of being the general manager at Marine Land. Billy's heart was so captured by Chief Jay during our discussions and prayers that Billy said that he felt like God had put a 1,500 pound weight on him, causing him to just begin to weep about what had been done to the Native Americans. As a result of that, the day that the grand opening



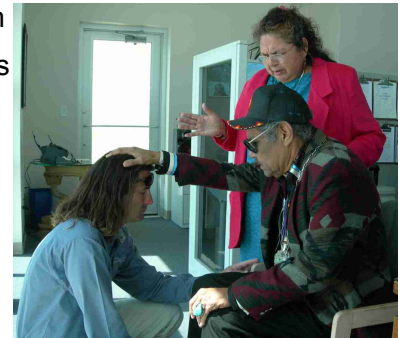
Carmen prays with Chief Jay and his wife.



Dolphins join in prayer.

occurred, the program included speeches from congressmen, owners and builders, but when it came time for Billy to speak he told the crowd of some 300 people that there were people who came before us who were far better stewards of the land God had given them than we have ever been and that we had killed them all or imprisoned them all and that we need to ask forgiveness and repentance needs to occur. So right there in front of all those people, Billy turned to Jay and asked for forgiveness on behalf of the Euro-Americans for what had been done to their tribes and to their people. Billy also asked him to cleanse and bless the land. (This is “identificational repentance” – identifying with the sins of our forefathers and repenting on their behalf.) Jay did that in a prayer in Cheyenne and then boldly began to speak about the cross and that it was the blood that makes possible repentance and that it is Jesus who granted forgiveness from the cross. I believe there was significant impact on the people who attended this Marine Land dedication and I think the repercussions will be wide spread!

We thank the Lord for allowing us to be a part of advancing His Kingdom through the ministry of Reconciliation.



Then the King will say to those on the right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.' Matthew 25:34-36



Mission Native America

The Katrina/Rita Report

“Reaching the United Houma Nation” Like a Mighty Army (Excerpts)

By Jerry and Cuba Mash

As long as I can remember, I have heard and loved the song of The Church that has a line “like a mighty army moves The Church of God....” In all honesty, however, I had never seen The Church move like a “mighty army.” I have heard and endorsed the reality that God is bringing The Church in this hour into a new apostolic movement. I have been to the conferences, accepted my International Coalition of Apostles designation. In my spirit I have affirmed what is clearly scripturally verifiable. But, I had not personally seen it work. We have talked about it. We have begun using the titles. We have set up what we call “Apostolic Structures” so The Church would be properly formatted. But Matthew 16:18 has been more a faith statement than a reality.

No more! Praise God, no more! I have seen it work. I have seen The Church move like a “mighty army.” I have seen the “gates of Hell” crumble before The Church moving like His, in order, in proper application of giftings, empow-

ered to take on the impossible and not disintegrate.

Cuba and I have had leadership roles in 28 missions over the past years. I have seen significant victories across Native America. We have had great teams and dedicated workers. But, whatever “perfect” is, the mission to the United Houma Nation has to be as close as I have ever seen. We have had some huge assignments before, but we have never faced the spiritual and natural “gates of Hell” that the Katrina-Rita devastation posed. The New Orleans area posed massive spiritual obstacles. George Otis, Jr., of the Transformation video series, teaches that spiritual darkness takes hold where sin is regularly celebrated.

The United Houma people have experienced hundreds of years of atrocities, pushed from their habitation in what is now New Orleans, then pushed from their villages in the now northern parishes (counties) of New Orleans, then to the west of New Orleans to the City named for them, Houma, Louisiana, then finally to the lowest marshlands of five parishes: St. Bernard, Lafourche, Plaquemines, Jefferson, and Terre Bonne parishes.

They subsisted at the Gulf’s edge until back to back hurricanes destroyed their homes and their livelihood. They had no schools, were not permitted to attend public schools until 1964. The United States turned its back on the “people of the land,” and refused to acknowledge their existence. Their last allies were the French, so many of the older generations speak French and had no schools to learn reading and writing.

Then America’s largest natural disaster strikes the Houma people, and almost 9,000 of the 15,000 tribal members are hit with various levels of destruction. The Principal Chief of the Houmas, Brenda Dardar Robichaux, told me, “We turned to the only places we knew. We tried government and charity agencies. We didn’t think about calling on The Church.” In historic fashion, the Houmas found themselves on their own, attempting initially just to find 3,500 tribal members whose whereabouts were unknown. Then, the ones who could, set out to help those most in need. The Mennonites sent some capable carpenters, but they had no materials. The United Methodist Disaster relief sent some volunteers, with limited skills and no materials. The Jewish Disaster fund sent \$30,000 for food. Wal-Mart sent two semis of clothing. Some Native tribes sent assistance that was greatly appreciated.

THEN THE CHURCH ARRIVED LIKE A MIGHTY ARMY. With precision more impressive than smart bombs, the five semis of appliances, furniture, household items, and building materials arrived with nearly 50 “soldiers” joined by about 30 in the roofing crew from New Orleans.

This Army was equipped and ready, spiritually and naturally. There were trained and skilled workers who could tackle the challenges of roofs and house repairs. There were washers, dryers, appliances, and furniture dispatched over more than five parishes with crews able to get the job done. There were pots, pans, dishes, household items flowing into the homes that had lost everything. The “command center” was the home of the Principal Chief, with Houma staff people working to provide the latest information on needs and locations.



Carmen hauls roofing tiles.

It works! This apostolic structure thing really works! Funds for roofing came from Alabama, from workplace and church. Men with apostolic vision from the marketplace made certain there was no lack to meet the need. One marketplace apostle attacked the roofing needs with skilled workers and expert evaluations. He led the Roofing Team.

Another gave apostolic leadership to the Appliance Team, delivering washers, dryers, refrigerators, furniture and other large items with transporting expertise. God showed up to verify His oversight in getting to one elderly lady the precise refrigerator she had prayed for, and putting certain volunteers in her home in answer to their specific prayers. Totally awesome!

One man gave apostolic leadership to the House Repairs Team. With skilled workers and willing helpers they sealed roofs of damaged mobile homes, built porches, ramps, and decks, replaced floors, delivered materials to those able to do their own repairs.

A couple gave apostolic leadership to the Household Items crew, and helped dozens of families with everything from pots and pans to mattresses.



Carmen and Bill Hurley help move washer.

Another of God's servants gave apostolic oversight to media communications and got the imbedded reporter to all the places he needed to be to see the vast need and effective reaching to the Houmas.

The Choctaw Nation contributed into the mission. One apostle caused the Oklahoma Apostolic Prayer Network funds to be deployed into the mission, as well as a generous gift from Church on the Rock. Apostle Jay Swallow gave oversight, prayer covering and counsel to all aspects of the mission. Jay and Joan provided chief robes for the Principal Chief and Vice Principal Chief. One lady and her ministry provided hundreds of "Chief Shepherd" Gospel of John books, which were distributed to the Houma people.

"Impressive" is not an adequate words to describe the Mission to the Houmas. From commissioning at the Apostolic level to exact execution of every task, this was a "Mighty Army" proving the plan of God destroys Hell's resistance.

Hundreds of Prayer Warriors who never touched the Houma land kept every one and every aspect of this mission covered with "air power." Hundreds of believers provided funds, processed items for distribution, loaded trucks and held the fort of all the congregations who sent their leaders and their workers.

It worked! Praise God, it worked. With over a million people in the affected area, hundreds of years of disregard for the "people of the land," massive celebrations of demonic forces, the "gates of Hell" crumbled like cardboard boxes.

Was it five loaves and two fishes to meet the needs of masses? Yes. Yes. Yes. But in the Master's hands watch what he does with an obedient Church. The land had to be healed before New Orleans could be rightly restored, watch what happens now.

Even before we left the Houmas, the Red Cross leaders had arrived. In tears, they watched in admiration "The Church" moving like a mighty army. They promised the Principal Chief of the Houmas, "We will come back with help."

The apostolic structure worked. The prayers worked. The repentant hearts worked. The love of God worked. This was our first "government to government" mission. We have always been received by the tribal government, to the reservation we have served, but we have functioned church to church leaders on the reservation. Here, the government of God in a new manifestation, dealt directly with the government of the Native nation. With tears as she looked at the impressive entourage of five semi-trucks, multiple pick-up and trailers, and vans and cars of God's army, the Principal Chief said "Look at this. You have done so much. It is so awesome what you have done for my people. I know now we could have called on The Church. No one has done for us what you have done. But even more I will always carry in my heart the love for my people that I saw in all of you."

I think I hear a voice from heaven, "Well done."

...

We are daily called upon to reach out to Native America with the love of God in Christ Jesus. Thank you for giving so generously. Thank you for praying so faithful. Thank you for volunteering so tirelessly.

Editor's Note: The original article by Jerry and Cuba Mash contained many specific people's names. These names have been omitted to shorten the article and because the reader's of this newsletter would likely not know them. We are thankful for each one and their contribution to God's work among the Houma Indians.

Consider becoming a Watchman over the City of Montgomery or find out how to organize a Watchman Ministry for *your* city by visiting

<http://www.hisvessel.org/watchmen.htm> .

CARMEN'S CALENDAR

WEEKLY MINISTRY

Monday	(Every Week)	8:00-10:00	Isaiah's Legacy Ministry Staff Prayer and Bible Study
Tuesday	(Every Week)	12:00-2:00	Gathering at the Piccadilly
Wednesday	(Every Week)	12:00-1:30	Gathering at First Baptist
		2:00-5:00	Downtown Prayer Walk/Supreme Court Ministry
Thursday	(Every Week)	12:00 -1:30	Pastors' Weekly Cluster
Thursday	(Every Week)	1:30-3:00	Central Alabama Prayer Leaders Network (Frazer UMC)
Friday	(Every Week)	7:00AM	Sonrise Bible Study

WHAT WAS GOING ON IN MAY?

Tuesday	2 May	9:00AM	State Apostolic Council, Birmingham, AL.
Wednesday	3 May	7-8AM	Mayor's Prayer Breakfast
Thursday	4 May	11:45-12:30	National Day of Prayer- State Capitol
Friday	5 May	12:00-1:00	Men's Friday Focus-Dexter Avenue Methodist Luncheon
Saturday	6 May	2:00-4:00	Officiating Wedding/Millbrook, Alabama
Wednesday	10 May	8:00-11:00	Teaching Men at Canaan Land Ministries
Wednesday	17 May	10:30-11:30	Servant Leadership Team Meeting Frazer UMC
Wednesday	17 May	11:30-1:30	John 17 Pastors' Luncheon Frazer UMC
Wednesday	17 May	1:30-5:00	Meeting at Isaiah's Legacy Ministry
Wednesday	24 May	3:30-5:30	Watchman City-Wide Prayer Ministry
Thursday	25 May	12:00-1:00	Teach Bible Study at Beasley/Allen Law Firm
Sunday	28 May	7:00-8:00	Jubilee Sunrise Service at Riverfront
Sunday	28 May	10:45-1:30	Family Life Bible Fellowship Church

WHAT WILL BE HAPPENING IN JUNE?

Friday	2 June	5:00-8:00	Officiating Wedding/Panama City, Florida
Sunday	3 June	10:30-12:00	Beach Vineyard, Panama City, Florida
June 7-19			Visiting Elaine's Family in Arkansas
Wednesday	21 June	10:30-11:30	Servant Leadership Team Meeting
Wednesday	21 June	11:30-1:30	John 17
Wednesday	28 June	8:00-11:00	Teaching Men at Canaan Land Ministries
Thursday	29 June	12:00-1:00	Bible Study at Beasley/Allen Law Firm

**"THE GATHERING" IS A MINISTRY OF UNITY
AND RECONCILIATION OF THE BODY OF
CHRIST**

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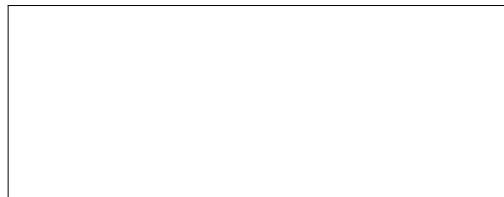
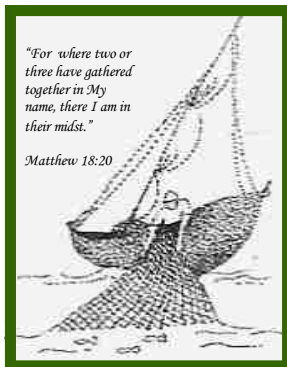
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the prayer closet - **"Pray without ceasing."** 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Praise God for the blessings of this year's:

- * Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, under the leadership of Jo Hancock, His Vessel Ministries
- * National Day of Prayer Service at the Capitol, under the leadership of Revs. Willie and Gwen Bradley of Prattville (new State NDP Coordinators)
- * Jubilee City-wide Service at the Riverfront Amphitheater, under the leadership of Mayor Bobby and Judge Lynn Bright. (For more pictures, check out **The Gathering** website at www.thegathering.ws.)

Pray for the following needs:

- * Carmen's weekly ministry involvements. (See page 7)
- * Carmen and Elaine to have a time of refreshing while they visit Elaine's family in Arkansas (Pray for their health and a blessed time with her mother.)
- * Continue to pray for Carmen to once again experience intimacy with the Father
- * Pray for Carmen as he works on the book God has called him to write, that he would work under the power of the Holy Spirit and accomplish God's purposes
- * Guidance in direction for all the city ministry work that Carmen is involved in: John 17, Servant Leader Team, CAPLN, etc.
- * God to supply more help with the website so that it can be completed and used as a ministry tool



Mayor and Mrs. Bright join in Jubilee Service. Bob Crittenden MC's, Carmen prays, and Pastors Clifford Terrell and Michael Rippy give a powerful message!