



## Pastor's Perspective — The Refiner's Fire

By Dr. Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

Over the course of the past several months, I have been privileged to witness God's character taking shape in the lives of several believers who are close to me. As the Scriptures teach, so I have observed in them that this shaping of God's character in the lives of His people is something that He accomplishes through trials of affliction.

I mention this to you because I fear that at times we will look at the life of a fellow believer and fall in love with the character that we see in them, hoping that someday it might be seen in us, but never really stop to take stock of what was required to shape that character within them to begin with. The Scriptures describe a process of refinement and trust. There was the need of God's refining fire to burn away the impurities and imperfections of their life. There was also the need of their trustful submission to God that His work of refinement would be accomplished in them to the praise of His glory.

We could wish that God's character would be formed in us in a vacuum, or in some sterile environment, apart from the pain of life's trials, but it doesn't work that way. The believers to whom Peter wrote in the

first century were in the midst of tremendous life-stretching trials, and their faith was fading. They needed to be reminded, as often we, that God's purpose in trials is not to destroy us, but to accomplish His work of refinement within us, where the impurities and imperfections of our sin-stained lives might be burned away. Writing in 1 Peter 4:12-13, Peter said:

*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange [something out of the blue, something unexpected, unusual or unprecedented] were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed.*

I do not know what the New Year will bring for my Christian friends mentioned above or for you my brothers and sisters in Christ or for me. But of this we can be certain: God will continue to use trials to shape His character in the lives of His people. Our responsibility in those trials will be to trust Him to do what He has promised that His glorious work might be beautifully and attractively evident in us. May our lives bear witness to the same.

## Exploring Missionary Service

Joel Wasserstein departed on December 31 to spend about six weeks with missionaries Nathan and Dawn Patefield in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This experience will enable Joel to see and participate in the work of missions firsthand and help to confirm whether the Lord is leading him into missionary service.

During his time in Brazil, Joel will be serving alongside Nathan and Dawn during a one-week English camp in São Paulo, working with the children in the Patefield's neighborhood during their summer va-



cation, reaching out in the community through English classes and door-to-door evangelism, and helping Nathan and Dawn produce materials for their children's club and Sunday school.

Please pray for Joel to have health, strength and safety during this time of ministry, to be a source of encouragement to the Patefields, and to be used of the Lord to introduce people to Christ and help them follow the Savior. Pray also that Joel will grow in his personal walk with the Lord and gain insight into the Lord's leading for his future.



## Christmas Missionary Offering

Through the annual Christmas offering \$4,115 was given for our missionary families. This enabled Fellowship to present each family with a gift equal to 93% of their monthly support provided by our church. Thank you for your generous expression of appreciation for our missionaries and their ministries.

## Serving the Body of Christ in the New Year

The January Annual Meeting will be held on January 26 for the purpose of approving the Officials, Trustees and Clearing Committee appointed by the Pastors and Deacons, as well as reviewing the annual reports of the various church leaders and committees. Please plan to participate in this important meeting.

Twenty-three church members have agreed to serve in various leadership positions in 2011, and we are

thankful for their willingness to serve the Lord and His church. Please pray for each one as they build up the body of Christ through their ministry. Consider also how you may be involved in encouraging and assisting them, for Fellowship can only function effectively as each part of the body does his/her part in the Lord's work.



# Progressing with Our Post-Mortgage Ministry Plan

In 2010 we began to implement a Post-Mortgage Ministry (PMM) Plan designed to guide Fellowship as we move into the future and seek to address some critical needs related to our current facilities. The Lord was good in enabling us to reach our goal for 2010, and we look forward to His faithful provision in 2011.

## ***Building Fund Emergency Reserve***

The first phase of the PMM Plan was to build a \$30,000 emergency reserve in the Building Fund for the purpose of preparing for unexpected repairs to and replacement of aging components of our building and its equipment. We accomplished this goal in 2010 through:

- \* \$10,000 included in the Church Budget for the Building Fund,
- \* The Thanksgiving love offering of \$4,383,
- \* Other special giving to the Building Fund during the course of the year in the amount of \$3,446, and
- \* Use of \$937 from the Korean use fees (the monthly fee paid by the Korean church that uses our facility).



## ***Building Repairs & Replacements***

With the emergency reserve met we are able to move forward with the other two components of the PMM Plan. The first involves regular, budgeted contributions

to the Building Fund in order to continue saving for needed repairs and replacements. Therefore, as we did in 2010, \$10,000 has been included in the 2011 budget for the Building Fund.

## ***Together We Build***

The final component of the PMM Plan is to prepare for building expansion through the "Together We Build" program. Our goal is to raise sufficient funds to expand our current building and specifically to provide:

- \* More educational space,
- \* A new and larger multi-purpose room,
- \* Enhanced office space and nursery,
- \* Additional restrooms and storage, and
- \* Room to grow.

A "Together We Build" offering will be received one Sunday each month in order to provide a monthly focus on this important priority. In 2011 our goal will be \$12,000, or \$1,000 per month. While this approach will require a number of years to raise the needed funds, it is our prayer that God will provide in additional ways in order

to realize this goal in a shorter period of time.

Our desire is to see our Lord use Fellowship in an even greater way in the years ahead to build His kingdom in our community and around the world. Thus, as we work toward building expansion, we do so with a focus not on erecting an impressive facility but upon expanding our ministry capabilities to God's glory.

# Money Matters

Following strong giving through the first 3 quarters of 2010, giving fell off in the 4th quarter, averaging \$5,060 per week. As a result, the total budgeted need for 2011 has been kept at essentially the 2010 level.

We praise the Lord for His gracious provision in 2010, even during difficult economic times. We also rejoice in the faithfulness of God's people in giving to support the work of the church, enabling us to carry out ministry here in Springfield and also encourage the spread of the gospel in distant lands.

December Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$5,226
Weekly Need	\$5,290
2010 Total General Fund Giving	\$273,756
2010 Total General Fund Need	\$275,092
2010 Total Building Fund Giving	\$7,829
2010 Total Special Missions Giving	\$24,119
2010 Total Benevolent Fund Giving	\$2,763

## Calendar



Jan. 11	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
Jan. 22	Men's Breakfast (8:00 AM)
Jan. 26	January Annual Meeting (7:30 PM)
Feb. 1	Youth Ski Trip
Feb. 4	Women's Heart Friend Party (7:00 PM)