



love letters

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written by Deb Wade
photos by Wayne Sneed and others

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mark you calendar

- **Orphanos Fall Family Reunion:** October 29, 2005
- **TLC'06:** February 16-18, 2006
(see page 2 for details)

A Christ-Centered Convergence

They thought the door was closed and locked. Seven servants from a small congregation near Detroit had prepared for their church's first short-term missions trip only to see the opportunity vanish a month before their planned departure.

"We felt like we were all dressed up with no place to go," said Deb Naz, team leader from the Bethel Baptist Church in St. Clair Shores.

Across the country, a North Carolina-based, construction-oriented team was looking for a mission opportunity, preferably doing something to serve children, but their numbers were too small to constitute an acceptable team for most sending agencies. They, too, heard the lock turning in the wrong direction.

Then the Lord opened the Door of Faith... literally... in La Mission, Mexico.

You decide.

Is it coincidence that the Door of Faith children's home in Mexico would need people to 1) remodel a toddler dorm and 2) care for children and conduct a VBS, at the same time that two separate teams were looking for 1) a building to remodel and 2) children to care for? Is it coincidence that the team leaders in Michigan and North

Carolina had both been in contact with Orphanos? That the Michigan team's trip to Jamaica was cancelled? That both teams were available March 5-12 to meet the needs in Mexico?

No. The newly constituted team of 15 members thought none of these things was a coincidence. So they stepped through the open door and successfully completed their work. The construction team gutted, rewired and repainted the dorm. The VBS team cared for small children

during the morning hours, and conducted a VBS for elementary children during the afternoons. They bonded with one another and with the children. They learned things about God and about themselves.

Together, they won eight days for God's glory. "The whole trip really deepened my trust in God," Naz said. "He's the one who works out details and puts things together."

He not only works out details in time and place, but in using every one of His servants as He desires. Naz's life is a study in contrast with one of her new friends from North Carolina, Breann Fariss.

Both are women in their prime. Naz is a single, successful businesswoman with no children. The Lord has kept her available over the years for trips to Bulgaria to teach conversational English and to Peru to provide support to medical missions teams. Her organizational and administrative skills were just what the Lord required to lead the Michigan contingent to Mexico.

Breann Fariss is a married mother of two who, along with contractor husband Matthew, has always wanted to do missions work. "When I graduated from high school, I wanted to go to Germany or Russia, but it fell through. Then I went to college, got married, started a family and lived on pennies. This was a dream, to finally begin doing missions work." God, in His perfect timing, used Breann's enthusiasm to encourage her husband in the construction phase of the trip,



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and her energy and expertise with children to care for the little ones at Door of Faith. She believes the trip will point her whole family toward future work with children at risk, beginning with another trip with Orphanos next November. There

is already evidence her daughters, Kylee, 2, and Anne-Mrea, 4, are growing from the experience: "My oldest pretends she's an orphan and I'm the Mommy. They both loved being with the children."

Here is another study in contrast on the Door of Faith team. At 2, Kylee Fariss is the second youngest team member ever to travel with Orphanos. At 73, Beverly Miserlian is the oldest. The Lord chose to use both "women" to hold and play with babies.

"You're never too young or too old for the Lord's service,"

Miserlian commented. Mrs.

Miserlian, a widow for the past three years, has raised four children and has seven grandchildren. She is a retired schoolteacher, guardian to a 70-year-old nephew who requires care, financial secretary to her church, and a knitting teacher at Michael's. The minute she heard about a short-term missions trip, she signed up.

"I have boundless energy and I love to learn new things," she said, adding that what she learned on this trip broke her heart. "I didn't know how many orphanages there were," she said. "I learned more about children at risk than I ever cared to know," Now that she knows, she says, she'd be even more likely to go on a missions trip again.

"A friend of mine who lost her husband at the same time I did has a pity party every day. I tell her, 'when you feel like that, get your coat on, go out there and do something for somebody.' The Lord left me here for a reason."



Calendar Notes

Please mark your calendar now for the **Orphanos Fall Family Reunion October 29, 2005**. This is a wonderful day to picnic, fellowship, and celebrate God's work in and through the Orphanos family. Don't miss it this year!

Dates have already been set for Orphanos Foundation's **Team Leader Conference '06**. If you expect to lead a team at some point, please reserve **February 16-18, 2006**, for some of the best short-term missions training and networking available. Tell your friends.

Light Note

Those who enjoy the experience of leaving a clock-driven "cool" culture for the slightly less time-sensitive "warmer" culture of South America, will appreciate the joke a La Mission Mexico pastor's wife told Dr. Robert Cosand, Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, St. Clair Shores, Michigan, an Orphanos team member, on the recent trip to Door of Faith:

"Jesus is Mexican," she told Pastor Cosand. "How do you know?" he asked. "He said, 'behold I come quickly,' and He hasn't come back yet."



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Orphanos Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) ministry based in Cordova, Tennessee.

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"TLC" Holds Double Meaning for Attendees at First Team Leader Conference

Was it A) the insightful information, B) the excellent presentations, or C) the intensive training, that Father Scott Howard most enjoyed at Orphanos' February '05 Team Leader Conference in Memphis?

D) All of the above, plus one more thing: "tender loving care."

Howard, who is Director of Missions for the Charismatic Episcopal Church Diocese of Alabama, said that while the information and training far exceeded his expectations, he was most encouraged by the people: "You can't duplicate what we shared with fellow workers during meals, or the level of collaboration I saw between missions groups," he said. "Every day I see young professionals pouring their lives into their careers. But here I saw young people pouring their lives into missions. It was very heartening."

Howard and his wife, Mitzi, will be using what they learned at the conference right away. They're leading a group of about 20 this July to a mountain town in Brazil where they plan to conduct street evangelism at a winter festival. Because team members are coming from three states, training for the trip will take place all in a day and a half in Atlanta, just before boarding the plane. The team leader conference gave the Howards just the tools they needed: "I was feeling overwhelmed (about the trip)," Howard said. "Now I have a plan. I've given reading assignments ahead of time, and I believe we'll be prepared."

Howard was just one of 40-plus participants at the conference, representing churches with as few as 100 members and as many as 29,000. Conference attendees hailed from the Mid-South as well as the Midwest (Iowa, Minnesota,

Colorado), the Northwest (Oregon), the Northeast (New York) and the Southwest (Arizona, New Mexico).

Speakers were among the "elite" in the short term missions arena—**Roger Peterson**, CEO, STEM Ministries, Minneapolis; **Brian Heerwagen**,

Executive Director, Delta Ministries, Portland; **Adam Henry**, STM Coordinator, Food for the Hungry, Phoenix; and our own **Wayne Sneed** and **Grace Fragos**, Orphanos Foundation.

"Everything was geared toward excellence," said Kristen Connelly. Short-term Missions Coordinator for Africa Inland Missions, Connelly came to the

conference with three AIM team members. "It was very professional," she said. "The technology. The use of our time. I couldn't tell the difference between this and a conference that might be put on by a fortune 500 company." That was an important consideration for Connelly in choosing to come to Memphis. "For some reason, within the Christian community, we sometimes feel we don't need to strive for excellence," she said. "I knew I didn't have to worry about that with Orphanos."

Like Howard, Connelly said the conference was about more than gaining new insights. She expects the tender loving care she and her team experienced will boost them for months to come: "The training was fantastic," she said, "but the fellowship was equally important. It was like a shot in the arm as far as encouragement goes."

