

Free Methodist Window to the World
December 2009
Missions Focus: Missionary Appreciation

Scripture: You have made known to me the path of life. *Psalm 16:11*

Story: New Path in Life by Michael Hamley, Spain

Drinking, family issues and other difficulties had brought Alvaro to a crisis. He decided to stop drinking, spend more time with his family and start going to church – our church, as it turned out.

He had only been attending for a week or two when, after Bible study, an impromptu trip to the mountains was organized for the following day. Many of us were a little surprised, but happy as well, that Alvaro wanted to come along.

We rode the train for more than an hour to a mountain pass. From there the group, about 15 of us, walked uphill a short way to a beautiful meadow surrounded by mountains. We spread our blankets and enjoyed the cool, crisp air and gorgeous views. While the rest of the group spent the day in the meadow, Alvaro, who'd been in the army and stayed fit, and I, an avid hiker, headed back down to the pass and started up the mountain on the other side. We decided to press on all the way to the mountain's top. This wasn't an easy decision since I spoke only a little Spanish at the time, and Alvaro spoke virtually no English. But an enthusiasm for the beauty of God's creation united us across the language barrier.

As our path led upward, we repeatedly crossed two states' borders that followed the ridge. In what is probably a uniquely Spanish occurrence, we passed by a few bulls just before reaching the mountaintop. (Thankfully, the bulls were more interested in eating than charging us!) From the top, we could look down into the city of Segovia, appearing so close it seemed we could almost touch it. Over lunch, we talked about our families and how God had brought us along winding paths in life, much like the one we had followed to the mountaintop.

Today, nearly one year later, Alvaro and his children have given their lives to Christ and are regular church attenders. We are blessed to see how they have grown. Looking back, this trip to the mountains was one of my favorite days in Spain. A mountain climb was just the beginning of Alvaro's new path in life.

Action Steps:

- Thank the Lord for all FM missionaries who, like Michael and Carrie Hamley, are helping new believers walk the path of life. As an individual or a local church, find ways to express your appreciation to the missionaries you support for their dedication and faithful service.
- Each FM missionary needs your prayers. Use the following resources, available through FMWM (1-800-342-5531), to help you pray: missionary prayer cards, ministry prayer directory, *World Mission People* magazine (including the prayer calendar), weekly Missions Hotline prayer update, missionary bulletin inserts and FMWM Web site (www.fmwm.org).
- Seek to develop strong personal relationships with the missionaries supported by your conference or church. Give regular updates about these missionaries in church services. Include excerpts from missionary letters in worship bulletins or church newsletters.
- Pray for these aspects of the missionary's life:
 - Their relationship with God: awareness of God's presence, refreshing times in prayer and Bible study, the Holy Spirit's guidance, growth in their Christian walk, and protection from spiritual attack
 - Effective ministry: open doors of opportunity, contacts with people who need to know Jesus, discernment, and genuine love for people
 - Their relationships with people: positive relationships with other missionaries and nationals, care for extended family near and far, close friendships, and healthy relationships with immediate family
 - Their daily life: health and safety, cultural adjustments, time management, language acquisition and financial needs
- In addition to praying for our missionaries, this file lists practical ways to support your missionaries emotionally, financially and spiritually – http://www.fmwm.org/cms_media/files/Missionary%20Care.pdf
- "Adopt" a retired Free Methodist missionary. Send holiday and birthday greetings. (Retired and former Free Methodist missionaries are listed in the *Yearbook*.)