

FREEDOM

FREEDOM IN CHRIST
MINISTRIES

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Webinars Encourage New CFM Coordinators

After five very successful "Freedom Catalyst Events" around the country in the fall of 2008, FICM was faced with the challenge of seeking to encourage those people desiring to start a Community Freedom Ministry (CFM). With the economy in trouble and people's finances tight, the Lord directed us to a strategy that would enable us to connect with them in the comforts of their own home! The FICM webinar strategy was born!

Webinar refers to an internet-based seminar and simply requires a computer linked to the internet via cable or DSL and a telephone. Webinar participants were able to follow along on a PowerPoint presentation led by the webinar host on their computers while listening in and talking on a conference phone call.

On four different evenings in January, we brought on as co-hosts those who have had a CFM up and running for at least a few years to give encouragement and advice to those just starting out. Dean Vander Mey and Paul Taming from Set Free Ministries in Grand Rapids, MI kicked us off. The next night Pastor Jim Learned and Sharon Chapman from the North County Freedom Ministry (out of Emmanuel Faith Community Church) in Escondido, CA were our co-hosts. Two nights later, FICM staffers Chapo & Peg McCabe from Springfield, MO were "on the air". Four nights later, our Texas team of Tom & Gay Nell Scarborough (FICM staff) and Pastor Doug & Linda Thompson (Ministry Associates) rounded out this first wave of webinars.

The response was very enthusiastic! Around 60 different people participated in the webinars and many thanked us and told us how encouraged they were. Here are a few comments:

"Thanks for leading the webinar last night. It was encouraging and I'm looking forward to seeing what the Lord will do in the days and weeks to come."

"I enjoyed the webinar this evening. Thank you for putting this together. I am encouraged and have some new direction now."

"We really appreciated the webinar and the questions that were answered last night. We are looking forward to being a part of a Community Freedom Ministry"

We have conducted 6 more "introductory webinars" in February with a second level of brand new webinar topics scheduled for presentation in late Spring. For now, many of our webinar participants are very excited about being a part of the Community Freedom Ministries Facebook group where they can stay connected daily with FICM as well as with each other. And that is because of the many generous financial supporters of FICM.

Your prayers for God's wisdom as we tap into the technology available to us are much appreciated! God works powerfully through committed relationships and watching the Lord connect us together across the country is exciting for us!



Tom & Gay Nell Scarborough



Doug & Linda Thompson



BREAKING THE CHAINS CONFERENCE, AMBASSADOR COLLEGE FOR LEADERSHIP AND BIBLICAL STUDIES, MARYVILLE, TN

January 16 – 17, 2009

The people who attended the weekend have seen breakthrough in many areas of their lives. The results have been obvious, and I really believe we will see much fruit in the coming days as a result of such an anointed weekend.

Your teaching was simple, yet powerful, easy to understand, yet with much anointing for breakthrough. I can see why God has you on the cutting edge of this generation.

Dr. J. Tod Zeiger, Pastor

Embassy Christian Center & President, Ambassador College for Leadership and Biblical Studies

I have looked at myself and my church flock wrong. I have viewed myself as a lowly schmuck saved by God's grace, and our church was just a bunch of God's misfits. WOW ... We are GOD'S kids. My Daddy spoke this world into existence and I am seated right now with HIM at the right hand of the Father. I am beginning to see who I really am in Christ.

Then the flood gates came when he played the video clip from the movie "The Horse Whisperer". When the horse finally broke and gave in, I said to God at that very moment, Lord, break me like that horse. I began to sob, uncontrollably at times. Crying like I have never experienced before.

A Local Pastor

Hearing Rich vividly draw the painful picture of his identity as a child/ teen reminded me of my warped identity and how I grew up hating myself until a suicide attempt at 15. I just never measured up! Several years ago, God used FICM to set me free from the destruction abuse had left in my life. He began to show me the truth of who I was in Him. This is an area where Satan still tries to attack. God used the BTC conference to remind me of how my Father sees me and what I look like through His eyes! God speaks to me so with the "warm bath" of His GRACE. I love to soak there for hours until my heart is cleansed, renewed and bubbling over with Him.

Sherry Johnston, FICM Staff

Breakfast with the President

Sounds exciting, doesn't it? Well, it was, but not because Judy King (FICM-USA Board member) and I actually had the opportunity to have a cup of coffee face-to-face with President Obama. What was exciting is that we were two of the 4000 guests honored to be at the 57th National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC February 5, 2009.

Sure, it was thrilling to see President and Mrs. Obama, Vice President Biden and to hear from former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. And even though not every statement made by the speakers would have been applauded by the apostle Paul (or by us either!), there was a strong Christian witness through the music of Casting Crowns. But what made the National Prayer Breakfast so energizing was to be literally surrounded by godly Congressman (both senators and representatives) and other U.S. government officials who had invited thousands of guests including over 1000 dignitaries from 160 countries of the world to come. Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Communists, and others all came primarily to see our new president...and many found Jesus in the process.

Beyond the grandeur of the breakfast itself and the other magnificent meals, something even more riveting was going on. It was taking place in small groups in suites and in one-on-one conversations in lobbies and restaurants. It was God's people telling men and women from powerful positions of influence around the country and around the world about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Judy and I got in on that act many times. One of the most meaningful to me was when we were invited by two influential Christian brothers to share for about 45 minutes about the freedom that comes through Christ with a Jewish man from Israel and two Muslims from Jordan listening to the whole thing!

God seems to enjoy doing wondrous things through committed relationships and that was the theme of the National Prayer Breakfast and associated meetings: Shine the love of Jesus. Show the love of Jesus. Live out the life of Jesus. And that love will break down barriers and grant opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus. And it's working...powerfully!

As a result of some strategic meetings that Judy and I had, there are possibilities of serving those who put together the National Prayer Breakfast at some level. What will become of all this networking, only the Lord knows, but we do ask that you would pray that He would open the doors no man could shut and shut the doors no man could open.



Judy King and Rich Miller with their National Prayer Breakfast host, Merle Morgan (left)

The Subtle Sovereignty of God *by Rich Miller*

My latest toy is one of those new “Blackberry Storm” smart phones that came out about two months ago. I’m sure all you iPhone devotees are snickering right now, but until iPhone and Verizon strike a deal, I’ll take my phone coverage over your bells and whistles any day!

There! That should have created some controversy. Now let’s talk about which are better pets...dogs or cats? Just kidding!

Anyway, for my Blackberry I went ahead and purchased a Bible program that not only gives me the entire NIV to read, but also has a daily Bible reading feature. Recently one of the places where I have been reading is in Esther.

You may be aware that Esther is the only book of the Bible where God is not mentioned by name, though followers of God (most notably Mordecai and Esther) play hero roles and a three-day fast before God clearly ushers in the turning point in the story.

In case your memories of the book of Esther are fuzzy, here’s a summary of the plot of the story. King Ahasuerus of Persia gets hacked off at his wife, Queen Vashti, because she won’t show up at the king’s party. The king wants to show her off but she’s not interested. Vashti gets the heave-ho as queen and after a lengthy version of the “Miss Persia” contest, Esther is chosen to replace her. Thus scene one of the drama of God’s subtle sovereignty is complete. Esther, a Jew, suddenly finds herself in an extremely influential position.

Her uncle, Mordecai (who raised her) is a devout Jew who happens to hear of a plot to kill the king. He reports it and the king is delivered but nothing is done immediately to honor Mordecai. The curtain falls on scene two of God’s subtle sovereignty as you’ll shortly see.

The villain of the story is the king’s right hand man, Haman (which is fairly similar to the name “Hanged Man” interestingly enough!). Haman hates Mordecai because Mordecai won’t kowtow to him and so Haman builds this gigantic (75 foot) gallows for the express purpose of making Mordecai pay for his “insubordination.”

During the night prior to Haman’s planned visit to the king to ask permission to hang Mordecai, Ahasuerus can’t sleep. So, knowing how exciting the historical chronicles are (they didn’t have sleeping pills in those days, I guess) he has his servant read to him, hoping history will become a lullaby. Instead, he hears the account of how Mordecai saved his life but nothing was done to honor him. You guessed it! God’s subtle sovereignty strikes again!

So the king decides to call in Haman (who happens to be lurking around outside just waiting for the chance to talk to the king about his plot to eradicate Mordecai). We’ll pick up the story in Esther 6:6 :

So Haman came in, and the king said to him, “What should be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor?” Haman thought to himself, “Who is it that the king would want to honor more than me?” So Haman said to the king, “Let them bring royal attire which the king himself has worn for the man whom the king wishes to honor, and a horse on which the king himself has ridden – one on whose head the royal crown has been! Then let this clothing and this horse be given to one of the king’s noble officials. Let him then clothe the man whom the king wishes to honor, and let him lead him about through the plaza of the city on the horse, calling before him, “So shall it be done to the man whom the king wishes to honor!”

The king loves Haman’s plan and you can just imagine Haman’s mouth drop to the floor as the king instructs that villain to do all this (and leave no part undone!) for Mordecai! The irony and subtlety of God’s sovereignty is enough to make you stand up and applaud! Haman’s family graciously informs Haman that his days are numbered and Haman (not to be confused with He-Man) becomes a desperate bowl of Jell-O.

Well, that’s not the end of the story. Eventually Haman becomes “Hanged Man,” hung on his own gallows, and Mordecai is exalted to great honor in the kingdom. And most importantly, the Jewish people (that Haman was bound and determined to destroy) are saved from destruction.

Thus...behind the scenes in a pagan land...the subtle sovereignty of God prevailed in rescuing the people of God and eradicating an evil, Hebrew-hating ruler from the planet.

In our humanity, it is so natural when things are going bad – either in the nation or in our personal lives and families – to cry out to God, wondering where in the world He is. The book of Esther teaches us that He is there...always there...quietly, subtly orchestrating circumstances for the preservation of His people and their eventual deliverance from evil. The plot may thicken, things may look very bleak for a while, but the book of Esther teaches that God will one day step in and bring justice and righteousness...often in an uncanny way.

And who knows what your role might be...either in the personal or national drama in which you find yourself. Perhaps as Mordecai said to Esther in 4:14, “it may very well be that you have achieved royal status [as a child of God and bride of the King of Kings!] for such a time as this!”



Rich Miller



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Thank you for your continued support of FICM!

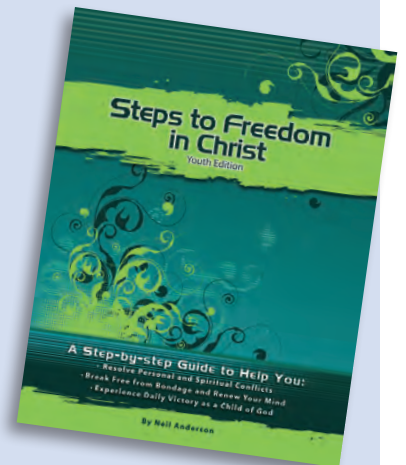
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