

First Step Ministries, Inc.

Rev. Lawrence E. Blakeslee

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Where In The World Is Carmen San Diego or Larry Blakeslee?

The Apology

Let me apologize for the length of time between newsletters.

Some have been asking if I am okay. Yes, I really am. Thanks for asking.

It has been incredibly busy time since my January newsletter with lots of changes and challenges.

In the column to the right, I recap the essential information of the last six months to quickly bring you up to date.

January & February

Working as the Administrator for Rhema Germany's church and bible training center.

Mid-March to Mid-April

Traveled to Phoenix, Arizona for my annual trip. The return flight ticket would run out on March 23rd if it was not used. It was a case of use it or lose the money already spent for the trip back from Germany.

I needed this time to rest, pray and hear from God for further direction for the ministry. Unlike my past annual trips to the America, on this trip I only met with a few local friends and didn't try to preach or raise funds. It was more important that I really take the time to pray. The upcoming month of June was going to be my third year in Germany. It was important for me to "check in" and see what God wanted me to continue to do.

My answer came after returning to Germany at the end of this trip. It seemed that I was to remain in Germany. It wasn't until the end of May that I knew that I was to continue working as the Rhema Germany's Administrator.

May

Preparing for a major strategy meeting for Rhema Germany. This involved bringing thirty key pastors from Western and Eastern Europe to Germany. The pastors were brought together to discuss the possibility of increasing the number of bible schools and training centers in Europe.

At the end of this meeting it seemed to me that I could have a greater impact on Europe if I held off going forward with the First Step Ministries children's prayer program for now. This would allow me to focus on working with these pastors and developing the schools and training centers.

June

William and his fiancée Stephanie's were married on June 4th in Auburndale, Florida. Since I needed to return to the States again this soon, I wanted to make the most of the visit. While there, I took the opportunity to attend a Rick Joyner, Morning Star Ministries Conference in Fort Mill, South Carolina. I was really blessed at the conference and was able to stay with some friends, Grant and Emily Gray, while there.

After returning to Germany, Pastor John announced that I would be staying on beyond my original one year commitment. Along with my other responsibilities, I would be developing a two or three year strategy to coordinate the starting of the new bible schools and training centers. This time I didn't set a length of time I would work with Rhema. It seemed more important that this time I left the date open ended.

Europe more than ever before, needs to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Europeans need a real relationship and an experience with Him. Many people in Europe are praying for revival here. The graduates of these new schools and training centers will help plant new churches in Europe to reach the lost and train the Believers.

July

Work as normal. Pastor John and his family traveled back to the States for their annual trip. Rhema Germany is starting to get prepared for the annual Summer Bible School week in August and the new school year starting in October.

Inside this issue:

Where In The World...	1
William & Stephanie's Wedding	2
Sgt. Josh's Surprise Visit	4
It's A Small World	4



William & Stephanie's Wedding



William is now off on a new adventure with his new wife, Stephanie.

It was hard for me to believe that my youngest son is now married and someone's husband. Guess they grow up don't they. I wish them the very best.

After a couple of weeks of leave from the Coast Guard, William returned to Astoria, Oregon and his C.G. Cutter Alert.

William and Stephanie are working out the next steps of either moving Stephanie to Astoria or waiting until his soon coming transfer to Elizabeth City, N.C. to attend the Coast Guard's Avionics' Training School, where she will join him there.

(Above) The Semi-Official Wedding Picture
(Right) The "less than official" Wedding Reception picture.

(Bottom Right) The other star of the wedding, my granddaughter, Antonella Blakeslee, 4 1/2 years old.



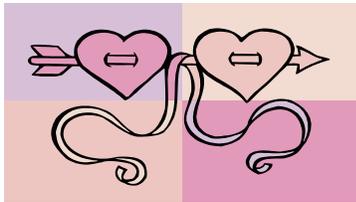
More of William & Stephanie's Wedding Pictures



(Left) Antonella and her half-sister Jude.

(Below Left) William and his older brother Shawn.

(Below Right) William and Stephanie one week later, wedded bliss.





More FSM Stuff

The Children's Prayer Program

I know that this program will eventually get started. My heart is still very much tied to seeing this program get off the ground. The positive feedback I have received here in Europe and in the America is incredibly encouraging.

My prayer is that God will bring a team along side of me and First Step Ministries to help me fulfill that dream. I believe that my time helping Rhema Germany is "seed sown" and my "harvest" will be to

have others come along First Step Ministries to fulfill its vision. Even if it means managing two different ministries at the same time, I know that both of these goals, administering Rhema Germany and First Step Ministries children's prayer program are part of God's heart. He just has to supply what and who is needed to fulfill this vision.

First Step Ministries will continue on with this program albeit at a slower pace for now.

Three Years in Germany

It is hard to believe that as of June 3rd I have lived here for three years. Time has gone so fast it is incredible. I know for now that I am to continue to live here. I just renewed my German Resident Visa for another two years. At the end of the next two years, I can apply for a Permanent Resident Visa. But we will see if I am supposed to do that. It will be interesting to see what the next few years bring. Guess we'll all find out together. The key for me is to continue to hear God and to remain flexible.

We all live in a time that the world has never seen before. Read the news or watch TV to see the world and technology moving at a pace never before seen. Threats come from any where, any place and any time. We live in a world that desperately needs to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

All of us need to be responsive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and share God's love and promises with those that He has put in our lives. And we believe for his protection as we work and play.

Many situations now exist that can move us from the mortal to the immortal in an instant of time. Where we spend our immortality is dependent on knowing Jesus as our Savior.

Share Jesus with somebody today.



(Left) You can never start too young, can you? She even has her dolls involved.

Finances

Some have asked if I am a paid staff member of Rhema Germany since I have a "full-time" position with them. The answer is "No".

I am always dependent on God providing support for me to continue to minister in Europe. Above all, I have found out over the past three years that in any "test" or challenge, God is faithful.



Surprise Visit

On Saturday, July 2nd I had a surprise phone call from Josh McKibben. Josh is the son of some very close friends of mine in Scottsdale.

Josh had been stationed in Iraq with the Army. He called early to tell me that he was at an Army Base in Kaiserslautern, Germany. It is about 2 ½ hour drive south of me. Honestly my heart dropped a bit when I realized that it was him on the phone. I was concerned something had happened. Josh explained that he had been flown in from Iraq the day before

because of a problem with kidney stones. My heart felt a little better. Kidney stones, although really unpleasant are curable.

My hope was to be able to at least have dinner with him or an overnight pass off base. A mini-miracle happened and Josh was able to get a two day off base pass. The next day, we did a small tour of the Bonn area and I showed him as much of my part of Germany I could. Josh asked if he could have some traditional German food. I told him that might be harder than

he could imagine. It is getting rare to find a traditional German restaurant in my part of Germany. Turkish, Italian, French, Chinese, Thai, Pizza Hut, McDonalds, no problem. German... a problem. We settled on the Hard Rock Café in Cologne. It was the first time for both of us. It was a real blessing for me to have seen him even for a short time.

It was also blessing for him to get out of Iraq for a short R & R even because of kidney stones.



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It's A Small Small World After All

While Josh McKibben and I were walking into his barracks at Kaiserslautern, we passed another soldier at the door way that looked familiar to me. We both said to each other at the same time, "You look familiar." He introduced himself as Wayne Tack but neither of us could remember where we had seen each other.

We found out that Arizona was a connection and that he lived in Mesa. He was an Army National Guard Civilian Technician at the 52nd Street and McDowell base, in Phoenix. Wayne's unit had been activated and sent to Iraq but he had just arrived in Germany from Iraq because of problems with his shoulder. He was also waiting at the same medical barracks as Josh McKibben. It bothered both of us, not to be able to figure it out how we knew each other.

A little later, we again started discussing where we might have known each other. We went down the list of all the possibilities we could think of, still nothing.

I casually mentioned that before moving to Germany, I worked for DHL for nearly ten years. THAT WAS IT!! It turned out that his wife, Bettina Tack, had been one of my employees when I worked there. Wayne would visit her at the office during lunch time and occasionally Wayne and I would share National Guard experiences. It is a small world after all.



(Above) Sgt. Josh McKibben "out of uniform" but it's okay. He was very thankful for the mini R&R. Josh has since returned to in the States. His unit completed their mission. He now rejoins his wife Tisha and baby

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