

Five Minutes for Missions—December 2005

How Do You Plant a Church? (Altigs)

In the past two months many of us have planted spring bulbs. Most of us know how to plant flowers or a vegetable garden, but how do you plant a church? Ask Steve and Bonnie Altig for this information. They are rapidly becoming experts in church planting as they “learn by doing.”

Steve and Bonnie both come from families with a long history of ministry. Steve’s grandparents were missionaries in Ecuador, and his father and mother were missionaries in Brazil. After Steve’s parents retired from the mission field, his dad became a pastor in the States. Bonnie’s aunt and uncle were missionaries in the Central African Republic. Knowledge of ministry is in their genes!

The Altigs are each sixty-one years old, have been married thirty-nine years, and have three children. They grew up in a solid, Bible-teaching church and have taught Sunday School and Bible studies to all ages. Steve has experience as a deacon, an elder, and a preacher, while Bonnie has been a teaching leader for Bible Study Fellowship. Steve was ordained at Red Hills Southern Baptist Church in Enoch, Utah, and is a graduate of Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia. Now, the Lord has led him to enroll in Liberty Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, VA, for further training, using Liberty’s fully-accredited distance learning program.

Several years ago Steve and Bonnie were driving back to Nevada after a fishing trip in Utah. At mile marker 17 on Utah Highway 14, Bonnie turned to Steve and said, “These people don’t have a church, and the Gospel is not preached on Cedar Mountain. We should start a church here.”

Steve says, “We had no idea what that meant, but, well, we know now—sort of. It means hard work, (even physical labor,) trusting God, finding friends we never knew we had, . . . and gaining a new understanding of God’s provision.” It also means being privileged to baptize five new brothers and sisters into the family of God.

Duck Creek Community Church is the only Protestant church within a radius of thirty-five miles. The community is so small that it has no school, no community hall,

and no grocery store. However, the community is surrounded by National Forest and Parkland, nestled in a deep bowl, and surrounded by the high Rocky Mountains. Several large ski resorts are nearby, and slowly “outsiders” are discovering this idyllic spot. Sunday School and worship are now held at the Pinewoods Resort, and attendance sometimes reaches sixty. The winter conference room has both heat and restrooms, but a different room is assigned to the group in the summer—and it has no facilities! With the Lord’s guidance, Duck Creek Community Church has started to build a log church with a very important cross on the top. Utah is strong Mormon territory, and there are no crosses on Mormon churches. This cross is a symbol that this particular church honors the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

The Altigs have set the goals for Duck Creek Community Church according to God’s leading. They keep the vision before the people, and in general work to accomplish the two things that they believe God has called them to do: build a spiritually-grounded congregation and build a church building.

Let us pray for this couple and their new church plant. *Gracious Heavenly Father, We praise You for this dedicated couple who have obeyed Your calling to plant a new church in Duck Creek, Utah. We pray that You will give Steve physical energy to work on the building, provide meaningful teaching, develop new worship opportunities, and not become discouraged. We pray that Bonnie will continue to have energy to keep up with her many duties, wisdom in mentoring, and vision for outreach opportunities. We pray for continued spiritual growth in the congregation, greater community impact, and safety for workers when the construction resumes next spring. We ask for Your healing touch on Tony Carlson, who was severely injured as he worked on the new building. Thank You, again, Lord, for the obedience of the Altigs. In the name of Jesus, we pray; Amen.*