

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Nursing Care Community

JANUARY 2008

Dear Prayer,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! I am excited to ring in the New Year as it brings with it the potential for so many new chapters in the story of this ministry – *and our lives*. As I anticipate 2008 I am planning the content of a few of those chapters, and I would like to share with you their themes because you are an integral part of The Sharing Org story. As you continue to read, however, it may be helpful if you hear it read in your head by that dynamic-voiced guy who used to introduce the original weekly Batman television series.

Up to this point in our story, our hero (that would be me) has been taking the love and gospel of Jesus Christ into the nursing care community (with the help of some trusted side kicks) since September 2003. Along the way our hero has learned to navigate many of the obstacles of being a minister to residents of nursing care facilities, has avoided almost certain elimination due to his own lack of experience with his utility belt, and been dealt a knee-crushing blow (Get it? Knee-crushing?) from the hand of his arch enemy - Beelzebub the Bad. While many of our hero's plans have been foiled, he has successfully shown the love of Jesus to people who otherwise would have been without.

Ok, so I am being a bit silly - I don't really have a utility belt - however, the last four-plus years have been quite the adventure, and this year has all the promise of the past (hopefully without the knee-crushing blow of 2007). As I look to 2008 I want us to focus on just three objectives, and I will need your help to see those objectives become a reality.

Objective #1: Over the next 12 months I want us to recruit *an additional 100 Prayer Partners*. To date there are 66 people like you on the list who receive our monthly prayer letter. You along with 66 other people have agreed to lift us, and the needs of this ministry, up to God in prayer each month. I cannot stress how valuable this is to us, for God certainly inhabits the prayers of His people. However, recruiting 100 new Prayer Partners is a very lofty goal, so I am going to need *your* help. First, I want to ask you to pray that God would provide us with people who will agree to join us in prayer each month. Secondly, I ask you to introduce the Sharing Org to somebody you are associated with who you know will pray. Each month this year I will include a couple of my business cards in your monthly prayer letter, and all I ask is that as you introduce the ministry to one or two of your acquaintances and that you give them my card so they will have the vital information for contacting me about getting on the Prayer Partners' list. With your help, recruiting 100 Prayer Partners in 2008 can be fully realized .

Objective #2: I am super-excited over this next objective. For 2008 I want us to help the residents to *fill 100 shoeboxes* in participation with Operation Christmas Child. Every year since 2003 (*when we started this ministry*) we have helped some residents to fill shoeboxes that were delivered to poor children for Christmas. Filling shoeboxes is a very important project for us because it does so much for so many. First, many of the residents feel like they are not able to be of use to anyone anymore because they are confined to their homes. However when they fill a shoebox they are able to take part in *praying for and giving a Christmas gift* to a poor child. They are able to feel a very real sense of self-worth for doing something useful for someone else. Secondly, the children who receive the shoeboxes are receiving items that are helping them and their families to see and feel the love of Jesus in their lives. Finally, for those who contribute a shoebox, they get the satisfaction of knowing that with just one \$50 donation they are providing a single gift that touches the life of a resident of a care facility *and* a child who is in need. For this year's effort we have doubled the price of the items that get put in the shoeboxes so that we can include a few special items that will bless the children for years to come. (*I will include details in next month's letter or you can go to our newly-updated web site and learn about them now.*) Again, to see this objective become a success I will need *your* help finding people who will contribute toward the cost of a shoebox. And just think, this year's shoebox program is an excellent way for you to talk to your acquaintances about the Sharing Org!

Objective #3: It has been suggested to me that our ministry would benefit greatly from a "Friends" committee similar to what a library, college, or a hospital has - a group of people who will work together on special promotional and fundraising projects. *This is a great suggestion!* So I want to organize a friend's committee in 2008. If you are interested in serving the Sharing Org in the capacity of doing special promotions and fundraising, please let me know and I will connect you with other people who are

www.thesharing.org

PO Box 73 · Armada, MI 48005 · (586) 949-6885

*It is the **MISSION** of the Sharing Org to share the love of God and to build relationships with residents of care facilities by providing them with weekly interdenominational Christian worship services.*

I would like to partner with the Sharing Org and serve the residents of care facilities by giving them the love of God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I would like to partner with the Sharing Org by making a **monthly contribution** of: \$50.00 \$25.00 \$15.00 **\$8.00** \$_____ Other for 2008

I would like to support the Sharing Org by making a **one time donation** of: \$500.00 \$250.00 \$100.00 \$75.00 \$_____ Other

#0607030.5

Prayer Partner

12345 Anywhere St.

Your Town, MI 48---

Thank you for partnering with us as together we share the Love of God with the residents of care facilities.

You've pledged \$0 per month to support the Sharing Org.

Your gifts for 2008 have totaled \$0

Please make checks payable to: **The Sharing Org**
Please mail to: PO Box 73
Armada, MI 48005

interested as well. This would be a huge blessing to Megan and me. (OVER)

That's it! Three objectives for 2008. There may be only three, but they are very lofty and it will take you and the other 66 Prayer Partners to help realize them. *Please be sure to ask God how you might be a part of helping us succeed at fulfilling our 2008 objectives.*

New for 2008! For those of you who have felt God prompting you to financially support the Sharing Org but have thought that you could not afford to do so, I would like to introduce you to the "8 for 08" concept. What is 8 for 08? It is where I invite you to sign up to support the ministry with \$8 each month during the 2008 calendar year. 8 for 08 is designed for people who want to give but feel that anything less than \$15, \$20, or \$50 a month is not worth it. \$8 is a small enough amount that almost anyone can do it (\$8/month = \$2.00/week = \$.29/day = 3 stray Michigan popcorn deposits). If you do not support the Sharing Org financially, please ask God if this might be the time for you to begin. *(Please check off "\$8 for 08" on the form attached to the bottom of your letter, fill out the form, and return it to us to begin financially supporting the ministry this month.)*

Finally, I was wondering if you (or someone you know) received a new iPod or MP3 player for Christmas? If so, do you know what is going to be done with the old one? I am looking for a used one so that I may put it to work helping lead songs at the homes that we serve. At present I am using CDs and that has proven to be an often-times unreliable method and has forced me to lead singing a capella (not good). If I can set up a small iPod and speaker system that travels with me then I can increase the reliability of how worship is done in the homes that I serve.

Be sure to visit our newly updated web site. There you will find current information, archived Prayer Letters, Ministry Moments, and financial statements. Drop us a line and let us know what you think of it.

It is the MISSION of the Sharing Org to share the love of God and to build relationships with residents of care facilities by providing them with weekly interdenominational Christian worship services. As one of our Prayer Partners this is your Mission too! I cannot (and have no desire) to do this alone, and I am grateful for you as you partner with me to reach into the lives of so many people who are confined to their homes. May God richly bless you as together, with God's blessing, we will accomplish each of this year's goals!

Serving our Lord with you,
John

Ministry Moments

In January of 2006 I began writing a correspondence series titled *Ministry Moments* for the monthly supporters of the Sharing Org. In Ministry Moments I highlighted key moments that happened in the ministry and my own reactions to those moments. I've since received so many positive comments concerning that series that I have decided to begin adding it to each newsletter. These Ministry Moments that I share are my most personal thoughts about what I've experienced in the previous month. My words are not always flowery or politically correct but they come straight from the heart – the heart that is ever being challenged and changed by our God who seems to surprise me every time I turn around.

January 2008

While it may still be, the buzz word in the business world during the late 90's and early 00's was *synergy*. Synergy is the better-than-expected result of two or more groups working together to accomplish a goal. While a better man than I can better explain the phenomenon of synergy, I know synergy when I experience it.

In December I was asked to serve the Lord's Supper for Christmas at one of the facilities. I generally avoid taking Communion into the homes because it has proven to be such a source of *division* among the people I serve – *nothing like the unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17*. As I began to prepare the elements, I explained to everyone that the main service was complete and anyone who wanted to was welcome to leave if they were not comfortable partaking in the Communion service. At this point I expected all but one or two people to excuse themselves, but to my amazement not one person left – there were 10 men who remained and shared together in this service where we all gave thanks to God.

After we all took the elements we prayed the Lord's Prayer together, and this was the very first time that I can recall hearing everyone pray – *and pray in perfect unison*. With these 10 men I did not just *recite* the Lord's Prayer – I *experienced* it. Jesus tells us that "*Where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am also*" and with us He was. After the service we all sat around and the men shared with me stories of the last time they had partook in the Lord's Supper. For most it had literally been years. As I left that day I was elated over the fact that Jesus had reached into our midst and touched the lives of all who were present. I suspect that for just a few minutes Jesus' prayer for unity had been answered in all of our lives and that there was a *synergy* that I had always hoped for – *but never really expected*.

~ John