

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Nursing Care Community

April 2008

Dear Prayer,

E. M. Bounds, in his excellent book on Prayer, wrote "Where grace abounds, song abounds. When God is in the heart, heaven is present and melody is there, and the lips overflow out of the abundance of the heart." These words of Bounds is brought to mind because I have been spontaneously erupting with the Doxology this week. My heart is overfilled with the goodness of our Lord and I have been eagerly wanting to share with you why.

From the beginning of this year I have been praying for spiritual "revival" among the residents that I serve. I admit to God that I have no idea what I am asking Him for when I ask for "revival" because I have no idea what revival might possibly look like in the nursing and Adult Foster Care (AFC) homes. However, I have continued to ask God to bring revival to the people that I serve. I shared this prayer with a group of fellow brothers and sisters at a conference of the Lifelink Eldership in early March. Even then it sounded odd as I told them about my prayer but they supported my desire and told me to continue to pray as the Spirit might lead. I do.

The following week I resumed services with the residents when after one particular service I was approached by a person who asked if I would consider baptizing her. We talked about Romans 6 and what her desire was and the week after I had the privilege of baptizing her and welcoming her into the faith and family of God. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow... Praise Him all Creatures here below..." With this single baptism I am realizing the "revival" of God among the people. **Please pray** that God might touch the lives of the people that I serve and bring revival to them **and pray** for this newly baptized sister as she discovers the Kingdom of Christ in her life.

It has been a great month of praise as I have been able to implement the iPod system into our worship services. It is a great blessing to us all to have a digital system that is so much more reliable than the analog system that we have been using for years. The biggest drawback now is "user error" - in other words "me" ☹ - I have to learn how to most efficiently use the little bugger.

The Shoebox program has been moving along well. As a result of this year's elders' meeting I have been invited by a board member of O2H (the Opportunity to Hope foundation) in Great Britain, to submit a request for a grant. This is a great opportunity to have the Shoebox project funded and I ask that you would **ask Jesus** to allow my request to find favor in the eyes of the people at O2H who will make the decision.

On the Prayer Partner front. Our goal for the year is to recruit 100 new Prayer Partners. This is a goal of recruiting 9 people per month of which we have realized 3 new Prayer Partners per month. This is a good number! Please do not get me wrong, this number is only 33% of the goal but a goal is just that - a goal. I praise God for the 3 families (or people) who have partnered with us to pray for the work that we are doing. Each and every partner is invaluable to the work that we seek to do and a direct blessing of God the Father. "Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts... Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost - Amen..."

I have been privileged to meet and become friendly with many pastors local to the Anchor Bay area. This is a great blessing to me as I see a group of men and women who share the faith of our resurrected Lord and are burdened to share that faith in our community. These pastors have welcomed me into the community with gracious and open arms and I am eager to get more involved with them. I am hoping to begin Wednesday services at AFC homes here in the Anchor Bay area and the Bay Area pastors and their respective congregations are going to play a large part to helping that happen. **Please pray** for the relationships that I am developing with these pastors as well as the residents of the AFC communities in the Bay Area.

As you pray for me and the residents we in turn pray for, and thank God for, you. We know that it is because of your faithfulness that we are allowed to meet together for worship, instruction, and fellowship. God bless you and know that we value you and your concern for us.

For His name sake,
John

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*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** for 2008 \$_____ Other

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.

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

Your gifts for 2008 have totaled \$0

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.

APRIL 2008

For this year's Easter Celebration I spoke to the residents about the *question* that Easter forces each of us to ask; "*Did Jesus raise from the grave or did he not?*" I asked the question with the intent that it would cause people to consider it in the silence of their own minds, I asked the question as a "hook" that was intended to engage their minds to make my words less than a "droning-on", and I asked the question because I think that its answer is the center for all Christian faith.

Well, the question did not create a contemplative silence like I had intended but rather it elicited an outburst of people who answered with a resounding "yes" complete with their own apologetics to support their answers. I was caught off guard but very inspired by the faith that I found among these residents. The question was intended to be a "hook" and it was successful at that. The residents did not simply answer the question but went on to share their personal testimonies about how they have personally experienced the risen Lord in their own lives. As I sat their and listened to the impromptu testimonies I felt very much like the apostles who did not believe the testimonies of the women in Luke 24. I cannot say that I did not believe them but I was quite taken by surprise at the words of witness that I was hearing from them. And the question was intended to point out that we can find unity in the faith as we congregate at the empty tomb of our Lord. As I stood their and peered into that tomb the residents (as though they were angels) told me that Jesus was certainly not there – that he had indeed risen.

As we shared about the differing doctrines of our denominational associations we talked about how being baptized 1000 times and partaking of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper 5000 times was nothing if we saw an *occupied* tomb – if Jesus in fact did not raise to life again. This discussion is not what I had expected coming from a multi-denominational group of Christians such as ours. I was greatly encouraged as I saw Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, and the like all unified in the faith of the resurrection of Jesus – Together, we all proclaimed an empty tomb. As I considered this, I was blessed to realize that many of the people that I serve are people of *real* faith. We may not necessarily agree on certain issues of doctrine and dogmatics but I asked myself; "If we all agree on the resurrected Lord, must they all agree with me on other points of doctrine?" I decided not. I was very happy to discover that the people I serve seem to be majoring on the majors.

~ John