

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Nursing Care Community

JUNE 2008

Dear Prayer,

I hope you are well as we begin this summer season. I have especially been enjoying watching my children dig in the flower beds as they "help" mom plant the flowers. They are at that age that the greens of Spring are *brilliantly* green and the blues of the sky are *brilliantly* blue. I remember being a little kid and experiencing the awe of the colors that God so lavishly splashed around our world in the summer and being utterly amazed.

You may have noticed that my daughter is drawing and/or writing on the back of your prayer letter or envelope. This is because every month she has been begging to help and I have (until last month) always told her "no". As I thought about it I realized that she is a part of this ministry and she needs to learn to correspond with you as you so generously pray for and financially support us. I know her scribbling might seem out of place but this is part of the learning process as we teach her the responsibility of regularly informing and thanking everyone who is involved with our work. Although I doubt that you will, I hope that you might find the scribbles as "cute" as I find them to be.

I have been invited to speak to the women of the Armada United Methodist Church at their annual ladies' picnic on June the 9th. The ladies have asked me to come and spend 20 minutes telling them about the ministry and the work that we do. **Please pray** that I am able to communicate about the work that we do and the people that we serve with passion and enthusiasm. God has opened this door to share the needs of those who are in the nursing and adult foster care homes to these women, and as a professor in college once said to me - "Men may seem to be in control of the church but if you ever really want to get something done just get the women behind your cause." I know this is true and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to share the cause of the residents with these ladies.

In May, I was contacted by a woman who is a board member of the O2H (Opportunity to Hope) Organization in Rugby, England. I was asked for more information about our shoebox program with the possibility of receiving a grant toward part of the cost of filling our 100 shoeboxes. **Please pray** that the board of O2H would be able to fund this portion of the shoebox program this year as the residents are eagerly preparing themselves to pack the boxes.

Also in May, we said goodbye to a gentleman who attended our very first worship service on September 7th, 2003. He was a man of God who shared his deep faith with the residents that he lived with. One lady had told me that she was not thrilled about being moved from her home into the assisted living facility but it was because of that move that she met this gentleman and was brought to a genuine faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. She said that everyday he would read from the Scriptures and talk to her her about the love of our God. He was truly a gem, and we will miss him deeply but we rejoice that he has peacefully left this world and went into the hands of our loving savior.

As I close I want to thank you for continuing to pray for and support me and my family month after month. I am often overwhelmed by how I so regularly depend on your gracious support which I know is God's blessing to our lives. I want you to know that I am so very grateful to you and I praise my God because of your love and concern for us. Please know that I pray for you and ask that God's hand of blessing will be evident upon your life.

With my deepest appreciation,
John

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** 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.

Your gifts for 2008 have totaled \$30

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

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.

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I walked around the grounds with a woman after a service one spring afternoon and she was sort of quiet – sort of contemplative. After a while she looked at me and said that she had a confession to make. She admitted that she did not think that she was really a Christian. As I heard her words I was confused because her regularity and enthusiasm for the weekly services did not seem to me to be the actions of a non-believer. As she continued she explained that many years ago when she became mentally ill her minister had told her that if she really *had* Jesus that she would not need a psychiatrist.

When I first heard this I was angered that she had been subjected to such (in my thinking) a horrific theological misrepresentation of the God who so loved the world that he sacrificed his one and only son to redeem it. After my initial anger subsided I calmly asked her that if that were true then did she think that if people “really” *had* Jesus that they would ever need an Dentist, an Orthodontist, or Insulin? As she thought about it for a while, her eyes showed the relief of a person who was released from a long-standing guilt. She explained that when her mind became clouded with the illness that she knew it was happening but she struggled with following the instructions of her minister and the advice of her doctors. She explained the struggle and the immense guilt that she had carried with her for years as she wondered if God truly and actually loved her. I assured her that God does in fact love her and that she should never again doubt the love of God in her life.

I wonder how many people with mental illness are like this woman. How many people who cannot control their minds, emotions, or memories feel guilt for their inability to control themselves? How many of these people doubt that God loves them, as we sing, “Just As I Am?” I no longer feel anger toward the minister who told this woman that “really having Jesus negates the need for her psychiatrist.” Instead, I feel sad because we ministers make a living telling people what we truly believe even if we are severely wrong. I cannot fault that minister because I know that somewhere in my own beliefs lies error. I just pray that my error is not hurtful to the hurting because I do not think that is what Jesus meant by “love one another.”

~ John