

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Nursing Care Community

SEPTEMBER 2008

Dear Prayer,

I hope you had a great Labor Day weekend. Can you believe that it is September already? Pretty soon the leaves will be changing color (for those of us in Michigan) and stores will begin their Christmas season blitz. Ahhh, the Christmas season.

Well, as much as I am uncomfortable with the consumeristic focus and political need for correctness of the Christmas season, I am very pleased to report to you that God has answered our prayers for the 100 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes objective! This past month we received word that O2H (Opportunity2Hope - www.opportunity2hope.org) has accepted our request and gifted us a grant for \$3,750.00 toward this year's shoebox program. This grant covers 75 of the 100 shoeboxes and with the donations that have come from you we are within three boxes of completing the goal for 100. I have shared this news with many of the residents and they are encouraged how God has provided, as well as excited at being able to pack a box for a poor child in another country. **Please continue to pray** that God would allow me to obtain everything on the packing list for the best prices. I plan to obtain the items during this next month and then in October I will be working with the residents to pack the shoeboxes. I will share with you the progress as we move along.

Please pray for Eve. Eve is a woman who occasionally frequents our weekly service and she is a Jehovah's Witness. The other day I talked about how Jesus' last prayer was for *unity* among the brethren - not theological or biblical accuracy. I also talked about how when Jesus was asked what was most important in the Scriptures, He basically said "love God and love your neighbor" - not to make sure everyone agrees with you on End Time's doctrine. I also talked about Paul's association of *maturity* in the faith to *unity* in the faith. I simply left the discussion with a question about how we all would say that we are "mature" in our faith but yet are very disunited with other professing Christians. Eve approached me after the service and thanked me for the message as it really gave her serious cause for consideration. While I was not sure what she meant, or to what extent God spoke to her, I pray that she will come to a solid unified faith that loves her neighbor as herself and warmly accepts others as actually being Christian.

A pastor friend of mine from the Chesterfield area has encouraged me to begin regular times of exercise at the pool at our local high school. His concern is that with MS I will continue to lose mobility in my muscles from the lack of use. He asserted that if/when the day comes that my body completely stops responding to my desire to move that the people that I serve, in the various care facilities, will have no other means for regular times of Christian worship. I was touched by his concern for our ministry and his desire to see that I am able to continue doing it as long as I physically am able. **Please pray** that as I begin to exercise that my body responds well and my health would even begin to see improvement. ☺

Megan and I are doing well. Megan has officially started school lessons with Sela as we are calling this the "Pre-K" year. Sela was excited to begin her lessons, but I think that is because she had a new dress and lunch box for her first day as well as a nifty pink pencil box - *complete with crayons and pencils*. **Please pray for Megan and Sela** as they begin this homeschool endeavor and they learn to work together as teacher and student.

Thank you for all of your prayers and support for our family and the work that God has called us to. Your involvement is such a blessing to us (and the residents we serve) in ways that you and I will likely never know this side of eternity. God bless you, and I will update you again next month.

Serving our Lord with you,
John

www.thesharing.org

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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.

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 remember once having a friend tell me about her trip to an African village to do a Bible school. She shared many details of her trip, but what I remember most was her description of when it was time to leave the village. She told me about how as she was leaving on the bus out of the village that all of the village's children ran behind the bus, yelling, smiling, and waving for the 100 or so yards out of the village gates. She told me how it was a lot of work to put on the Bible school, how the heat was exhausting, and the boarding conditions were far from one-star quality. But as she witnessed the gratitude of the village children while they chased her bus, she realized that her team *did something* there and those children genuinely appreciated it. She said that despite all of the bugs, the sparse food, and no showers or flushing toilets that her eyes welled with tears as she left because she knew that her efforts made a difference in the lives of those children and, she hoped, in their eternity.

The other day I was visiting one of the homes that I visit each week and per usual there was a lady sitting and waiting for me to arrive. Each week is the same – before I even get the engine cut off she is pulling at the door handle in an attempt to help me out of the car. For some reason and against my desire I feel myself cringe and I deep down feel annoyed at this regular greeting. “I should not feel this annoyance” are the words I tell myself, but the annoyance persists. Then, after the service is complete and I am getting ready to leave I am escorted by not just this lady but another person as well. Each week is the same: they clamor over one another to open the door (even before it is unlocked) so that they might help me into my car.

The other day I was considering the annoyance that I felt when I remembered my friend telling me about the village children in Africa. I realized that this was in essence the same thing. The lady who awaits my arrival like clockwork and the escort I have when I leave the facility are all simple expressions of *appreciation*. For the residents that I serve this is the best expression of gratitude that they have to offer me. *Now* when I am greeted at my car door and escorted back to my car I no longer view it with annoyance but rather more with the eyes of a person who is truly loved and appreciated. These are expressions of love and I need to receive them with gratitude.

As I think about it, maybe the annoyance that I feel is really just simple embarrassment caused by an honor that I know that I am really not due.

~ John