

Ministry Moment...

“I’m a Blah-blah-blah (insert your denomination) but I really enjoyed the service.” This is what a new person in one of our services said this to me this week. I always like when people say things like this: not because it strokes my ego, as nice as that is and all, but because I know that they were paying attention.

Although I have always known it, I was reminded once again that the people in the homes watch the news – and lots of it. This past month they have brought to my attention that there seems to be a war on police in our nation, people in the general public are being run-down with box trucks in France, people in Japanese invalid-homes are being murdered in their sleep, and the American presidential race is a frustration like at no other time they can remember. One person commented that a grandchild told them that they were lucky they were old. What I realized is that many of the residents feel helpless in a world that seems to be going crazy.

It’s true, I admit, that the world does seem to be spiraling out of control in death and despair. But I remind them that all of these things are the natural results of our fallen world. I get to remind them that the moment Adam and Eve turned from God, the world was under a curse. That death and destruction are the only things that could be expected in a world that is presently governed by the Evil One. And that when mankind decided to turn from God, and go their own way, we have been out of relationship with Him ever since. And a world that is not in relationship with God through Christ really should not expect anything more than death and chaos.

But, then I have the great privilege of reminding them that God was born into our world in the form of a man – Jesus the Christ. In Jesus, we men, who are without a relationship with God, may again be so, just like in the days of Adam and Eve. That Jesus died on the Roman Cross in order to defeat the power of sin and death in our world so that we might say along with Paul – *“Where O’ death is your victory, where is your sting?”* (1 Cor. 15:55) I remind them that we are not a people who are alone but rather we are people with a very present and personal God in the Holy Spirit.

Do my words alleviate the fears and concerns that people have? Probably not. Just as a minister’s words at a funeral do not alleviate the pain of losing a loved one (for even Jesus wept). My prayer is that the residents will see an obviously messed up world with the eyes of hope and knowledge of the Good News of our resurrected savior. And not just in the world, but in their lives.

So while it excites me when I learn that someone is listening, I am full of anticipation that they will understand their world with the hope and comfort of Christ.

~John

Prayer Letter...

Dear Prayer Partner,

I invite you to praise God with me as we have more than met our fund-raising goal for this year's shoebox program! The shoebox program has been an annual event with us since our inception in 2003. In that time we have done as few as seven boxes and as many as 132. This year we get to pack the love and gospel of our savior for 50 destitute children who live somewhere in our world. This program allows the residents the opportunity to reach out into a world which they so often are no longer able to take part in, and make a very real difference. We are thankful to Samaritan's Purse for giving us this great opportunity, and if you are not familiar with Operation Christmas Child you can learn about the program at their website. Just Google "Operation Christmas Child" and the link will pop up.

I ask that you would pray for me this month as I am bound and determined to send out a letter to churches in our county of Macomb. I have been planning this all year and have allowed too many urgent matters to get in the way of this one – which is rather important. Please pray that I will actually get this project finished and get the letters posted. My prayer is that area churches will learn of the need that AFC homes have in their very own neighborhoods. My hope is that they might begin reaching out and serving the people in their own neighborhoods. This letter is a directive of our vision which states that *"It is the Vision of The Sharing Org to realize all churches in Michigan serving the spiritual needs of the people who live in nursing and adult foster care homes."* So please pray with and for me, that I will get this project done in August and that it will have the effect of inspiring many churches into caring for the residents in their own communities.

Please pray for Jenn & Drew who volunteer with us. They have experienced a little antagonism that has caused a little concern. Nothing very serious, I don't think, but still it was serious enough to remind us that there are very real spiritual battles going on in the homes. Please pray that they would be comforted in their efforts and know the presence of Christ with them.

Also, please pray for me as I travel, this month, to St. Louis, MO to speak at a church about serving the needs of their own community in the AFC homes. Pray that the Spirit of our Lord might impress upon this congregation to serve Him in this way.

And finally, I want you to know just how much I appreciate you for supporting our work with your prayers and financial gifts. I find that each month I am surprised by the reality of those of you who earnestly pray with us on behalf of the people that we serve. I feel that the words "thank you" are too little to express my real gratitude but alas, these words are the best that I have to offer. I do pray that you know just how much I appreciate you. I want to remind you that I pray for you by name. Each and every day I call out to God to bless and encourage you through His Spirit. Again, this is not much, but I do pray that knowing this, you will find comfort.

I pray you have a blessed month.

In Him,



John

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

(2 Corinthians 1:3-5)