

Loon Area Christian Ministry

January/February/March, 2010

Personal Note from Skip

Driving home from the health club on Thanksgiving morning, I noticed several cars parked off the highway at the foot of a long driveway that wound its way uphill. There's a family that has a lot to be thankful for, I thought to myself. At the top of the driveway is the home of Danny Bourassa, who has been the subject of many people's prayers, our own included. He had just gone through a transplant of the greater part of his digestive system. Waging a war against his body was a rare disease that had caused him to lose so much weight as to be almost unrecognizable. Last year hope was fading. This year, he's received a new lease on life.

Prayer has been a large part of this ministry from the very beginning. We began our prayer letter with its daily entries back in the early 80's with our ministry at Sugarloaf, and have been publishing it ever since. This past year we added an email prayer chain. At the end of each one of our prayer letters is a list of praises for the answers we've received. This past year I remember several times when emailed and printed requests were met with God's visible hand at work—it's been both inspiring and strengthening. Your prayers have made a difference, and I can't thank you enough for them.

Skip

From the "Better Half"

Dear Friends,

As most of you know, I have a small bead/jewelry shop located in the thrift store that helps support our ministry. Last year I was approached by the manager of the local crisis pregnancy center who asked me to make salvation bracelets for their clients. Each month it seems that more and more are being given away and making an impact on the lives of their (usually young) recipients. Each bracelet has colored beads separated by silver beads and has a heart or cross charm on the end.

If you are not familiar with these bracelets you can google Salvation Bracelets and find a few sights on line. The colored beads represent different aspects of the gospel message as follows:

Black-SIN-all have sinned

Red-BLOOD OF JESUS-only the blood of Jesus pays for our sin

White-CLEAN-when we receive Jesus our sin is washed away

Blue-HOLY SPIRIT-He leads and guides us into truth

Green-GROWTH-we must grow in Christ
Gold-HEAVEN-when we die we will go to Heaven where there are streets of gold!

I was excited to learn that one lady who received a bracelet is using hers to tell others about Jesus! After accepting Christ herself, she used the bracelet to share the gospel with a friend of hers and the two of them showed up at the ministry so her friend could have one of her own! Our God can use the simplest things to change a life. Loon Area Christian Ministry supplies the materials, I assemble the bracelets and other volunteers use the bracelets to share the Good News of Jesus Christ to those in need of His love and mercy.

Joyce

Loon Mountain

After a delayed start due to unseasonably warm weather, Loon now has all of its trails open and great skiing conditions.

I got an upsetting call the other morning from the head of Human Resources at Loon. She informed me that they had just sent an employee to the hospital by ambulance for a heart attack and it didn't look good. When I arrived at the hospital I discovered that he had died. At 62 years of age, Paul Vonverde was a much-beloved ski instructor who had been at Loon for years. I'm presently putting together a memorial service for him that will be held this Saturday after the lifts close. I, and many of those who knew him much better than I did, are going to miss him.

Christmas Eve

About 170 people crowded into the Governor Adam's lodge for our annual Christmas Eve service. This year I asked Rev. Ray Bandi, of New Hope Fellowship, to bring the message, and he did so very powerfully, wrapping up with the story of a woman professor who was an agnostic and ended up a believer when she finished her battle with cancer. We gave away six Bibles, and over twenty "Jesus" booklets and twenty "Jesus" DVD's following the service. In addition, we collected a record \$1030 for the benefit of an ambassador friend of mine whose wife has just been diagnosed with stage four

(terminal) cancer. He was both surprised and grateful to get a check for twice that amount as our ministry matched what people gave that night.

Downhill Worship

We started our DH worship services the Sunday before Christmas, but attendance has been very light, due mainly to the weather. I was expecting another “crowd” in the single digits, which corresponded closely with the temps outside this past Sunday and was very surprised when twenty people showed up. Interesting—I rarely become discouraged, especially with numbers, but I was feeling this way that morning. In retrospect I think I would have felt better regardless of the amount who showed up—just being with those folks is a personally rewarding experience, but still, it’s nice to be on the receiving end of God’s encouragement.

Waterville Valley (by Rev. Shirley Marcroft)

We’re excited and encouraged as we see God transform lives and opens doors in Waterville Valley. We’ve been praying for people’s hearts to be stirred up with a yearning for God, and it’s happening! We’ve seen a huge transformation in people’s acceptance of us and our ministry at WV. The residents, business people, property owners, employees, and guests now see us as “one of them”.

I was recently invited to join the WV residents women’s group “Girls Night Out”. This group meets monthly for social activities and networking (ed.—folks, this is a biggy. I had expected Shirley would never be accepted in the community because she lived so far away. I can’t tell you how glad I am to have been proven wrong.)

Our ministry has also become part of the local business association and I’m serving on several subcommittees. My work in the community has been received with the message it was intended to convey: God cares about you and we care about you. The response has been a level of acceptance never before experienced during all my time at WV. A few residents are becoming regular church attendees and contributors, the employees see us as friends and supporters and second home owners are becoming regular and repeat attendees. I’m both humbled and grateful to see the shoots of growth coming from the seeds we’ve been planting.

This ski season, New Life is providing 2 church services each Sunday morning: 10 a.m. in Town Square at the “Meeting Place” Room, and an 11:30 on mountain service on the deck of the Sunnyside Lodge--what an incredible view of God’s creation.

Christmas at WV

It was exciting to witness God at work in people’s lives during our Christmas eve services. We offered two services: a 5:30 pm short service for families with little children; and a 7 pm traditional candlelight service. It was so encouraging to see WV residents and their families attend. These are folks with whom I’ve been building relationships for the past year-and-a-half. After both services people came up to me to say they’d be attending our service on the mountain..

My message was about how much God loved them and how that love is shown even on the cross. I highlighted the message with a video "The Father's Love Letter", and concluded by encouraging people to commit their lives to Christ. I don’t know how many did or didn’t, but from people’s attitudes at the end of the service, I wouldn’t be surprised if many made a first or recommitment. The sad, stressed, indifferent-to-God attitudes that people had at the beginning of the service were replaced by expressions of joy, relief and exuberant happiness as God’s love became real to them. It was truly amazing.

One couple looked very bored and blasé during the first part of the service, but at the end they ran up to shake my hand, hug me, and share how much the service meant to them. Their new found joy was as exciting to witness as it was surprising to see, considering their attitudes at the beginning.

One of the Public Safety guys came with his family. He gave me a huge hug at the end - and just beamed with joy in God—a big change from the way he’s previously related to me. Awesome !!!!!

Also, as chaplain to the Fire Dept., I’ve been visiting with a man who is terminally ill. He accepted Christ just weeks before his death.

The Book

Is going great but have had to put it on the back burner for a few weeks during the holidays and until I get this newsletter/prayerletter out. I worked on it the other night and it felt like “coming home”—a real sense of “this is what I should be doing.” I’m hoping to finish up the first of my five subject within the next month or two and then submit the manuscript to some professional writer friends for their review and editing.

Financial Report

(Received from the Thrift Store, Real Estate Income, Weddings and Donations for calendar year 2009)

Budgeted	Received	Difference
97810	107297	9487*

*While individual donations were down 10%, we ended up well in the black due to an unusually (as in best in its history) good year for our thrift store (praise God from whom all blessings flow!)

Encore

We're faced with a very new problem: we're running out of clothing. For some reason, the amount of donations we're receiving has declined. We usually put winter clothing out until February 14th, but ran out the first of January. Also, we usually accumulate a large amount of summer clothing, but recently discovered that we've less than a half of what we usually start with. Please pray for God's wisdom to understand what's happening and how to respond to it. Thanks!

Blessed to be a Blessing

This year we gave away more than \$33,000 from special offerings, general funds and invested income earmarked for missions. Recipients of those funds include six missionaries—two in Guatemala, one in the Philippines, two who are starting ministries at ski resorts and a girl who is supervising a Christian program of mentoring at-risk teens. We've contributed to several who were facing financial difficulties due to life-threatening health issues, purchased heating oil for those who couldn't afford it, paid bills incurred by a Loon employee who was prevented from working when his mother went through cancer surgery and almost died, purchased a car, contributed to the area food bank, crisis pregnancy center, ambulance company, spent close to \$1600 in bibles and literature that we gave away, provided dental care for an unemployed man in need of some serious work and stopped a family's electricity from being turned off when he was unemployed. I can't tell you what a joy it is to be able to be of such help, both to those who don't know the Lord and those who are spreading his Word. If it weren't for your contributions, this wouldn't be possible, so on behalf of all those we're able to help because of you, a big THANK-YOU!

Across the Desk

Here's how this works," Gabriel explained to the man at Heaven's gate: "You need 100 points to make it into heaven. Tell me all the good things you've done, and on the basis of how much good there is in each, I'll assign a number of points. When you reach 100 points, you're in."

"Okay," the man said, "I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart."

"That's wonderful," says Gabriel, "that's worth three points."

"Three points?" said the man incredulously. "Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my money and service."

"Terrific!" said Gabriel, "that's certainly worth a point."

"One point?" said the man, beginning to show a bit of panic. "Well, how about this:

I opened a shelter for the homeless in my city, and fed needy people by the hundreds during holidays."

"Fantastic, that's good for two more points," said the angel.

"*Two points?*" cried the man in desperation. "At this rate the only way that I'll get into heaven is by the grace of God!"

"Come on in," said Gabriel.

Bryan Chapell in *Holiness by Grace* (Men of Int. 7/28/09)

(Need a smile? This should do it)

There were 3 good arguments that Jesus was Black:

1. He called everyone brother
2. He liked Gospel
3. He didn't get a fair trial

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was Jewish:

1. He went into His Father's business
2. He lived at home until he was 33
3. He was sure his Mother was a virgin and his Mother was sure He was God

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was Italian:

1. He talked with His hands
2. He had wine with His meals
3. He used olive oil

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was a Californian:

1. He never cut His hair
2. He walked around barefoot all the time
3. He started a new religion

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was an American Indian:

1. He was at peace with nature
2. He ate a lot of fish
3. He talked about the Great Spirit

But then there were 3 equally good arguments that Jesus was Irish:

1. He never got married.
2. He was always telling stories.
3. He loved green pastures.

But the most compelling evidence of all - 3 proofs that Jesus was a woman:

1. He fed a crowd at a moment's notice when there was virtually no food
2. He kept trying to get a message across to a bunch of men who just didn't get it
3. And even when He was dead, He had to get up because there was still work to do