

Loon Area Christian Ministry

April/May/June 2008

About this Issue. . .

Beginning with this newsletter, we're moving from a bi-monthly to a quarterly format. Simply stated, with energy levels falling as I get older, I'm finding it increasingly difficult to get this out and still maintain my other responsibilities. Putting together the newsletter and prayer letter require about 40 hours of work. During that time, everything else takes a back seat. For instance, this week I haven't gone to the mountain for my regular day as an Ambassador and my thrice-weekly exercise regimen has stopped.

At the same time, these publications are important. Doing away with them altogether is simply out of the question. The newsletter keeps you informed about what's happening in our ministry, and the prayer letter provides one of the few opportunities we have for a continuing ministry with those who attend our services.

Since there are prayer needs that surface that can't wait until a distant publication time, we're instituting an email prayer list for those who'd like to be on it. When a prayer need comes to my attention, either for ourselves or someone connected to our ministry, I'll shoot it off to you. If you're presently subscribing to the prayer letter and I know your email address, your name will be automatically added. While I have been intending to do this for some time, the move to a quarterly schedule now makes it a necessity. Those who have already signed up for this, or who receive our prayer letter and whose email address I know, will be contacted shortly to let you know you're "on the list." If you don't hear from me in the next week and want to be receiving our emailed prayer alerts, then just email me and I'd be glad to add your name.

Also included in this issue is our annual budget and response form, enabling us to know how you'd like to be involved. Some of you are undergoing some pretty difficult financial strains. Let me emphasize that your prayer support is every bit as helpful as the financial support we receive. While the latter makes our ministry possible, your prayers make our efforts effective. So even if you're not in a position to contribute financially, please don't feel you have to do so in order to be an important part of this

outreach.

Personal Notes. . .

On the other end of the phone was John Livoti, a long-time friend and active member of the ministry at Sugarloaf Mountain in Maine. He was calling to see if I was going to be attending their 25th anniversary celebration. I had gone to the 20th, but in thinking about their 25th, I felt a sense of detachment. The ministry at Sugarloaf has grown and changed so much that it bears little resemblance to what I said "good-bye" to 18 years ago. When I left Sugarloaf it was a viable, but seasonal ministry. Now it's an established year-'round church with a vibrant outreach to the resort of which they are a part.

"I could never have done what Earl and Pam did (the clergy couple who took over from me)." I told John. As I continued expounding how our callings and talents were different, I began to realise something about myself: pastoring a regular church, even on a temporary basis, was not something I would ever enjoy. I had always expected to do interim work when I retire in five years, filling in for churches who were between ministers. But now I realised that I'd be miserable in such a setting. My heart has so attached itself to the environment of resort ministries that ministering in a normal church setting has all the appeal of going to a dentist who doesn't believe in novacaine.

Speaking of retirement, I've got 5 years to go. Our plans, Lord willing, are to move to the Bangor, Maine area to be near our grandkids. I'd like to keep my hand in resort ministry and Bar Harbor is just about an hour away. In addition, I've been thinking that the Lord may be leading me into a writing career in my retirement years. I know I've got a long ways to go before that becomes a reality, but then who knows what can happen in five years?

*Blessings,
Skip*

From the "Better Half" . . .

Dear Friends,

The calendar says it's spring, but as I look out our

windows, it looks very much like winter. Still, I know that underneath the mountains of snow—the heights of which we haven't seen around here in years--there lies a new birth of shoots waiting to announce to the world that "spring has sprung!" I can hardly wait!

A lot of exciting things are going on in our ministry and personal lives. The Alpha Course we helped lead was a huge success! A few people accepted the Lord and they and several others are hungry for more of God's word! What a privilege it was to be used by Him in this wonderful program! If you're not yet familiar with it, I would encourage you to look into doing the Alpha Course in your own church or community.

The web site for my jewelry did not work out so I canceled it before it became a financial nightmare. I seem to do better with one-on-one sales and selling to a local jewelry store. I will be putting my collection into a jewelry show on April 12-13 in Laconia, NH.

For some time now I have been trying to get out of our thrift store. I enjoy the people I work with and our customers are great. The job, however, has taken its toll on me physically. At the end of most days I am in a lot of pain. I tried massage, chiropractic and phys-cal therapy. All work for a short time but each physi-cian tells me the same thing: get out of your job! Well, I think an answer has come that will enable me to gradually do just that. I am opening a small jewelry and bead shop within the store. Encore is giving me 100 square feet for what they would earn from that space plus expenses. The space is at the front of the store, which will enable me to keep an eye on both it and Encore. As my business grows (that's the plan), I will be working less and less for Encore. The good news is we already have someone who would love to take my place as its manager!

More good news. Skip and I are looking forward to two weeks off in May. We are going to North Carolina to visit my family and then on to Georgia to visit our son, Mike. We will be meeting his new love, Natalie. Then in the fall we are looking forward to returning to California and spending a week in Hawaii! Life is good God Bless! Joyce

Loon Mountain

A First for our Easter Services!

The forecast temperature was 9 degrees and the wind was expected to be 10-12 mph. The result? A "real feel" of 5 below zero for Easter morning. Not wanting to preach to a bunch of popsicles, I needed an alternative. With temperatures that low I didn't

expect last year's crowd of 400. One hundred fifty to two hundred would be more like it. On the other hand, it was going to be a clear morning and people could see the sun rise if we were outside. But then they wouldn't enjoy it much if they were freezing to death. Besides, past experience has shown that you always have folks showing up inadequately dressed for an outdoor service. Such were the thoughts juggling for position in my mind as I considered tampering with tradition.

Going into the Summit Café, I checked with its manager, Kishana, to see how she would feel about holding it inside. "That'd be fine!" she replied, and we talked about some of the logistics involved. I then headed down to the administration building and talked with the Food and Beverage manager. After batting around the possibilities for awhile he declared: "With those temps you need to be inside."

So inside we went. I arranged the sound system and stood on a chair at one end of the octagon-shaped building. People started arriving, and arriving, and arriving. A couple of times I asked if they could move forward to make more room, and they willingly complied. But still they came, and came and came. As I started the service, Joyce called out from the back to see if I we could make more room—many were still outside. I told her I didn't think we could. Then folks found spaces I didn't even know existed and a bunch more were able to crowd inside. Three hundred people eventually made their way indoors, leaving another 75 out in the cold (literally).

In order to address the increased attendance (this is the 2nd year in a row we've had around 400) next year's plans include another "first"—holding two services back to back. Now, if I can just figure out how to make the sun come up a second time. . .

Downhill Worship Services

Attendance peaked at close to 60 for our final service on Easter morning, giving us an average of 29 for the year—our second highest ever. Even more important than those figures however, were two responses we got: one who said they were doing some spiritual searching and another who said they had accepted Christ. I had asked you to pray for someone to accept Christ in our prayerletter--quite a "coincidence", wouldn't you say? ☺

As I look back over the season, I recall several conversations with folks at the end of the service which led to opportunities for ministry afterwards. I know there's some connection between my presentation for the morning and people's openness in seeking me out afterwards. but I have vet to make

it—I'm just glad it's happening.

Follow Ups

As some of you know, one of my responsibilities during the ski season is to follow up on those whose injuries get them an ambulance ride to the hospital. In most cases the follow-up consists of a phone call to the person who, by the time I reach him, as been treated and released from the hospital. In cases where the patient is admitted, a visit is in store. After speaking with the guest, I'll email the patrollers to let them know the nature of their injuries and their prognosis. More often than not I also convey their appreciation for the care they received. It's a ministry that I've enjoyed and the patrollers have appreciated. I had one particular case this past year in which the injured person had to remain hospitalized longer than anticipated and was suffering from loneliness and isolation in being separated from his family.. Even though he didn't regard himself as "religious", he responded positively to my offer of prayer, and the visit left him in much better spirits than when I arrived. To date I've followed up on a little over 100 people, roughly about 10% of all of our injuries.

Encore Thrift Shop

We've been sprucing up the store recently. A leaking vent pipe into the customer's bathroom led to my replacing the ceiling tiles, light and fan. Joyce wanted to paint it, so I picked out some paint and good friend Scott MacIntyre lent his painting skills to make it look like new.

The back room that used to house our 99c items is being transformed into a "boutique" filled with our new and higher priced items. Scott went to work on that room too, and the painting job he did made it look so good that I toyed with painting the whole store, but the expense would be prohibitive.

FINANCES

(Received from Thrift Store, Real Estate Income, Weddings and Donations through March)

Budgeted	Received	Difference
22,200	23,863	1,663

Across the Desk. . .

In his documentary *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*, Simcha Jacobovici claims archaeological evidence that disproves the resurrection of Christ. He says that the words "Jesus son of Joseph" found on a burial container near Jerusalem refer to Jesus of Nazareth. He also claims to have identified Jesus' DNA.

How valid are these conclusions? The Israel

Antiquities Authority calls them "nonsense." Other secular and religious scholars agree. Jesus and Joseph were common names in first-century Judea. And Jacobovici needs DNA samples from Jesus to compare with the bones in the tomb. Obviously, that's impossible!

But there are strong arguments in favor of Jesus' resurrection. Most compelling is the fact that every disciple except John died a martyr's death. Central to their message was Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:29-32). If Christ had not been raised from the dead, why did the disciples choose to die rather than deny it?

Assaults on our faith and on the Scriptures come and go. Don't be shaken by these baseless attacks. Two thousand years ago, the disciples were eyewitnesses to the real tomb of Jesus. The angels told them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:5-6).

---Dennis Fisher as quoted in Our Daily Bread, 3/25/2008

Modern Day Foot Washing

"Since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet" (John 13:14).

Every Wednesday afternoon, Richard Selzer visits his public library to mix it up with elders by the newspaper rack. As the young doctor held the door for one wobbly gent in his 80s, he apologized for his gait, saying, "The hinges is rusty." As "Neckerchief" sat down to read *Time* magazine, he hissed softly in pain.

"The hinges?" the doctor whispered.

"Nope. The toes."

"What's wrong with them?"

"The nails is too long. I can't get at 'em. I'm walkin' on 'em." Richard slipped out to his office to fetch the toenail cutters. Returning, he told Neckerchief, "Come to the men's room. I'll cut your toenails."

"Don't untie my shoes," the old man cautioned. "I just slide 'em on and off." Doc peeled away two pairs of socks, revealing dried blood and big toes resembling goat horns. It took an hour to remove those claws and cleanse the toes. Once his socks and shoes were back on, Neckerchief stood up and tested his feet. "That's a Cadillac of a job!" he exclaimed. "It don't hurt. How much do I owe ya?"

"On the house," Doctor Selzer replied. Now he always brings nail clippers, and later on trimmed the toenails of "Stovepipe," then of "Mrs. Fringe" (tying up the ladies' room for half an hour).

—Ted Engstrom /Paul Cedar in *Compassionate Leadership*