

Loon Area Christian Ministry

April/May/June, 2009

Personal Notes. . .

Dear Friends,

It's 3am (6am east coast time) and I'm sitting in a Los Angeles hotel room preparing to wrap up some family business following my mother's passing in December.

I regularly solicit people's prayers when I'm flying—not for safety but for the folks I'll meet on the flights. I've got to tell you about yesterday.

It was the second leg of the trip—from Washington, DC to Los Angeles. An empty seat separated me from the middle-aged Asian lady sitting next to the window. Curious, I glanced at the book she was reading. It appeared to be a photography or art book (it turned out to be the former) written in what must have been her native language.

An interesting movie (Frost/Nixon) and the vacant middle seat discouraged conversation during the greater part of the trip. Then the kid in front of me reclined his seat, making it impossible to use my computer, I asked her if it'd be alright if I moved to the middle seat.

It was a motherly, but revealing gesture. I was briefly tangled up in headphone wires and juggling with my computer when she reached over, lifted the seat arm, and in that thoughtful gesture, put an end to my wrestling as I simply slid over. Remembering her pleasant demeanour during some brief exchanges earlier in the trip I thought to myself: I'll bet she's a Christian.

We started talking. Her heavy Korean accent mixed with the noise of the plane had me straining to catch her words, but it was well worth the effort. Finding out that I was heading for Los Angeles, she said she had just spent a week out there, taking her 21-year old son to Disneyland. It had all the sounds of a nice family outing until she dropped the bomb. "He beat me up." "He what?" I exclaimed, shocked. "He beat me up." Her tone of voice made it sound like a routine occurrence and I'm beginning to think battered-wife (or in this case, parent) syndrome. "He has autism, and when he gets upset he beats me up. The last time I had to call the police." "How do you protect yourself?" "I lock myself in the bathroom,

but that's only after he's already hit me."

She has had to call the police on him in the past and concerned friends have done the same thing, but one quickly understood that the violence toward her on his part was a pattern that she had learned to live with for the past nearly 20 years. Although married, her husband is of little help. Thoughts of comparing her to a battered wife disappeared as she explained that when her son's problem became apparent, over twelve experts in autism concluded that his case was so severe the only recourse was institutionalisation. "We tried that, but they had to medicate him to the point that he was almost unconscious most of the time. I wasn't going to consign him to that kind of a life, so I took him home." "How do you handle it when he beats you up?" I asked. "I pray," she responded. "You're a Christian, aren't you?" "Yes," she replied, "in fact it was because of my son's problem that I became one."

She went on to explain that she had been sceptical of the Christian faith and an unbeliever until a friend gave her a copy of the Bible at a time when she was well aware of her inability to cope on her own. "God met me in the pages of that book, and I've been reading it ever since and relying on him ever since." She reached into her purse and took out a couple of miniature books the size of two thumbs put together, complete with little snaps on their leather covers. One held the book of Proverbs and the other the Psalms.

As the plane taxied to the gate she said: "now you'll have something for your sermon." "Now I'll have something for my newsletter," I replied.

Joyce's Jottings. . .

Dear Friends,

Ahh, small town life. Since leaving the position of manager at the Encore Thrift Store I have heard a few stories from the Rumor Weed. (You may have heard about him in Veggie Tales). It has been rumored that I purchased Creation Station, a paint-your-own-pottery shop in our mall. I was renting space there for a couple of months to see if I would like it, but I certainly do not have that kind of capital. The 2nd

rumor hit me this morning. I was asked if we really sold Encore. Over the years I have heard so many stories about our business and ministry that this does not surprise me. The enemy would like nothing better than to discourage us and stop the work being done through Encore and if he has to resort to the Rumor Weed, well I guess we'll survive.

We welcome Linda McIntyre, our new manager at Encore. She has a lot of energy, fresh ideas and a strong husband who has been a great help as well. As for me, I am enjoying working in the shop a few hours a week and working in my bead/jewelry shop the rest of the time. I am renting a small portion of the Encore shop right up front. You can see a few of my pieces if you go to myhalfmoonjewelry.etsy.com (very important to include both dots). This summer I will be displaying my jewelry in the Artisans Gift Shop at Loon Mountain again and hopefully at a couple of craft shows.

By the time you read this, Skip and I will be in Quebec City enjoying a few days away. Next month we are looking forward to driving to New York to visit daughter LeAnne and husband Rick and then on to DC to see Lori and Mark. A little break before plunging into the summer season.

Loon Mountain

It was a good season in spite of slight slip in attendance due to the diminished number of skiers over previous years. One of the things I've started doing is spending more time with those who attend our services such as skiing or having lunch with them afterwards. I'm thoroughly enjoying these opportunities for further interaction and look forward to continuing them next year.

Our Easter Sunrise service set a record! For low attendance, that is ☺. We had 130 with another ten at the regular Downhill Worship service at 11am. That's compared to last year's figures of 375 and 55, respectively. Was it something I said? ☺ No, I've finally concluded that attendance figures on Easter have nothing to do with temperatures (last year was our coldest on record with a windchill of five below zero). Nor does it have to do with whether Easter is early or late. Instead it has everything to do with how many people are in town, which has a lot to do with skiing conditions. Being the last day of the season and coming after two weeks of frequent rain left the town almost deserted this Easter Sunday weekend.

I have nominated myself for the mountain's newest and most prestigious award—in fact it's one I've created myself. 'Tis the "egg on my face" award, presented periodically to those who do an excellent

job at fouling things up. Why am I so deserving of this honor? I initially gave the mountain the wrong time for the Easter Sunrise service.

The Friday before Easter weekend I woke with a panic. It dawned on me that the time I had given the mountain for the sunrise service a couple of weeks before was an hour off. In a flurry of emails and phone calls I sought to repair the damage. Fortunately I was able to contact most local newspapers in time and alert the TV station. Unfortunately, the mountain had already sent out the incorrect time to their numerous publicity sources, but quickly issued the revisions and made adjustments to minimize the damage. As a result only ten people didn't get the corrected time and showed up an hour late. We prepared ourselves for that contingency by providing a second service.

A big thanks to Dave and Judy Snyder for helping out during the service—Dave's help was especially important in setting up. An improvement—for the first time in 20 years we had a more-than-adequate sound system. I finally broke down and bought some high-quality equipment for our summer services that we used for Easter.

Waterville Valley

(As reported by Rev. Shirley Marcroft)

The sunrise on Easter was awesome !!! It was cold, but not too brutal..... around 0 degrees at 5:30 before the sun came up --- and of course some wind to greet the 125 people who attended. The service in the valley was good, too. We got to see the sun rise again, as we were setting up the room in the village. Most of the people had left the valley by then because of mud season, but amazingly ten came to the service—all WV residents—God is beginning to touch hearts!

I had requested your prayers, and emailed requests for slopeside services to WV's management, but was still amazed the day they approached me and asked me to do an outdoor service on the deck of the Sunnyside Lodge! They had been so immovable before your prayers and emails! Those 11am services were held from Feb 15 through Palm Sunday, were very well received, and we're looking forward to continuing them next ski season.

In addition to our slopeside services, we continued our 9am service in Town Square, with the number of attendees growing from winter into spring.

Our summer/fall 10am services will begin Memorial Day weekend by Corcoran's Pond in Town Square, with the indoor location used in case of rain.

“The Book”

I’m making progress, albeit not as much as I’d like. Hopefully the time between seasons will give me a chance to surge ahead. (For those of you new to this newsletter, I’m working on a book on ski ministries).

I quickly realized that I’m not going to be able to include the nine-ten ministers I had originally planned on featuring in this work. There just wouldn’t be room to do a good job on all of them. Rather the number will be closer to five, but I’ll be bringing in the experiences of the others, as well as my own, in telling about them.

The more I get into writing, the more ideas I have for things I’d like to write—enough to make me wonder if God isn’t calling me in this direction—now there’s a mind-blower for you.

FINANCES

(Received from the Thrift Store, Real Estate Income, Weddings and Donations through March, 2009)

<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Received</u>	<u>Difference</u>
27,150	22,548	(4,602)

Across the Desk. . .

“An Imposing Argument”

(John Leo is a columnist for *U.S. News & World Report*. His book, *How the Russians Invented Baseball and Other Essays of Enlightenment*, showcases his humor. He’s also written *Two Steps Ahead of the Thought Police*, a romp through the irrational world of political correctness, and *Incorrect Thoughts*, a thoughtful analysis of our wayward culture.)

I’m struggling to understand the "don't impose your values" argument. According to this popular belief, it's wrong to vote your moral convictions unless everybody else already shares them. Nobody ever explains exactly what constitutes an offense in voting one's values, but the complaints appear to be aimed almost solely at conservative Christians, who are viewed as divisive when they try to "force their religious opinions on us." But as UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh writes, "That's what most

lawmaking is—trying to turn one's opinions on moral or pragmatic subjects into law."

Those who think Christians should keep their moral views to themselves, it seems to me, are logically bound to deplore many praiseworthy causes, including the abolition movement, which was mostly evangelical churches courageously applying Christian ideas of equality to the entrenched institution of slavery. The slave owners, by the way, frequently used "don't impose your values" arguments, contending that whether they owned blacks or not was nobody else's business.

Adapted from *U.S. News & World Report* (11/29/04) by permission, as printed in *Men of Integrity*

Oswald Chambers

“My Utmost for His Highest”

June 22

We have to recognize that sin is a fact of life, not just a shortcoming. Sin is blatant mutiny against God, and either sin or God must die in my life. The New Testament brings us right down to this one issue— if sin rules in me, God’s life in me will be killed; if God rules in me, sin in me will be killed. There is nothing more fundamental than that. The culmination of sin was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and what was true in the history of God on earth will also be true in your history and in mine— that is, sin will kill the life of God in us. We must mentally bring ourselves to terms with this fact of sin. It is the only explanation why Jesus Christ came to earth, and it is the explanation of the grief and sorrow of life.

March 19

Living a life of faith means never knowing where you are being led. But it does mean loving and knowing the One who is leading. It is literally a life of *faith*, not of understanding and reason—a life of knowing Him who calls us to go. Faith is rooted in the knowledge of a Person, and one of the biggest traps we fall into is the belief that if we have faith, God will surely lead us to success in the world.