

Impressions of the Journey

A publication of the Visitors from the Past Ministry—June 2008

Dear Friends,

It is time for a newsletter of some sort isn't it? I have fallen far behind in writing for several reasons. We have been praying about which direction to take with the newsletter. I love keeping in touch with you all, however the cost of mailing is getting quite prohibitive. The postage we pay is the lowest rate we can get by using a non-profit bulk rate with bar coding but it is still a hefty cost. Our mailing list at this time is over 2000 names! By the time we print the letter and pay the postage we have over \$1000 invested. Then if there are address corrections we pay \$.70 each for the corrections and sending the letter on. While that does not seem like much we are finding that with every letter we have 30 to 50 returns and that adds up.



So the question becomes what is the best way to stay in touch with everyone? The answer...We do not know for sure! But we are going to try a few things. First, we are going to try sending a smaller letter several times per year. We have said many times that if you want our newsletter we want you to have it. However, we have names on the mailing list that we have received since this ministry began over 16 years ago. So it is conceivable that there are names on the list of folks who no longer want to receive it. Therefore we are also going to try to update the list. You will find in this letter and the next one a tear-off reply form that we are asking you return if you want to continue to receive the newsletter in the mail. If we do not receive a reply from you your name will be deleted. On the reply form you may also indicate if you would be just as happy to receive a notice by email when the letter is posted at the website. You may also email us in order to receive the newsletter by email.

Secondly, we have been posting short updates at the website and I am now keeping a blog at the site which is a little more up to date than a newsletter. However, we know there are those who do not have the internet and there are those who do not want to have the internet!

We are hoping that these changes will work out to reduce our costs and still keep us in touch with you all. If you do have access to the internet and are part of a church that wants to follow our comings and goings we ask that you make a copy of our updates and share them with you church family.

NEWSLETTER REPLY FORM

I want to receive your newsletter by email: _____ @ _____

I want to receive your newsletter in the mail. My address is:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

There are a number of things that we have been praying about in addition to the newsletter in regard to how we maintain this ministry. As you can imagine the cost of diesel fuel is taking a toll on us and making some changes in the way we are able to do ministry. We no longer hitch up the trailer and take it with us for a few days of ministry. We cut the fuel mileage in half every time we hitch up so we have to weigh that against what it will cost us to go out and back and even stay at the Motel 6 for a couple of nights. I will admit to you that this is a hard decision for us. One of the blessings of giving up our house and living full time in the trailer has been that wherever we go we have our home and it is more restful to sleep in your own bed at night! So what does this mean about the amount of ministry we do in the future? We are trying to be good stewards of all that God is providing for us but the ends are sometimes getting harder for us to bring together. In addition to the cost of fuel are the finances of the ministry in general. We are finding unfortunately that in many places there has been a decrease in the gifts given to support the ministry when we go out. So after prayer and discussion Jim and I have made some decisions about changes that need to be made in regard to what we ask for when we are out in ministry. In the future we will be asking for mileage reimbursement at whatever the federal rate is plus a free will offering to be taken after the time of ministry. We realize there will be churches that will still not want to take an offering and for those churches we will discuss the amount of the gift given to us for the ministry. We will not issue a flat rate gift as there will be places and times that require different gifts but we will have an amount set before we come to the church for ministry.

I have always said that I will not remain in the ministry if I have to issue pleas for money all the time and that is still true. I do not intend to send out a plea for money at every turn but we both believe God would have us to let you know our needs. We are struggling financially at this time and if that continues we will need to rethink how the ministry is done in the future. We want to be available to do ministry any time you want us in any place you want us but we will not continue to go in debt to go out to do ministry. So what does this mean about the amount of ministry we do in the future? We are not quite sure but we are beginning with these steps and we will see where God leads us.

We want to thank all of you who are supporting us with ongoing gifts. You are the reason we are able to continue ministering as we make these adjustments. We invite other churches and individuals to pray about becoming monthly, bi monthly or one time supporters to help us continue the journey.

Change Service Requested

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