

Mission News

The Care Mission Quarterly Newsletter for October - December 2016

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“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: REJOICE!”

Philippians 4:4

A Christmas memory flooded my mind the other morning as I was warming up our box truck to begin my day at the mission. There was a light frost on the windshield, as I looked for the ice scraper I suddenly recalled a Christmas Eve I hadn't thought of in decades.

For many years my dad, who passed away in 2002, worked as a service manager and truck driver for a mobile home company. By truck driver I mean he was the one who drove the truck that pulled the mobile homes from the sales lot to the owner's property or rented space. When I was in high school, some forty years ago, I'd work there as well on Saturdays, summers, and school breaks. Working alongside my dad and two uncles enabled me to learn many useful skills. I could do basic plumbing, electrical, and carpentry work before I could legally drive. I developed those skills into a career for more than 25 years.

During one of those Decembers of my high school years a young couple came to my dad's employer to purchase a mobile home. They had lost their home, I can't recall how, so they and their three small children were homeless. They had pulled together every cent they had as a down payment and on December 23rd they were approved for a loan to purchase a new mobile home. The young father and husband pleaded for his new home to be delivered and set up on Christmas Eve so his family could move in Christmas Day since this would be the only Christmas present they'd receive.

County and state regulations weren't nearly as strict back then compared to today, but still this wasn't a RV trailer, this was mobile home. To deliver and completely set up their home in one winter's day was a big ask. Daylight would be an issue. And then to do so on Christmas Eve? As service manager it was my dad's call. When the company's set-up crew refused to work, my dad "volunteered" me to help him do the job. This wasn't unusual, my dad often volunteered me for different task.

Now my dad was an excellent truck driver. He was accomplished at pulling mobile homes into places you'd think were impossible and as a service manager he was well organized and deliberate in his decision making. But, it had been years since he'd actually set-up a mobile home. I knew this was going to be a case where he helped me do the set-up, not the other way around.

So that Christmas Eve morning we headed out early. Unfortunately we ran into some problems getting the mobile home onto the lot. We leveled and blocked up the home in record time. As we worked the darkness was catching us. At some point a light mixture of rain and sleet began to fall. We hooked up the electrical before things got too messy. Again, in those days an inspection was not always required. In this case the electric meter was already set. We just had to wire in the main disconnect on the outside pole to the inside breaker box. We finished hooking up the water and sewer with flash lights.

When we were done we were extremely cold, perhaps the coldest I've ever been, wet, and muddy. As we gathered our tools preparing to leave the young couple arrived and began to *rejoice*. They had assumed that we had left, unable to complete the job due to the weather and darkness. When they returned to find it completed and that they could spend their Christmas in their new home they both were overjoyed.

I wish I could tell you I was all warm inside and filled with "good will toward man" and all that stuff as I threw my coveralls in the back of the truck and climbed into the cab, but I wasn't. I was tired, cold, and just plain miserable. I just wanted to get a hot shower and crawl into my warm bed.

But, the thing I remember most about the whole experience was when my dad got in and cranked up the truck. I can still see the freezing rain and sleet mixture through the moon light as we sat there warming the truck up and trying to get the thin sheet of ice off the windshield. Once we were ready to go my dad put the truck in gear then said to me, "Well son, Merry Christmas."

Forty years later God brought that moment back to me as I was warming up the mission truck. And I smiled and I *rejoiced* for the memory. I rejoiced because I just don't have too many good memories of me and dad. But, this is one. Together we had brought joy to a family. I'm glad I remembered it.

In all the hustle and bustle at the mission it is easy for us to fail to *rejoice* in the moment about all God is doing here. Just like I failed to enjoy the celebration of that young couple back then, in our weariness we can fail to enjoy the work of the Lord and the difference He is making to those He has given us the opportunity to serve through the Care Mission. To fail to *rejoice* is to fail to properly acknowledge Him.

We don't have all the numbers in yet, but I've no doubt that 2016 will set new high marks for the amount of food distributed and households assisted. And this will have happened in a year that proved to be our most challenging in regards to the amount of support we've received.

So let us rejoice always in the Lord, because He is able and faithful and worthy. REJOICE!

Beginning in February we start FREE cooking classes. These classes will teach how to be more economical when shopping and more nutritional when cooking. Signups will begin soon.

Closing the thrift store has proven to be the right decision. Isn't the wisdom of the Lord always the right decision? It would have been impossible for us to distribute the amount of food we have over the past six months if we were still operating the thrift store.

Our next Board Meeting will be Monday, January 23, 2017 at the Care Mission. This will be the final meeting for our 2016 Board of Directors. Please keep us in prayer as we move forward.

We have been blessed this holiday season with tremendous support through food drives and monetary donations. We won't attempt to list them all, but be sure the Lord knows and will bless each. We greatly appreciate the support of our community and are always humbled by your kindness.

Please include in your prayers the following request; the spiritual, mental, and physical wellbeing of our Board, our volunteers, our supporters, and for ourselves as we lead this ministry; our cooking classes and other outreach opportunities; protection us from the attacks of the enemy; strength and consistency from our current supporters and an out pouring of new support; a renewed sense of joy, that we do not grow weary, but rejoice in the Lord always. Amen.

Food for thought...

If you visited our home you'd believe we were Mr. and Mrs. Grinch. We have no Christmas tree, no Christmas decorations, or wrapped presents in the corner or hid in a closet, nothing to indicate we are only a few days from Christmas other than a few Christmas cards displayed on the ledge of a cabinet.

We have not always forgone the traditions of Christmas. But, all of our children are grown and moved away. Our two older grandchildren (14, 12) have grown accustomed to our lack of Christmas pageantry. Our youngest grandchild (5 mths.) is too young to care. I suppose we'll start decorating again once he's old enough to expect it.

We would however, make the argument that we celebrate the Christmas spirit all year round. In our yard are two tall strong Christmas trees we planted years ago. When our kids were small we'd buy a real tree with roots attached. We'd keep it a large bucket during Christmas then plant it afterwards. We planted probably a dozen or so. Only three have survived, two here and one where we use to live. Goats, which were a Christmas gift themselves, ate one. I can't say why the other trees died.

And then there's the wonderful truth that God has allowed us the opportunity to serve others in His name on a full time basis for nearly 11 years at the Care Mission. What an honor. And what a privilege it is to work side by side with so many men and women who volunteer their time and talents.

It is in the demanding and challenging days far from the pomp and circumstance of Christmas denoted on a calendar that the true love for Christ is best observed. In a few weeks Christmas and all that it represents will be in the rearview mirror of many. But for a few the work will continue without a parade, bright lights, or celebration. They are those who work not only at the Care Mission, but at ministries all across our county, our nation, and our world. They will serve unnoticed until next year because for the most part those they serve will go unnoticed until next year.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!
Deon and Kendra