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“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” Deuteronomy 31:8

I was looking back at the newsletter I wrote in March 2020. The virus outbreak had just started. I doubt any of us thought we would still be dealing with it a year later. We are thankful that things are starting to open back up in our area. The last report Larry had from the prison was they hoped to start letting volunteers come back in April. Pray with us that they will let the volunteers back in. The prisoners need them; especially those that don't have family. My devotional reading today began in 1 Timothy 2 which urges us to pray for those in authority. Prayer is important but we also need to stand up for Biblical values. Our country is on a downward spiral. We didn't get in this situation overnight and we can't expect things to change if we do nothing. I saw this on Facebook this week and it is spot on. 'The world is caught up in what offends everyone. We should be worried about what offends God'.

We appreciate everyone who helped with our Christmas Behind Bars Outreach. Although we couldn't help as much as we had in years past, we were thankful for what we could do. Larry drove to the Little Debbie Store in Gentry, AR on December 10. They couldn't donate enough so that every Arkansas prisoner got something, but we assured them that their donation was a blessing and very much appreciated. Their donation was given to the Tucker Unit and Maximum Security Unit in Tucker, AR; the Delta Unit in Dermott, AR; the prisoners at Arkansas Law Enforcement Academy in Camden, AR and the Hempstead County Jail. We also bought ramen noodles, starlight mints, hot cocoa packets and peanut butter cheese crackers. We couldn't go to the jail or to Tucker Unit to help distribute the sacks, but the important thing is the prisoners got a Christmas sack.

We lost two friends in December; both prisoners in Arkansas. Snuffy had been battling cancer for a few years and was 77 years old. We used to go to the Inmate Counsel banquets with him. He didn't have much contact with his family, but he thought of us as family. He didn't talk much about God or his faith until he got sick. We sent him one of Richard Headrick's 'Cancer Be Gone' books. He told us he shared things in that book with other men in his barracks who were sick. Ewok also had cancer and was just 53 years old. Larry had ministered to him for several years. He was hardheaded and never would make a commitment to the Lord. In one of the last letters he sent us, he told us he had cancer, so we sent him a 'Cancer Be Gone' book. He also told us he had been saved and was walking with the Lord. We let him know how proud we were of him and that we were praying for him.

We left for Laurel, MS on February 12 to attend the Hellfighter's Valentine Banquet. We got to Laurel Friday evening and went out to eat with a large group of the Hellfighters. All the men sat at one big table and women at another table. I'm not sure when I have laughed as much as I did that night. The banquet was actually a surprise get together for Ann Mock. Ann and her husband Brad are Hellfighters. We met them two years ago and they are very dear to us. Ann has been battling cancer for a long time. More than once, the doctors told them they couldn't do anything else for her, but God has had other plans. Brad wanted to bring her to Laurel so they could see some of their friends and thought it might encourage her to keep fighting. We will just say it snowballed from there.

The banquet was in the fellowship hall of a church and there were Hellfighters there from all over the country. We were served salad, steak, baked potato, green beans, and dessert. They gave all the women a red rose and they gave Ann a dozen red roses. She had no idea what was really going on until we had finished our meal. The people who spoke testified of Brad and Ann's faith through her journey and how they inspire others. Ann was in tears when she found out everyone was there in honor of her. They took a love offering for them before the banquet. Brad thanked everyone and shared how faithful God has been to take care of them since he can't work full time. It was a blessing to be able to go to the banquet and spend time with our Hellfighter family. Being there reminded me of the Scripture in Galatians 6:2 about bearing one another's burdens. That is exactly what we saw happen at the Valentine Banquet. Please keep Brad and Ann in your prayers.

We had originally planned to spend two nights in Laurel and come home Sunday but with the winter storm on the way we thought it best to leave after the banquet. We had to take a couple 'detours' when we got to Shreveport, LA because they had already closed some of the roads. We thought it was strange since it had not started snowing yet but having grown up in the Midwest, we sometimes forget they don't have much equipment for snow removal down here. The storm brought us 18-20" of snow. We were thankful that we made it through the storm without losing power or having pipes burst. We know some were not that fortunate.

We appreciate your prayers and financial support. I have told people that I feel like our ministry has been 'hijacked' by this virus but there are people to minister to everywhere we go. We are hopeful that in a few weeks, Larry will be back at the Tucker Unit. And with more states opening, there should be opportunities to go to rallies too.

Blessings,

Larry & Kathy Medford