



COMBINED CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES TO THE POOR

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December 2007

Hi.

Thank you so much for all the feedback I have received regarding my last letter in September. Some even jokingly dubbed it as my "epistle"! ☺! It really was an accumulation of my experience working fulltime with CCMP over the past almost 3 years now. Many of you shared with me your appreciation of the insights I shared in that letter. Thanks for that.



Since then, however, some of you have asked where I've disappeared to . . . ? Well, I've been here and I've been pretty busy too. Over the past few months the energy that would have gone into a newsletter has gone into compiling a more formal reporting format for the Ubomi Obutsha Centre. We have put out four over the past four months but, due to high printing and mailing costs we have only distributed to our major supporters, donors and network partners. They also tend to be rather large in their electronic form and so, not wanting to fill up everyone's inboxes once a month, I have avoided emailing them to everyone who I would normally mail my newsletters to. The good news however is that I have finally managed to update our website a little and all the reports are available there to download as Acrobat documents. Our web address, from



where you can download these reports as well as past newsletters and our covering documents, etc is <http://www.ccmp.org.za>. Or you can follow the link in the email that this letter came with, to directly download the Ubomi Obutsha Centre November 2007

report. I think you will find it very informative and you will see just how far we've come since I first began sending out personal newsletters!



This past year has been a very difficult one for me. There has been a lot of progress in many areas of the ministry but very little in others. Being the only "employee" in an organisation of volunteers, everything inevitably comes back to me in the end and I simply don't have the capacity to do everything that needs to be done. This has resulted in a lot of unfinished business for the year which is very frustrating and doesn't give me much room to rest – as much as I may need it.



Also regarding my personal financial support, it has been a bumpy ride this year. For understandable reasons, some of my supporters have had to withdraw their support for now but I have also gained some new ones. By the grace of God my needs have always been met during 2007 even though my overall monthly support is significantly down from this time last year. I am so thankful for the stability Alma's

established income provides at the moment, but my personal support is an area I really need to work on again for next year. A BIG "Thank you!" to those of you who have been able to stand by me this past year. I appreciate it so much.





During my first year with CCMP (2005) I worked with things just as they were – getting a “real” feel for the people and the work. During the following year I introduced many changes and we tried out a few different things. Some worked, some didn’t and some worked really well but just weren’t practical for long term maintenance. This past year we have kept much of what worked in 2006 and built on it. We established a Centre Management Team made up mostly of dedicated community volunteers and a few “outsiders”. It has been amazing to see how they have grown

and the successes of the Project over this past year have really been carried on their backs. There is still a lot of work to do regarding building the capacity of these volunteers but it has been amazing to see another group of community volunteers emerging out of the people who come to us for assistance – particularly among those who work in the garden and the teenage youth. They have become our next phase of reach into the community around the Centre and I am looking forward to what next year holds.



Unfortunately I have no “words of wisdom”, or newsy details for you here (check those reports for that kind of stuff) other than to say – enjoy your break if you have one! There are many emails going around urging us to “remember the reason for the season” and I’d like to echo that. I know we can all debate for hours whether the 25th of December as the actual birth date of Jesus Christ or not, but I just figure it’s as good a time as any to

celebrate together the redemption God has given us all through the person of Jesus, so let’s enjoy this time together! And I hope you are all blessed in the New Year with the amazing abundance God is able to give and I also hope that you are convicted by Him to sow some of that abundance into the lives of the poor in our neighbourhood. (2 Corinthians 9 : 6-15 – read it!)



Last thought I’d like to leave you with is this . . . the photos in this letter were taken at the Emanuel Youth stay-awake held as a celebration of the end of the school year. Looking at them you would think, for the most part, that they were just regular teenagers celebrating a regular event – but that’s just the amazing thing – considering that at least a third of them are, what’s termed in current jargon, OVC’s (Orphaned or Vulnerable Children) who have lost, or are in danger of losing, their primary



care givers due to disease (HIV/AIDS & TB being the main ones), abandonment or just simple poverty that puts their own lives in grave danger. Many of them have a long history with the Centre and it is because through the Centre they have come to a saving knowledge of God through Jesus Christ and because they experience the blessings of God through those of us who avail ourselves to be the hands, eyes, feet, mouth, heart and even the pockets of God in their lives, that they have been able to

accomplish all that they have and to enjoy a “regular” celebration of a “regular” event. They planned, arranged and managed everything themselves and I find it overwhelming, knowing the situations many of them come from, just how far they’ve come. Looking at the pictures I think you’ll agree that something’s going right!



Blessings.

Mark Lawler
(CCMP, Ministry Director)