



Spirit Renewal
MINISTRIES

Transforming Lives • Renewing Communities

Spirit Renewal Ministries - Ministry Update - February 2012

The year 2011 was a year for which we give great thanks for the many opportunities to serve both at home and abroad. I am writing this letter to share some of our activities, and to thank the many people who have contributed in so many ways: through prayer, donations, partnership, through service (a special thank you to our Board members, and to others who have given of their time and wise counsel), as well as those of you who have made referrals through which our ministries of care are extended. We have much to be thankful for!

I am currently reading the autobiography of the German theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, entitled *A Broad Place*. This quote from his book speaks to me at this time in my life, and encourages me as I think about the future of Spirit Renewal Ministries. Dr. Moltmann reflects on the last fifteen years of his life as a professor of theology and writes about his thoughts for the future. I can relate to Dr. Moltmann because as I look back on the last number of years of ministry and consider the six pastoral charges I served with United Church of Canada, my time of study at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, the many pastors and individuals who have mentored me, and my time with Spirit Renewal Ministries, I can only look ahead in my life and give thanks to God, and marvel at the “wealth of possible life still un-lived.” Like Moltmann, I feel like we are standing on “the threshold of possibilities,” many of which were not thought of when this ministry began.

“Behind the life that has been lived there is always the wealth of possible life still un-lived. The older one becomes, the more one senses this wealth. Whether we are young in years or growing older, we are always standing on the threshold of possibilities.”

Dr. Jürgen Moltmann

The ministry was founded in 2006 to serve people in the local area who had no church home. Part of our original mandate was to offer a Sunday morning worship experience that was unique, and to provide a church home where people could worship and explore their faith, as well as meet on a regular basis to study God’s Word and to participate in mission work. We rented worship space in a local school that fall, but decided after prayerful consideration that it was not the right timing. Since then, our local ministry has expanded through the provision of bereavement and funeral services, marriage ministry, counselling services, Bible studies, as well as leadership and preaching services for churches in need of interim ministry. Many of you have been served through these ministries and it has been our privilege to serve you. This year, with the guidance of our Board of Directors, we are re-visiting the possibility of beginning a Sunday morning worship service. You, or someone you know might be interested, and we would be interested in hearing from you so we can update you on this initiative. You yourself may wish to become involved.



SRM Wedding



Curaçao Mission

One of the great blessings for our ministry has been the opportunity to serve in overseas missions in three countries: India, Kenya, and Curaçao. Many of you have read about these activities in our newsletters or on our web site. In November 2011, I returned to Curaçao for the third year under the auspices of our partner ministry, Zadok Ministries International of Scarborough. On this trip, I met with



Kenya Mission

church leaders and pastors each day and shared God’s word through the ministries of preaching, teaching, prayer, and encouragement. A number of churches in Curaçao were excited to learn about our initiative to provide Bibles to churches and ministries in Kenya, and they have now partnered with us to provide Bibles for this program. What a great testimony to the connectedness of the world-wide body of Christ!

The program “Bibles for Kenya” is a new initiative to support our partner churches and ministries. It can take up to five years for someone in rural Kenya to save enough money to buy a used bicycle, and many parishioners cannot even afford to buy a Bible. We are very thankful to the churches, groups, and individuals both in Curaçao and Canada who have provided funding to provide Bibles through the Bible Society of Kenya to individuals and ministries in Kenya.

I want to share another story that speaks about the connectivity and unseen possibilities that occur through our local ministries of pastoral care. Tim met us through our local ministries and became interested in participating to “make a difference.” We talked about various community needs, and thought it might be helpful to gather used clothing to help those in need. Tim launched the project in his neighborhood, and also involved a local school as well as a local hockey team. An excerpt from the Durham Region web-site highlighted the activities of the team-members who took a break from their own fund-raising activities to launch the clothing drive for Spirit Renewal Ministries.

Members of the Pickering Panthers Bantam AA team are taking a break from their own fund raising efforts to give back to children who need it. The team has been fund-raising since April 2010 to pay for an upcoming trip to Europe in December, where it will play friendly tournaments with teams in Germany, the Czech Republic and Austria. On Saturday, June 4, the team will change tack as it launches a clothing drive for Spirit Renewal Ministries, which aids children in countries including Africa and India.

Durham Region.COM (June 1, 2011)

This story gets better. After we had collected the clothing, we learned that it was prohibitively expensive to pay the shipping fees for a container. Through God’s providence, all things worked out. I was asked to do an outdoor wedding for a couple and through my discussions with their Catholic priest, and subsequent conversations with



CFFC Warehouse

the priest about our clothing drive, I learned about the ministry of a Catholic charity, Canadian Food for Children (CFFC), founded by Dr. Andrew Simone. Canadian Food for Children puts Mother Teresa’s words, ‘Trust in God,’ into action. Each year, CFFC sends over 8,000 tons of much needed supplies to people in over twenty countries worldwide! This year, clothing from SRM has gone to Zambia and Malawi. This is a very exciting initiative for us and we will continue to support CFFC. We are thankful for the many individuals and organizations which have partnered with us to support the ministries of CFFC. Contact us to learn how you can participate!

I close this letter by reiterating Dr. Moltmann’s phrase, we are “standing on the threshold of possibilities.” We continue to respond and serve families and individuals through our pastoral ministry services in Toronto, and we are actively pursuing the possibility of beginning a Sunday morning worship service. This will take prayer and careful planning. We are working with our partners and supporters on an on-going basis as we plan for a return mission trip to Kenya in the next year. We are exploring possibilities for additional mission work in the Caribbean (ongoing discussions with a number of ministries), and we will continue to promote the program *Bibles for Kenya*. Thank you for your continued support. May God bless you.

Rev. Dr. Stephen McAllister