



Compelled to Go!

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Dear Friends, Family, and In-Pact Partners:

Greetings once again from the spectacular White Mountains of Greer, AZ, at 8,500 feet altitude where air is rare but the beauty of God's creation reinvigorates you every morning. This is our third season to pastor the Greer Chapel, begun in 1995 by Jo Ann's sister and brother-in-law, Dortha (Dot to most people) and Bill Hutchison. It has again been far too long since our last letter back on April 7th, written soon after we had returned from winter ministry in Yuma. There is so much to update that, unfortunately, we have no space for pictures this time, so forgive us for that ---- and for not writing more frequently. Bob is actually finishing up this letter while we're at a conference in Tucson. Temp yesterday was 112 degrees.

To some of our friends, family, and supporters, we're just on an extended glorified vacation, but nothing could be further from the truth. Bob studies for and teaches four times a week, almost all of our chapel members are past retirement age requiring an inordinate amount of personal ministry, the Chapel has seven primary events every week that we must either lead or attend, important community "non-chapel" events take place almost weekly, and major shopping requires 100 to 160 mile round-trip miles. Both internet and cell phone service are horrible at best, and go downhill from there. Bob has commented recently about returning to a full-time pastorate somewhere so we could slow down a bit . . . in jest, of course.

But, we wouldn't trade places with anyone. Our two chapel pastorates ---- here (mid May thru early October) and in Yuma (late October through March) ---- are the most fulfilling and rewarding ministries we've had since we returned from the mission field in Ukraine ten years ago, even with Bob hitting the milestone of now being an Octogenarian as of last March. As Bob puts our report "on paper" (computer screen) today, the sun has just broken from behind the mountain ridge to the east with the willow-dotted Little Colorado River meandering through the valley, small as a tiny brook and filled with trout. This is our third season, and Bob has yet to "wet a hook" fishing even though he brought all of his fishing gear two years ago.

Personal:

The past nine months have a bit of a challenge health wise as Jo Ann suffered a heart attack last November and Bob experienced a double tear in the Meniscus of his right knee the last Sunday of February. But we still can't fathom sitting around our house in the Ozarks puttering with repairs and projects and having little opportunity to minister to people. So, we still ask God for five things through-out the year: -- 1) "Extend our years; 2) Increase our stamina; 3) Sustain our health; 4) Open doors; and 5) Supply necessary funds."

Last year we added #5 because our ministry expenses have increased and, because of the mounting medical expenses related to Bob's knee surgery (past and future) that Medicare won't cover, we're no longer able to continue covering much of our ongoing ministry expenses from our personal retirement income. Both ministry and personal expenses continue increasing. And, of course, neither of the resort pastorates generates any kind of income beyond immediate ministry overhead.

Bob still often quotes these seldom-noticed scriptures: "*Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.*" (III Jn 1:2), and, "*The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.*" (Deut 28:8). Those are the promises we claim each year as we ask God for those five things. We don't ask Him for selfish reasons, but because we know they are necessary if we are to continue going where He leads us and doing what He has called us to do.

Jo Ann's recovery from her heart attack is nothing short of miraculous. She is more energetic than she has been in years, and her blood pressure is almost embarrassing, usually running around 110 over 60. Bob's

knee continues to be bothersome since the April 6th surgery to remove the “debris” from the torn Meniscus. He still walks with a cane, a limp, and noticeable pain most of the time after over three months since surgery, and the prognosis is that this will not change without some kind of further treatment.

He also has arthritis in both knees, adding to the discomfort. We will soon be taking follow-up procedures, hopefully doing the Viscosupplementation injections, commonly known as “Rooster’s Comb” shots. Many people have indicated they have had this treatment with very good relief, but the end results duration have varied to the extremes . . . from only a couple of months to over two years of relief. Bob isn’t fully assured that this treatment is even an option, but we’re going to look at that as the first preference. Unfortunately, the problem has begun affecting his right ankle with generally constant pain and discomfort.

If the shots are not an option, then the only two alternatives left will be either total knee replacement or learning to live with “pain and cane”. One of the men in the weekly men’s prayer breakfast, a retired orthopedic surgeon, has urged Bob to have the injections if for no other reason than to be pain free. Ongoing pain is a debilitating and draining situation that seems to sap you of motivation and energy. We hope to make some decisions very soon. The first step is to make an appointment.

We just learned yesterday that the cover on the ministry 5th wheel stored in Yuma for next Fall was blown off and destroyed by strong winds the first part of July. The cover is designed to protect from dust/sand, UV rays and extreme heat that often causes separation between the laminated skin and backing. So, we’re trying to figure out what to do about that. None of our options are cheap ---- hire someone to move and store under covered storage, take a chance and leave it as it is with the hottest part of Summer still ahead, or buy another expensive cover and hire someone to put it on, hoping another wind won’t tear it up as well. So, that is something you can pray about with us.

Family:

We’ve not written much lately about family, so here’s a quick update ---- Bob and Cheri celebrated their 25th with a delayed dream trip to Europe back in May, visiting many of Bob’s old stomping grounds from when he lived there. He now works almost exclusively from home. Debbie celebrated her 57th July 20th and Cheri celebrated her 56th July 22nd. Cindy celebrated her 58th June 24th, and Kevin had laser surgery to relieve pressure from Glaucoma. JoyLinn graduated from high school in May and is headed to university. Christopher graduated from SAGU in May and is manager of White Rhino Bistro at his church in Waxahachie. Debbie and Mike had quite a scare recently as a man argued with them at gunpoint. He has been arrested and charged. We learned several weeks ago that great grandbaby #16 is on the way, a little girl coming to Roma and Bri. There are probably other updates we’ve forgotten.

Great Blessings – Receiving and Giving:

In our last letter one of our prayer requests concerned the wear and tear on our two aging vehicles, the 1997 Buick LeSabre and the 2003 Chevy Suburban, both of which were high mileage vehicles. We had asked you to pray that God would provide either financial resources for repairs or purchase an upgrade. Prayers were answered in a totally unexpected way. While we were in Texas for our grandson Christopher’s university graduation, a family donated a beautiful like-new 2007 Cadillac SRX, “loaded to the max” with only 44,000 miles on it! Jo Ann has already stated that it is “her car”, and Bob is still searching for his.

As a result of that generous gift to the ministry, we immediately donated the Chevy Suburban to a Wycliffe missionary family with a young teen son and a set of quintuplets who were coming home on furlough. Then, just this week we gave the Buick LeSabre to our youngest daughter and her family since their “local” car was recently totaled in an accident. So, we have been doubly blessed by both receiving and giving. God is faithful to respond to our needs.

Chapel Ministry:

+ The Numbers ---- We continue to be amazed how God is blessing the ministry at Greer Chapel, both in chapel ministry, impact on the lives of others, and growing favor and influence in the community. Attendance in both Sunday services and week-day Bible study groups (three of them) has been strong and consistent in spite of several regular families either being late in arrival, in and out, or not coming to Greer at all. Offerings have been amazing, and once again we have had first-time visitors every Sunday of the season. There hasn’t been a service without first-time visitors since 2016, and we have now gone 29 consecutive “seasonal” Sundays with people attending for the first time. According to the “old timers” of the Chapel, the men’s prayer breakfast last week had the largest attendance in five or six years.

+ Sermons and Bible Studies ---- Bob studies and speaks four separate times each week . . . once for Sunday worship, and three times for Bible studies. Needless to say, he puts in many hours praying, studying, preparing, and printing his note sheets for each study. His note sheets are designed so he has complete flexibility to digress from the sheet and yet people can use them for personal study on their own. People are constantly asking for copies of sessions they missed.

The Sunday theme this year is "***The Wonder of It All***", based on I Cor 2:9 ---- "*Eyes has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love Him.*" During the Wednesday morning Bible study in the RV park we are studying the ***Gospel of John***, and in the afternoon Bible study at the Community Center we are looking at the ***Covenant Names of God***. The Thursday men's prayer breakfast is more unstructured where we deal with a variety of topics. The Monday morning ladies' Bible study is doing a ***study on heaven***, using David Jeremiah's DVD series on the topic.

+ Video Taping, Facebook, and YouTube ---- Thanks to Chapel member Steve Williams, the video tapes we are doing for the Farsi ministry have now been converted over to MP4 video and MP3 audio clips, and are accessible on the new Greer Chapel YouTube channel. If you are interested in watching or listening to any of these, you can currently access them on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwckdkurqjYcPbBS-xz0T6gs>. This series, accessible at the above link, so far includes . . .

May 27, 2018 – "Beyond Your Wildest Dreams" (I Cor 2:9)

June 3, 2018 – "God of Wonders (A) – Eternal and Creator God"

June 10, 2018 – "God of Wonders (B) – Covenant Keeper and Compassionate God"

June 17, 2018 – "God of Wonders (C) – Covenant-Keeping God"

June 24, 2018 – "Wonder of the Word (A)"

July 1, 2018 – "Wonder of the Word (B) – The Bible's Role in America"

July 8, 2018 – "Wonder of God's Love"

July 15, 2018 – "Wonders of Salvation (A) – Defined and Described (1)"

July 22nd, 2018 – "Wonders of Salvation (B) – Defined and Described (2)"

We will probably take six or more Sundays in the "Wonder of Salvation" and then move on to other topics as time allows.

The videos are also accessible via Facebook by going to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/168281700490054/>. Edited versions that are more "polished up" will eventually be available, but the Lord is the only one who knows exactly when that will happen. Printed copies of the note sheets are also available as e-mail attachments. Just ask. These unedited raw copies will also be eventually put in Drop Box for people to download, as well as hopefully being posted on GodTube and MeWe.

+ Sad Moments ---- Not everything is "joyful jumping" in Chapel life. Age, health issues, deaths, and financial matters often mar our world here at Greer Chapel, and sever those special relationships. This year we have at least eight long-time Chapel families who are not here. Most recently, our favorite story teller and 93 year old World War II veteran, Roy Meyer, died. He and his wife, Gerry, also a WW II vet, were always the first to ring the bell at Greer's annual Bell Ringing Ceremony held each July 4th. We have many military veterans among our Chapel members, and WW II veteran Ray Evans was the oldest vet to ring the bell this year at age 92. Ray was raised as a cowboy on a 235-section ranch north of Phoenix. That's 150,400 acres! It was 26 miles across from one side of the ranch to the other. Ray's cowboy and old Arizona stories are as interesting as Roy Meyer's stories as a waist-gunner on a B-17 bomber where he often had to kick jammed bombs loose from the bomb bay with his feet without wearing a safety harness.

Our Partner Ministries:

+ We've not had recent reports from our various partner ministries, but share with you what we know. We've not heard from Sergey Lyakhov in Ulan Ude, Russia, for many months. However, his Facebook page is posted with pictures indicating the ministry to the Buryat people in Siberia north of Mongolia is continuing to be effective. He and Inna celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary a few weeks ago. Seventeen years ago they finished schooling at St. James Bible College where Jo Ann and I taught his senior year (he was president of the senior graduating class), got married, and soon after that they traveled over three thousand miles to begin their ministry of sharing the Gospel, training evangelists and other leaders, and planting churches.

+ Joel and Ira Colon continue their faithful ministry of training church leaders, working with the Farsi ministry, and using the Flower and Coffee shop as an outreach in the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine. They spend much of their time equipping young men and women to share the Gospel. Ira still translates for numerous English speakers who come to minister in Ukraine.

+ Raidel and Margarita Arbelay Pekeka continue pastoring the Upper Room Spanish Church in Kiev. This was the first church we planted back in 2003 as a home Bible study group with Jesus and Carmen Rivas and Tania Llopiz from Cuba as leaders. Raidel was one of seven members of the Ukrainian National Baseball team who accepted Christ through Jesus' involvement as their coach, and has now been pastoring the church for over ten years. They faithfully minister to Spanish speakers from multiple countries, Ukrainians who speak Spanish, orphans, and other needy people through regular church services, street ministry, and compassion events.

+ When Jesus and Carmen emigrated to the U.S. where he pastors a Latino church in Oregon, Raidel became co-pastor, and now serves as pastor of this small but vibrant body of believers. Tania and her husband, Arto, now live in the Stockholm area where they serve in churches and continue ministering to Latinos in the area. Tania has completed her training as an x-ray tech. They were able to visit her mother and friends in Cuba recently.

+ Our Syrian evangelist friend, Saied Ziadah and wife, Rana, have been deported back to Norway from Germany, and now live in Nøtterøy on the island municipality of Færder. Their first night in Norway, the Norwegian police left them out on the streets to fend for themselves. In both Germany and Norway the government has employed or secured the services of many Arabic speakers, most of whom are Muslim. As a result of both political corruption and Islamic hatred toward Christians, Saied and Rana are still being deprived of most of their rights and are being treated as garbage with great hostility and animus. They really need our prayers for a quick resolution to this issue.

+ Although we've had only a few brief Facebook posts and e-mails, we do know that "M" and the Farsi ministry are doing amazingly well. God is blessing their efforts to the point that they are having a very hard time keeping up with everything ---- online library, translating material into Farsi, Facebook articles and videos, Facebook personal correspondence, training and mentoring leaders in many countries, video production for CBN Farsi network, leading a network of groups in Germany, . . . the list is endless. How they keep up, we don't know. When our daughter, Cheri, and husband Bob took their 25th anniversary trip to Europe, they were able to visit with Farsheed in Frankfurt. You remember that he leads the Farsi work in Germany.

Prayer Requests:

Please pray with us and for us in these specific areas ----

- Right decision regarding protection for the ministry 5th wheel in Yuma. We're hoping to avoid having to travel there, and praying the cost will be minimal.
- Continued healing and recover for Bob's knee. We hope to make a decision about the shots soon.
- Ongoing significant financial needs both ministry-wise and personally. More medical costs will be soon coming, and ministry expenses are seldom covered by our two current ministries that generate no funds.
- Financial needs for the Farsi ministry both for "M" at headquarters in Ukraine and for "F" in Germany.
- For Saied and wife back in Norway. They are still not getting the treatment they should, and their financial needs for simple subsistence living are ongoing.
- Joel and Ira Colon's expanding ministry in training Ukrainians in evangelism and church planting.
- God's continued blessing the expanding ministry in Greer, and the use of Facebook and YouTube for ministry exposure and expansion.
- Needed trips to Ukraine, Germany, Sweden, Colombia, and Cuba, all seeming beyond possibility.
- That God continues meeting those needs we pray about each year ---- -- 1) "Extend our years; 2) Increase our stamina; 3) Sustain our health; 4) Open doors; and 5) Supply necessary funds."

FINALLY:

We hope that you are one of those who pray for us regularly. We certainly need lots of prayer as we face the challenges requiring important decisions. Even though we seldom write to you personally, you are loved and appreciated, and your partnership is never taken for granted. Thank you for sticking with us through it all!

In His Bond, By His Grace, and For His Kingdom,
Bob and Jo Ann (The Tollivers)

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