

May 25, 2007

Dear friends,

I'm just beginning to get to know the family of CEF partners. I wish there was a way to personally meet each one who has been faithfully praying and working and giving to make the ministry possible. If I could, the first thing I would say is THANK YOU! Occasionally we receive a large gift or a legacy. That's exciting, and we praise God when it happens. But it is the regular prayers and faithful giving of God's people that keep us going. I believe that's the way God wants it to be. So... thank you.

The first time I addressed our staff I said I wanted the ministry to be characterized by miracles, to see God's hand at work on a regular basis. I'm already seeing examples of that happening. In just ten days early this month, I was contacted on separate occasions by five different people who want to help with CEF ministry, in various capacities. All of these inquiries were totally unsolicited. One of them, a businessman, came to visit me in my office. As he spoke about the need to reach children, his voice got shaky and tears formed. I thought, "That's just what I was like when God first called me to minister to children". I pray that God will continually renew that passion in me.

It's interesting to see the things that stir passion and compassion. I often share the story of Jessica McClure, the 18-month-old girl who was trapped for 58 hours in a well pipe in Texas back in 1987. The outpouring of help and money and love for that little girl still stands as an example of the capacity for compassion God has placed within all of us. Yet every time I remember that event I wonder, do we as God's people show that kind of compassion for the many children all around us who are in a crisis far worse than what baby Jessica was facing? How much of our time and resources are we willing to give to take the saving love of Jesus Christ to children who will otherwise face apart from God?

As the expression goes, I'm preaching to the choir. I know that. You have already demonstrated where your heart is. Thank you again for your faithfulness and for continuing to be faithful as God enables. Now, if you are willing, there is another way you can help.

We have some serious challenges to overcome. We need to create awareness among the vast numbers of Christians who don't know about the ministry of CEF. We need many more volunteers to help us work with children in the areas of the province where we have no ministry happening. We need additional staff to cover those areas as well. And we need many more faithful supporters like you to help get us past the major financial challenges we face.

In Matthew 9, when Jesus looked on the crowd and "*was filled with compassion because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd*" he immediately turned to the disciples and said "*pray that the Lord of the harvest would send forth labourers into his harvest field*". Compassion demands action! Would you help us by praying that God would send forth labourers into a field full of children? They are so responsive, but first they need to hear.

There's another way you can help. God is already speaking to people, as I said, but often He wants us to be His voice. Andrew searched out his brother Peter to introduce him to Jesus. Philip found Nathanael.

Perhaps God would like to use you to help get the word out and speak to others on behalf of CEF. We particularly need to add those of a younger generation who have a vision and a passion for reaching boys and girls.

I'm not asking anyone to be passionate about the CEF ministry, though I have met quite a few people in the past few months who are exactly that. What I'm asking is far more important. I'm asking people to be passionate about serving God in reaching a generation of children who are in a spiritual crisis. That's a cause for which I have no problem encouraging people to get involved.

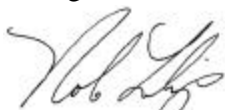
I am new and unknown to most of our CEF partners. You may very well be asking yourself, "Why should I get behind a ministry under his leadership? I don't even know who he is." I understand, and it's no doubt going to take a while for us to get to know each other. Still, I thought it might help us move in that direction if I share with you something I will be presenting to our staff a few days from now, just about the time you receive this letter. It's a list of the core values that have always been a part of my ministry, and that I want to see in CEF under my leadership.

That isn't to say these values haven't always been a part of the CEF ministry. I just want to publicly affirm my personal commitment to these principles, and my determination to see that they are a foundational part of CEFOntario as long as God leaves me in this position of responsibility.

- ?? We will follow two goals above all others; to please God, and to share the Gospel with children as broadly and effectively as possible.
- ?? We will operate in a spirit of generosity, seeking to come alongside and give aid to any person, church, or organization that wants to reach children with the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- ?? The CEF team will operate in an atmosphere of trust, supporting and encouraging one another, and moving as one body to accomplish the task God has set before us.
- ?? Within the CEF team, each one of us will expect from ourselves a high level of commitment to God and to the task He has given us.
- ?? We will maintain the highest level of integrity, both in the way we conduct our business and in the way we minister.
- ?? We will acknowledge our absolute dependence on God, and trust Him to provide what we need as individuals and as a ministry to accomplish the goals He sets before us.

May God bless you as you have been a blessing to us. I encourage you to let the love for children that God has placed in your heart flow out and touch the lives of others around you.

Together in His Service,



Rob Lukings