

Dear Friends,

Many of you know that this year has been one of loss and sadness for my family and me. My husband, Troy, passed away on April 8th only seven weeks after diagnosis. Troy expressed his gratitude many times for the time he had to say goodbye. I've never seen anyone die with more grace. We take comfort in that but it doesn't diminish our feelings of pain and loss.

Refugees and Asylees

Refugees and Asylees continue to find their way to us. Lisa Barnes and her sister have done an amazing job caring for a young woman in her thirties from Sudan who was robbed and suffers from many medical problems.

Other families referred to us simply can't survive on the salaries they're paid. Employers now, because of the high unemployment, pay minimum wage and may only give them two or three days of work. The adults are not able to get medical or dental care and the car usually breaks down since they are driving old cars.

Rajmonda

Rajmonda continues her studies at Richland College. For those of you who may not know Rajmonda's story, we brought her here with her mother when she was eleven years old. She was severely hearing impaired and had no language. She began learning sign language and received a cochlear implant when she was twelve years old. The obstacles to her ever getting this far were so great that we are amazed at this beautiful young woman she has become.

Croatia

We continue to support the work in Croatia through a small church. They purchase food and distribute once a month to two communities. One of the communities has many elderly and is without needed support. Some of their difficulties are because of their ethnicity.

Garland and West Dallas

Mable and James Armstrong continue to work with the poor in West Dallas. We supply them with funds to buy food and toys at Christmas. Juny Richetti works with the needs in Garland and often in Mexico. Most of the clothes, home furnishings and furniture donated to us are distributed through her ministry.

The Pain of Seeing

Recently while driving from Ft. Worth, a squirrel tried to cross the freeway. He had crossed several lanes but the car in front of me never applied his brakes to give the little squirrel a chance to cross the last two lanes. When he hit him, he flew into the air and convulsed to the side of the road where he lay still as I passed.

I screamed for several minutes, "I hate this life, I hate this world, I hate indifference, I don't want to be here." You may be thinking, "all that over a squirrel?" It's the picture of how we live, never present to the ways God is showing Himself to us through his creation. We spend our lives chasing one dream after another, sure that just around the next bend, happiness awaits us.

It's a kind of blindness. We live in fear, anxiety and guilt, grasping for more while trampling the sacred under our feet.

This time of grieving has given me time to think again about our short time here and what it all means. There's a story in "My Grandfather's Blessing" about a woman who was so grief stricken when her husband died that she could not function. Her family finally convinced her to see a counselor. Months after her counseling ended, she sent her counselor a note that said simply:

I pull up anchor

And catch the wind.

Anthony De Mello writes at length of our false belief that has been put in our head by tradition, culture, society and religion. The belief is that we cannot be happy without the things that we are attached to and that we consider precious. Happiness is in the future – it will come if we can manage to change our situation and the people around us.

The truth is we have within us everything we need to be happy. It's the 'pearl of great price' but we must give up everything in order to possess it. It's this giving up that is the pulling up anchor so that we catch the wind. And so we live, not clinging to attachments - not stumbling blindly through life. But rather we walk freely, seeing God in all things, as one born of the Spirit.

Conclusion

This work for me is always about doing the little things – little for me but not so little for the one receiving. Maybe even more importantly, it's about bringing others into the needs so that we can all be part of the giving. When we walk into a new part of the world (city or way of life) it opens up another way of thinking for both the giver and the one who receives. Heaven knows we all need to change!

The containers are a question in my mind right now for LIAI. There is a great need and when I'm made aware of how we could meet that need, it seems that it's ours to do. However, the difficulty we've had in shipping the Jordan container has caused me to pause. I will need to be sure before I begin the process for another container.

Thank you for your prayers and support in all the ways you give.

God bless,

Rae England