



Risley Family Ministries

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Taking the Gospel to the Mountain Villages, Prisons and Hospitals of Sonora, Mexico

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THANK GOD MOM FELL!



This is the first time I am writing the ministry letter solo, so please bear with me. As many of you know, mom and dad are not doing very well physically, and your continued prayers are greatly appreciated. I planned on getting this letter out earlier, but thanks be to God, Mom fell while taking a shower. God is truly merciful, because the resulting hospital visit and x-rays showed she was developing pneumonia which we wouldn't have seen had she not fallen. As a result, the pneumonia was caught very early, and she is recovering quickly.

As I have been reading through some of our previous letters, I realized that we often mention the "Soup Kitchen", yet we have failed to fully explain and elaborate upon what the "Soup Kitchen" is or does. So, per the request of my father, I want to explain what Cheryl, Courtney, the kids, and my ministry is, as it relates to the "Soup Kitchen".

The Gospel has always been the center of our ministry, and that will never change. However, as we ministered and people came to Christ, they would always tell us about somebody they knew who needed help in some way or another. Most of the time, these needs were proper nutrition, medical care, or a combination of the two. After a family meeting and prayer, we



decided that in accordance with the Bible (Santiago 2:15-16) and the examples given by Christ Himself we would open a Soup Kitchen. Our primary goal is to demonstrate the love of Christ through ministering and caring for the destitute and elderly men and women in the community.

In the beginning, we would open the Kitchen early, and while Cheryl and Courtney prepared breakfast, I would use our van or pick-up to bring down as many elderly people as wanted to come. While they ate breakfast, I would teach a lesson and minister, then Courtney would tend to any of their medical needs. This worked well for about a



week, until we realized that many of the elderly people who came to the Kitchen lived alone and were not eating anything else all day. So... we started serving lunch as well. Then... we started sending home box lunches for dinner. Then... we started serving dinner and having an evening Bible study. Then... we started delivering meals and visiting people who couldn't leave their homes. Then ... we brought in an elderly mom and son who didn't have any family to take care of them. Then... we took in eleven more elderly people who couldn't care for themselves...

As you can see what we originally opened as a breakfast only Soup Kitchen, God has developed and grown into a full time Soup Kitchen and assisted care/nursing home. We currently have thirteen beds, and it is very rare that we have any vacancies. On a



normal day we minister and serve breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks to thirty people and some days many, many more. Many of the people who



frequent the Kitchen or live here are unable to provide basic care for themselves and must be bathed, changed, and tended to continually. The level of care which these elderly brothers and sisters in Christ requires may seem like something we wouldn't be equipped

or prepared for, but years ago God had already known what was going to happen and prepared us for this exact situation.

Allow me to explain. For those of you who don't know, I served in the U.S. Army and received a medical discharge in the summer of 1997. Soon



after, Cheryl and I moved to AZ, and I started looking for a job. As you know, when you need a job you apply for many then take the first one offered. So, less than a year later, this hard-charging, high-speed, low-drag, drink from the skulls of my enemy, Infantry Airborne Paratrooper... took a job working as a "Nurses Assistant" in a long-term care facility at a hospital in Arizona (what a difference a year makes). The only "catch" to the job was that, in order to keep it, I was required to complete a "Certified Nurse's Assistant" course within two

months of my start date. The Hospital enrolled me in the school, and my G.I. Bill covered the expenses. However, one week after completing the course I was fired from my hospital job for "assaulting a patient". The accusation against me was completely false, because I in no way "threatened harm" to the male patient as they claimed. The legal term for what I did is "battery", because I very physically stopped the male patient from beating his girlfriend and her daughter in the hospital's parking lot. This technicality was not accepted by the hospital administration, and their "zero tolerance" policy resulted in my termination for "Assaulting a Patient". Career over! Or so I thought...flash forward to now, and it is easy to see God's plan and how He prepared and trained me for the "kitchen" aspect of His ministry.



The way in which our God provides and works never ceases to amaze me! His Word will not be stopped, and over the last three years we have been blessed with showing God's love and caring for thirty-nine elderly men and women (only counting those who have lived at the facility). Of those thirty-nine, twelve of those men and three of those women have now gone

to be with the Lord. We take comfort and joy knowing that, no matter what hardships and difficulties these brothers and sisters endured in this life, they were promoted into the presence of Christ while being loved and cared for in His Holy name.



Currently, four men and three women who are living at the Kitchen require complete care. Between Courtney, Cheryl, and myself, we have taught and trained our children how to do these chores correctly. Amy, Jose, Reagan, Ronald, Emily and Abigail enjoy serving their "grandpas" in God's name and ministering alongside us daily.



Below are the pictures and first names of the thirteen men and women who we are currently caring for at the Kitchen (just those who live there). Please keep these brothers and sisters in your prayers. Four of them are not long for this world, and we pray for God's will and timing for them. (Theirs are the first photos.)



Pancho



Manuel



Lina



Margarita



Pancho



Zungo



Antonio



Angelina



Doc.



Rafael



Piriri



Lalo



María

However, I cannot stop here, because to do so would fail to adequately show the most important part of the Kitchen ministry, the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus the Christ.

As I stated earlier, the primary focus of our ministry is and always will be the Gospel. Believe me, there is nobody who comes to the Kitchen that fails to hear and understand the Gospel. However, the Gospel does not stop at the Kitchen doors. One of the biggest blessings that we see every day is how God uses the Kitchen to propagate and spread the Good News of Christ throughout the entire region.



Since we are the only facility of its type within about 100 miles, we receive and care for people from all of the surrounding communities. This allows us to reach many individuals and families that we would not have an opportunity to interact with, thanks to the care and services provided through the Kitchen.

For example: We have recently brought in a man named Rafael. Rafael lived in a village about twenty minutes away. He is awaiting a hip replacement. Since he could not live alone, he was staying with his daughter and her husband. However, Rafael and his son-in-law had a fight, and his



son-in-law put Rafael and his wheelchair out on the street and locked the door. Social Services informed us of the issue, and we took him in until he can have his surgery. Within the first week of being with us, Rafael eagerly trusted in Christ. Soon after, two women and a man (friends of Rafael) came to visit him, and he told them about what we were doing and how we had helped him. After Rafael introduced me, we began to talk, and two of them trusted in Christ. All three are now starting the lessons, and they said that they will try to come to the Bible studies I hold at the Kitchen on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

This is just one example of how God uses the Kitchen to further His ministry, but I don't want anyone to think that every case has an ideal ending. We generally talk about what we perceive as "successes" and "good", but please don't get the impression that everybody we meet or care for comes to faith in Christ. Recently, we had a man named Tierno who was/is a severe

alcoholic and had fallen ill. He was unable to care for himself. We brought him in, and for three weeks nursed him back to health. However, he never acknowledged any interest in the Bible or Christ. As soon as he recovered enough to walk on his own, he left, and we haven't seen him since. Though these cases sadden us, we have to remind ourselves that what we do is not based upon what we see or observe. We don't always understand God's plan, but we are guaranteed that His word will never return void (Isaiah 55:11). Our mission is to trust God and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as we care for and love those He brings to us.

This brings us to the final aspect of the Kitchen, and that is "Christian service". Many of the men and women who have trusted in Christ and studied with us now participate and help at the Kitchen in one way or another. We



have ladies who come once a month to cut hair and fingernails. We have others who prepare and deliver evening meals. Some donate cleaning supplies and help clean. Others come and help with medical needs and bathing. Still more come just to visit and chew the fat. The Kitchen offers the opportunity for these men and women to show the love of Christ in a very meaningful and

compassionate way to their elderly brothers and sisters in Christ.

So, there are the basics of the "kitchen" aspect to the ministry and, hopefully, I have given you a better understanding of how it started and how God is using it to further His kingdom.

As always, thank you for your prayers and support. May God bless you and keep you in accordance with His will.

IN THE SERVICE OF OUR KING

The Risley's:

Bill, Pat, Courtney, Grady, Cheryl, Emily, Reagan, Ronald, Abby, Amy, Jose, Willy, Amber, Hose and more...