Living Hope

February 2020

Dear Friends,

We find a lot of joy in working with kids. Don’t get me wrong. Working with kids can be frustrating and hazardous to your health at times but overall, it’s a great joy. As many of you know, Colette transitioned last year from teaching second grade to teaching language arts and social studies to seventh and eighth-graders. I thought she was a bit crazy when she did this but I also thought she was a bit crazy agreeing to marry me 19 years ago. Colette has been placed in a challenging place of blessing. Working in a low income, Title I school has its difficulties but God is using her to forge impressionable relationships with her students. She has been a role model and a friend to many troubled teens. She has been able to challenge them and encourage them in ways that they have never experienced before. Watching them grow in maturity and confidence and move on to high school has been a real blessing. This year, Colette has a student that is struggling through abusive relationships and crippling depression. Please continue to pray for Colette and ALL her students. Please pray that she would be an example of God’s love to kids that have never known love. Pray that through Colette, these teens would see their true value in Christ.

This year at church, we started a new children’s ministry called Bible Adventure Club. We no longer hold Sunday morning Sunday school for kids but have this new ministry in the afternoon for them. It is filled with worship music, chronological Bible storying, activities, crafts, snacks, Bible memory and discussion time. BAC is offered to all the kids in our community from KG-6th grade. At Christmas, we had 25 kids present the Gospel message through drama and music to 75 adults. It is like a new breath has been breathed into the church. The kids are excited about God’s Word. The kids are excited to learn and engage with the Word. The kids are being changed by the Word. For Colette and I, this has re-energized us. What started out as a reworking of a struggling ministry has given us a newfound excitement for God’s Word and the impact it can have on our kids.

For the last two years, I have coached a community swim team during the summer. In the fall, I coach youth soccer. It has been great fun for me to spend time engaging with kids in these
activities. At the end of last year, I received several requests to coach girls’ high school soccer. After a bit of convincing, I finally agreed but I didn’t realize exactly what I was getting into. It seems as though I have adopted 25 teenage daughters. Although we all connect through soccer, coaching has provided some wonderful time of connection. Each of these young ladies has struggles and God has put me in a position to help protect and encourage them. Riding a bus for 3 hours to a game and then 3 hours back is not necessarily fun, but it does provide a great opportunity for discussion. I’m asked all sorts of questions ranging from, “How do I decide what college I should attend?” to “What do I do when a boy treats me like this?”

Sometimes we think about missions being something exotic. We think about ministry being complex and requiring extensive training and planning. In reality, as believers, we are tasked with being light and salt wherever we go. It’s foolish to think that serving God doesn’t start in your family and community. Life is dark. Stop waiting for your moment. Start shining for Jesus right now and watch as He does great work in you and the world around you.

Blessings!

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