



Dear family at The Well,

As we plan for a new year in ministry, I'm thankful for the significant relationships we've been able to establish over this last year. We continue to forge deeper relationships with partner ministries to the underprivileged and disadvantaged in our community, as well as unreached people who desperately need the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

One of the most important lessons I've learned in mission work is that investing time, talent, and resources to foster deep personal relationships is key to having a truly effective impact on the people to whom we are reaching out. All too often, affluent churches "drop in" and then leave. While this is generous, it is not really effective ministry at a deep interpersonal level. This kind of "parachute" method actually undermines trust, especially when it happens repeatedly in a community.

Fortunately, we at The Well have been given the privilege to move beyond the acquaintance phase of relationships with our ministry partners at Lifeline and Solidarity. We have become friends and true allies with them. At this point we can actually experience the benefits of going deep in the lives of those we work with in that community. Plus, as we serve the poor and abused in their neighborhood, we experience the fullness of Christ in a unique way that only happens through this kind of outreach.

One of our primary goals for this year at The Well is to experience the fullness of Christ in our lives, through obedience to Jesus' call to love and serve those who are poor and oppressed. (Matt 25:34-45, Jer. 7:5-7, etc.)

### **2nd Saturday Serve Days**

This monthly activity continues to be a good vehicle to both facilitate our mercy and justice ministries, and it's also an entry point for more people to experience this aspect of the Christian life - *loving and serving the needs of others*. Service is an important aspect of living out what we say we believe. It is part of going deep with Jesus. Acts of service get us involved in the Kingdom of God, and provide the context for developing relationships with those who are less fortunate.

There are two words; *Missional* and *Incarnational*, which articulate what we hope to accomplish through our Serve Days. *Missional* implies we have a mission to share the love and message of Jesus Christ with other people around us. *Incarnational* focuses more on "being with" or doing life together. This is where the investment of personal interaction and developing relationships comes into play. *Incarnational* ministry goes way beyond writing checks. It requires us to go deep, get beyond the surface, and really get to know people for who they are, and to take part in their lives. In this, we find that the best way to follow Christ is to live life the way that Jesus would if he were in our shoes.

Here are a couple of new objectives that we hope to introduce into our Serving ministries:

- Share Stories (articulate our journey) – by articulating the thing that we are experiencing through service and mission, we not only do things for the Kingdom, but we allow those experiences to deeply change us and draw us closer to God. This can be accomplished by telling stories. Gathering together to talk about (articulate) what we've witnessed and learned helps us reflect on the journey. Stories about what is happening in our lives and the lives of others, as we do life and ministry together, demonstrates what God is doing in us and through us.
- Transformation – as the practice of missional experiences and articulating the journey is repeated over and over, the world around us is transformed and we see a transformed Church that is better positioned to engage a broken world and continue to experience the fullness of Christ.

I'm really looking forward to experiencing what the Lord is doing in us and through us. It's exciting to join God in his work!

In Christ,

Jeff