



Summer 2008

LOOKING BACK

Nearly seven years ago, Lucie, our kids and I set out on a venture more daring than I'd ever imagined undertaking. At the time of our departure, I'd been on the staff of Young Life for twenty five years. Although those years had been filled with challenges and demands, to this day I look back on the experience as one of the most phenomenal gifts we've ever been given. Nonetheless, as we said "Good-bye" to that unparalleled season, I knew, with absolute certainty, that God was leading us into yet another wonderful adventure.

Soon thereafter, Journey Resources was begun. A Board of Directors was selected and we formed a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation. What we anticipated has been all that we hoped for and a whole lot more.

From its inception, our mission has remained simple and clear:

Journey Resources offers the message of God's love, grace and mercy for all people found through Jesus Christ. Providing opportunities to discover God's loving care, our mission extends as far as God leads and reaches through us.

From day-one our mission has been carried out in these specific ways:

- Providing direction for individual and group retreats.
- Conducting seminars and workshops and speaking at conferences and various other events.
- Offering spiritual direction to individuals and groups.

In 2004, when *Running on Empty* was published, writing became another means of accomplishing our mission. After *Running on Empty*, I worked on a project with several authors entitled *The Transformation of A Man's Heart*. This fall, InterVarsity Press will begin work on the publication of my next book. Its theme is trading religious performance for intimacy with God.

Looking At the Present & the Future

A few years ago, compelled to heed the wisdom found in James 5:16: "*Make this your common practice: pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed. The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with,*" I began sending a weekly, "Monday Morning Update" via email to a growing number of people. It consists of a short list of prayer concerns & celebrations. (If you wish to be included; please notify us via email: filanderson@triad.rr.com.)

Comments from recipients are common and always appreciated. However, the following request that has been repeated each week this summer has provoked a significant (and extremely encouraging) number of questions and remarks:

Please pray as I prayerfully consider expanding Journey Resources' vision and mission statement.

One friend wrote: "Thank you for keeping me on your prayer list. I love hearing what you are doing. You have listed a few times about your desire to "expand" the ministry of Journey Resources. What are you thinking?"

Since many of you may have wondered the same thing, let me try to explain my thoughts thus far.

From the beginning the tag line for *Running on Empty* was "learn to live *with* God instead of *for* God. My hope was to encourage others to begin the journey from achieving to being, from self-importance to God-importance, from noise and hurry to quietness and rest. My hope was to explain that it's not a journey *away* from the world, but *toward* a satisfying and authentic life of faith *in* the world.

Despite the emphasis in *Running on Empty* regarding the inherent threats followers of Jesus face

while living in a too-busy, too-noisy, too hurried world, my intent was never to suggest that we must therefore stop running. Instead, what we need is to listen as we are running. Our external activity must be connected to and supported by our intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit.

The writer of Hebrews described our challenge in these words: “...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Truthfully, this is what I've personally attempted to do the past eight years. It is also the thing that I've attempted to assist others in doing. However, action and contemplation are generally thought of as mutually exclusive by most people. In light of this reality, I sense that Journey Resources is being called to take a more decisive stand with Jesus in this “middle place”—not a stance of mediocrity, but at the center of the cross where opposites meet and are held together.

I believe it is at the center of the cross where Mary, the “patron saint” of contemplative people and Martha, the “patron saint” of active people, can and must come together. Unless these two are joined, neither one makes sense. The truth of the matter is that it takes both to establish the kingdom of God, a kingdom of balanced passion and compassion.

Thus, I am sensing that Journey Resources is being led to expand its vision and mission to be more deliberate in helping others learn how to integrate a contemplative lifestyle with compassionate service. More specifically, I sense that God is leading us to especially assist

those who seek peaceful, positive alternatives and solutions that reflect the character and values of Jesus to the difficult challenges of our often materialistic, irrational and violent world.

If you are wondering what this means, how it will take shape, and what changes will occur; I am too! However, the following are guiding principles of which I am certain:

- The life and teaching of Jesus has been and will continue to be our central reference point. Our future will be primarily determined by watching and listening to Jesus.
- A contemplative heart and mind are essential if we are to carefully follow Jesus and offer the most compassionate service and care to others.
- What is being considered is an expansion of Journey Resources vision and mission. It is not a revision. All that we have been committed to (retreats, seminars, workshops, speaking at conferences and other events, providing individual spiritual direction, and writing) will continue.
- Attention will especially be given to the poor, marginalized, and disenfranchised; those Jesus referred to as “the least of these.”

An Exciting Opportunity

This spring I was asked to serve in the International Chaplaincy Program of Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief and evangelism organization. For over 35 years, Samaritan's Purse has done their utmost to follow Jesus'

command by going to the aid of the world's poor, sick, and suffering.

At various times throughout the year I will travel to international locations to encourage Samaritan's Purse staff and partners. While there I will facilitate spiritual retreats, lead Bible studies and offer spiritual direction.

A Note from Fil:

We are currently experiencing the sharpest decline in contributions in our history. Therefore, **we are in great need of support**. If you are not presently partnering with us and are able to help, we would be most grateful. All gifts to Journey Resources are tax deductible. No level of support could be too small to matter.

You may make a donation by returning your gift in the enclosed envelope, by visiting our web site at www.journeyresources.org and using an existing Paypal account or credit card. Or, if you wish to establish a monthly draft, please notify us and we'll gladly provide you with the needed information.

Another means of supporting our mission would be to prayerfully promote our services to those people you know who might benefit from them. Perhaps your church could host Fil for a conference or your small group might wish to enlist his leadership in the direction of a retreat.

Mere words cannot express how grateful we are for the privilege of being engaged in this mission. It's our desire to continue offering the message of God's relentless love, grace and mercy for years to come. Please accept our heartfelt thanks for partnering with us in whatever way you have in the past are now or may be led in the future.