

# MINISTRY UPDATES

Greater Grace Newsletter from Mike Thompson

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## Mike's InFaith Mission Focus

Here is a brief overview of my ministry focus with InFaith.

1. **Planting and strengthening residential recovery ministries** and rescue missions through developing, and coaching leaders and providing structure and gospel centered recovery related curriculum.
2. **Strengthening churches and non-profit ministries** by equipping leaders & teams to align their ministry with their God-given mission.

## Front Lines Updates

### GOSPEL CENTERED RECOVERY HOUSES

Part of my missionary work in smaller communities is helping start or strengthen gospel focused sober houses.

#### **The Branches—In Mora, MN**

The Branches has important events in May and September to introduce the ministry to community leaders and the public. We plan on purchasing a wonderful facility that will accommodate all our needs.

#### **The House of Hope**

I had the privilege of starting this ministry with a wonderful team. Now this sober house is led by others, including graduates of the program. Dawn and I were able to attend a reunion in Hayward which was attended by mentors, staff, residents and graduates. It was such a blessing to hear about all the work God has done in the hearts of people there. I will be doing some consulting and assessment work for them soon.

#### **Barnum**

A church and group of people who want a sober house have contacted myself and another board members of the Branches. They would like us to help them start a sober house in Barnum, MN. We will meet with them soon.

### NON-PROFITS AND CHURCHES

#### **Gospel 4 Haiti**

Gospel 4 Haiti has asked me to help them form an official non-profit and apply for 501c3 status. I have written articles of incorporation and will work on bylaws and will help form a board and guide them through the process.

### CHURCH STUFF

I continue to serve as interim pastor of Fish Lake Chapel, which is an InFaith associated church. As an InFaith missionary I am serving this church beginning with a one year commitment as Interim Pastor.

We rolled out a whole church assessment which began with a church survey. We have summarized the assessments and are making plans for implementing helpful suggestions and recommendations.

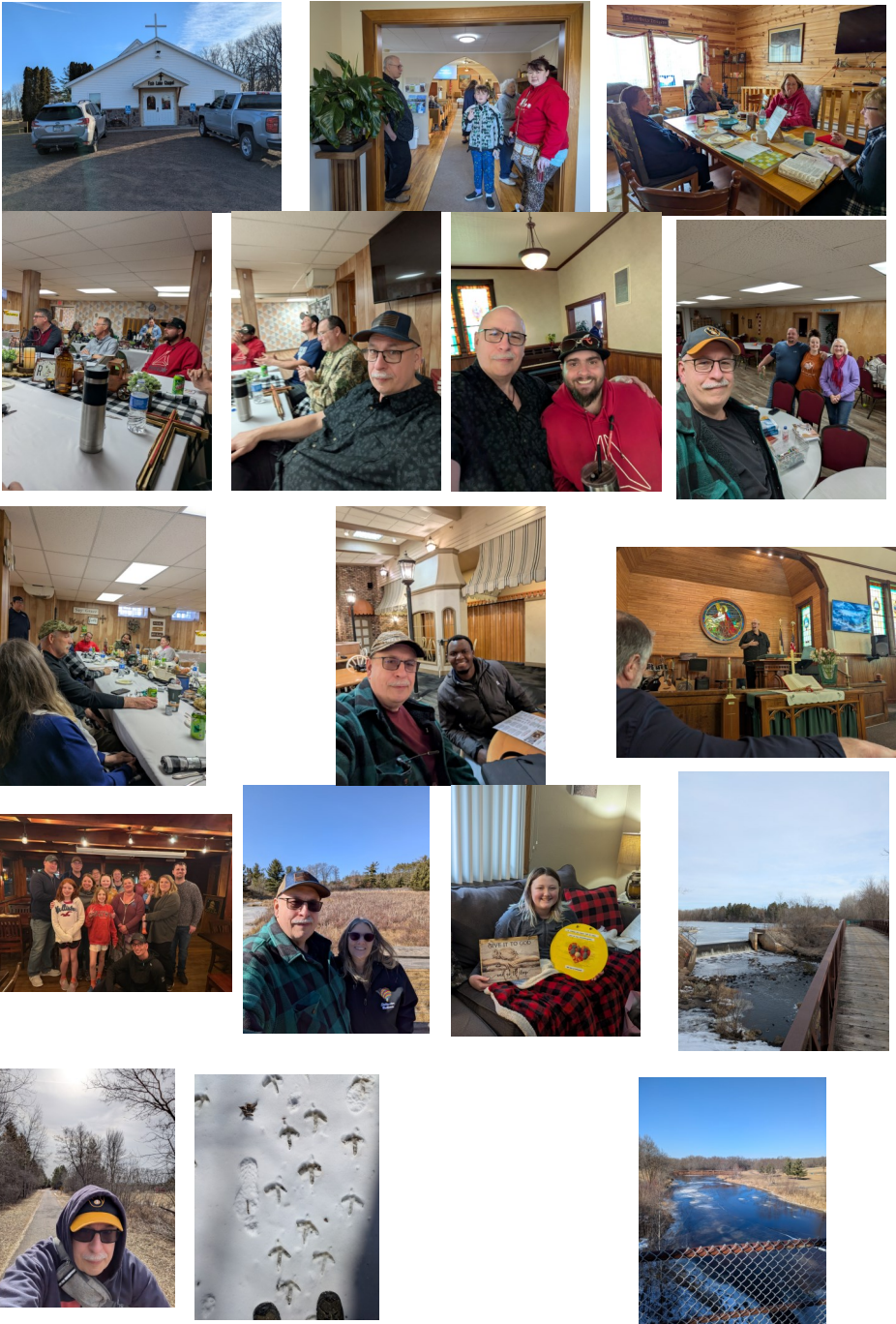
### INFAITH UPDATES

As most of you know, all my ministry is done as a missionary and I rely on your partnership to engage in all the ministry described in this newsletter. Thank you for your partnership in this ministry! People in smaller churches and communities can not afford high priced consultants to help start or strengthen churches and non-profits. InFaith (formerly know as the American Missionary Fellowship) is an incredible gospel focused ministry that began by planting Sunday schools around the country more than a century ago. Check out their amazing organization at [www.infaith.org](http://www.infaith.org) "Refresh" is a gathering of all InFaith missionaries from around the country. Dawn and I will be attending the refresh gathering in Savannah, GA March 24th to March 27th. We look forward to interacting with other missionaries and InFaith leaders and collaborating for future ministry effectiveness. I am posting this newsletter later in the month to include pictures from this gathering.

**WORKSHOP** To see wood products we make and sell to support our mission work check out our Facebook site: *"Mike and Dawns Wood Products"*

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560611692441>

## UPDATES IN PICTURES



## Praise Reports Prayer Requests

PRAISES	PRAYERS
We sold several workshop items that help partially fund our mission work	Dawns trip to see her sister in Florida. Her sister is terminally ill with cancer.
Dawn's women's study is thriving and well attended	Many will come to faith in Jesus Christ
People are coming to faith in Jesus and others are growing in their faith.	We pray for conversions and growth at Fish Lake Chapel
Growing ministry opportunities to serve churches and recovery houses	Ministries that are asking for help to become even more effective

## Contact & Other Information

MINISTRY PAGE: <https://infaith.org/ministries/michael-thompson>  
 Michael Thompson  
 411 Central Ave West  
 Mora, MN 55051  
 Mthompson@infaith.org  
 715-661-3254



Note: Ministry page (QR Code and/or web site link above) has a ministry overview and a link/button for donations

**InFaith Home Office:** (send checks via U.S. mail)  
 145 John Robert Thomas Drive, Exton, PA 19341 / 610-527-4439  
<https://infaith.org/>

# Bonus Devotional Thought

## Ephesians 5

### New International Version

#### ON THE IMITATION OF GOD

**5<sup>1</sup> Follow God's example ("Be Imitators of God"), therefore, as dearly loved children<sup>2</sup> and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.**

This passage begins with the term "dearly loved children." Paul identifies believers as children of God who are dearly loved. Then he tells the dearly loved children to "walk in the way of love." There is a connection that might not be obvious but should not be overlooked. The assumption of Paul is that children often act like their parents. Children take on the habits and values of the parents that raise them.

Christ gives us a primary reason and motivation for walking in the way of love. The motivation for walking in the way of love is that "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us..." In other words, God who adopted us through Christ is a God of love. Therefore imitate your adoptive parent (God) and walk in the way of love. Act like your Father and walk in the way of love. Act like Jesus Christ and model your life after his. Here are three applications for how we can walk in the way of love.

#### Forgiving Love

Paul has in mind the attribute of "forgiving love." We know this because Jesus died so that God could forgive our sins and instead treat us as adopted children in Christ.

The context of this passage links to chapter 4 in which Paul told us to be "kind and compassionate, forgiving one another."

If we say we are loving people the proof is in the way we forgive others. Love's nature is to forgive. Christ expressed the love of God toward us by forgiving us through Christ's work on the cross. A lack of love leads to many problems including psychological distress. A great deal of the work done by mental health counselors is related to forgiveness.

In one of his books, "Stott" quoted the head of a mental hospital who said half of his people could be released if they gave and felt genuine forgiveness.

The death of Jesus indicates we are truly forgiven. Romans 3 describes our moral debasement and yet he forgave us despite the way he saw us in our former life. One of the evidences of legitimate faith in Christ is that we both receive and grant forgiveness. Are you ready to forgive all who have offended or harmed you? Forgiveness is not pretending or forgetting, but it is leaving the paybacks to God. Yes, establish boundaries so new harm is not invited. But forgive the past so it no longer dominates your mind and thinking. You have better things to do.

#### Giving Love

The second thing these verses teach is that God "gives love" and so should we. In the cross we see God's giving love. Giving love first show up when God prepared a wonderful living environment to Adam and Eve.

God has given us life and placed us in a wonderful and fascinating world with meaningful work to do. But this pales in comparison to the love he gives us in the cross.

**John 3:16 God so loved the world he sent his son**

**Romans 5:8 While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**

**John 15:13 Greater love has no man but that he lays down his life for his friends.**

He did not just give up things for us, He gave himself. He gave up his position and so much more. Jesus gave himself even to the point of death, even death on a cross. Love does not just give up things, but gives up itself.

This is good marriage counseling, not just giving things, but giving yourself. One disgruntled wife quoted in a counseling session said; "Yes John, you have given me things but have not given me yourself."

Does your Christian life involved giving yourself (heart, mind, physical action) to others?

#### Living Love

Our love is a living love. A practical or active love. The outline of Ephesians chapter four describes what it means to live a life of love.

- To put off lying and speak truthfully

- To put off anger

- To put off stealing and work instead

- To put off unwholesome talk and instead speak to help others

- To put off malice, rage and anger, instead be kind, compassionate...

This is an eternal love that comes from God through us. We need the character of God's love to be received and displayed in our lives.

**What shall separate us from God's love? More than conquerors...nothing can separate us from God's love. Romans 8:35-39**

Let's revisit the phrase "imitate" from our passage. Be imitators of God related to love.

"Imitate" comes form the word "mimic" which is to copy someone else's speech or action.

We can only do this after carefully observing the action of the one we want to copy, in this case God. We can only do this if we spend time with God. Are you spending enough time with God to know what He is like? If you are, then you know how to imitate him. If not, you know what you must do.

## Blessings and love in Christ

Mike Thompson