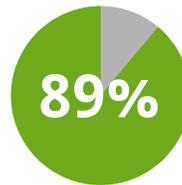


JOURNALS POSTED ON AUGUST 22, 2017

Homer and Jane



LARRY & REBECCA
STANTON



SUPPORT PLEDGED



HUNGARY

It is a great joy to be visiting home! We are soaking up the hugs from family, friends and church family.

One of the sad things about being gone most of the year is missing funerals of loved ones. In June, our church lost one of its most faithful members, Homer Richards. In addition to being a pillar of Pate Chapel Church, Homer has a role in Larry's story. Larry attended church as a boy, but stopped going when he grew "older and wiser." Homer was one of the people who never gave up on Larry. Every Saturday when Larry took his sons to McDonald's, Homer would be there having coffee with friends. Larry says he would groan inwardly because every time, here came Homer, shaking Larry's hand with his massive grip, and reminding Larry that he needed to be in church. From time to time, Homer would leave fliers on Larry's windshield for events at church. He never pointed out that Larry was living wrong, doing wrong, never shamed him—just the steady, "We'd like to see you back at church."

It's fun to reflect on the work God has done in bringing us to faith and refining us along the way.

We had lunch with a group of local pastors at my home church, Crainville Baptist. Our discussion of Hungary and Serbia turned to the meandering journey our mission has taken: how we were supposed to be in Liberia, how my teaching brought us to Hungary which led to Larry serving refugees in Greece and Serbia. How we met on a mission trip in the first place! How the pastors in the room had influenced us, and how the church members like Homer played a role in this journey.

Vicki Roth, the wife of the pastor who baptized me, related the story of her mother's conversion. When she was a little girl, Vicki went to church but her parents didn't. Ladies in the church would come and visit her mom. Eventually, Vicki's mother said, "They were so nice, I had to go!" Both she and Vicki's father became followers of Jesus, and Vicki has faithfully served Jesus her whole adult life.

When I think back over my faith journey, I had many teachers and pastors and family members who poured God's truth into my heart. When I think about how to witness, one person's work stands out: Jane Stalker. Jane was my college Sunday school teacher. I often didn't go to Sunday school during those rebellious times, or would sit in shame while I was there because I knew I wasn't right with God. Did Jane know the life of sin I was leading? Probably. But she never confronted nor criticized, just kept teaching. And praying. And inviting me to participate. I actually didn't rededicate my life until several years later, but her influence was there, steady and real. When I did come back, she counseled me through the heartaches of growing up. Her husband Jim brought me into my life of ministry by insisting that I teach the high school Sunday school class. Did they know that my faith was shaky, that I wasn't ready? Probably, but they trusted the power of the Holy Spirit to do what He does. Did they know I would eventually become a missionary? Now they are part of our faithful support network keeping us on the field in Hungary!

If you believe in Jesus, you probably have a Homer or Jane, someone who didn't give up on you when you walked away, someone who actually spent time in prayer that you would come back. Now it's your turn to be Homer and Jane. Who is it that needs your labor of love? Your persistent, loving invitation could become part of someone else's story!

Maybe we are your Homer. Perhaps you grew up in church but something caused your interest to grow cold. Maybe religion has never been a part of your life. Please consider

taking a step toward Christ. Find a quiet place to ask God how to take the first step toward him. If you have any questions, please ask. We may be around the world, but we're just a click away.

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