



BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – January, 2012

“DEAR CHILDREN, LET US NOT LOVE WITH WORDS OR TONGUE BUT WITH ACTIONS AND IN TRUTH.” 1 John 3:18

“This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us.” —1 John 3:19

Authentic love is an action, not a feeling. It produces selfless, sacrificial giving where there is no thought of receiving anything in return. God expects generosity with our time, expertise, talents, possessions and finances.

God is the source of our love and Jesus is our example of what it means to love. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to love when he lives in our heart and makes us more like Christ. God's love always involves a choice and an action, and our love should be like His.

Before Christmas, Bridges of Love experienced what it means to serve with Christ's love. We were invited to assist with the relocation of the Huntington Hills Condo residents due to mold in the building.

When I arrived at the condo, CUPS who was the lead agency in this endeavor, said all the residents had been taken care of except one family. They were still without a new residence and they were not having much success in finding suitable accommodation. They had one night left to find a place to live so time was running out...

After hearing the situation, I offered to take this family into our home, until they were able to secure suitable accommodation in the area. CUPS was unsure of this arrangement but offered to make introductions to the family. The moment I met the couple I indeed felt a love for them. There was no hesitation confirming my previous offer to have their family of five temporarily move into our home.

After further discussion, however, the family decided to accept the kind assistance from CUPS taking an apartment not far from their present residence.

We had an opportunity to connect with this family again, once they were settled, when we took over a little dinner one evening. Welcoming them to their new home; they insisted we join them for the meal. After a lovely visit over dinner we returned home with a few treats they generously shared with us.

Helping others might mean taking a risk but if we trust God to look after the circumstances we have the opportunity, to not only love others, but also to be truly blessed in return.

DEFINING SUCCESS

Over the holidays, I enjoyed reading a recently purchased book, “A Guide to Governing Charities” by Ted Hull. Ted a Winnipeg resident, is President of Ted Hull Consulting. He has a passion to serve churches and charities and for over twenty-five years has shared his expertise and experience for good governance.

A chapter I found especially interesting was, “**How Does a Charity Define Success?**” He stressed the importance of measuring the right results.

So how does a Charity define success? Hull states success is a journey, not a destination but we should be conscientious about measuring success. He says success is less about a one-time goal to be reached and more about reaching incremental markers indicating movement in the right direction.

Beginning a New Year seemed like a good time to reflect on the role of this ministry set by the Canada Revenue Agency. Bridges of Love Ministry Society was registered as a charity in 2007 because it:

- Benefits the community by educating and instructing religious leaders and their parishioners on emergency preparedness and the churches role in pandemic situations; and
- Advances religion by preaching and advancing the teachings of the Christian faith and the religious tenets, doctrines, observances and culture associated with that faith.

It is not an easy task to measure progress but I feel we have kept sight of the purpose for which the Charity exists. What parameters do we now measure for our success?

We could measure success by the number of trusting relationships built across the various sectors brought together by the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative Advisory Council, the number of churches who have signed to partner with the Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative, or how many have become ‘FEPI Bridge’ Partners.

These are all valid parameters for success. I am sure the Lord, however, will be counting how many lives were touched and perhaps changed by Bridges of Love and FEPI Churches who made a tangible difference in the lives of those impacted by an emergency or disaster.

We may never know what difference a kind gesture of compassion may have had on a life but those involved will feel the warm satisfaction.

BRIDGES OF LOVE MINISTRY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Reflecting God's Glory

Why does Bridges of Love Exist?

To provide opportunities for the local church to be a catalyst for change and engines of influence, reaching out with a greater concern for, and an irresistible influence on those in their community.

What is Bridges of Love's Purpose?

To unleash people of faith to identify the needs of their community and be willing to respond in relevant ways reconnecting the church as a vital part of community care demonstrating Christ's Love is ACTION.

What is Bridges of Love's Strategy?

To facilitate the development of an integrated network of churches to complement and enhance performance during a disaster with existing secular emergency management agencies.

What is Bridges of Love's Value Statement?

To display the Lordship of Christ having the heart of servant hood as the integral part of our mandate as we care for the needs of others in our community through compassion, respect, confidentiality, sensitivity, responsibility, honesty, open communication, and above all, love for one another.

“LIVING PROOF OF A LOVING GOD”

