

Love-Lift Ministries Newsletter

Celebrating Twenty-Five Years of Ministry

Fall 2002

Dear Love-Lifters,



Thanksgiving comes before Christmas. From a heart overflowing with thanksgiving flows a desire to bless others, at Christmas and all year long.

The season of Thanksgiving is near. I love this time of year. Even here in Southern California where there are no bright red and yellow trees to signal the changes there is an indescribable feeling of autumn in the air. The days become shorter, the nights colder, and the busy, but exciting, time of Christmas will soon be upon us, ready or not. Change is sure and we feel it all around us. The Thanksgiving season is nostalgic time when we look back through the years and seasons of our lives to fondly indulge in remembering special times past. We often recall especially the years of our childhood. The gathering of our extended family for the holidays and the love we shared. The smells of roasting turkey and pumpkin pie baking in the kitchen.

This letter is an unusual one for me to write. Allow me to share with you something of a very personal vision that began when I was a

little girl facing the unknown future of my life: **Isaiah 6:8 – And I Heard the Voice of the Lord, Saying: “Whom Shall I Send, And Who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I Lord. Send Me.”**

Many years have passed since I was a small child. It was then, at an early age, when I began the journey of a lifetime commitment to missionary service. Many times when the path was unclear, the road so long, and I was so weary, God’s promise would come through during the difficult times. Moses once told Joshua, when he faced the challenge of accepting his new role of the leadership, **“Be strong and of good courage. The Lord, He is one who goes before you. He will not leave you nor forsake you. Do not fear, nor be dismayed.” – Deuteronomy 31.**

As our ministry continues to expand, I look back at the challenges of the past twenty-five years and I remember God’s still small voice as He has spoken so often in my down times, **“Keep my vision. Do that which is in your heart to be a blessing to others for my sake. Be faithful and follow my call.”**

When I was only seven or eight years old it had been easy to answer God’s call, and to answer, “Yes,” as my life was not clearly laid out before me. I could not see the pressures, tests and trials that would come along in life’s journey. In spite of difficulties God’s vision has remained very clear as the years have passed. Together, with your help, we have gone on now for a quarter of a century, looking to Him to develop a program which has love-lifted many blessings around the world to far away places where missionaries, pastors, and the people they serve, are in need of encouragement. And knowing that they are not alone; knowing that others, like you and I, are standing with them, united in the holy faith encourages people.

We began the program as a sewing ministry at my church in 1977. As the years went on, and as we began to grow, we realized we would need extra storage space--a warehouse where we could work, store our supplies and store the donated gifts of many participating churches and church-schools that help us. Our warehouse ministry began in 1989 in a small room at the back of a lightbulb business in Costa Mesa.

We were next offered a much larger space by a Christian business in Huntington Beach; the only problem was that the space was upstairs and required hard work to carry heavy things up and down. Next we moved to a church near Love-Lift Headquarters where we had a single room, only large enough for storage of supplies kept there in preparation for the Fall when we geared up for the annual Christmas Love-Lift at our own church. When we worked here we had to carry out tables to work outside on the parking lot in the hot sun, but this didn't hinder our vision! It was exciting to see the opportunities for services continue to grow and to realize that we were now reaching more and more people with God's love.

In 1994 another Christmas business donated the use of an attractive office building, where we developed a former suite of medical offices into a new Love-Lift Ministries warehouse. We were thrilled with this wonderful opportunity to spread our wings in a nice environment.

By now we were an all year-around operation. In addition to the seasonal Christmas Love-lifts when whole church congregations were invited to participate in filling Christmas stockings, we began to fill Christmas stockings and Christmas gift-bags at the warehouse on a weekly basis. In the beginning home-schooled children, and their mothers were a real blessing, helping us create a weekly workshop in our new warehouse. The children were good at sorting toys and other gifts for the various age-groups which now in 2002 includes filling several thousand gift-bags for babies, toddler boys and girls, little girls and boys, teen-boys and girls, and men and women. It was a valuable learning-time for the children; a time to appreciate what they have, what we all take for granted.



Pictures from the top to bottom:

1. Realtor Lorraine Webster, who spent many hours helping us find our new warehouse and teenagers from NMCC who helped clean and paint the new warehouse.
2. Dave and Alice have given many long hours and days of work in cleaning, painting and being on call for all deliveries and working their hardest on details.
3. Moving is no fun but it had to be done. Harold Hunt has taken many loads from the old warehouse to the new.
4. Is anyone moving? We are! Some of the Love-Lift work team helping. Left to right; Carol Smiledge, Tom Kleban, Joseph Meyers, and Alice Alford.



As time went on God sent us some very special people who would be trusted to carry on the work with faithful dedication, consistently coming to the warehouse every week. These dedicated individuals are a constant blessing, and have been the mainstay for the year-round operation. *God knows their names, and He knows the names of all of you who have participated in some way to help Love-Lift Ministries realize the vision of blessing others – blessing those who desperately need not only our gifts, but also our prayers and encouragement. As you give this year to people who you will never know personally, please pray for them and realize that God knows their names, and their needs, just as He knows your name, and knows your needs.* Not only the poor have needs!

During the years at our fourth warehouse we once again began to outgrow our facility. Our shelves were filled to capacity with boxes of gifts that our crew needed to fill the large number of bags. Our methods of operation began to require not only more space, but also better access to pickup and delivery trucks. In short we needed a "real warehouse," something more than a converted office.

In the autumn of 1998 we made our fifth move, and for the first time we had to pay rent. This warehouse had 1,500 square feet. The rent was \$900 a month. This next step along our journey was a real challenge of our faith, although our vision remained steadfast. Like Moses we were required to step out and believe God's promise. Each new warehouse move has developed in me a greater sense of anxiety, but also a greater sense of faith, trust and dependence upon God. Today as we face a new challenge, He continues to fulfill His eternal and loving plan to bless the poor, and to save the affluent from selfishness so that we all might enter the Kingdom of God together.



Harold Tangmo and Ray Smiledge loading boxes on new shelves.

Even though we had started with almost nothing God's Word has continually reinforced His eternal program. God says in the Bible, "Do not despise the day of small beginnings." And still He speaks to my heart, "Hold on to My vision, follow My call, and I will supply your needs." Which brings us to where we are

today as we step out once more, trusting God to continue to move the hearts of His compassionate servants who understand the value of this ministry. Now in the autumn of 2002, we are once again embarking upon new territory as we enter our sixth warehouse. Beginning in October we now have twice the space for work and storage as before - 3,000 square feet. Our rent has doubled to \$1,800 a month. This now begins our greatest test of faith as we

move out again toward eternal blessing, and further fulfillment of a lifelong vision

As I have been required to make this move of growth and maturation I have been amazed at how God has drawn together wonderful new people with whom to work and share the vision. I could not have done it alone! Lorraine Webster has freely given many hours of professional real estate service as she and I looked together for months to find just the right place for new offices and warehouse of Love-Lift Ministries. We finally found a good facility located in a nice environment near Calvary Chapel, Santa Ana.

The new facility was a "fixer-upper." Numbers of people joined with us to clean-up, repair, and paint the place from top to bottom. Lorraine organized a work crew of teenagers from NMCC to give up one of their Saturdays to help. Dave and Alice Alford have worked for many hours making the move go smoothly as possible. Doug Wheeler spent long weekends with a friend to get the facility ready for the move. He purchased and planned out the layout of the new shelving. Many people helped to make this move. We are thankful for their help.

Let us all thank God for each other this Thanksgiving Season. Without each of us working together, Love-Lift Ministries would not continue to operate. Indeed, someday the journey of this ministry, like all other earthly organizations, will come to a close, leaving lingering blessings and memories, and leaving our rewards for service in the hands of the Master Servant. But, for now, I still have a dream, and a childhood vision to be used by God to share His love and blessing with those we are given an opportunity to reach - those who are in need of encouragement as we journey this earth together.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Kunde, Director, Love-Lift Ministries



Chris Mills donated the wood and worked many hours cutting it to size to fit the shelving. Behind him are the new nine foot high shelving units for the new warehouse.