

Pust Update, November 2008

Dear friends and supporters,

The Lord has been good to all of us as we are nearing the end of the busy part of the fall calendar. Due to the economic situation we have seen many Christian school related camps cancel, but on the other hand I think we have had more couples retreats this fall than ever before in a fall season. We will have had six couple retreats, with 5 of them being five weeks in a row! I think it is encouraging to think that during a time in our country when the family is under heavy attack, that the Lord has given us greater opportunity to fulfill our mission in the area of strengthening families. This is no coincidence. God is still on the throne!

We have mentioned in past notes that the financial situation here at Ironwood has been very tight, resulting in hard decisions having to be made. Once again we see the hand of the Lord for while we are still learning how to spend less and yet serve our guests, we find ourselves as a ministry in the best financial situation we have been in at this time in the fiscal year in many years. When you begin to add up all the oddities of this year—a very small spring camping season, then the most campers ever for a summer, fewer Christian school camps than in many years, yet more couples than ever, and that all adds up to a strong financial situation—the only answer is that the LORD is doing a work. There is no doubt that your prayers on our behalf have been an important part of this whole, unlikely outcome—unlikely, that is, from a human perspective.

Once again I would like to express our thankfulness for your faithful support over the years, and especially this year. The Lord has provided for our needs and more. You may wonder over some conflicting information that we may have shared over the course of the year concerning our support level. Those discrepancies are largely due to the difficulty I personally have had in understanding how Ironwood was figuring that percentage number. It helps to ask the right question, and I now understand! We have indeed seen our support stay right around the 90 to 95% level all year long. We still would like to grow that a little over the next little while but are willing to wait to see who the Lord will put in our path in the days to come to help in that area. There are others here who are in greater need of additional support than we, so you might pray for them also that the Lord would indeed provide for them as well.

Lest you all think that we have it all together because we work at Ironwood, I just want to share that the Lord has been working in my heart this year through various circumstances and relationships. I don't always attend all the men's retreat sessions but this year I knew that I needed to be a camper for while. As I have journeyed through this year it has become increasingly clear to me that I have a problem with being impatient, irritable, to put it bluntly, with anger and it was getting worse. The messages at men's recharge this fall were where I drove a stake in the ground and decided that with the Lord's help the progression of anger in my life was going to turn around. I spent a lot of time in James chapter three and still do. Once again I want to thank each of you who have prayer for me, not even knowing what I needed, but still praying. I don't think this is something that

I will ever get to the point that I don't need to be geared up for battle with, but I know it has made a difference in my relationships, and in my family already.

Tammy has been busy too. We made the decision this fall, since she is officially working $\frac{3}{4}$ time that she just needed to close it up at 3 and be home with the kids after school. Being a team leader of a very busy and important department doesn't make that super easy, but it was important to do and it has been a good thing. She has been enjoying the process of moving into and rearranging, and reorganizing, and rearranging and reorganizing.... the new, expanded, hospitality complex. I don't know for sure if that will actually ever be totally done, the rearranging I mean, but we are getting closer to really being done with the last details of construction and remodeling. It is really easy to just stop at functional, but we don't want to do that, so we keep plugging away. She has two of the Institute of Ministry girls working for here this fall, so that keeps her busy, not just keeping them busy, but trying to really teach them, not just about laundry, but about life.

Ericka is enjoying 5th grade, mostly. I think it must be a requirement for 5th grade teachers to have the longest fingers in the world. I know mine did. Maybe it was because it was often pointed at me! Micah and Melissa are in third and second grade this year and doing pretty well. You might pray for us as parents as we try to help them develop good study habits, good paying attention habits, good doing-their-best-all-the-time habits, and so on. We want them to actually develop a love of learning and not see school as a necessary evil. Looking back on my time in those grades, which is longer ago than I want to think, I'm sure they got their mischievousness, and orneryness, and all that from me, or maybe it was Tammy. Anyway, they come by it honestly. All the same, pray for wisdom in being parents. We need it.

I guess I have rambled enough for one night. Thanks again for being a part of our ministry by praying and by giving. God will not forget.

Andrew and Tammy Pust

Ironwood