



### Sharing Christian:

Empathy – Concern – Comfort – Compassion  
Support – Relief – Reassurance – Assistance  
Faith – Hope – Love

### Ministry Blessings – Ministry Challenges



Bearded Dave

Some of you, but not many, are aware that I have been fighting ever-increasing back and hip pain for the past year and a half. I have chosen to only share that with people who watch me limp by as I lean on my walker. In the past three months, as pain has increased dramatically, I have been unable to walk without a walker and had hip pain with every step.

This has affected Carolyn's and my life dramatically. I attend only events that are of primary importance to me and she attends the rest by herself. The miracle in my situation is that I have been able to go to the Atlas office and work nearly pain-free for 8 to 10 hours a day. That has allowed me to help others while maintaining my sanity as I dealt with chronic pain.

My initial problem was a combination of hip and back pain. The first medical recommendation was to have back surgery before repairing the hip. The back surgery would be fairly debilitating so we first chose the option of several pain reduction treatments. None worked well. We then went to Mayo for a second opinion, which was to have a hip replacement as quickly as possible and then address any future need for back treatment.

The switch to Mayo will have taken five months when I finally have the surgery, but we are encouraged because we have a firm plan. Hip replacement surgery is now scheduled for May 25<sup>th</sup>. The recovery can be simple but the doctors still do not want me to go into the office to work for six weeks. Needless to say, such an absence will put a great deal of strain on the effectiveness of the ministry.

Although I have total faith in Tonya in my absence, the option of totally abandoning her after only eight months of Atlas service is totally unacceptable to me. Therefore, we have developed a working plan for my recovery. Tonya and I will have video or phone interaction as needed. Using Zoom, we can continue to participate together in initial client intake meetings, staff meetings, or board meetings. Another great use of my time during recovery will be to meet regularly with a time-consuming client who is my only advocate partner. We will be able to concentrate on her growth during my time at home. My limitation makes this opportunity available to speed up her life change process dramatically. I will continue to be available by phone on a 24/7 basis.

I share all of this with you so that you can see how God works through our trials for His glory. The past few months have been an amazing time of God's presence in the ministry and the lives of clients. When people ask me how I am doing, my answer has truthfully been, "Physically not very well, psychologically just fine, and spiritually sensationally." The net effect of these conditions is a remarkable peace in whatever God has planned through this experience. I have been able to thank God for this time of adversity, even finding joy.

I also request your special prayers for Tonya, Jodi, and me, the Atlas ministry, and our many clients beginning with the surgery date on May 25<sup>th</sup> and continuing for the next few weeks. Please pray for productive ministry in the office and from my home and/or for a shortened period of time away from the office if possible.

I also want to publicly thank Carolyn, my home and life caretaker, and Tonya, my office caretaker, who have both served God well through the Atlas ministry while helping me try to do the same in spite of my limitations.

### Ministry Funding Needs Continue to Grow

Atlas of the Lakes Area finds itself in the fully expected financial situation of having to deal with the added costs of payroll expenses for our new staff positions. Our income for the first four months has increased by 87% but that increase covers only 64% of the additional payroll expense. The \$6,353 shortfall has to be made up from our cash reserves. Other reductions in expenses have offset part of this payroll increase and we continue to be in good financial shape, blessed by God's provision. We continue to need additional staff to handle the mission needs of the ministry, and, if implemented, will add to the potential financial difficulty.

We continue to trust God's provision for the ministry and simply share this information so that you, our faithful supporters, are fully aware of the ministry's financial need going forward. We are ever grateful for your generous past support of Atlas of the Lakes. All areas of support are deeply appreciated.

**P.S. The new beard will definitely end up on the bathroom floor before my surgery.**

