

December 2004

Dear Friends,

Since the days of the Chadian Oxen Project when I was in Chad for Grace Brethren International Missions, I have been encouraging U.S. Grace Brethren to remain involved with the believers in Chad in helping them find ways of providing for their own needs. It was out of frustration over relief projects and their inability to solve the problems they sought to alleviate that the Chad Oxen Project and Love in Action were born. Through this project we were able to help Chadians fight famine, not through emergency relief food distribution, but by helping them to plant larger, more drought resistant crops.

There is something of a person's dignity and commitment to God that are attached to working hard and being self-supporting. Central African Christians do not think much more of living on handouts than we do. Most of them would rather suffer, and do. Food, medicine, costs for children's schooling, and even clothes are common needs. Yet fellow Christians go without unless they can get training and find work.

We are not much acquainted with suffering in the U.S. and perhaps think of it least at this time of year. But many of our brothers and sisters in Africa are in serious need. Love in Action is for those who want to spend their efforts for the wellbeing and day to day survival of those we have won to Christ in Africa. Not to help them, but to help them help themselves.

Love in Action is implemented in the country of Chad by Frank and Karin Puhl and Matthias and Malina Ezel, two families from Germany who are Charis missionaries with Grace Brethren International Missions. As a supportive ministry, we seek to encourage the evangelism, church planting, and church development ministries already in place by providing believers with occupational training and resources for employment. This, in turn helps the members of Chadian churches train pastors, send missionaries and evangelists, and support the local needs of the church, not to mention care for their own families.

You may have noticed in our October newsletter, "Love Notes," that Matthias took on a class of five apprentices at the metal fabrication shop in September and Elie, our African manager of the sewing center, took on four new apprentices after graduating four in June. These are now part of sixteen or so men and women in African Churches that now have an occupation in tailoring to support their families and churches. This has been made possible through gifts to Love in Action, International.

This kind of employment training is not very common in Africa because Evangelicals have not made it part of missions activity. Today more and more missions and missionaries are seeing the need for a holistic ministry that cares for people after they come to Christ in poor countries. Other ministries of Love in Action include the Mike Retterer Training Center for vocational and biblical training and support for the “Jesus” film ministry. A micro-enterprise development center that was active previously is presently waiting for funding.

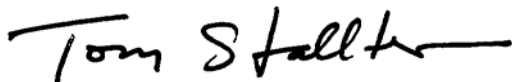
I am asking you to consider what part you might play in this ministry to poor Christians. I have included a prayer reminder card so you can pray for Love in Action meaningfully. I am also enclosing a response card with this letter that you can use to return with your gift or monthly commitment if God leads you to take part in that way. I hope this saves you time in writing a note to delineate how you want to be involved.

As we approach the Christmas season, please consider how God may want you to participate in the lives of poor brothers and sisters half a world away, but in desperate situations. Love in Action will not be giving any money to African individuals. All gifts will be used toward the mechanics and capital of providing training for self-sustaining occupations for Africans as you designate on your response card.

Thank you for taking the time to listen. If you made it this far in the letter it is an investment on your part already. Visit our web site www.loveinactioninternational.org for more information and the recent and back issues of the “Love Notes” newsletter. Financial operation information is available upon request.

May God bless you as you celebrate the birth of our Savior this month. It is because of Him that we get involved in getting the message out and caring for His people.

Yours in His great work,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Stallter" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Tom Stallter, President
Love in Action, International, Inc.
Professor of Intercultural Studies and World Mission
Grace College and Grace Theological Seminary

P.S. Please review the blue insert that lists our project goals for prayer. I am praying that many will also return the response card with a gift for their brothers and sisters in Africa.

Prayer and Giving Goals for Love in Action International, Inc.

These are the 2004-2005 goals for which we are asking God's help so employment training can be encouraged and expanded for Chadian believers. Pray with us that God will provide for our brothers and sisters in Chad.

Metal Fabrication Shop, \$7,000 to complete building and equipment needs.

Sewing Center, \$5,000 for expanded building and embroidery machine

Apprentice Fund, \$2,000 to provide encouragement to apprentices during their 2-3 year commitment

Mike Retterer Training Center, \$5,000 for furnishings, equipment, landscaping, and electrical fixtures

Jesus film Project, \$3,000 for purchase of rugged video projector for showing the films in the bush

Frank and Karin Puhl Fund, \$1,200 Encouragement honorarium for their work in managing LIAI projects

General Fund, \$3,000 For administrative and logistics costs.