

Sounding the Trumpet of God's Faithfulness

Many people who've heard our loud Christian rock band Soulfood can't believe we also play a couple of nursing homes regularly. In fact, they look at me sideways when I tell them we even bring our drums! (Howbeit, we bring the electronic version, the ones with a volume control.) We also ditched our electric guitars in favor of the acoustics, but if you think we've held back one ounce of our enthusiasm for praising the Lord, you're wrong. We still rock the same up-tempo boogie-woogie worship grooves we do at any big festival.

You see, we simply don't know any of the old hymns, and I reckon if we did, we still wouldn't play them. The patients already get a steady diet of those. We feel the Lord wants us to give them the very best of what He has given *us*. They can always back their hearing aids down a notch if need be.

We do try to be careful and notice if a new patient seems a bit wary after being wheeled in. They're always the ones eyeballing our speakers, almost thinking aloud, "Oh Lord! Who are these Whipper-Snappers?" I'll shoot them a reassuring smile and a word of encouragement. If I can get them to relax, I know they'll soon taste the loving presence of the Holy Spirit and let their guard down. Soon they'll be clapping and shouting along with the rest of us. By God's grace, we haven't run across a patient or staff member yet we haven't been able to win over after a few songs.

Now, I won't say there's not heaviness in those hallways. There is a lot of suffering and loneliness. It can meet you at the door and haunt your soul if you're not prepared. It was difficult for us to deal with at first. But since our mission was to bring the joy and hope of Jesus, we pressed on, and we found when people are praising God those dark forces make themselves scarcer than a field mouse at a Tanzanian tomcat training camp.

I'm ashamed to admit that when we first started going there, we thought we had something new to share with these old timers. RIGHT!!! Some of these saints were serving the Lord back before the ink had dried good on parts of the Old Testament! It's Soulfood that has learned a thing or two, and we've been the major recipient of the joy and encouragement involved in this endeavor. I can't tell you how many dear saints I've met who've blessed my soul. During our prayer times they share with me such unbelievably encouraging testimonies of God's faithfulness. Some may be suffering greatly the ravages of age and illness in their bodies, but spiritually they are absolute giants.

Just last Sunday a dear little lady patted my hand and explained, that although she has no one to visit her, she has never been more fulfilled. An indescribable gleam graced her eyes as she added, "Jesus is always with me. I wouldn't trade my lot in life with anyone!" She was simply beside herself.

Can you believe that? In this place so many find grief, she has found an oasis with the Lord. I gazed into her countenance and found myself envious. I was staring into the Truth of God's promises found in **Psalms 139**. All my agendas suddenly seemed so small. She had found the Pearl of a great price; the reason for life itself.

I must admit, we've been doing this for years now and I've been woefully resistant to share the experience. I've been worried people might find out what a great time there is to be had down at the nursing home and book up all the prime dates. We just couldn't stand being bumped out of this good thing we've found. For me and the boys, this is it; the most pure and unadulterated example of why we do what we do.

Someone's got to get in there and find a way to get these incredible testimonies out to the world. I realize there are restrictions and sensitivities because of the regulations written to protect patients, but there's got to be a way to sound this trumpet of God's faithfulness. These dear saints are like nothing I've ever seen or heard. You simply can't take in the fullness of what they have to express and go on denying God is real, or that He is Love.

But anyway- I double dog dare you to drive down to your local nursing home and spend some time making friends. Chances are you'll agree these saints are a much overlooked treasure in the body of Christ.

-Guy Sheffield 3-22-07