

**NBA...
United in Spirit,
Joined Together By
Prayer**

*A Devotional Booklet By And For
The NBA family
June 2000-May 2001*



Dear NBA Family/Community:

Welcome to a year of sharing our spiritual foundations with one another.

“NBA... United in Spirit, Joined Together By Prayer” is just one more way for all of us to experience the awesome power that is given our ministry when we are united in the spirit of prayer. Though we are spread across the nation, and many of our paths will never cross, we all share the same mission of serving as Christ’s extended hands of love and care. This devotional booklet is meant to draw us closer as we use it each week in staff meetings, resident meetings, Board meetings, personally and privately.

Over the last two years, NBA has participated in prayer partner programs, matching units by two’s. Many have found this to be meaningful, but what if we were all partnered in prayer?? Such is the vision of this booklet. I pray you will use it often, widely, creatively, and passionately. The words written here come from the hearts of many persons...they come from the heart of NBA. How blessed we are that so many have welcomed us into a glimpse of their heart.

Special gratitude for this devotional booklet goes to:

- ◆The Church Relations Task Force who created this idea in their November, 1999 meeting.
- ◆Those wonderful persons who wrote the devotionals you will meditate on each week.
- ◆Arlene Franks, Assistant Director of Church Relations, for editing and compiling the booklet.
- ◆The Holy Spirit who inspired these writings. They come from humans, but you will often catch the spark of the Divine in them.

I know that you will be tempted to sit down and read all the way through the booklet right away! Good for you! Read on! What spiritual wealth lies waiting for you! Represented here are many differing religious backgrounds and theological perspectives. What an opportunity to have our spiritual minds stretched.

And now, here is the greatest gift of the booklet, for as you use it week by week, although you have already read a devotional, on the second reading, there will be new insights...and on the third reading, even more.

I am thinking of those six St. Louis women who joined in prayer more than 113 years ago. If the unity of their prayer could result in the ministry of NBA today, then God only knows what the unity of our spirit and prayer can mean. God only knows, but in our faithfulness, shall it not be revealed to us?

Blessed reading,
Ben Bohren, Director of Church Relations

Three Special Notes—

- ◆ **Celebration!** When we invited the NBA family to submit a devotional, we had no idea if we could achieve 52 devotionals; we surpassed that! So, the extra devotionals are included for you as well.
- ◆ **Limitation!** We made enough devotional booklets to distribute to each member of the NBA Board of Trustees, each NBA Unit Board President, each unit CEO and each writer. Beyond that, we have only a very few extra copies. Please photocopy individual devotionals you wish to share.
- ◆ **Continuation!** If your NBA Unit found the Prayer Partner program of matching one unit to another very meaningful, you are encouraged to continue this on your own. Call a unit of your own choice and make those arrangements.

June 4-10, 2000

God Sustains Us

***Scripture:** Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. Isaiah 46:4*

Jennie is fast on her feet. She is a wonderfully young woman in her 90s, and has been a resident at our facility for a number of years. Jennie walks (I am guessing) over 3 ½ miles an hour. This is a feat that 75 percent of middle-aged men cannot keep up with.

Jennie dresses and walks like someone who is going somewhere, and I think of this scripture as I watch her. Surely, based upon her personality, her lifestyle and her outlook on life, God does sustain us when we walk through life with faith and trust.

I am reminded that the times when I am serving others or sharing in the work of the church, coincide with those times when I feel most vibrant and alive.

Coincidence?

***Prayer:** Gracious and heavenly Father, forgive us when we forget that you who glorifies yourself through your creation, also made us a little lower than the angels; so we can glorify you through our redeemed lives. Help us to understand that we experience your love most when we are in those situations where we approach life with confidence and excitement.*

Bill Howard, CEO
NBA Olsen West, Sedalia, Missouri

June 11-17, 2000

The Call of Perfection

Scripture: Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3: 13-14

Every morning I read the NBA Mission Statement. Every morning it scares me. My mind floats through the lines about providing “social and health services to meet the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of persons...” But it’s the closing line that causes me to pause each time, “...in the loving and caring spirit of Christ.”

I am just a person, as flawed and inconsistent as any God has created, yet each morning I am agreeing to do my work in the loving and caring spirit of perfection. There is that moment of realizing simultaneously that I cannot do this, but also that I don’t have to do this. I only need to open myself like a conduit, to allow this spirit to flow through me. If I could only learn to keep *my* hand out of it, and let the Spirit guide me. That is when the miracles happen. That is when everything flows without effort.

Prayer: God, today I ask that my errors be my own. Guide me through any decisions, actions, interactions and choices that may affect those whose care have been entrusted to me. And please remind me to be grateful for the abundance in my own life. Amen

Kenneth Hall, CEO
NBA Burlington Tower, St. Petersburg, Florida

June 18-24, 2000

On Judging

***Scripture:** Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Matthew 7:1-2*

How often we receive the counsel “Don’t judge, seek to understand.” We acknowledge the wisdom of this advice. But let us be honest—we do judge.

We judge whether Mark McGwire is a better hitter and player than Sammy Sosa...and what about Ken Griffey Jr. We judge whether the Weight Watchers plan is better than Dr. Atkins’ Diet Revolution plan. We judge what is best for our children and what care is best for our residents. We judge many times each day. So, what do you mean, “Do not judge!” Impossible.

A careful reading of the text suggests that Jesus’ focus is not on the everyday judging which we do routinely. Rather his emphasis is about making judgments regarding the quality and worth of others. Avoid judgment that relates to the character of others. For as we judge so we will be judged.

As Christians, our judgment should be done with mercy and love. Mercy implies compassion. Love reminds us that judgment should be always for the sake of correcting or improving, rather than destroying. Never should we judge so as to serve our own self-interests. Such judgment violates love that is self-giving.

We may judge one’s actions but not one’s self-worth. When we seek to belittle others, the judgment is on us and our own mean spirit and littleness. So, “do not judge,” but if you must, do so with mercy and love—always for the welfare of the one judged.

***Prayer:** Lord, may my words be spoken in love and my actions tempered with mercy. Amen.*

Don Heath, Director of the Cypress Fund,
NBA Cypress Village, Jacksonville, Florida

June 25-July 1, 2000

Called to Serve

Scripture: A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This, too, is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. Ecclesiastes 2:24-26

When we commit our lives to the Lord, He is faithful to lead us to a very special work. The Lord has a plan for everyone's life. If we seek his guidance, he will impart wisdom and knowledge to us and fill us with true happiness in our work. He does not want us to seek worldly fame, high positions or the recognition of other men. He reveals to us in scripture that when we seek out worldly riches, he will hand them over to whomever he pleases.

What better promise could we receive than one like this? The Lord says that if we seek to serve him first, that he will bless our work and give true meaning to our lives. There is always fear associated with a new calling, however, when we step forth in faith. God will bless that with the guidance of his hand and reward us with sweet peace and true happiness.

There is no greater joy than to serve the Lord and know that your work is being blessed by Him. It is a win-win proposition. We win, the people we serve win, the Lord is served and His witness is borne to the world.

Seek to serve him today and find the joy and blessing that will result. He will impart knowledge and wisdom to you in your work and fill your heart with true happiness.

Prayer: Dear Lord, We thank you for the work you have given us. We thank you for the staff you have provided and ask you to guide and direct each one of us in your service. Thank you for the people you have given us the opportunity to serve. In Christ's Name, Amen

**Ted Moore, CEO
NBA Patriot Heights, San Antonio, Texas**

July 2-8, 2000

The Word Was God

***Scripture:** In the beginning, was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. John 1:1-2*

I feel that these are the most important two verses of the Bible.

They answer the question of who Jesus really is—He was God in flesh when he came the first time. Now He is God in heaven with the Father. He is God our redeemer who is coming again to receive us to Himself and bring us back to rule and reign with him over the nations.

***Prayer:** Almighty Father, I come before you, to thank you for all your many blessings to your people--the beautiful world you made for us and the way you watch over us. Thank you most of all for your love in sending your son Jesus Christ to die and shed his precious blood for our many sins. And thank you Jesus for being willing to come and become a man when you are really God. And thank you Holy Spirit for being in us to keep us from the sins that we face every day. Continue to watch over us in all we say and do. We all look forward to your Return, Jesus, and it is in your precious name, we ask this prayer. Amen.*

Winona Bowen, Resident
NBA Powell Vista Manor, Gresham, Oregon

July 9-15, 2000

God Is Love

***Scripture:** By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35*

And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God, must love his Brother also. II John 4:21

Christianity is demonstrated by love: Our first priority is to love God above all else, and then we must love our neighbor. Sometimes it is difficult to love those around us, but Jesus said, "this is all the law and the prophets." In showing love to others, we show love to God.

***Prayer:** Oh Heavenly Father, help us to be loving and kind to others, and not offend or hurt anyone, in anything we say or do. In Jesus' name, Amen*

Gerri Miller, Resident Council President,
NBA Valley Vista Village, Twin Falls, Idaho

By His Love...

Scripture: Who by His understanding made the heavens, His love endures forever. Who spread out the earth upon the waters. His love endures forever. Who made the great lights-His love endures forever. The sun to govern the day, His love endures forever. The moon and stars to govern the night; His love endures forever. Psalm 136: 5-9

The daughter had stood by her father's bedside all night long. Alone except for the sights and sounds of the hospital equipment and the occasional personnel to check on her father's vital signs. He seemed weaker, more distressed, as the night wore on. The daughter was afraid. She knew that surgery was scheduled in the early morning, but he seemed too frail to survive the surgery. Being an RN she knew the odds, but also knew without the surgery, his quality of life would forever be changed. As she wrestled with her fears, the caretakers came in to prepare her father for the day. Taking a moment for relief of the bedside vigil, she walked to the waiting room. Her fears became overwhelming once away from her father's bedside. As she walked to the window, she noticed that dawn had arrived and the sky was a beautiful rose color, with colors of the rainbow all around in the morning's dew. As she looked out, she saw God's creations everywhere and it reminded her that He was there with her and her Father. All she had to do was "let go and let God;" it wasn't her decision to make whether her father should have surgery or not. She prayed a prayer of Thanksgiving for the life she had known as her earthly Father and for God's continued guidance and care in their lives. At peace now, she walked back to her father's room, to continue her vigil with him. As she neared her father's room, she heard the surgeon's voice talking to her father. He was explaining to her father that he had visited with other specialists about her father's condition and felt that the same results could be obtained by other procedures without subjecting him to the life-threatening surgery. The decision had been made! "God's love endures FOREVER."

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, creator of all, we thank you for Your undying love and care for each of us. May we be reminded that we do not have to make decisions alone. You are there, "Now and Forever" In His name, Amen.

Patti Howard, CEO
NBA Liberty and NBA TAMBO, Sedalia, Missouri

July 23-29, 2000

Making A Joyful Noise

***Scripture:** Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises. Sing praises to the Lord with lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody. With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before King, the Lord. Psalms 98:4-6*

When I was young someone told me—I believe it was my grandmother—that every time you heard a bell ring, it meant that an angel got its wings. I am comforted with this knowledge. Many times after someone has died, I worry that I have not prayed enough for their salvation. I am greatly relieved when I hear that bell and know that God has answered my prayers. I have yet to not hear that bell.

Sometimes, it is a loud and joyful sound, and sometimes it's just the tiniest of tinkles. But, always I have heard that tinkling bell sound. When I have told this to some of my friends to comfort them about the loss of their loved one, they have scoffed at me. Maybe it is only something rattling in the refrigerator motor or the furnace coming on to bring heat up the register... but, isn't it wonderful to be able to have such a belief? Maybe this is God's way of making a joyful noise to me. I know this passage in Psalms doesn't say anything about a bell. However, I have never heard a more joyful noise than that bell. It always renews my faith and makes me rejoice with gladness.

***Prayer:** Dear Lord, Thank you for renewing my faith each time I hear the tiny tinkling of a bell and know that you welcome joyful noises. Thank you for giving me ears to hear, eyes to see, a heart to feel, and a chance to find comfort in the joyful noises all around me. Help us to open our hearts to all possibilities of communications with you, most of all for the comfort, that only you can give. Amen*

Nancy Chenoweth, Administrative Assistant,
NBA Spoon River Towers, Lewistown, Illinois

July 30-August 5, 2000

Be Still And Know That I Am God

*Scripture: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever.
Hebrews 13:8*

Our needs vary—yours from mine and from day to day. Peace and comfort can be had just by reading the Bible. This passage, as well as Psalm 46:10 override any trouble. Just be still and know that God and Jesus Christ are here, yesterday, today and forever.

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father we come to Thee in faith and hope. We are confident that our supplications are always answered. We know that our endless praise and adoration will always glorify Thee and reverberate for all eternity.

Melda S. Tubel, Resident,
NBA Florida Christian Center, Jacksonville, Florida

August 6-12, 2000

Relationships: Which do you pursue?

Scripture: Flee also youthful lust; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. II Timothy 2:22 I am a companion of all who fear You, And of those who keep Your precepts. Psalm 119:63

Throughout our life's journey, we encounter many individuals. As we begin to assess the purpose of those we meet, we must examine our motives. Are we seeking to obtain material gain by knowing certain individuals? "It's not what you know, but who you know," "rubbing elbows," "brown nosing," and "networking" are among the familiar terms used to describe one whose motive is to meet or impress another for personal gain. Some go beyond what is ethical to what is illegal in order to obtain status, recognition or acceptance.

Have we sought out relationships that would provide spiritual gain this diligently? Do we understand the benefits of having a companion that believes, "for where two are three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20)?

We should challenge ourselves to pursue relationships with Christians whose hearts yearn for God. Plan a 'happy hour' at Wednesday night's Bible study class. Rubbing elbows there may get you healed.

*Prayer: O God, let Christ be formed in me
That lives touched by mine
Shall be made like thee – Anon*

Daphne Curtis, Assistant Director of Accounting for Planned Giving
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri

August 13-19, 2000

God Loves His Children

***Scripture:** Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me." Matthew 18:5*

God has watched over me all my 81 years. When I was 11, my mother died. God was there through family, neighbors, church family, and community. He sent me my mate of 55 years. He gave us three children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Through strokes, heart failure, gall bladder surgery, and two pacemaker implants, God is always there through prayers from family, church friends, and neighbors in our apartment building.

There's a need to give back to Him, and the way I've chosen to do that is being in the Foster Grandparent program in the public schools. As we tutor children and see their eyes light up as they work to accomplish their school tasks, it is easy to see why Jesus used children to illustrate the attitude necessary for entering God's kingdom. Being a Foster Grandparent is a way to reach out to His children as He has reached out to us.

***Prayer:** Thank you God for reaching out to me as many times.
May I give your love to children and treasure them as you do.
Amen*

Emogene Grammont, Resident
NBA Meadows Point Apartments, Enid, OK

August 20-26, 2000

Five Principles of Effective Faith

***Scripture:** ...for truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. Matthew 17: 20*

FOCUS—Keep your eyes upon Jesus and the “things” of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

ATTITUDE—God’s peace will give you strength. This *spiritual attitude* will connect us to the greatest power we can ever know.

INVEST—Faith is an investment yielding awesome returns! Jesus said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”

THANKSGIVING—Give thanks and praise to God for all His precious gifts.

HOPE—gives us the understanding that through Christ we are able to live a life filled with the joy of His love.

*Prayer: Father, help us **Focus** on the important things in life. Guide our spiritual Attitudes and show us how to **Invest** our treasures in heaven. Thank you for giving **Hope** to the world. Through faith in you, we can move mountains! Amen.*

Amber Dinwiddie, Director of Annual Fund,
NBA Woodhaven, Columbia, Missouri
(adapted from a 1999 Lenten Devotion by Dale Shotts)

August 27-September 2, 2000

In the words our savior gave us...

Scripture: "Pray then in this way: And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.... For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matthew 6:9a, 12, 14-15.

What familiar words are the phrases of the Lord's Prayer! From the time we are small children until the last days of our lives, these words trip so easily from our lips—words we share in worship, words deep in memory that bring comfort.

As with all Scripture, there must come a time when these benign words bring a reckoning, slicing with double edged precision into the heart of our egotism. "I am forgiven!" We celebrate. But the words of indictment are the words that follow...as we forgive. So certain that we might miss that tiny causal statement, they are repeated without ambiguity two verses later. Our state of forgiveness is dependent. It absolutely depends on our willingness to be an agent of forgiveness. It is with fear and trepidation that we pray these words, or else we follow with: "Father, please, do not hear and answer me, Amen."

Prayer: Almighty and everliving God, fill me with your Spirit. Enlighten me that I may know the many places where I hold on to the debts that others have incurred. Clearly show me my closefisted desire to absolve others of their wrongdoings. Free me of vengeance. Then and only then, give me back the words that Christ has taught me so that I may pray with one Spirit with him who has saved me. In Jesus name. Amen.

Julie Wilmot, chaplain
NBA Village at Skyline, Colorado Springs, Colorado

September 3-9, 2000

Believe When You Pray!

***Scripture:** Therefore I say unto you, what things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark 11: 24*

When one has been given the resources to obtain a goal, the tools to accomplish or finish a job, then the goal should be obtained, the job should be accomplished. God sent Jesus to die for us, but first He lived on earth and is our perfect example. Our Lord has let us know that when we ask our Father for something in His Name, accept it as a fact that our petition has been heard and we will receive our request.

I have been blessed in the almost 50 years of learning to communicate through prayer and meditation with our Heavenly Father in the Precious Name of his Darling Son Jesus Christ that God loves us and is so concerned about every area of our lives. He truly does care and will answer one's surrendered Prayer.

***Prayer:** Dear Gracious Heavenly Father, in our soon-coming Savior's Great Name, please grant us your Grace that we Love you and obey you. Let us seek Your Holy Will for our lives and Believe.*

Bennie Jean Stevens, Resident
NBA Hylton Point Apartments, St. Louis, Missouri

September 10-16, 2000

One More Day With The Frogs

***Scripture:** Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, 'Entreat the Lord, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, '...when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses?' Exodus 8:8-9*

As a result of Pharaoh's stubbornness, Egypt had been invaded by the frogs, and they were everywhere! In the cupboards, the bedrooms (ugh!), the porches—they covered the land. When Pharaoh couldn't stand the slimy, hopping and croaking amphibians any longer, he called his historical enemy, Moses, and exclaimed; "Enough is Enough!" When Moses agreed to take care of the issue, Pharaoh wanted him to wait until the next day...WHAT? One more day with the frogs? His wife probably wanted to wring his neck! Can you imagine what his advisors thought at that moment as they inhaled the rotten stench of half-dead frogs? Yuk!

How often have we, like Pharaoh, put off surrendering to a better thing that God would do for us? "I must get rid of this cigarette cough, but let me have ONE MORE PUFF" "I know what alcohol is doing to me, my family and my job - let me have just ONE MORE DRINK." "I know the health risks that my obesity will surely cause, but I must have ONE MORE CANDY BAR." It's so easy to procrastinate in making financial, personal or religious decisions. Our loving family and caring friends must stand by and watch as we proclaim "TOMORROW - what a clever idea!" But tomorrow is a hoax. When the clock strikes midnight, it's today all over again. Everyday is today.

***Prayer:** Father, strengthen our hands as you remind us "Today is the day of salvation..." "Today if ye will hear My voice..." Thank You for your love, mercy and patience. Help us face our fears and receive our courage from You to get rid of the "frogs in our life."*

Felicia Moghbel-far, LPN, Care Coordinator
NBA Oklahoma Christian Home, Edmond, Oklahoma

September 17-23, 2000

Every day was Miracle Day at Mallory

Scripture: ...Jesus said to the paralytic, "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." And he stood up and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" Mark 2:11-12

Right out of seminary, my husband and I served the Mallory Avenue Christian Church in Portland, Oregon. The week you are reading this, there is a NBA Miracle Day scheduled there.

The years spent at Mallory taught me to expect miracles each day in the regular course of events. Lives changed when they touched that congregation. When the technician who came to install our new phone system walked through the building surveying the site he had a eye full/spirit full experience. In the basement, he met the YWCA cooking class, the kids playing ball in the gym; in the office area he met the secretary for three congregations who offered him home-baked cookies while talking with a homeless woman; upstairs he met the director of the local YWCA and a Community Minister who created programs for neighborhood families and ran a clothing bank, the two pastors, the mental health drop-in center workers and participants and the juvenile restitution officer meeting with a young community service worker. He turned to my husband, Doug, and said, "This is quite a place. I've never seen anything like it."

That is what a miracle is—a sight/happening that causes a person to stop and say, this isn't business as usual. Something different is happening here.

The men in the Mark story carried their friend to the source of healing. this week, workers from Oregon will carry the pieces of a miracle with their hands and hearts to the source of healing and a miracle will appear. The Mallory I remember was used to miracles. I expect they will smile knowingly and nod -- there is another miracle. It happens every day.

Prayer: Loving God, thank you for the miracles you bring each day. Open my heart to receive them. In expectation and hope I pray, AMEN.

Cathy Myers Wirt.
Member of the NBA Church Relations Task Force

September 24-30, 2000

And A Child Shall Lead Them

Scripture: *God said, "This is the sign of the covenant....my bow I set in the cloud, as a sign of the covenant between myself and earth. Genesis 9:12-13*

Worship at Watson Terrace Christian Church in St. Louis on March 26, 2000 was not a typical service. 'Celebrating a Decade of Ministry,' worshippers sat at table and shared memories, tears, stories, communion and lunch. 10 year old Brianna sat drawing. Giving the piece of paper to my husband, David, whose 10-year ministry there was ending that Sunday, Bri instructed, "wait until later to open it."

We arrived home and opened the paper to find a rainbow set against a sky of blue with this message: "May you always remember Watson Terrace as a never-ending rainbow!" After shedding many tears, I reflected on the message. It is true. The people with whom we ministered painted a colorful pattern of relationships. Through acts of love and compassion, in times of joy and sorrow, we bonded and blended in a beautiful rainbow of expression. We battled with AIDS, painted bridges and built homes all in celebration of "God with us." Our diversity in race, culture, educational attainment and career formed a rainbow even more beautiful than the ones that God places in the sky.

Prayer: *Dear God, we know that we are never alone for you are here with us. You put the bow in the sky and gave us a rainbow of people for friends and co-workers. When we open our eyes, we see the beauty that is before us. Thanks for the rainbow. Amen*

Bea Meeker, Director of Records Management
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri

October 1-7, 2000

Choosing God's Way

***Scripture:** Whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.
Philippians 3: 19*

A popular Rap singer, who died in 1995 at the age of 31, took pride in the profane language and violent imagery of his productions. If you listened to his music, you had the feeling that he was shaking his fist at God. It's a tragic story. The singer's godless philosophy of life deprived him of hope and led him into a lifestyle that caused his death at a young age. But far worse than an early death is the fact that God's judgment awaits all who reject him.

What a contrast! Man's way produces harmful, evil conduct that ends in destruction. God's way promises inner peace, victory over enslaving sins and eternity in heaven. The right choice is obvious! "Jesus Christ."

***Prayer:** Dear God, grant that we may never falter in our faith as we live that quality of life that is consistent with your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.*

Arthur Jones, Resident
NBA Hylton Point Apartments, St. Louis, Missouri

October 8-14, 2000

Humbled

***Scripture:** Do good to your servant according to your word, O Lord. Teach me knowledge and good judgement, for I believe in your commands. Before I was humbled I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees. Psalm 119:65-68*

Learning knowledge and judgement does not always come from schools. It is our experience as well as our encounters with others that provide a richer understanding of life. Sometimes we struggle from setbacks that take us from God's way. It is often through dealing with those situations and letting God's discipline and love work in our lives that we learn humility. For me, accepting times when I am wrong is difficult and puts me on the defensive. I have to stop and listen and make myself open to the new idea or procedure that I may not yet fully understand. Seeing through the eyes of another allows me to develop an understanding of a situation and receive the guidance that is needed. Swallowing my pride is difficult!

***Prayer:** When suffering comes our way, God, may we receive it as a means of being drawn closer to you, of learning your love, of discovering your mercy, of trusting your will, and of feeling your compassion, even as we have learned your ways through the "school" of humility. Help us, Lord, to be accepting of others and our selves. Amen*

Kim Wagner, NBA Regional Manager

October 15-21, 2000

Making A Life

Scripture: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matthew 5:16

One of the things that happens as we grow older is the discovery that we no longer need what we once thought was essential! I refer to the material goods—the “stuff” we collect along life’s journey. When we stop and consider how quickly life flies by, we learn that the contribution we make is not in what we accumulate, but in what we give away.

NBA Foxwood Springs Living Center has over 400 volunteers who realize that you do not “make a living” by what you get paid, but you “make a life” by what you give away. Great opportunities to do great things do not come often, but small opportunities to do something great for people surround us every day. May we always keep in mind the words of Jesus as we do our “good works” to the glory of God!

Prayer: Creator God, we ask your blessing as we start a new day and ask that you keep us ever mindful that it is more blessed to give than it is to receive. Amen.

Barry A. Kramer, Director of Resident Services
NBA Foxwood Springs Living Center, Raymore, Missouri

October 22-28, 2000

Unconditional Love

***Scripture:** For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16*

We speak with many accents and in several languages. Some of us use walkers, wheelchairs and canes to get from place to place. We do not all share the same values and beliefs. Many, but not all, of us have gray hair and wear glasses. Our skin colors are not all the same. We have held various jobs and lived in many cities, states and countries. Now we live in an apartment community, and, because of our differences, it can sometimes be challenging to “love one another” (as we are commanded to do in 1 John 2:8). Most of the time, we do show love and concern for one another because we know that we are more alike than different. We are all human, with strengths and needs. We are all children of God, who blesses us in many different ways, especially through the unconditional love of his Son, Jesus!

***Prayer:** Oh Heavenly Father, how I do love you because you first loved me. I call upon you to please give me the courage and the openness of heart to love with honesty and sincerity. Amen.*

Residents and Staff of NBA Stone Crest, Des Moines, Iowa

Oct. 29-Nov. 4, 2000

For Your Journey

Scripture: Psalm 23 (see below)

The 23rd Psalm is always a favorite. It's good for the journey.

I remember memorizing it in the third grade and saying it in unison for our parents as a class project (McKinley Grade School, Enid Oklahoma.) We did this in the public schools...I'm old. I remember wondering who Rod was and how many employees were on God's staff ...because He said they were helpful...remember "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." The word Oklahoma means "home of the red man." So it is not surprising that I also know a Native American translation of the 23rd Psalm. Please read this Psalm in whatever Bible you like the best and then read this translation from the Cherokee language.

The great Father above a Shepherd Chief is. I am His and in Him I want not. He throws out to me a rope and the name of the rope is "love." He draws me to where the grass is green and the waters not dangerous and I eat and lie down and I am satisfied. Sometimes my heart is very weak and falls down but He lifts me up again and draws me onto a better road. His name is WONDERFUL. Sometime, it may be very soon, it may be a long, long time, He will draw me into a valley. It is dark there but I'll be afraid not, for it is between those mountains that the Shepherd Chief will meet me. And the hunger that I have in my heart all through this life will be satisfied. Sometimes He has made the love rope into a whip, but afterwards He gives me a staff to lean upon. He spreads a table before me with all kinds of food. He puts His hand on my head and all the tired is gone. My cup He fills until it runs over. What I tell is true, I lie not. These roads that are away ahead will stay with me through this life and after. And afterwards I will go to the big tent and sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever.

The 23rd Psalm is always a favorite. It's good for the journey.

Prayer: Our Father, Heaven-dweller, My loving will be to Thy name. Your Lordship let it make its appearance. Here on Earth, let happen what You think, the same as in Heaven is done. Daily our food give to us this day. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And do not temptation being, lead us into. Deliver us from evil existing. For Thine Your Lordship is, And the Power is and the Glory is forever. Amen

Cindy Dougherty, NBA President

November 5-11, 2000

Trip to Jerusalem

(Excerpt from "God and a Boy Named Joe" by Ethel Barrett)

Scripture: Let us praise God for His glorious grace, for the free gift He gave us in His Dear Son! Ephesians 1:6 I

I have enjoyed this little story since 1976 when my children were in Sunday School. I have referred to it many times since then.

Grandmother and Joe were on their way to the Temple when Joe said, "Grandmother. You remember how we watched that man in the Temple? How he transferred his sin to the lamb?"

"Yes, Joe, yes."

"And the lamb was killed in his place?"

"Yes, Joe."

"Grandmother—Jesus of Nazareth was the lamb!"

"Joseph Simon Bar-Jason!" Grandmother said, "Let's get back to the Temple. We'll buy a sacrifice. Transfer your sin to the sacrifice. And ask God to forgive you. And then let's get home."

"Don't you believe Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah?" he asked.

"Joseph," she said, trying to be patient. "We believe in GOD."

A little later Joe said, "Well I think...Jesus was the Passover lamb. He was killed on Passover day."

"He was a prophet," Grandmother said desperately.

"No! He was the lamb," said Joe.

"He died on the cross just like the lamb died on the altar."

"Joseph----come!"

"I'm going to ask Him to forgive me." Said Joe. "I'm going to transfer my sin to Him."

Grandmother hesitated a minute, then came back slowly and stood beside Joe.

"What shall I call Him?" he asked.

She thought a moment, then cleared her throat. "If that's the way you feel, Joe," she said, "you'd better call Him Lord."

Prayer: Lord forgive me for I have sinned

Bobbi Jacobsen, Director of Marketing/Development
NBA Village at Skyline, Colorado Springs, Colorado

November 12-18, 2000

We Are Never Alone

***Scripture:** Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Philippians 4:4-5*

How wonderful to know of someone who died for our sins! How inspiring and reassuring to know who created all of the heavens and the world around us! How glorious to know His all-consuming love!

Let us rejoice in His name always. Our Lord reigns, Our Lord reigns . . . How wonderful to know His spirit lives in each of us. We can take each day knowing that we are never alone.

Our Lord lives, so rejoice with gladness and with love. Thank Him daily for all your tribulations, because He knows your cares and your worries, and He is forever at your side. Raise your eyes to the heavens and say this simple prayer:

***Prayer:** Thank you God for all You have given me and for those around me who do not know Your unconditional love. Allow me to be the witness to Your name. In Jesus' Name, Amen*

Angelina Alesi, Resident Council Member,
NBA Valley Vista Village, Twin Falls, Idaho

November 19-25, 2000

Thanksgiving Week

Giving Thanks

*Scripture: It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, ...
Psalms 92: 1a*

When I look at our society and everyday life, I can find a lot of negative things to talk or complain about. Most people seek a higher standard of living, more money, more friends, better jobs, etc., and are not thankful for the things that they already have. Most of us have been blessed with loving families, caring friends and a nice place to call home.

The next time you feel you have a right to complain, take a look at the famine-stricken countries where residents bathe and drink from the same watering hole. Consider how difficult it must be for them to eat each meal wondering if there will be a next. I am sure that anyone of those individuals would be willing to trade places with you. So while you have all of these things, do a "good thing" and give God thanks for what He has given you.

Prayer: Lord I know it's typical for me to ask you to do something for me, but this time I'm not going to ask for anything. I'm going to do a "good thing" and give you thanks. I thank you for thinking about me, and for making sure that I wake up each morning. I thank you for food and water. I thank you for my job that you blessed me with that gives me the opportunity to make a living for myself and my household. I thank you for all the things that I take for granted. Amen

Donald Buckner, Acting Director of Accounting for Planned
Giving
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri

November 26-December 2, 2000

Gossip Or Tale-Bearing?

Scripture: A gossip reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a babblers. Proverbs 20:19

Everyone loved Cindy when she and Jack were married. She seemed a sweet, loving girl. Then Cindy started gossiping—playing one family against the other. This eventually brought strife and discontentment between the two families.

Finally the families quit speaking and gathering for special occasions. It's going to take a miracle from God to reunite these two families. "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words cannot hurt me." Don't you believe it. Gossip is strictly from Satan. There are many scriptures that warn against gossip. Here are a few more:

Leviticus 19:16

Proverbs 16:18

Proverbs 18:8

Proverb 16:20

Prayer: Heavenly Father please cause this young lady to realize the hurt and unhappiness she has brought so many. Inspire her to salvation that she might try to mend the hearts she has broken. In Jesus name I pray. Amen

Mary Hawkins, Resident
NBA Meadows Point Apartments, Enid, Oklahoma

December 3-9, 2000

Advent Begins

First Christmas with Jesus

Scripture: And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.
John 14:3

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below,
With tiny lights, like heaven's stars, reflecting in the snow.
The sight is so spectacular, please wipe away that tear,
For I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear,
But the sound of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here.

I have no words to tell you, the joy their voices bring,
For it is beyond description, to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me. I see the pain inside your heart,
But I am not so far away. We really aren't apart.
So be happy for me dear ones. You know I hold you dear,
And be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I send you each a special gift, from my heavenly house above,
I send you each a memory of my undying love.
After all "Love" is the gift, more precious than pure gold.
It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other, as my Father said to do,
For I can't count the blessings or love He has for each of you.
So, have a Merry Christmas and wipe away that tear.
Remember, I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

Prayer: Father, help us to remember that our Christmas memories here will be nothing to compare with Christmas in Heaven! Amen

Becky Zimmer, NBA Associate Vice President for Development
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri

December 10-16, 2000

Second Week of Advent

Sharing Peace

Scripture: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'" Isaiah 9:6

The second week of advent is traditionally the week when we light the peace candle on the advent wreath. This is a deeply meaningful symbol for me. I have always been concerned around issues of peace (personal, interpersonal, and global). I spend a great deal of time gathering resources, studying, and meditating about what peace means and how to find peace, not only for ourselves but for our global family. This much I have learned: peace is tricky business, but infinitely important. I do not offer answers but rather an invitation to a journey. Light a candle for peace today and take time to consider peace in your life and the role that you play in bringing peace to others. Invite others to share the journey for we do not, in fact we cannot find peace alone. The Prince of Peace comes to us, let's follow.

Prayer: God of Peace, bless us as peacemakers. Help us continue to follow you and play our part in bringing peace to your world. Bless us this advent season and always. Amen.

Sarah Riester, NBA Board of Trustees

December 17-23 Third Week of Advent

God's Amazing Grace

Scripture: But God gives us more and more grace. James 4:6

God is so good, tolerant, merciful and kind. His grace never ceases to amaze me. We human beings with all our constant complaints—it's a wonder that He doesn't just wipe us off the face of the earth faster than He put us on it.

When I meditate on all He does for us and puts up with from us, it makes me realize with awe what the song *Amazing Grace* really means. "Amazing Grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me."

None of us is perfect, all of us make mistakes, but those of us who try with all our hearts to be what He created us for and who are diligently seeking His guidance in all we do, will understand what Amazing Grace means. Critics (fault-finders) will always be among us. Only God in His infinite mercy can change their hearts with His Amazing Grace.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for your mercy and your grace. Our lives are so much richer because of you. We praise you and glorify your name. Amen

Ann Wolle, Resident,
NBA Oklahoma Christian Apartments, Edmond, Oklahoma

December 24-30, 2000

Christmas Week

No Room...Or Which Room?

Scripture: And she gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7

I don't think he meant to do it, but little David, my preacher's son, was surely the perfect role model of a terror! I was 9, a shepherd in the Christmas pageant; David was 10 and playing Joseph. He knocked on the door of the inn, and when there was no answer, he knocked again and again, so hard he actually put his fist through the door! Kind of like saying, "Don't tell me there is no room here!"

Have you read that passage carefully? It doesn't say there was no room at all, just no room in the inn. According to legend, the innkeeper did find a cave, or a barn or some building for the pregnant couple. There was room, just not in the main part of the inn.

Seems to me, that's kind of like us... Come on in, Jesus...you are welcome into my life...in the basement, or the attic or the garage... in the side issues...on Sundays...when I'm in trouble. But I'm afraid to let you into the main part of my life...in my primary relationships...in my business...on Tuesday night...into my guilt, greed, and graven images.

So, where will Jesus be born in your life (my life) this Christmas? Will it be the tool shed or smack dab in the center of your soul?

Prayer: Little Lord Jesus, thank you for being willing to come into my life once again. I know you will come, no matter what room I offer you. I know you won't beat down the door, but help me to open my heart and offer you my soul for your manger. Come, Lord Jesus, Come. Amen.

**Ben Bohren, NBA Director of Church Relations
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri**

December 31, 2000-January 6, 2001

New Year's Week

What Made Jesus' Healing Different?

Scripture: Whatever villages or towns or countryside He entered, they had the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassels on his cloak; and as many as touched it healed them. Mark 6:56

According to sources written at the time of Jesus' ministry, many people possessed the power to heal. What made Jesus' healing different for those who also could heal? It was more than just touching the tassels on his cloak.

Jesus healed the lepers, the paralyzed, the blind, the deaf and the mentally ill to show they were to be citizens in the Kingdom of God. His Kingdom was built upon pillars of faith, hope and love. These pillars for God's kingdom offered attitudes toward assisting the disabled.

Today, we have the medical arts for treating the disabled. Yet medicine cannot heal our negativity toward the physically challenged. We are entrusted to make the Kingdom of God a reality for all.

Prayer: O Divine Healer, grant us the sight for the visually impaired so we can all see your Kingdom on earth. Grant us hearing for the deaf so we can all proclaim your Kingdom. Grant us the ability moment for the physically challenged so we can all journey into your Kingdom. Grant us the calmness for the mentally affected so we can all live peacefully in your Kingdom. O Divine Creator, grant us your strength to heal our weaknesses when we confront those who are powerless in this world. Amen

David Morton, Resident,
NBA Gateway Accessible I, St. Louis, Missouri

January 7-13, 2001

The Power Of God's Word

Scripture: Wherefore, if meat make my brother offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother offend. 1 Corinthians 8:13

I was reading my quarterly lesson on February 7, 1982, and the power of the word engulfed me as a powerful light. The meat was my cigarette habit which God took away from me instantly, after 49 years of smoking. If you are a Christian, your body is the temple of Christ and the scripture says not to do anything against the body because it is the temple of Christ.

Prayer: Dear Lord our Heavenly Father, I come to you this day and hope that you hear and reach out to people like me in these homes or nursing homes or wherever they may be, and purify all hearts. Bless each and everyone of us on earth and have thine own way. Amen.

Thelma S. Ledwell, Resident,
NBA Bethel Housing, Jonesborough, Tennessee

January 14-20, 2001

Laughing With God

Scripture: *When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.'*
Psalms 126:1-2

God is continually surrounding God's people with reasons for laughter. In Psalm 126, the Israelites revel in God's promise of deliverance. At NBA California Christian Home, we composed our own Psalm of laughter and delight:

My mouth is filled with laughter because...

- God tickles my heart with his Goodness!
- God gave us a jollyologist in the form of our Chaplain
- God laughs with me.
- God is reflected within me.
- God has a sense of humor and not only forgives but forgets the dumb things we do.
- God's love fills me to overflowing.
- God's grace gives me what I do not deserve, and His mercy keeps me from getting what I do deserve.
- God graciously provides me with a wonderful family, good friends and a happy life. And once in a while, because God has a sense of humor, He sends challenges along the way as well.

God will fill your mouth with laughter today. Are you ready to be delighted by the Presence of the Lord?

Prayer: *Lord, help us to be aware of your presence, which surrounds us, empowers us, fills us with laughter and delight. You are doing great things for us and we rejoice! Amen.*

Staff of NBA California Christian Home, Rosemead, California

January 21-27, 2001

A Walk with God

Scripture: The Lord is the light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27: 1

Every time I stand up I can praise God. Every time I stand up and hold my balance I can praise God, and Every time I can stand up hold my balance and take that first step, I know I have accepted the biggest challenge of my life. If I can rise up and get out of that wheelchair or steady myself with a walker or use the support of a cane, I realize that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me each and every day. I lived the scripture that says when you do it unto the least of these you do it unto me. I remember the prayers that I had and the feeling that God is always with me.

During my Hospital stay I was flooded with new terminology, different slang and uniforms that are color-coded for the different jobs. Thank you for the happiness of the flood of memories and the special people who touched my life.

The next time you see a sunset, or a sunrise, or you look up and see a beautiful sky,...or see a moon and you say,..."Wow!... Look at that!" Say nothing, just enjoy the wonderment of it all. Listen as heaven whispers to you...God did this...just for me.

Prayer: Dear God: Thank you for the wonderment of Life. Amen.

Peter Cascio, Volunteer,
NBA Cleveland Christian Home, Cleveland, Ohio

January 28-February 3, 2000

All Are God's Children

Scripture: Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God. 1 John 3:1-2

If anybody ask you, "Who I am? Who I am? Who I am?" If anybody ask you, "Who I am?" Tell 'em, "I'm a child of God!"

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of February as African-American History month, we are unfortunately reminded of how many of God's children have not been treated in that fashion. Many of God's children have been discriminated against based on the color of their skin, the level of their education, the place where they reside,... the list goes on and on. But scripture tells us to behold the manner of love the Father has bestowed on us—that we should all be called children of God!!! Not only this month, but at all times, we should pause and reflect on the many contributions of African-Americans. There have been an enormous amount of inventions by African-Americans—inventions that allow us to iron our clothing, care for our hair and skin, mow our lawns, avoid traffic accidents, preserve food...oh, what would we have done without the inventions of these CHILDREN OF GOD?!!

Prayer: Heavenly Creator, we are thankful for ALL your children. We remember. We celebrate. We believe. As we pray: In the spirit of Umoja - unity, we remember Lorraine Hansberry, one of America's finest playwrights known for the production of "Raisin in the Sun" a play about love, pride and strength. We celebrate African-American playwrights of today and pray for more to come. In the spirit of Imani-faith, we remember religious life among Black Catholics in Kentucky in 1824 with three free Black women under the leadership of Father Charles Nerincks. However, when father Nerincks died so did the order—no one else saw a need for Black sisters. We celebrate the first successful foundation of Black sisters which took place in Baltimore in 1829 - the Oblate Sisters of Providence. We celebrate the strong faith of all African-American religious men and women. We pray for more to come. Finally, we pray that we are all embraced by the Holy Spirit, which will enable us to treat all humankind as children of God. Amen.

Madonna Aldridge, Business Manager
NBA The Olive Branch, St. Louis, Missouri

February 4-10, 2001

Rich In Friends

Scripture: A man that hath friends must show himself friendly, and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24

I have often made the statement I'm "rich" even though I have a modest income. I feel rich because in my life there have been friends coaching me along the way saying, "you can do it... You'll be fine." Sometimes when chaos strikes, I hear this voice saying, "you can do it." If I were rich, maybe people would be there simply because of it. But since I am not, I know they are there because they love me. They have been patient and tolerant of my weaknesses and differences. They may not have understood why I chose the paths I took, but had faith in me, believed in me, encouraged me and accepted me for me. Some people go through life without having this. A true friend is hard to find, and if you have more than one, you are blessed. You know there is someone to laugh with cry with and share things that are important in your life. Money cannot do this, only friends can.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for blessing me with friends. Many have passed on but left beautiful memories behind. Help me to cherish old friendships, give me the courage to reconcile broken ones and open my heart for new ones. Let me always remember to have a friend, I must be a friend.

Sophia S. Phillips-McNairy, Special Funds Accountant,
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri

February 11-17, 2001

A Safe Harbor

Scripture: For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angel, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38

We had come to this cold Alaska lake to find a cabin loaned to us for the weekend. By the time we arrived, it was already dark but we had clear directions and started our small boat with confidence we could reach our goal. Not far out into this large northern lake, filled with many islands, we suddenly became engulfed in a very thick fog. Without any visible landmarks and unsure of where we were going, not even able to see each other clearly, we could have become very frightened. However, above the fog the Northern Lights were dancing across the sky in all their magnificence. Somehow we knew we would find the safe harbor.

How often we feel surrounded by fog and cannot find our way out. Our landmarks have disappeared and our goals obscured. We cannot even reach out to our friends. But all the time, the love of God is blazed across the sky, guiding us to our own safe harbor.

Prayer: Remind us, O God, that we cannot escape your love and that it will sustain and guide us into your eternal presence. Amen

Mary Daigle, Board Member,
NBA Columbia Community Connections, Inc., Decatur, Georgia

February 18-24, 2001

The Hiding Place

Scripture: You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance". Psalms 32:7

Sometimes when entering into relationships, we try to keep our darkest secrets in a hiding place for fear of rejection. With entering into a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, we must bring a vulnerable openness for there is no hiding place with God. Our Creator God knows every intimate detail about our lives; he knew our lives before we took our first breath. It is exultantly calming to know that we come to Christ open, honest and sinful only to be reassured that his arms are always open for us to fall into. Let the word of God be hidden in your heart, and whenever rejection or fear comes upon you go to the scriptures you have hidden away and feel God's arms around you, reassuring you of his love.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for sending your son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins, that we may have everlasting life with you. Thank you for your words that we may hid them in our hearts to recall throughout our daily lives reassuring us of your promises.

J. Shultz, Administrative Assistant to Development
NBA ECHO, Emergency Children's Home, St. Louis, Missouri

February 25-March 3, 2001

Lent Begins

God does not forget

Scripture: O Lord, you have searched and known me....Such knowledge is too wonderful for me....If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me....From Psalm 139

It was during Lent a few years ago when I was first diagnosed with diabetes. I had been feeling faint mid-morning, especially if I had skipped breakfast, and was always thirsty...my skin was dry and cracked, my feet and hands always cold. I knew what the doctor would say even before I got the call.

With a family history of the disease and a life-long struggle with food, I'd been hedging my bets for years that I wouldn't get it—at least not until I was retirement age. I was barely in my 30s, so I thought I had years before it would all catch up with me.

All I could think of that Lenten season was what I was giving up...Everywhere I went, chocolate bunnies stared at me with surgery eyes, lying amid the brightly-colored jelly beans. They mocked me.

I felt very alone...and very, very afraid. I tried to hide my fear...even from God. I had forgotten that God already knows everything about me. I had forgotten God's offer of a hand to lead me and hold me. I had forgotten...but God had not. God kept tapping me on the shoulder and nudging me along a path to wholeness ...every once in a while, it felt like more of a push than a nudge...But God has never forgotten me.

What I gave up was nothing compared to what I gained. Each time I struggle, each time I triumph, my memory of God's abiding and unconditional love grows stronger. And, I am forgetting more and more what I have chosen to give up. This year, not one single chocolate bunny even gave me a glance!

*Prayer: O God, keep reminding me when I forget your love for me.
Amen*

Arlene Franks, Assistant Director of Church Relations
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri

March 4-10, 2001

Lent

Cast Offs

Scripture: Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength is spent. Psalm 71:9

The “Smiths,” a retired, married couple, had spent their entire lives as farmers and retired anticipating the good life. However, Mrs. Smith became ill and soon needed nursing home care. Then, Mr. Smith also became ill and needed nursing home care. They moved into a nursing home together. However, it was expensive and after a time, they had to sell their farm to pay for their nursing home care. Eventually, they went on Medicaid. Then, the unthinkable happened. The state decided that Mrs. Smith no longer needed nursing home care and she had nowhere to go! They contacted NBA Emily E. Flinn Community. Mrs. Smith moved into our assisted living facility and Mr. Smith moved into our nursing home. Today they can easily visit each other on a daily basis, meals together and continue their life together as a couple. If it wasn’t for Flinn’s ministry, I don’t know anywhere they could have gone.

Prayer: Lord, in this day of increasing needs, please give us the wisdom to make day-to-day decisions that will right both today, and tomorrow.

Kenneth D. Adkins, CEO
NBA Emily E. Flinn Community, Marion, Indiana

March 11-17, 2001

Lent

God's Love

Scripture: Meanwhile these three remain: Faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love. It is love, then, that you should strive for. Set your heart on spiritual gifts, especially the gift of proclaiming God's message.

1 Corinthians 13:13 – 14:1

As I went walking into the shadows of the night I saw a mysterious light that glows with such splendor it must have come from Heaven. Maybe God is shedding His light to shine upon His loving children: to show everyone His love for everybody.

God is love, and Jesus is love too. We all love everyone here on earth. Love is always in the hearts of many good people. So remember love is anyone and anything you see, smell and feel. You are loved and cared about all the time by friends, relatives, and God and Jesus too. And, I love all of you too.

Prayer: To a loving and caring Friend, we thank you for your love and for the gift of your Son. It was your love that sent Jesus to the cross to free us from our sins. Thank you very much. We love you. Amen

Kimberly King, Receptionist and Resident
NBA Gateways, St. Louis, Missouri

March 18-24, 2001

Lent

What a Friend We Have In Jesus

Scripture: Jesus said, "I no longer call you servants...Instead, I have called you friends...You did not choose me, but I chose you..." John 15. 15-17

What wonderful words to hear! Isn't it a joy to know that we have been chosen by Jesus as his friend? Why has Jesus chosen us?

We are chosen for joy. However hard the path may be for us, we are chosen for the way of joy. We, as Christians, are joyful people, as we believe in the Risen Lord. How can we be less than joyful when we walk the pathways of Jesus?

We are chosen for love. We are chosen to go out into the world not only to love others, but commanded to teach this love to others. We are commanded to love God first, then our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus asks us to live the life he lived.

Jesus calls us to be his friends. We are no longer called to be slaves, but friends. We are called to be intimate friends with God. What a tremendous offer! It means that we no longer gaze at God from a distance, but come before God as close friends.

Prayer: Creator God, thank you for choosing us to be your friends. Help us walk as friends with all those we come into contact in our daily activities.

Marilyn Niemeyer, Coordinator of Volunteers,
NBA Foxwood Springs Living Center, Raymore, Missouri

March 25-31, 2001

Lent

Let your light shine!!

***Scripture:** You are the light of the world. A City up on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.*

Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see

your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

There is no doubt that many have illuminated our paths through this life. Here at the Village, there are beacons of light that shine their radiance and attitude to the rest of us. Some have physical challenges and have endured changes in their lives and continue to be a shining light to the rest of us. They have made a choice to enjoy every day as it comes, and it is a blessing to be around these reminders every day. As we are obedient to his command, there will be those whose lives we may brighten. Let your light so shine!!!

***Prayer:** Dear Lord, help us to be your beacon and let the light of Christ shine through us and give us inner peace.*

Sandy Earnest, Secretary/Bookkeeper
NBA Tahoma Vista Village, Tacoma, Washington

April 1-7, 2001

Lent

Joyful?

Scripture: *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy Hebrews 1:9*

My accountability partner told me recently, "I have such great joy when I choose not to sin." That must be in part, what this passage in Hebrews is saying. Each time Jesus was tempted, He obviously thought of the outcome, considered the benefits and consequences, made His decision and chose not to sin. Sad and interesting, isn't it, that so often I think only of the pleasure of the moment, and do not consider the "all of it"? Jesus' foremost concern was for righteousness and loving that righteousness and secondly, rejecting and hating the wickedness. Why? To obey and please His father and bring about good effect for us! Happiness and joy flowed to Him because of His successful encounters and resulting triumph over sin, death and the devil. Are you joyful? This Scripture answers why we are or why we aren't!

Prayer: *My prayer is that of the old hymn, "O to be like Thee! Blessed Redeemer, this is my constant longing and prayer; gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures, Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear. O to be like Thee, Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art! Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness—stamp thine own image deep in my heart".*

David Watkins, CEO
NBA Kennedy Living Center, Martinsville, Indiana

April 8-14, 2001

Holy Week

A Time Of Renewal

Scripture: *So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!*
2 Corinthians 5:17

Our dinette area overlooks a park-like backyard. The flowers are in bloom and the birds are singing! This scene is bathed in bright sunlight. SPRING is coming! Nature's way for renewal—to make everything new.

We celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection to everlasting life through the Lenten services culminating on Easter Sunday. This is our time to renew our faith in God through His Son. Each year, my faith in God through His Son, Jesus Christ, grows stronger. As we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to forgive our sins, which will be forgiven by His Grace through our faith. This continual renewal allows us to change and become a "new" creation in Christ for the glory of God.

Prayer: *Merciful Father, we thank You for Your immeasurable grace given to us as Your children and for the opportunity to grow in Christian faith. Amen*

Alan McMullen, Volunteer,
NBA Cleveland Christian Home, Cleveland, Ohio

April 15-21, 2001 (Easter Sunday)

An Easter Day Meditation

Scripture: My GOD, My GOD, why has thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? Psalm 22:1

Sometimes, as we contemplate our personal circumstances, we, too, feel forsaken. But we know, as Jesus knew, that our pleas are heard. God answers in mysterious ways we may not always understand, and at times in ways that are unexpected. As we view that day of Christ's crucifixion and now celebrate His resurrection at this season of Easter, we are reminded of the gifts that God gives to each of us through prayer:

The bloody cross now empty
And silence 'round it lay.
In humbleness we bow our heads
This Resurrection Day.
LORD, Your Son gave his life
So people everywhere,
Would value the truth and wisdom,
That comes from YOU in prayer.

Prayer: Lord, help us to live for the light and freedom we are blessed with when we pray. Amen.

Jeane D. Mangum, Resident,
NBA Syringa Plaza, Burley, Idaho

April 22-28, 2001

And He Had Compassion on Them

Scripture: When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick" Matthew 14:14

This passage from Matthew's gospel precedes his account of Jesus and the feeding of the 5,000. It underscores the theme of our Lord's earthly ministry, and indeed gives the inspiration and motivation for the total ministry of the church. Webster defines "compassion" as "the deep feeling of sharing in the suffering of another, together with the inclination to give aid or support or to show mercy." Such is the definition of the mission and work of the NBA. As the Chaplain at NBA Robin Run Village, I hear the deep appreciation of the residents for the caring, the compassion they receive, not only by staff members, but also from the church as a whole, that makes such facilities passable. I think our Lord, who himself had compassion on the crowds, looks with favor on the work of our hearts and hands. I know that I am blessed richly by sharing in this compassionate service.

Prayer: Gracious God, who through our Lord Jesus Christ modeled compassion, grant that we might be faithful in the compassionate ministry to which you have called us. May everything we do be done in His name. Amen.

J. Wayne Markward, Chaplain,
NBA Robin Run Village, Indianapolis, Indiana

April 29-May 5, 2001

God's vineyard

Scripture:

He that abideth in me bringeth forth much fruit. Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5

Disciples bear much fruit. John 15:8

Christ has chosen you. John 15:16

Your Heavenly Father has planted the vineyard. As head of the church, the body, Jesus chooses each branch. Before the creation, the Redeemer chose you personally to do His work. His love is manifested in and through you. Bring forth the fruit. Only this way do you become a true Disciple.

Prayer: Spirit of God, open my eyes fully to Christ's vision for lost souls.

Resident who chose to remain anonymous, "that Christ receive all glory"
NBA El Redentor Apartments, Houston, Texas

May 6-12, 2001

My Secret Garden

Scripture: *Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3*

One Saturday Afternoon my grandchildren and I watched the *Secret Garden* video. I knew the movie and was not expecting any surprises. Monica and Annmarie were a joy to watch and listen to. They were excited when Mary found the door to the garden. They asked questions about the flowers that were planted, were enthralled when the beautiful garden grew before their eyes and happy for Colin when he learned to walk. Tears came to my eyes as I began to realize even at the ages of 3 and 4, they were learning about the sense of hope and promise during life's journey. We saw the beauty of the garden together.

Last spring at the end of the school year, the children of NBA Cleveland Christian Home, Inc. planted sunflower seeds and gave them to the staff to nurture. I took mine home and planted and nurtured it. I remember the joy when the first flower burst out and the sadness when a squirrel ate the flower. I was sad until I realized the flower fed one of God's creatures. Five more buds burst out with beauty for the world to enjoy. Season after season, we witness God's beautiful promises. Look for something in nature as a sign of God's good news to the world.. May you discover your secret garden!

Prayer: *Dear God, thank you for giving us the Hope that encourages us to follow our dreams, for the Hope that encourages us not to give up and the Hope that offers an opportunity for growth. May we encourage the personal growth of each person's life we touch. Amen*

Mary Beth Cascio, Chief Development Officer
NBA Cleveland Christian Home, Cleveland, Ohio

May 13-19, 2001

The Rewards Of Forgiveness

Scripture: *And Joseph said unto them, "Fear not: for am I in the place of God? And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good. Genesis 50: 19-20*

Four centuries before Moses delivered the 10 commandments and about 1,700 years before Jesus lived the life of God's redeeming love, Joseph expressed a forgiveness of his brothers who had conspired to kill him but sold him into slavery. Joseph grew from a spoiled brat who taunted the other members of his family to the personification of reclaiming forgiveness.

Along the way, Joseph found out that living through difficulties, disappointments, failures, illnesses and imprisonment could bring a quality to life that would enable one to live triumphantly. Joseph, long before the meeting with his brothers after their father's death, had forgiven them. He could not have been as generous with them as he had been if this were not so.

Forgiveness, like mercy, is twice blessed. There is redemption and healing for both the forgiver and the forgiven. Instead of dying a heartbroken and miserable old man, Joseph and his brothers and their families lived together in peace and harmony.

Prayer: *God, give us the grace to trust in Thy graciousness in times of adversity as well as in times of peace and plenty and give us forgiving hearts. For Christ's sake and in His name we pray. Amen.*

Jess Simoson, Resident of NBA Cypress Village,
and Volunteer Chaplain in the Health Center, Jacksonville, Florida

May 20-26, 2001

Our Refuge and Strength

Scripture: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1

A year ago, Mrs. Calloway, who is in her early 90s, fell and broke both her shoulder and her hip. Unable to return to her apartment following her hospitalization, she moved into the Health Care Center and began physical therapy. Getting out of bed and walking was especially difficult because it caused not only leg pain, but considerable shoulder pain, as well. Her physician doubted that she would ever walk again.

With total family support, strong encouragement from the physical therapists, her own gift of determination, and much prayer, she did walk again. Today, Mrs. Calloway again lives alone in her own apartment. Days begin with stiffness but always include an afternoon walk through the long halls of the apartment/activities building. For the exercise, she also does her own light housekeeping and laundry. And she thanks God for the strength and hope she finds through prayer. But her story doesn't end there.

Every Friday, she and other volunteers ride the Patriot Heights van the short distance to the Health Care Center to visit the residents. She says, "I understand what they are going through. They talk, and I talk, and we both feel better." Because her visits are an inspiration to the residents, the physical therapists often ask her to talk with residents who are down or discouraged. Mrs. Calloway downplays what she does and gives God the glory.

Prayer: Gracious God, thank you for giving us strength to get up each day and serve you. Amen

Gail Taylor, Chaplain
NBA Patriot Heights, San Antonio, Texas

May 27-June 2, 2001

Being A Good Neighbor

Scripture: You shall love the lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live. Luke 10:27-28

In this story from Luke, Jesus tells the story we are all familiar with, that of the Good Samaritan. I find that as I go about my work each day, that there are many good neighbors all around me. I see it in the person who calls to tell me about their neighbor whose brother just died. I see it in the concern I see as a friend brings a meal to her neighbor who is ill. I see it in the friend who picks up the newspaper daily and takes it into the house of her neighbor who has difficulty walking. It is the call to someone who is alone, just to say "hello, how are you today."

God sends people into our lives just when we need them to help us through difficult days or to celebrate a happy moment. We are never alone when we have good neighbors to care for us. How have you been a good neighbor today?

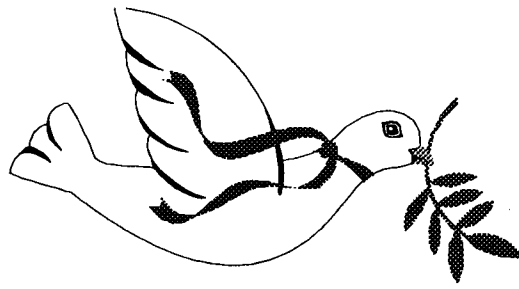
Prayer: Dear God, once we feel your love in our own lives it is easy to love those who are around us. Help us to have the energy and the love to help them as we have been helped. Amen.

Sally A. Robinson, Chaplain
NBA Lenoir Retirement Community, Columbia, Missouri

Additional Devotions

We are truly blessed by the bounty of spirit at the NBA which led to the overflowing of this devotional booklet beyond the year's worth of weekly devotionals we had originally envisioned.

On the following pages are additional devotionals for your use in board meetings, resident council meetings, staff meetings or your own personal devotional time.



An Honorable Life

Scripture: *To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. Proverbs 21:3*

“To all of us he was, and always will be, an ideal. The example he set will long continue to influence and inspire us.”

“Walt was a good friend and one of the most honest men I know.”

When my father died, my mother received many sympathy cards. The two that have stayed with me over the years were the ones that spoke of my father's integrity. He was not a perfect man, but he strove to do what was right.

We make choices everyday, and every one of them results in a consequence. Mom has often said, “The only thing we take with us when we die is our integrity—no one can take that away from us.” What a profound statement!

For today, will we choose to live our lives on the path of integrity?

Prayer: *Dear God, you showed us the way to an honest life when you sent us your son, Jesus. Help us to follow in his footsteps as we make decisions today. In Jesus name, Amen.*

Laurie A. Scott, Volunteer
NBA Cleveland Christian Home, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio

Unity Of Spirit

Scripture: *Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind. Do not return evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but on the contrary bless, for to this you have been called. 1 Peter 3:8-9*

This scripture, like many, gives me such good thoughts about the care givers and staff throughout the NBA. "Unity of spirit—sympathy—love—tender heart—humble," all seem to have some part in the services and care of people, which we see coming from our staff from coast-to-coast. Many of you show us "for to this you have been called." You are a blessing to our residents and clients, and you are a blessing to those of us who are not able to be there with you, except in spirit. THANK YOU !!!

Prayer: *Bless your NBA family of care-givers and support staff, oh Lord. And bless those for whom we care, that their lives might be enriched through our gifts of care. Amen*

Leon Whitney, NBA, CFO
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri

The Glad Game

Scripture: This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalms 118:24

Do you remember Pollyanna? One of my favorite fictional characters. A little girl with a miserable life who played the “Glad Game”.

Do thunderstorms make you nervous?
Be glad it is not a tornado.

Do rainy days depress you?
Be glad for the rainbow.

Does a co-worker annoy you?
Be glad you don’t live with her.

Repeat the verse above and play the game. You will enjoy it.

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father: Open our eyes so we may see and appreciate the beauty and wonder of your world. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

Mary Foster, Volunteer
NBA Cleveland Christian Home, Cleveland, Ohio

All We Have to Fear ...

Scripture: The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27: 1

When I consider the most painful periods of my life, it usually comes down to fear. That one dark emotion has been at the root of many of the trials I have faced. There's the trivial fear of worrying about being accepted at a new school or a new group or the gut-wrenching terror of knowing that someone I love is in danger and may be hurt. Often, I simply fear that I am not the person I want to be or that you would have me be. Fear is the emotion that has often driven my actions and my thoughts.

Yet here is God, telling me that if I just let go and trust in Him, the fear will be gone. Not the hurt or the reality that something bad may befall my loved ones or me—the realities of life will continue, but the paralyzing fear of life will evaporate. In its place is a serenity that can only come from knowing God and trusting in Him. For me, it's not about being safe, it's about **not** being afraid, because I know that God will truly be my rock, my support ...no matter what comes my way.

Prayer: Dear precious and powerful God, we thank you for the trials and sharp, jagged edges of life, for they are part of your gift to us. We ask you for strength to bear the wounds and endure the pain. We pray that you will fill us with the peace of complete trust in you, Lord, and your promise of everlasting life. Amen

John Smith, Director of Education and Training Services.
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri

Music in the Night

***Scripture:** They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem; and they performed their services in due order. 1 Chronicles 6: 32*

My husband passed away in his sleep at age 64—very suddenly—no warning, except he was cold when he went to bed. Which was very unusual for him.

I was very busy at church. We had been in charge of a candy project which had cleared \$11,000.00 the Christmas before.

The nights were bad. I went to sleep at once because I was so tired, but woke up shortly thereafter to lie awake for hours. A friend told me about “Music Through the Night.” What a blessing. It put me to sleep after it let me know God was with me and watching over me. Praise the Lord!

***Prayer:** Thank You Heavenly Father for your many blessings. You continue to be with me day and night. I Feel so blessed.*

Frances Hinz, Volunteer,
NBA Cleveland Christian Home, Cleveland, Ohio

The Joy Of Living

Scripture: *Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry. Psalm 39:12a*

Prayer is an important part of our lives. For most of us, it has been since childhood. Many will remember that first prayer we prayed before being tucked into bed: "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, if I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." Later that was replaced by one of our own, very child-like, but loved by God. Those prayers usually dealt more with life as we were living it, rather than about dying and something called our "soul."

Since moving to NBA Foxwood Springs, I have come to realize that the residents are not consumed with the idea of dying, but of living. That made me think about the need for a second verse to my childhood prayer that would reflect this positive outlook about life: "When I wake at new day's dawn, I know for me my life goes on. And as I live each hour that day, I know God's Presence leads my way."

Prayer: *Help us, dear Lord, to keep a positive response to life. Even though we know death is a reality for all of us, we also know as long as You give us life, we want to share its joy. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen*

Lloyd H. Lambert, Chaplain
NBA Foxwood Springs Living Center, Raymore, Missouri

Jesus the Savior

***Scripture:** Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost." Luke 19: 9-10*

Jesus Saves! What a wonderful message the church has for the world. Jesus' promise to Zacchaeus is a promise to all who would believe in His name.

HE CAME. The incarnation in God's love extended to us in Jesus. He came to be with us in order that we might come to be with Him in His kingdom.

TO SEEK. We seek for so much to satisfy our lives. The satisfaction for Christ is to find us and better still to find us seeking Him.

TO SAVE. There is salvation nowhere else. He didn't come to condemn but to save. All who believe and call upon His name shall be saved. Hallelujah!

THE LOST. Those who don't know the way. Those whose lives are ruined and all messed up. Those who are the least and the last. Those who don't believe.

But, He came to seek and to save. Through the witness and work of believers, His work is done.

***Prayer:** Lord, make me an instrument of Your salvation work. Use me to lift You higher, that You may draw all men, women, boys and girls unto You. Amen*

Timothy M. James, President, Board of Trustees
NBA Cleveland Christian Home, Cleveland, Ohio

Ordinary People

Scripture: *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews 13:2*

Remember Clarence, the guardian angel assigned to George Bailey in “It’s a Wonderful Life?” Clarence’s angelic mission was to show George Bailey what impact his life had and how it touched those with whom he came in contact. We all know the “rest of the story.”

We meet Clarences in our lives daily...ordinary people in the grocery aisle who give us a smile when we least feel like smiling...the person who shovels the snow off of our sidewalks just because...the person whose skin color, family background, ethnicity or lifestyle is different from ours and loves us in spite of our desire not to love back.

We ordinary people have the chance to be Clarences or George Baileys every day. We can choose to call a family member or not; write a long-lost friend, thank a teacher who made a difference in our lives, minister to a lonely person, love, smile, etc. The list is endless.

Remember—“every time we hear a bell, an angel get its wings.” Christ has blessed us all with wings. Praise God for allowing us to be angels on earth.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, challenge us to be angels and announce Christ’s presence in our lives through thought, word and deed. Let us be open and hospitable to angels unawares, for we all are angels. Amen*

Rick Hembrough, Associate Vice President for Administration
NBA Central Office, St. Louis, Missouri

Caring Disciples...



**...What we do best
is care...
and pray!**

National Benevolent Association

Mission Statement

"The National Benevolent Association will provide social and health services to meet the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of persons, in the loving and caring spirit of Christ."

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