



Dear Fellow Redeemed

It is difficult to believe the rapidity with which the season of **Lent and Easter** is coming upon us. Suddenly, the realization is that Wednesday, February 6 is Ash Wednesday! Galatians 6:2 comes to mind regarding the example of **Christ's passion** for us all where it says, "Help carry each other's burdens, in this way you will fulfill Christ's teachings." Jesus, through His suffering, death and resurrection, carried the ultimate burden of our sins to the cross. As He bore that burden for our salvation and triumphed in His glorious resurrection, we are freed from the crushing weight of the burden of sin that would destroy us for time and eternity. We are free to look toward one another, including those who do not yet know Him,

and come along side them and help. Through our love for **Jesus our Burden-Bearer**, we desire to help others know of His bearing of the burden of sin and help them serve Him in fulfilling His purpose for their lives. May God bless our Lenten journey and Easter celebration to that end.

This issue of *Michigan In Touch* provides a particular focus upon those who **bear the burden of service to country**. As the members of the various Armed Forces are involved in the critical and dangerous task of serving others through their activities, we thank and praise God. They help us bear the burden of peace in our time that the Gospel may have free course and be shared.

Recently, while waiting in line for security clearance at an airport, a young serviceman stood in front of me. When he approached, the agent remarked that this soldier bore the last name of a famous general and asked if he was related. The serviceman responded, "People often ask that, but as far as I know, we're not related. But it is an honor to share the last name of one who served so well." The agent looked at the serviceman, smiled and said, "Well, let me **thank you** personally for your commitment to serving us and enabling us to be free. God bless you." My thanks, also, went to that young man and later, in deeper thought, my thanksgiving extended

to our gracious, Heavenly Father for His provision of this country in which we are privileged to live and serve. The very burden of service which this young serviceman bears for us reminded me also of the burden that our Lord Jesus has borne for us to provide for us in time and also eternity.

While we have never done a survey, it is assumed that most of the congregations in our Michigan

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District have members serving in the military. It seems nearly every congregation includes altar prayers for those members who are away serving in the military. Our prayers for them are not only critical as they serve in their appointed posts, but our care and mutual burden-bearing extends to **welcoming them home** as they come back by God's grace. This includes our pastors who leave their congregations to serve as Chaplains. These returning service people, including our Chaplains, deserve and need our care and

concern for the task of re-entry. They need the warmth of our fellowship as well as providing them with the opportunity to debrief and integrate. There are many resources to this end as mentioned in the following pages. May God bless this sharing of one another's burdens for Jesus' sake.

You may recall that in an earlier issue of *Michigan In Touch*, it was reported that a call had been extended for the District staff position of **Large Church Congregation Ministry Facilitator**. The call was declined. However, we continue our search to fill the position. Our praise and thanks go to our Lord for the way in which our current staff is working to cover during this period of vacancy.

Speaking of calls, the application deadline for **congregations calling a seminary graduate** is March 1, 2008. Application forms are available by calling 888.225.2111. Congregations are encouraged to work with their Circuit Counselor and Congregation Ministry Facilitator for making application.

It is my prayer that our observance of Lent in anticipation of the joyous, triumphant celebration of Easter will fill us with praise and thanksgiving to Jesus, our burden-bearer. May we heed His call to bear one another's burdens.

In Him with You,
C. William Hoesman