

ASLAN YOUTH MINISTRIES

A Presidential Point of Light

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Dear Friends,

As always during this blessed Advent Season, all of us at Aslan want to offer you our warmest wishes. In barely 2 months, Aslan will celebrate 31 years of ministry. We would not have lasted one year, much less thirty-one years, without those of you who have walked with us and faithfully supported us through the years. This last year has been, by far, the most difficult that Lynn Ann and I have ever experienced. We have not only personally suffered such great loss and tragedy, we have also watched the ministry of Aslan ~ that we have so loved and given our lives to ~ suffer as well.

During the past 2 years we have been forced to reduce our staff from a high of 11 individuals to what are now 5. As we have explained in previous mailings, this was precipitated by the loss of a very large 6-year grant through the New Jersey Faith-Based Initiative. We and our remaining 3 staff members have worked tirelessly to fill in the gaps. However, it has simply been impossible for the five of us to continue the same level of service that we were providing with a staff of eleven. This we know ~ that we have always striven for excellence in our stewardship of the resources God has provided, and we have continued to seek this high standard through these very difficult times. Please believe me when I say that your prayers, financial support and encouragement have made the difference in the success and survival of this work.

With Aslan, it is always about the children ~ our love and compassion for these little ones in such desperate need. We love children that are sometimes so difficult to love that most people give up without even trying. Aslan Youth Ministries began with love and compassion some three decades ago, and that love and compassion still drives us today. There is simply no other reason for us to have continued doing what we do for so long. This is a love that God Himself has placed in our hearts. The word "Christian" is more than a word to Aslan. For us it means living out the love of Jesus Christ each and every day ~ whether the money is there or not; whether it's popular or not; even if it costs us our lives or the lives of those we value even more than our own. This is not some "game" or "lark" that Lynn Ann and I are on. It is hopefully, by God's grace, a fight to the finish.

In C.S. Lewis' The Voyage Of The Dawn Treader, there is a wonderful character named Reepicheep. Not only is Reepicheep a rather large mouse by mouse standards, but he is also a talking mouse! Toward the end of this adventurous book, everyone on the sailing vessel, the *Dawn Treader*, is given a choice to remain on a comfortable island or to continue sailing to the World's end. There is a lively discussion amongst the exhausted crew members, with many of them suggesting they've fulfilled their mission and should not go further. Throughout this adventure of Aslan Youth Ministries, I have held fast to

