

January 9, 2004

Dear Family member:

At the turn of the year we all look forward to changes in our lives. We desire to advance and have expectations of what will unfold in the coming year.

As I have traveled the world, I have witnessed people and families that don't have the opportunities we enjoy. Many live and work for less than a dollar a day. This is not just for one individual, but for a whole household, which many times consist of a parent and 3 or 4 children as a standard.

Even with this as their stationary income they have invited me into hut after hut and always greeted me as their special guest. I was greeted with smiles and soon offered a snack, drink and many times a cooked meal. Thinking I was joining the whole family for dinner only to find out they did this just for me, I would insist everyone join in. But very humbled to find out that this was the best they had and they were willing to give it to me a stranger.

In one remote village I visited I was invited in to a small eight by eight home which was held together by posters and sheeting walls with two single beds and a table. On the other wall was stacked dishes, cloths, utensils, pots and pans. A single mom with four teenage daughters living and sleeping together. As we talked I asked them what they had eaten last. I was told honestly they had picked grass outside their hut and mixed it with the ground meal to make it last, as it was the only meal of the day.

We each can truly say we are blessed to enjoy many different selections of restaurants or choosing to cook whatever we desire. We have a freedom not all can enjoy. The beginning of a New Year always starts off with making resolutions of what we will do or want to change. Lets decide today to lift people, to remember that in our world of abundance we can share with those in need.

Your giving to **Serving Our World** will reach those in huts and homes barely protected from the elements, with a new hope that this year someone cares and is thinking of them.

One of the places many struggle from day to day is East Timor. This is the newest country of the 21st century, which after a civil war lost thousands of lives. Children lost parents and now homeless are wandering the hills and streets. Mothers in dirt floor shacks trying to care for five or six children. They are in need of someone like you and me to reach out at this New Year. We together can decide to build homes and futures by getting involved in lives that have no voice to speak out on their own.

When I was there I was led down an alley by several children weaving in and out with sewer running between my legs. Soon we were at a dead end. I followed them as we walked through an opening in a wall only to find out we were in one of their homes. They gave me the best chair and the mom sent one of them out to get me a soda. A dirt floor, tin walls, no door and nothing but smiles and joy that I had come into their home.

Together we can build homes for the single widow, a mom with children and those children with no parents. We as a big caring family can provide a new family home where they can receive all they need.

This year with all the decisions you have to make, *make one that will have the effect of a lifetime in the lives of others.*

Together touching lives,



Michael Thomforde
Founder/President



Affecting lives for a lifetime