

WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

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Raising Hopes and Expectations

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With multiple healthcare reform conversations moving across our land, my husband and I consider ourselves blessed to have had coverage despite the varied challenges before our family. 2009 has been an incredibly hard year. In February, my husband had half of his right foot amputated. His doctor said it had to be done. Even more disturbing to us was that he walked into the hospital at noon and by 2:00 p.m. it was over. There was no warning, no time to prepare, no consultation; a life style change at someone else's discretion. Suddenly, the life we knew would never be the same.

Having worked in the healthcare field, I know that advocacy is vital. Still I have often privately referred to 2009 as a year from hell. However being a person of faith, I have since repented. Currently I look upon 2009 as an opportunity to find God's presence within the challenges. The end result being that I have been able to choose light over darkness, faith over fear. With the many stresses that came along with this ordeal, my husband and I made a conscious decision to draw strength from scripture, which has enabled us to keep our expectations hopeful. Even more with the support of friends and family, we have been able to get through this.

One such story within my Christian faith tradition is located in the New Testament. The book of Acts, chapter 3 informs us of a man who was crippled from birth. He was carried to the temple daily where he begged for assistance. Two of Jesus' disciples, Peter and John, came upon him at the entry gate and challenged the man to change his views about the world in and around him. It worked. What they gave him was greater than money he had been collecting. This attitude shift was the miracle he needed. It allowed him to reevaluate his situation and accept a new path. The end product was miraculous. Simply stated, their faith instructed them to care for the infirmed. Their advocacy enabled him to change his life.

Reflecting upon the 2009 healthcare debates, I've recognized through my family's struggle that there are many within our nation needing various types of support; medically, financially and spiritually. We were/are blessed. Others may not be as fortunate. Who will advocate for them? How will their hopes be raised?

In this season of giving, let us raise our expectations, release our faith, and extend personal responsibility for justice. I've heard it said, "You might not be able to do everything, but you certainly can do something." No one is too old or too young to make a difference. In 2010, let us extend a hand for neighbors in need. Throughout this year, we will have many opportunities to assist. Decide now that you will encourage another by your prayers, giving, writing letters, and making phone calls to your local, state, and national officials, signing petitions, marching and lobbying if necessary, or even changing your lifestyle if it will help another. We can no longer do business as usual. We have to get involved.

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