

Dear friends and fellow servants of Christ Jesus in the Minnesota North District-LCMS:

Many of you are already aware of the fact that our oldest son, Jonathan, is currently serving his third combat tour in Iraq with the U.S. Army. He is with the 101st Airborne Division out of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Jonathan works with the Judge Advocate General (JAG Corps) processing military justice and investigating claims by the citizens of Iraq.

On July 1st we received an email from Jonathan stating that he now has a location that he works out of outside his base near Balad, Iraq. Iraqi families are coming to this building asking for assistance. Jonathan's email read, "I offer to them clothes, shoes, sandals, and blankets. I started doing this on my own because I had been given a container full of clothes, so I just started handing them out. My unit is doing a wonderful job, and I have gone on missions delivering these items right to people's homes and backyards. The villages are located not too far from base. They are Albu Hishma, Al Zor, Shehabi, Yethrib, and Hatamia." Jonathan also wrote that the families are in need of medical supplies such as burn creams, band aids, antibacterial aids, pain medications, and any other common over the counter medicines.

Subsequently, on July 4th we received a 6:00AM phone call from our son. He had spent the day with his interpreter and an army doctor visiting homes in one of the villages. One stop was at the home of an Iraqi man who was paralyzed from the neck down and had been confined to his bed since his injury had occurred. The gentleman was laden with large bed sores. There was no way for him to be moved at all. The doctor told our son after their visit that if this man was not given some kind of mobility, he would eventually die. Jonathan said to us, "I know this is asking a lot, but we are in great need of wheelchairs here." He stated that a used wheelchair would be wonderful. Jonathan realizes that with all the items - the clothing, medical supplies, and especially the wheelchairs - shipping costs are a major issue.

Perhaps some of you would be interested in extending to your congregations the opportunity to participate in this Iraqi clothing/medical supplies/wheelchair project. There is an abundance of very worthy projects that we all can donate our time, talents, and treasures to. If this particular project is one that is not possible for you to participate in, we certainly understand. Please pray that our efforts on behalf of these Iraqi citizens will be successful.

Jonathan stated in one of his correspondences that he now has this opportunity to help free a very small portion of the Iraqi people from constant poverty. We look at this now as our opportunity to share the love of Jesus Christ showing **mercy first** toward the physical needs of a suffering people. We feel compelled to work on this project not only because our son is serving in the military - not only because our hearts ache for the Iraqi children when we see their faces in pictures that Jonathan has sent to us after he has distributed various items to them. We are compelled because of the words in Matthew chapter 25: **Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee? And the King will answer them, "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."**

If you would like more specific information about what to purchase or ship, please email us at aoo@unitelc.com or call our home phone at 218-732-9236. Please refer to the attached flyer which could be used as a possible information source for members of your congregations.

Thank you so very much.