

July 2018

Dear Sustaining Partner,

*"How obvious it is now--the gift you gave. All those letters, they were you... All those beautiful powerful words, they were you! The voice from the shadows, that was you... You always loved me!"* Roxane from *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand

Finding someone to speak on your behalf has been going on for ages, especially in junior high...or middle school---whichever you call it. Do you remember locking eyes with someone in the hall between classes...and dang---it was LIKE at first sight? But wait! What if that person doesn't like you back? It's a HUGE risk to just walk up and say hello. So, what to do you do ensure you don't make a complete fool of yourself? You do what my 9-year-old grandson recently did just before school dismissed for the summer. You ask a friend who you hope will present you in the best possible way to speak on your behalf. Sometimes your pal delivers a note which includes "Check 'Yes' or 'No'" at the bottom. The goal is to open communication and test the water. My grandson's crush checked the middle and told him to ask again in high school.

Generally, we ask another to speak for us when we want to avoid rejection. In the case of, Cyrano---who was convinced one look at his very large nose, would prevent Roxane from hearing his words of affection for her. So, he had friend, Christian deliver the letters. As is often the case, Roxane fell in love with the heart of the man who wrote and not the appearance of the one who delivered the words. It's easy to dismiss a pretty face, but hard to forget words of love which ring true and make your heart beat more quickly. By the time Cyrano and Roxane came face-to-face (or nose-to-nose) the heart of one had won the love of the other.

Who knows-perhaps Roxane would have not been put off by Cyrano's appearance? We don't know. Most of us are biased according to what we see and our preconceived ideas. We are all guilty of making assumptions based on what we see or hear in the news---for substantiation consider how people vote based on biased media sound bites. However, that's a discussion best reserved for another time.

I speak from experience because at one time what I believed about God was based on what people told me. As a child I never associated the word "love" with GOD whom I had heard was judgmental and always watching to catch me doing (or thinking) something wrong. Before I came to know God intimately, life was a constant "dance" to stay out of His bulls-eye. (Good luck dodging the "King of the World!") How did God communicate His love to me and win my heart? He sent Jesus to represent Him, and Jesus used others to amplify Words full of grace, mercy and hope. God approached me indirectly, so I would hear his heart. He had others whom He trusted to communicate His Word for Him, and like Roxane I recognized and responded to love.

I am pleased we have the privilege to facilitate truth to our clients, many who have no understanding of God's love, grace and mercy. They typically have heard only about rules and judgment...that's what people usually focus on most isn't it? He desires we know His heart---that's why He sent Jesus who said, "...You can trust my decision because I'm not out to get my own way but only to carry out orders. If I were simply speaking on my own account, it would be an empty, self-serving witness...."

Thank you for joining us in our mission to speak truth in to the lives of people who have believed lies about God, life and their value. Your partnership enables us to be here every day to stand in the gap for the marginalized regardless of ethnicity, economic status, religion or political affiliation. Transformation by the power of God's love is the only hope for any of us regardless of politically correct rhetoric. You can't clean up the outside only, think happy thoughts and expect change, which only happens when a heart is regenerated by The Gospel---the law of love. Our constant prayer is that we will be trustworthy spokespeople who communicate in love what God done--- He sent His son to speak truth and break through all the built-up fear and opinions. May we never do anything to hinder our Father's love affair with the world.

August 18 is our annual ladies' tea---"Seeing Beauty---When and Where There is None" Tickets available for ages 16 and over NOW. Call for information...even at the last minute. We will try to accommodate all requests for seats. You'll be able to purchase tickets through the link in our website this year. Innovative technology continually raises my learning curve to warp speed. We're planning lots of fun, food and a silent auction. Invite some friends and join us for a fun mid-summer day when not much else is happening. It will be COOL!

Save the date: Friday, October 19 so you'll be at our Annual Fall Gala featuring Nazareth. "Real Men...!" It's never too early to begin to invite guests to join you. Contact me for information about being a Table Host and/or event underwriter. This year especially we'd like to include more men on our guest list because they are the backbone of any community. We **need** more men to join us if we hope to build healthier families.

Until next month...Stay hydrated and safe in the heat.

For Life!

Lisa J Stiefken  
Executive Director