

August 4, 2010

Dear Friends,

I hope you are having a good summer. Cheryl and I enjoyed a good holiday the last couple of weeks. The GAP Team arrives from Rwanda in a few hours. We look forward to seeing them, especially Lindsay (our daughter)!

There are a couple of things I would like to bring to your attention. First, a reminder of the upcoming GAP Farewell Service this coming Sunday, August 8 @ 10:00 a.m. at Cremona Country Fellowship. You are invited to join us. For driving directions go to Upcoming Events on our website: [www.vti.ca](http://www.vti.ca).

The other announcement is a bit more dramatic. After extensive prayer and discussion as a staff, **we have decided to cancel the Friends & Followers for the 2010-11 year**. This is a big decision as we have had 64 Friends & Followers Teams since the inception of VTI in 1979... for 30 consecutive years! With only one team member signed up it is clear that the Lord has some unique plans for us this coming year.

Let me try to answer a few questions below:

**What do we believe is the cause of this?** This isn't easy to answer in a few sentences but let me summarize by saying a few things: 1) We believe the Lord wants us to have a Visioning Year, a year where we can renew, reconsider and reconnect with the Lord and our constituency. 2) It seems the recession has officially landed in our area... 3) Not having an Encore Team this past year affected mobilization. Let me say though that our Mobilization people have worked hard and have done an excellent job of presenting VTI.

**Does this mean Friends & Followers is done for good?** No, we want to take some time to evaluate over the next few weeks but plan to gear up for 2011-12. We plan to have some thoughts together for next year's Friends & Followers Team by the end of September.

**Will we continue with Family Adventure, Spring Teams, Encore, GAP and AIR?** Yes! In fact those teams seem to be shaping up fairly well. We continue to mentor and support our AIR teams: the Jill Hagen Band and Refined Undignified. R/U continues their busy summer, ministering at teen camps through the month of August.

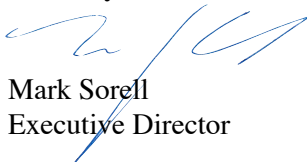
**How will this affect the finances of VTI?** This will mean some restructuring within our current budget. We praise the Lord for His provision this year - we are still in the black - which is amazing considering this present economic climate. We are excited about making better use of the ministry tool(s) the Lord has given us in the Discovery Lodge property. God has blessed us with some fine people who are helping there... the Joos's and the Thompsons.

**What will the staff do during this time?** As I mentioned above we are planning to take some time to listen together to what the Lord has to say about the future of the Friends & Followers program and anything else the Lord speaks to us about. We are willing to change and grow where necessary. As mentioned before, it will also be a time to focus on mobilization with the Encore Team and reconnect with Bible Colleges, supporters and partners.

**How is the staff feeling about it?** As a staff we are grieving to some degree, especially after having such great teams and ministry, but in other ways we are excited to see what God has in mind.

**How can you help?** You can help by... 1) Praying for us. 2) Spreading the word about what VTI means to you. 3) Giving us your thoughts and suggestions. 4) Communicating this accurately to others. 5) Encouraging and supporting young people to come on a team. 6) Volunteering as a cook, driver for Encore or helping with Maintenance projects. 7) Booking Discovery Lodge for a church or family event.

Sincerely,



Mark Sorell  
Executive Director