



December

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Posted by [Pastor Rick Warren](#)

Wednesday, December 30, 2009

Dear Saddleback Family,

THIS IS AN URGENT LETTER unlike any I've written in 30 years. Please read all of it and get back to me in the next 48 hours.

I have thrilling news to share with you below but first some seriously bad news:

With 10% of our church family out of work due to the recession, our expenses in caring for our community in 2009 rose dramatically while our income stagnated. Still, with wise management, we've stayed close to our budget all year. Then... this last weekend the bottom dropped out.

On the last weekend of 2009, our total offerings were *less than half* of what we normally receive - leaving us \$900,000 in the red *for the year*, unless you help make up the difference today and tomorrow.

Please read this end-of-the-year review and then take one of the 3 actions below.

2009: A BANNER YEAR OF MINISTRY IN SPITE OF THE RECESSION

There's so much to share - I can only hit the highlights (maybe 5%) of how your church has served our community this year:

YOUR GIFTS HELP THE POOR & THOSE HURT MOST BY THE RECESSION:

- **Saddleback Food Pantry**- Your gifts are feeding 400 hurting families in our community each month. Over 2,000 different families received food assistance in 2009, thanks to your generosity and the help of over 250 volunteers.
- **Breakfast Together & Homeless Ministry**- Thousands of Saddleback volunteers are serving in the 6 locations hardest hit by poverty here south OC.
- **Financial Coaching**- With 10% of our congregation out of work due to the recession, this ministry exploded with growth in 2009.
- **Cars Ministry**- Received over 150 donated vehicles. Some were sold to pay for parts to refurbish the rest of the cars which were given to members struggling without transportation. All our mechanics volunteer their time.

YOU ARE HELPING THOSE WITH PERSONAL & RELATIONAL PAIN

- **Counseling**- Your 230 certified Saddleback counselors provided over 20,000 free counseling sessions to our community this year! Training for new counselors start in January. The need is so great.
- **Support Groups**- 193 volunteers lead these specialized small groups that focus on acute needs. We support everything from Alzheimer's and AIDS to Young Adults with Aspergers.

Information

Saturday

4:30 & 6:30 p.m.

Sunday

9:00* & 11:15 a.m.

4:30 & 6:30 p.m.

* ASL Interpreted

[More service times & directions](#)

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Recovery- During the recession, attendance at *Celebrate Recovery* has grown 35% after 27,000 participated in our 8 week *Life's Healing Choices Campaign Experience*. A new program for elementary kids, *Celebrate Station*, was launched. Over 12,000 other churches nationwide now use our Celebrate Recovery program.

- **Prayer Garden-** 6,720 people in crisis received warm, face-to-face attention and prayer through our Prayer Garden and Restoration Service. This does not include our counseling ministry.

YOU ARE HELPING CHANGE LIVES FOR CHRIST!

- **Baptisms** - 2803 people demonstrated their new life in Christ through baptism- the most in 30 years!
- **Joining our Family** - 4,026 attended Class 101 in 2009 - another 30 year record.
- **Prison Ministry** - *CR Inside* grew by 20 state representatives who are directing our work in jails, prisons & rehab facilities nationally. Every state will be covered by the end of 2010.

YOU ARE HELPING PEOPLE FIND GOD IN WORSHIP

There is so much going on with our worship ministries it would require 3 pages. Here are just a few activities you probably don't know about:

- **A 5th Saddleback campus opened in Laguna Woods** - Adding to our available services in San Clemente, Irvine, Corona, and Lake Forest. Our Lake Forest worship venues (Overdrive, Praise, Traditions, and others) continue to minister to tens of thousands of spiritually hungry people. 20 worship leaders have been mentored.
- **Saddleback's School of Music & Arts** - 472 students took weekly lessons with our ten instructors. Our children's choirs, involving hundreds of kids, did 20 outreach events in our community.
- **Guitarists in God (GIG) Ministry** - Over 50 guitarists volunteer to play at nursing homes, our motel ministry to the homeless, urban outreaches, and Bible studies on our campus and in homes. A new credentialing program will launch in 2010.
- **Purpose Driven Radio** - Began in 2009 on the Internet, offering 24 hour a day music, daily devotionals, children's programming, and more. You can hear it [HERE](#).
- **Our Ohana Band & Hula Team** - (Island music) serve the community as Saddleback ambassadors.

YOU ARE HELPING PEOPLE GROW SPIRITUALLY

- **Small Groups** - The heart and soul of our church family grew to over 4,000 adult groups, meeting in almost every city in Southern California. We're testing 26 online groups. *Talk It Over*, our small group studies based on the weekend messages were downloaded **53,893 times** for use by groups. Our groups speak over 20 languages.
- **Our online Spiritual Growth Center** - was used 44,716 times. All our Bible studies set records for growth.
- **Married Life Pathway** - 2,704 people took advantage of our programs for couples to strengthen their marriages in 2009.
- **Our Children's, Jr. High, Senior High & College Ministries** - We are shaping thousands of young lives and exploding with record growth. High school ministry doubled in the last year after we opened the Refinery.

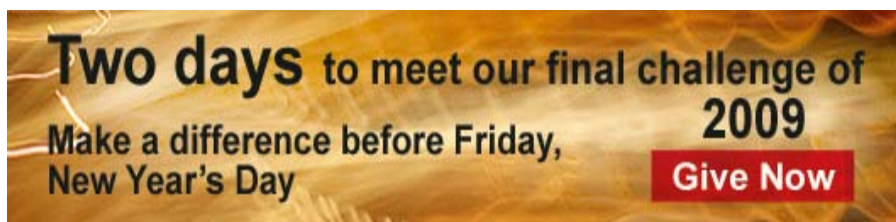
YOU ARE MAKING A HUGE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT!

- **PEACE Plan & Purpose Driven Leadership Training Worldwide** - It would require a book to tell you all your church is doing to Promote reconciliation, Equip leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick, and Educate the next generation. No other local church on earth has the international reach that Saddleback does. Over 8,000 Saddleback members have served in 139 countries. PEACE Teams are already planned to serve in the remaining 58 nations of the world in 2010.

READING JUST THIS SHORT LIST

It's obvious that your giving through your church family is providing more "*bang for the buck*" than anything else you could support. It is no wonder that our ministry was named the **top religious newsmaker of 2009** as reported by Associated Press.

YOU CAN HELP SAVE THE DAY 3 WAYS BEFORE JAN 1



1. Click [HERE](#) right now to and give as large an end-of-the-year gift as you can to help avert this crisis. If we all do what God leads us to do, we'll all be a part of a miracle.
2. Mail in your gift today. Gifts must be postmarked in 2009 to be posted as 2009 gifts for tax purposes. Mail to: 1 Saddleback Parkway, Lake Forest, CA 92630.
3. Drop your gift in the box at the front door of the Ministry Center at 1 Saddleback Parkway so you know for certain we get it TODAY or Thursday.

Saddleback is the most generous church family I know. You have always come through when asked. Now, you can make a difference, and help us continue serving so many. If we all do our part, we'll end this year in the black and start the new decade with high hopes!

I love you so much. It is a deep privilege to be your pastor. I will be teaching again this weekend and writing to you about the lessons I've learned in 2009. If you missed [Radical Hope](#) this last weekend, I urge you to watch it on line. I'll see you this weekend!

Pastor Rick

Rick Warren
Saddleback Church
Purpose Driven Network
P.E.A.C.E. Coalition
TWITTER [@RickWarren](#)