

## John Tefertiller Health Update – 27 June 2009

Greetings to my family and friends.

If you are new to this email list, welcome! I appreciate every expression of prayer, hope and encouragement that I have received over the last several weeks as my condition has been diagnosed, and with all the follow-on changes that are happening in my life.

### Start Here

I mean it when I say that I want this passage of life to reflect the glory of God, and the character of Jesus Christ that is being worked out in me. Of all the things that God intends for any of us, the one primary thing is that we would be conformed to the image of the Son of God. That may mean difficulty and beyond difficulty at times, but if we keep our eyes fixed on the goal (Christ-likeness, not just heaven!), we can be assured that no matter how things turn out with our sorry little tents of flesh, God himself will receive us because of the work already performed by Jesus for us. He died that I might live, and that life is not only in this present existence, but in the promised rest of sinless perfection with him.

### The Facts

Since the last update I have had consultations with a medical oncologist (a Harvard grad with Stanford residency, no less!) and I have also seen the radiology oncologist. On Monday I was given a CAT scan (completing the trilogy of major medical scans) in preparation for the chemotherapy and radiation therapy that will begin this Monday.

The chemotherapy will consist of an oral treatment which is, by all accounts, just as effective as the infusions previously used. This saves a minor surgical procedure and possible infections, and also may reduce some of the side effects. The drug is capable of attacking cancer cells and killing them throughout the body, but the main purpose in my case is to enhance the effects of the radiology in the general region of the tumor.

Radiation therapy will at first cover the general pelvic region, narrowing down to the specific area of the tumor itself over the course of treatment.

### Side Effects

I have been warned, and have read many accounts of the potential side effects of both the chemotherapy and the radiation. At this time I am not planning to take any significant time off from work. That could all change as early as this week, depending on the severity of side effects, and down the road, the financial situation may require re-thinking disability and Medi-Cal options.

### Finances

As I have made it known before, my financial resources are limited, with no personal health insurance in place. Available help from my employer has some serious limitations. I have already exceeded by more than twice the yearly cap on reimbursement for prescriptions. Thanks be to God, friends have stepped into the gap to help cover the cost of the initial chemotherapy treatment as well as making some other resources available to “float” expenses temporarily.

The medical assistance office at work has been able to negotiate the cost of services for radiation treatments down to something remarkably low, and will be working with other providers to see what they will do. However when all is said and done, it is all but certain that I will exceed the amount of assistance available through my employer, well before I emerge from this season.

### **Friends**

I want to say a word about friends, and without naming names which might embarrass them– they know who they are. But as I mentioned help from friends above, I want you to know that I thank God in every true sense for the generosity of heart that I have been shown. I have not had to go asking for their help– they have done so without prompting, and with offers of other help. I am so overwhelmed that it is even difficult to express to their faces how thankful I am. May God show the same generosity toward them as they have shown in my need.

One reason for mentioning this is that I am aware that I am in the early stages of treatment, with several months yet to go. It will be about a year from the initial diagnosis before we can declare victory in the physical. I never want to presume upon the generosity of friends– although it goes without saying that help will always be gratefully accepted. I also don't want to be a “poster boy” for the needy victim. I want to be able to say with confidence and truth that “My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in Glory in Christ Jesus.” It is easy to tell others to “stand back and see how God works things out,” and it is quite another thing to stand back with patience and thanksgiving in my heart– trusting without doubt and fear that God will provide.

### **Pray**

Prayer requests may already be obvious from what I have tried to express above:

1. Physical healing– by whatever means our God chooses.
2. Physical stamina– to hold up under possible side effects from treatments.
3. Financial provision– God created the heavens and the earth, and all things belong to him.
4. The power of God's spirit to uphold me, that I may radiate the person of Jesus Christ by my trust in him.

### **Closing Remarks**

Health care is a maze at the best of times. Toss in a lack of resources and it appears like a tidal wave of doubts, fears and frustrations that seems ready to engulf you when you least need the pressure. It is at a time like this that the image of Moses and the children of Israel standing on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea comes usefully to mind.

Fear and doubt would have been paramount in most people's minds as they stood on the shore, yet the only way across was through– treading between what amounted to *two* tidal waves. It may be a tidal wave that I see, but I know that I serve a God who created dry, solid ground for his people to walk away from their fears and doubts, to freedom and promise. As I go through this time, I want to keep trusting in that God who will always make a way for those who trust in him.

Keep me in your prayers.

With kind regards,

John T.