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July 28, 2007

Dear Pastors and Praying Friends;

Greetings in the name that is above all names! May this letter find all the saints of God immensely blessed. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee". Amen. This has been the verse harboring in my mind over the past two months. First of all, let me thank all of you, God's people and his Churches, for your faithfulness. Do you know that the Almighty God of Heaven has used you dear people, over the past 18 months or so, to not only further my ministry through prayers and support but also to encourage my *heart when times are tough*? I hope you understand just how much God uses you. While on a bus recently, somewhere between Connecticut and home, it occurred to me that from my childhood to the present, God's people have given me everything that have. I both understand and appreciate that fact. Let me also say that the Lord does as well, and I cease not to pray that he blesses you all (I know that he will). This, my second summer of deputation, is almost over now and summers (in my experience) are very hard for missionaries as meetings are scarce.

As his servant and yours, I would like to brief you on the status of my progress in relation to my support level and need for further funds and of future goals. I am currently *a mezza via*, or half-way. I remember telling Pastore Dino back in Italy before I left that it would take me about 2 years to reach my needed support level, which I believed would be the case. Now I struggle with the verity that I will not reach my goals. Although not having the blessing of being able to drive everywhere and anywhere has been a factor (as is the fact that I am attempting to do alone what most missionaries do with a supportive wife and family), the main problem is a lack of meetings. Although I have been careful with planning and in my efforts to avoid a lot of the things that I have observed working as stumblingblocks to other young missionaries in their pre-field ministry (debt, credit problems, vehicle / travel trailer issues, etc.), I am more than ever aware of my limitations. I have been blessed to have my brother Derek's help as he has from day one graciously provided my lodging without asking much. Without him I would be even further behind. I ask that you would keep him in your prayers also the same as you would me. Despite my limitations and lacking, what has hindered or slowed my progress the most is a desperately scarce availability of meetings. While I am able get a ride or take the bus to meetings in New York and surrounding states, the issue of transportation becomes insignificant when there aren't any meetings to get to. I believed it would be easier.

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On the brighter side, it is encouraging to note that of the Churches I have been in, only two have not seen God's hand in my future ministry or for some other reason decided it better not to contribute. I thank God for that percentage. I ask for your prayers for more meetings, as I have asked God for thirty more Churches before leaving for the field. I need at least that many more as I cannot afford to return for more support after a short time in Italy. Preachers and Pastors, I hope that you understand this, as you also understand my weaknesses and needs. I will not lie to you; I am getting a bit troubled and anxious. I question myself daily, my only hope is in the Word; my only consolation is in verses such as the one I shared at the beginning of this letter. Football has its training camps, a summer of hard training for a long season where players and teams can prove themselves; a professional boxer might spend a year or more in training for just twelve rounds. Perhaps two years plus in preparation and Spiritual training for a lifetime of being "in the ring" with our greatest enemy and the only enemy of the Italian people, isn't so unreasonable. Thank you all for your patience with me. I am getting closer. Bless you.

*"Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." Psalm 63:3*

Nel bene e Nel male  
Your servant and his soldier,

Angelo Serino

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