



September, 2014

Dear Friends of CMOTO,

Looking back over the last seven years I am amazed, humbled, and at the same time thrilled when I think about what has been accomplished through this small but growing ministry. As we have prayed and believed God for what often seemed impossible humanly speaking, we have seen God intervene in situations and bring to reality this vision step by step. I love the scripture from 1 John 5:14-16:

**“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”**

#### **THIS IS HOW THE MUSEUM MINISTRY DEVELOPED:**

I bought a little paperback book at a dinosaur museum in Branson in 2007 with the title *“It’s True, We Came From Slime,”* and it was just after this that I received the vision for a creation museum ministry in the Branson area. I soon shared this vision with a few close friends who were attending the creationism class that I was teaching in a local church. We contacted the real estate office of Rex Grady in Branson, and arranged for him to give us a tour and show us some properties that were available. We were thinking at that time that the Lord might help us to build from scratch. I remember that as we were driving around Branson with Rex he would point out properties that were for sale and say, “This property goes for three million dollars,” or “That one over there is one-and-a-quarter million dollars,” etc. The possibility of finding a good accessible site at a reasonable price on which to build in Branson began to seem out of reach for such a small start-up ministry as ours. We went back home and prayed.

Well, I’ve always said that prayer has to be the foundation of any ministry that will produce anything of lasting eternal value. A few of us kept this vision alive through prayer until the Lord surprised us in 2010. Our friends and ministry coworkers Curtis & Sherry Baker noticed that a small store front property in Strafford was available for lease. After prayer and consideration we felt that it could serve as a head office for this ministry as it developed—still with an eye on Branson as the eventual goal. Strafford is a town of only 2,500 population just a short distance from Springfield, Missouri, and is located right on the Interstate 44 highway.

#### **STEP ONE: THE FIRST MUSEUM**

After moving into the store-front facility in Strafford we discovered that a bigger room adjoined it at the rear which had served for years as the town hall meeting place. I talked to the landlord who told us we could lease that larger space for an extra \$100 a month. We prayed, and the Lord quickly laid on someone’s heart to sponsor that amount. Well, with the extra space that we had acquired we soon found ourselves painting and making the rooms more presentable. I have joked about it many times by saying, “We don’t care for the word, but the facility in Strafford *evolved* into a museum.” Not too long after this a man whom I had never met before passed by for a tour. After the tour he had his hand on the front door handle ready to leave, but turned around and asked me how much we were paying to lease this facility. I told him, and he said, “If it’s OK with you my company would like to take care of that for you from now on.” What a fine Christian gentleman this is, and for almost four years he has been faithful to keep his word. This is just one example to show you how the Lord has favored us in this ministry.

As I am writing this almost four years later we have seen over 5,000 people of all ages visit the Strafford museum. Young and old (including some groups of atheists) have been exposed to the truths of God's Word supporting the Creator and biblical history through the sciences, and have heard the Gospel which is part of the tour which still continues to this day two days a week.

## **STEP TWO: THE SECOND MUSEUM—SEVEN YEARS AFTER THE VISION**

If we maintain faith in the vision God gives us He will often work behind the scenes as it were, and then later it will become clear to us what He has done. After losing my first wife, Joanna, who went to be with the Lord almost ten years ago, I met and married Linda. We have been married just over five years. Linda happens to have a brother who lives near Branson, who just happens to be a close friend of the son and owner of the property we are now leasing. Now we can see how God was making the connections before we knew anything about it. He has provided this amazing location which is in full view of the major Highway 65 just a few minutes drive from Branson. What a great God we serve, who listens to our prayers and enables us to keep in faith for the things we are trusting Him for.

We have now been at our second museum location in Branson just over three months and have received over 1,500 visitors so far. We signed the lease on June 1, 2013, and it took almost a full year to renovate the building and prepare it for visitors and our Grand Opening on April 12 this year. For example, we were able to hire the Amish to install a new roof and siding all around the building. Needless to say, this has turned out to be an expensive project, but the Lord has helped us thus far—especially through wonderful volunteers who willingly donated their time and expertise. It is very thrilling to see the young and old come to tour the museum and be impacted with the truths about creation, evolution and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our Creation Experience Museums in Branson and Strafford stand as a testimony today to the truthfulness of such scriptures as, **“We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us,”** and **“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”** A statement I have made many times is: **“We can't do it; God can; and I believe He will.”**

## **STEP THREE:**

Is there a step three? Yes! From the beginning of this vision we have believed that the Lord would have us aim for a full-size state-of-the-art museum with animatronic dinosaurs, historical biblical personalities and various scenes—e.g. a hologram image of an angel announcing that Jesus has risen from the empty tomb. We also envision special educational areas related to specific sciences with hands-on activities for children. We believe that such a facility would attract huge numbers of the seven-plus million visitors who come to Branson each year. We have come to realize that because of our two locations CMOTO is not only a national outreach for the Gospel truth of a Creator and Savior, but also an international ministry because of visitors from other countries.

While we still face design and financial challenges to complete STEP TWO, we will keep seeking the Lord in faith at the same time for His guidance for STEP THREE. This is all truly the Lord's doing and His ministry. I hope that all of you who have supported CMOTO by believing prayer and practical and financial support will know that you are a vital part of this ministry. It is reaching people with truth, and laying a foundation in young lives that will strengthen them to stay true to God, the Bible, and encourage them to follow God's plan for their individual lives.

From my heart I thank God for all of you,

*Rod*

Rod Butterworth, President, Creation Ministries of the Ozarks & Creation Experience Museums