



I just returned from the International Rotary Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. It was a great conference with over 16,000 Rotarians in attendance that represented over 140 countries. At the conference, the Rotary International Board approved a new mission statement and vision statement. The revised mission statement reads:

"The mission of Rotary International, a worldwide association of Rotary clubs, is to provide service to others, to promote high ethical standards, and to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through its fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders."

The revised vision statement states that:

"Rotary International is to be universally recognized for its commitment to service above self to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace."

The incoming RI President, Wilfrid J. Wilkinson, spoke of the 2007-2008 Rotary theme.....*Rotary Shares*. He went on to say that sharing is not giving away what you have to spare or what you don't need for yourself... it is giving of yourself for the good of others. *Rotary Shares* is much more than a theme, it is a call to action. It is asking each of you to be involved in our community. As a club, we can each share of our time, talents, expertise, and money to make our world and local community a better place. We can also share Rotary with businesses and leaders in our community. If there is once common thread among the 1.2 million Rotarians worldwide, it is the willingness to share.

The highlights of the conference included hearing from Utah Governor Jon Huntsman, President Bill Boyd, Incoming President Wilfrid Wilkinson, and William Gates, Sr. The Rotarians were also entertained by Donnie Osmond.....(I felt 12 years old again!). I believe that William Gates, Sr. was the most inspirational speaker at the conference. He is the co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He was presented an award from Rotary International for helping with the tremendous goal of eradicating polio. Mr. Gates stated that he felt Rotary is one of the finest organizations on the planet. He went on to say that Rotary's resources were wallets, legs, and lungs.

Wallets: Rotarians have contributed over \$600 million towards the eradication of polio over the past 20 years.

Legs: Rotarians were sent to various countries to help administer the polio vaccine.

Lungs: Any group that can get over 16,000 people to a conference has a voice!

I would like to backtrack and tell you why Mr. Gates was presented the Rotarian award for helping eradicate polio. Rotary was close to eradicating polio in Nigeria a few years ago. Negative actions by the Muslim leadership reversed that trend. Nigeria is primarily Muslim with a small percentage of Christians. The Muslim leadership convinced the Muslim community that Rotary was spiking the polio vaccine with an agent that caused sterility. They told their followers that Rotary's goal was for Christians to outnumber Muslims in Nigeria. Eventually, new Muslim leadership came to the forefront and convinced the Muslim community that the polio vaccine was not a danger to the fertility of their children. The leadership went so far as to televise their children receiving the polio vaccine. This convinced the Muslims that they should allow their children to receive the vaccine. To ensure the Nigerians received the vaccinations, the Gates Foundation contributed \$150 million to this cause. In addition, his foundation created a global alliance for vaccinations and immunizations. Their goal is to ensure that all children in underdeveloped countries receive their basic vaccinations to avoid preventable diseases and death. Mr. Gates said he truly wants to make a difference in this world and it helps to accomplish this goal when your son owns Microsoft!

I think we all want to know that as we pass through this world, we make a difference. We want to make a difference in our family, a difference in our community, and a difference in our world. Rotary is a tool that helps us accomplish this. Rotary makes a difference in every corner of the world. It makes a difference to those that receive scholarships and realize their dream of obtaining an education. It makes a difference to those that are helped by the Salvation Army, because we had a part in raising funds when we rang the bell during the holidays. It makes a difference in the lives of those impacted by polio. It makes a difference to those third world communities that have potable water to drink, because Rotary dug a well in their neighborhood. We make a difference to our families, when they see us sharing of ourselves to help those in need. It demonstrates to our children the importance of getting involved with helping others improve their lives.

Tom has done a great job as President this past year. With the help of Dub George, I put together a photo album that highlights his year as president. I believe this album will remind him of all the good Rotary did during his year as President. I am looking forward to serving this year as President of this club. We have had the honor and privilege of having many great Presidents. I realize I have some very big shoes to fill. I will do my best to make each of you proud to be a Rotarian. Rotary is an organization that allows ordinary people to come together and do extraordinary things. As a member of Rotary, each of you can be assured that you have made a difference in the world today and for many years to come. I look forward to working with you this year. God Bless each of you!