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| What would you do with a million dollars?It is a question that God seems to be asking? What would we do if the Christian Montessori Fellowship had a million dollars?  Twice this year I have been asked that question. The first time I laughed. Yes, it would be a delightful speculation – castle building (in the air of course) but in the same conversation I was also challenged about the planning for our 40th anniversary conference. “You seem to be planning for the attendance of where you have been in the past instead of planning a conference for where you want to go in the future.” Ouch! As Proverbs says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” Speakers of truth.  The second time the question was asked, I didn’t laugh. “Okay God. Is there something here that I am missing?” I have been blessed to be a dreamer. While not all dreamers are blessed with an outcome of reality my dreams have seen the light of day; the trees of those dreams shaded the castles that would be built in the air (where nothing was before) and then have foundations placed under them.  Early in our marriage, my bride said to me, “You are a dreamer.” It was realized early in the marriage (but not before the wedding) so it didn’t become a deal breaker. 😊 Fortunately, the God-inspired dreams began to come about - with more successes than failures. And later on in the marriage “You are such a dreamer” was said with a mixed degree of awe and the trepidation of, “What new adventure are you getting us into?” Eventually, “You are such a dreamer” was followed by a twinge of Godly recognition that the sentence would be completed with “But I’ve seen your dreams come true.”  The reality is that Barbara was and is the wind beneath the wings of those dreams. (Occasionally, she is a typhoon, hurricane or tornado.) But without that wind dreams don’t fly as high or as far or as graceful.  We started a Christian Montessori school – eighteen months through High school on four and a half acres in the middle of Dallas – without any resources or backing (but God.) It was a long dream – twenty-nine years and with all the steps in between. We later started the Christian Montessori Fellowship when the term Christian Montessori didn’t exist and didn’t have acceptance in either community of Christians or Montessorians. (We are celebrating our fortieth anniversary conference in January.) It was started without any resources or backing (but God.) (But it was one time that the dreamer’s wife looked at him and really shook her head.)  Later, we created a Christian Montessori teacher training program by spending five years in the studio putting everything on video – again without any resources or backing (but God.) Our training program is beginning to go all over the world thanks to technology – and God.  All these dreams were God’s dreams for His children (even though we use the word we in our story.) We now kid that we are so used to walking on water that we no longer even know where the boat is. Yet, none of what we are writing is really about us (even though we are in the middle of it.) It really is about YOU.  What is the dream that God has given you? Many of you have started schools, grown schools, expanded schools (just like us) without great backing or support. You’ve taken training. You’ve walked on water. It is tough work to make dreams come true – even if they are God’s dreams. I’ve asked Him often, “Can’t you make it any easier?” And He smiles.  Now, we are faced with two challenges – or are they new dreams? The scripture says that we are given three score and ten years of life. (Wow! Seventy. Which to many of you seems so far away.) And if by strength of force you may live to eighty. So, from seventy on is bonus time. My bride just turned eighty. She must be living on double bonus time. This is part of the challenges and dreams. And the next part of the story.  Last month we were meeting with our friend Sandy talking about the ministry of Christian Montessori when I heard my wife say to Sandy, “We are going to buy land. We are going to build a new training center and we are going to move to Nueva Cuscatlan (a suburb to where we live in San Salvador.) I know when I hear God’s voice. It does often sound like my wife’s. (Not always but often enough to pay close attention.) I heard God’s voice. You’ve seen our ages. We fit well into Joel 2:28 “your old men will dream dreams …”  So, why should it be a challenge? Is it any different than all of the other experiences of starting with no backing and no support – but God? So, why should this be different? (This is what you also get when the woman you married has lived with and supported a dreamer for over fifty years. Did I mention hurricane, typhoon and tornado beneath your wings, and that she often speaks for God?)  That was not the only surprise and challenge of the morning. Sandy asked, “Why don’t you ask the Lord for a million dollars to be able to spread what you are doing around the world? You don’t have it because you don’t ask God for it.” If I stammered in my answer it would only be because I don’t have faith to ask. And there it was again “A million dollars.” Dreams are the seeds of faith to be planted. And so there I was just like the father asking Jesus to heal his son, Mark 9:24. “I believe, Help my unbelief.” And so, I am asking God for a million dollars for the ministry. (Relax, I’m not asking you – Well, not today. 😊)  So, my asking Jesus to help my faith comes out a little like, “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch.” But my asking in trepidation is being replaced with, “Where are those plans for a larger chicken coop?”  Then there is still a very practical question, “How do you spend a million dollars wisely?” Now, this is where YOU also come in and why I am writing this. CMF needs to plan how to spend the first ten thousand dollars – not the million to come. What is the most significant thing we could do for this ministry (and what you could do for your own ministry) with ten thousand dollars? Can my faith stretch to asking and planning for ten thousand dollars? Yes, and so can your faith.  I’ve been challenged to not make excuses. I’ll give you the same challenge - no excuses. I can wisely spend ten thousand today (and even wisely plan for the next ten or twenty or maybe even fifty thousand – if I have the faith to receive it.) But if I don’t exercise faith and plan for the first ten thousand there will be no seeds, no progress, no dreams nor any need for the next installment that God wants to give us to be able to bless His children.  Plan for your ten-thousand-dollar challenge on the way to whatever else God has planned for you. Plant those “dream seeds”, water them with prayer (and work) and watch – or is that “observe?” Let’s walk this together asking God to increase the borders of our tents to bless more children for Him. Let your dreams create the reality. |