

# *Ruth's Christmas Letter*

December 2011

Christmas Greetings!

Time for that over-the-shoulder look at the year that has just whizzed by. Did you get a good look at 2011, or did it zip by that fast for you too?

A few physical health issues showed me what age bracket I'm in, otherwise it was a good and busy year for me. At the beginning of 2011 I was sure I couldn't squeeze any more into my life, yet I did! How!? We really don't know our limits until we are stretched to the max - and then more elastic grows there.

One thing I prayed for often through this year was for my business income to increase so that I can say I'm self-supporting. Sure enough, it has crept up! I praise God for that!

Although you may think I'm working full-time as a missionary at Western Tract Mission, it's not quite the case. For one, my personal support has been too low to live on, so from the beginning I've tried to guard certain mornings to work on my own web business websites. While in the midst of cleaning up Dad's estate in 2007 the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan (MHSS) asked me to design and maintain a website for them. I told them I could only spare one evening a week, but that's worked out very well for both MHSS and for me. I reserve certain evenings for other ministries' websites; some of them pay fairly regularly too. Thus I've been able to meet my basic budget, and keep body and soul together.

This year, however, I've become aware that working 12 hour days is not a good lifestyle for years to come. If I spent sufficient time at all my roles at WTM, I could fill the hours of about three full-time jobs just there alone. About six weeks of coughing and a cracked rib this fall proved that zeal and enthusiasm, and a super-disciplined schedule aren't quite enough. I need to work towards change.

Therefore I've been praying openly for more volunteers to train at WTM, and they've begun to appear. I've prayed that my web businesses will start turning a good profit so that I can hire employees to share my workload. That's on my horizon now too, praise God!

Mostly I've focused my guarded morning hours on two SBI sites, while I put my other sites on a back burner so to speak. Others who work diligently at their SiteBuildIt! (SBI) site usually find they can let go of their "day job" in about a year or two. If I'd put in full-time hours I might also be riding in style by now, but I've been 'st-re-t-ch-in-g' my time hard. My [www.aloe-vera-and-handy-herbs.com](http://www.aloe-vera-and-handy-herbs.com) site, started in Nov/2007 is now getting over 500 visits a day, (compare that to others getting just 30-50 visits a month!) so as I put on affiliate ads it is just about ready to start bringing in several hundreds a month. Or headed that way.

In 2008 I put in three mornings a week at it, and learned the SBI ways. In 2010 I took on another one, and neglected this first one, but it kept growing. This year I've given the first one Monday mornings, and the second one just Thursday and Friday mornings. It is about how to shop online safely, and though not as far developed, has even more potential. Once these sites are fully profitable, I should no longer have to worry about income. Of course, it's important to keep maintaining and adding



information to them, and responding to the visitors' questions. Already I get one or two questions a day from the aloe vera site visitors!

In case you are still wondering what exactly it is I do, - here's my short answer; I write informative web pages on a topic for a niche site (which is like a large interactive public book on the web!), and I add affiliate links from which I get commissions if enough visitors click and go buy on the other company's site. It's very clean, non-messy work, that I can do from any computer. It calls for some HTML knowledge, and lots of creativity and writing - right up my alley!

Obviously, I'm excited about this, but why am I telling you all this, you are wondering, eh?

Well, I'm trying to explain my news that I think early in the new year I'll be able to say "Ta-da! I'm self-supporting as a business woman!" My plan is to change my status with WTM from missionary to volunteer. I would stay on in my office there in WTM, as there are extra rooms I can add on, as needed. The missionary title is nice, but not necessary to me, and that will free up some funds to go to the other missionaries who really need support too. Me paying office rent would help as well.

You know, of all the missions and ministries I know about, both North American based and in third world countries, I don't know of any that don't have constant financial struggles. It is my new passion and calling (I think) to raise funds to help support others who are doing Christian mission work.

I've come a long way already. I used to think I was only a 'creative' person and had no business head whatsoever. But after Mom died, I had such a longing to publish my novel, that I told the Lord that if He provided a computer, I would be willing for Him to 'turn me into a business woman.' I had ten good years as Dad's caregiver where I had time to learn the skills I'd need, including bookkeeping. I've tried to behave as a business woman, and in the last four years especially, I've come a tremendous distance! (Maybe the Lord and I are the only ones who know how great a distance!)

In 2011 He has encouraged me to believe that my little business, *Azaleas Virtual Assistants*, can continue to grow stage by stage, eventually hire employees, and grow financially to where I can support my growing prayer list of missionary friends and contacts. I believe it's is going to happen in 2012. Watch for further news!

If you are praying for me, perhaps this gives you a new sense of direction for your prayers.

Meantime I enjoy my meaningful, purpose-filled life, and delight in the Lord's gifts of Love, Joy, and Peace – and many more! I can only wish you the same, and all the good things that He has in store for you in the new year.



As I've often said, if you really want to know what goes on in my life week by week, you would do wisely to subscribe to my Tuesday ezine, the **RoseBouquet**, (it's free), or at least go visit my blog by the same name where I also post that information each Tuesday. There you can read all about my mice wars, and see photos of the garden in the summer, and a few other thoughts that saunter through my mind. Plus, there's clear hints of what keeps me busy in my work. If you want to see more about SBI, check out these links; <http://buildit.sitesell.com/provision.html>  
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