

# ***Urban Christian Outreach (Ottawa)***

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***Update #46***

***December 2007***

As I write this on the first Sunday of Advent, the gospel theme of *God approaching, God among us* is an astonishing reminder that the God of all eternity chose to take upon Himself all our human limitations in order to truly 'find' us and bring us back to God. There is no experience of human limitation or disability that can possibly compare with the limitations that Jesus freely chose, out of the depths of His great love for us.

In UCO, we think a lot about human disability and limitations. I am deeply aware of my own limitations, and UCO staff and volunteers give prime attention to people who consider themselves to be disabled well beyond the average, and who yet bring faith and goodness into the world: Jose, who learns to manage life in a shelter from the limitations of a wheelchair and who greets the day on the sidewalks with a smile; Mark, who is aging prematurely for developmental reasons and who has a passion for praying for his own friends in need; Gilda, whose mental illness blocked her from getting an education as a teenager, but who is now determined to change that through commitment and hard work.

The Christian message reminds us that no personal poverty or disability can 'save' us spiritually – salvation is just free gift through Christ – nor does God want to leave a person's limitations untouched by transforming love. But I have seen and

experienced how suffering and disability may open the human spirit to the infinite Jesus. He knows. He's been there. God's strength is made perfect in weakness. UCO is called to live close to the mystery of the Incarnation. Next to Jesus, the poor and the disabled are amongst my finest teachers on this journey of life.

It's a privilege for me to do this work – but only for six more months, as the calendar races towards my chosen 'retirement' date from this UCO task at the end of May 2008. There will be one more opportunity for me to write to you, our truly wonderful supporters. Meanwhile, the Board is planning and working towards a new era for UCO. We are truly sorry to lose our Board President, Clint Curle, as he moves on to a different piece of his career and calling (please see his comments on p.2). Thank you, Clint, for bringing your faith, skills and good humour to the Board for more than three years. We are delighted to welcome two new people onto the Board: David Hayman and Scott Valentine. We are already enjoying working with you, Scott and David.

This Advent time, may we all be touched deeply by the simple and profound Hope that came down to earth on that first Christmas morning.

***Katrine Barton-Coward***  
***UCO Executive Director***

***From UCO's outgoing President of the Board***

*"Nothing is impossible with God." These were the last words the angel Gabriel spoke when he announced to Mary that she was to give birth to the Son of God. A few years ago, it was common in my own church circles to hear the searching question, "what would Jesus do?" Perhaps we should have asked, "what wouldn't Jesus do?" If the Lord God Almighty, the creator of heaven and earth, can draw near to sinful humanity in a cuddly baby born in a barn, we ought not to set any limits on God's will or God's power. It is just this sort of theologically informed hopefulness toward the future that informs UCO's work with our clients.*

*Due to a change in employment, I will be stepping down from the UCO board in the new year. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to Katrine, the rest of the UCO Board, and all of the prayer and financial supporters who are truly partners in this ministry.*

*In Christ Jesus,  
Clint Curle*

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### ***From the Secretary of the Board***

*I live in the market and see poor people every day on the streets as I hurry to and from work. Beyond those that I see, I know there are many more struggling for safety, hope, meaning, and better lives. Through Katrine's reports, I catch glimpses of their different situations, challenges, and victories. It is a comfort to think of Katrine meeting with them where they are, physically and spiritually, providing pastoral and practical care and gospel ministry; and I am grateful for the privilege of being involved with her work, even if only in the background.*

*I ask for your continued prayers and financial support as we look ahead to a challenging and exciting new year.*

### ***Janice Fiamengo***

*(Janice works tirelessly on all secretarial matters at board level and also takes a role in inter-church liaison for UCO.)*

## **The Treasurer's Page**

## ***Year End 2007, and Next Year***

You are good people. Scripture says, “Godly people give generously to the poor, their good deeds will never be forgotten” (2 Corinthians 9:9 NLT.)

Every fall I hold my breath as we nearly run out of funds, but through God’s grace donations increase as Christmas approaches and we pull through.

Next year will be a more expensive year for Urban Christian Outreach. We plan to have an employment overlap, for training purposes, between Katrine and the new Executive Director.

Please keep this ministry and its transition in your hearts and in your prayers.

## ***Retirement gift***

For almost fifteen years, Urban Christian Outreach has been on the streets of Ottawa catching those who are falling through the cracks. Next year will be wonderfully challenging as Katrine retires and a new Executive Director takes over the work of Urban Christian Outreach.

Some have told me that they would like to contribute to a monetary retirement gift for Katrine. If you are like-minded, you may mail cheques to us up till April 30, 2008. Please clearly state that the funds are for Katrine’s retirement gift.

Please note that contributions to the gift are not tax receiptable charitable donations.

***David Wice***

***UCO Treasurer***