

Urban Christian Outreach (Ottawa)

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Update #63

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“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. John 15:12-17 (ESV)

Dear Friends in Christ,

We thank God for you, most sincerely, for your love for Him, for your love for us, and for your love for the poor whom we have been given the mighty privilege to minister alongside. We give thanks to God for the fruit of the Holy Spirit, evident in our community of Urban Christian Outreach, especially the fruit of love and joy, as displayed last month when we gathered together to celebrate 20 years of faithful ministry to the poor, the homeless and the marginalized. What an amazing, joy-filled event we shared! Truly, the Spirit of the Living God was upon us as was testified by many. Our much-loved speakers: Ms. Katrine Barton-Coward, visionary and founder of UCO, Rev. Dr. Allen Churchill, founding President of UCO, and Rev. Dr. Anthony Bailey, UCO's Spiritual Advisor, all spoke with exquisite anointing and we were blessed! We were blessed with friends with servant hearts among us: volunteers, Board members,

musicians, and supporters. But what truly enriched us was your presence. What a joy and a delight it was to meet with you and to celebrate God's majestic faithfulness! For those of you who were unable to attend, thank you for your very kind wishes and support. We count you all as friends.

And what a friend we have in Jesus! Whether we are gathered to celebrate, or struggling to find comforting words to speak to the broken-hearted, we do this all for Jesus, and we are humbled to know that we simply cannot do anything effectively without Him. Do we not have the most precious best friend ever in Jesus? When I encounter the lost and the lonely in my daily work, I am very much aware that it is by grace that I have been sent, and that what our hurting friends need are not wise words or works from me, but the very Grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And is this not what we all need?

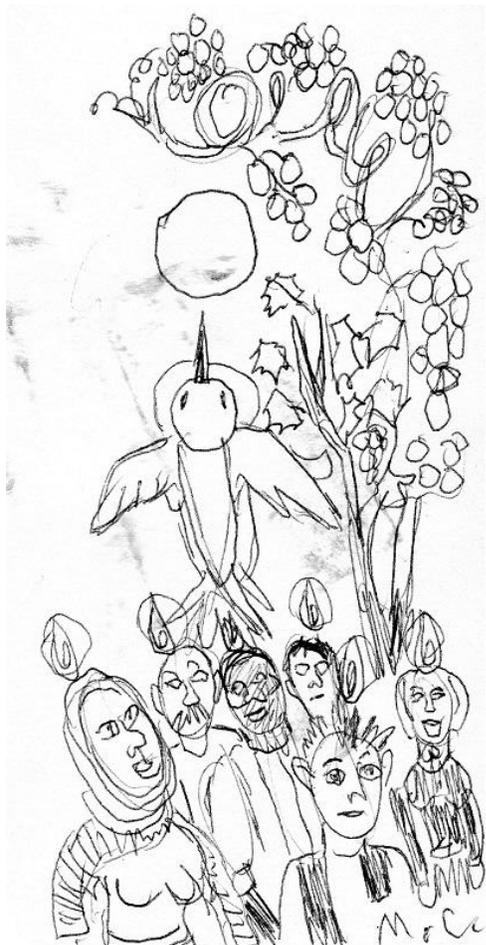
For without God's Grace, are we not poor ourselves? We are poor in so many ways – poor in spirit, poor in understanding, poor in faith – and when we minister to those that our Lord tenderly places before us, we experience His Grace also. For we have come to understand that in giving to the poor, we are receiving. We receive the knowledge and understanding that we need the poor, just as much, probably more, than they need us. We need them because when we encounter their honesty, and often beautiful, child-like faith, we learn that appearances mean nothing, that fancy cars and fancy homes and fancy clothes and fancy titles pale in comparison with the beautiful humility before us – the beautiful humble spirit of a broken person who knows their need for salvation, who has borne the burden of brokenness and worldly shame, to the point of being able to admit that they do not have it all together. How they have earned our respect – how we can learn from them. In Christ, there is no condemnation. In Christ, there is no shame.

How our Lord can and does use the brokenness of our humble friends, to further his kingdom! They know what it is like to struggle - to be stripped of all dignity by a system and society that often looks down on them. Perhaps this is why the workers are so few – because many of the workers, those who profess to be Christians, have forgotten their need of a Saviour? Father, help us to remember Jesus. Help us to discover our own brokenness.

God recently led me to a women I will call Brenda (not her real name), who has been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, a treatable, but

very challenging cross for her to bear. This mental health condition is defined by the Canadian Mental Health Association as being made up of five groups of symptoms: unstable behavior, unstable emotions, unstable relationships, unstable sense of identity, and problems with awareness. In addition, those suffering with this disease often have recurring thoughts of suicide. Brenda suffers from most of these symptoms, yet is able to flourish when she remembers Jesus. However, she needs almost constant support, and reminders, because when she forgets to invite Jesus into each situation, her life quickly falls apart. We have been able to offer Brenda extra help through telephone prayer ministry, and she continues to get better, one day at a time.





For those of us who, by the Grace of God, do not have to struggle with mental health conditions, can we not identify with Brenda in our own need to invite Jesus into every situation, every conversation, every plan and idea? When I pray with Brenda, I am blessed by the opportunity to receive the Peace of Christ, and reminded of my own need for His Grace. We need the poor because we sometimes forget to pray. The poor know they need God, and by their ability to ask for their needs to be met, they not only fulfill our need to give, but provide an opportunity for us to be included in the moment by moment demonstrations of the Kingdom of God among us.

Thank you, faithful friends, for partnering with us in our ministry to the poor. May we humbly ask for your continued prayers and financial support as we seek to serve our Lord another day? May God richly bless you!

With Gratitude,
Jill

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed. Proverbs 19:17

MAILED UPDATES:

In an effort to decrease our mailing costs, we have decided to update our mailing list. If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please use the enclosed donor card to advise us, or contact us at 613-233-6633. You can also advise us by email at jill@uco-ottawa.ca

ELECTRONIC MAILINGS:

If you would prefer to receive UCO's updates via email, (or both mailed and emailed copies) please send us an email at jill@uco-ottawa.ca advising us of your preference. Many thanks.