

Urban Christian Outreach (Ottawa)

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Update #65

October, 2013

Dear Disciples of Christ,

Would you agree that the world around us seems to be getting more chaotic? We are plagued with environmental disasters, relationship problems, financial burdens, human rights atrocities, and an increasingly busy world where distractions and chaos seek to suck the peace right out of us! We are called to be *in* the world, but not *of* it.

“They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” John 17:16 ESV

Therefore, as ambassadors for Christ, as His very own disciples, how much more do we need to be putting on the ‘full armour of God’, and to guard this special relationship that we have with Jesus, to guard our time with Him, to seek refuge in His arms and at His feet? Total immersion in Christ: this is where we find true Peace. This is where we find Jesus. This is where we come to a true place of thanksgiving. This is the very hope that we are privileged to bring to the poor, as they struggle to find their way in a broken world.

As we prepare our hearts and homes to celebrate Thanksgiving, I’m thankful that by the generosity of God, we can put our hope in Jesus and find refuge in Him. I am thankful, that by the Grace of God, we are saved. I am thankful, that by His unending mercy, He draws us out of sin, out of the chaos and insanity of a world that seeks to distract us, and into a place of peace, rest, hope and love.

“Watch with Me.” Matthew 26:40

Only when we are able to reflect the love of Christ Jesus, can we be of any use to Him in our ministry work to the poor. Not our will, but His. Not us, but Him. I was reminded of this recently when He led me to sit for awhile with a woman whom I shall call Anne.

I found Anne sitting alone in a coffee shop. I sat nearby, and as she got up to leave, she made a comment about my backpack. This began a conversation from which she poured out her pain, crying and sobbing uncontrollably. I was moved by her grief, and by her willingness to be authentic in a public place. Clearly, others around us were moved as well. We prayed together, asking for grace and for mercy for her many trials, and Anne was filled with Peace. What a privilege it is to facilitate the love of Christ in another’s life, and to wait upon the Lord and watch Him move.

You have blessed us, faithful ones. By the Grace of God, and through your faithfulness, you have responded to God’s compassion for the poor. How beautifully you reflect the love of Christ. We are so very grateful to those who were able to give in abundance and to the one who was able to give \$5.00.

Just what can \$5 buy? God can multiply this amount in ways that we cannot imagine and I am reminded of a story which I wrote about a few years ago.

You may recall it. I recently had the pleasure of retelling it when I had an opportunity to share our work with a group of men during their time of Bible study. Some moments are just so special, they are worth repeating. Here is the story, once again:

"I had the privilege of meeting a gentleman downtown one day this past summer. He was walking, holding a Bible. He followed me for awhile and I invited him to have a cup of coffee and talk about the Bible. He declined the coffee, but agreed to talk about the Bible. We sat down in a restaurant and while I sipped my tea, we sat quietly, not speaking a word for some time. Then, he spoke one word: Jesus

I smiled and nodded, understanding what he was saying. He repeated: "Jesus". Again I nodded and smiled. "He is all we need" said the gentleman, and I nodded in agreement. He spoke very eloquently and I knew that God was with us.

One Word: Jesus. So simple, and here I was, ready to complicate things with my Bible wisdom. He was the teacher that I needed that day: I was the student. There was beauty in the simplicity of his words. When it came time to leave, I thanked him for blessing me and asked him if there was anything that I could do for him. He said that he would like a cigarette, to which I replied that I was sorry, but didn't have any cigarettes. He said that perhaps he might like a cup of juice later in the day, and so I bought a \$5.00 gift card from the restaurant in which we sat. As we were leaving, I handed him the gift card; he smiled, thanked me and tucked it away in his pocket.

Just outside the restaurant doors, and sitting on the sidewalk, was a young woman panhandling. The gentleman squatted down opposite her, so that they

were face to face and he said one word: "Jesus". She smiled and looked at him, then at me, and again back at him. He repeated himself, again saying one word: "Jesus". The pain behind her smile was becoming more obvious as she struggled to hold back tears. "Do you know Jesus?" He asked. "Well, not really...well, I used to", she replied.

Quietly, he reached into his pocket, took out the gift card that I had just purchased for him, and dropped it into her panhandling cup. She smiled and offered him a cigarette.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of UCO, our volunteers, and our friends on the sidewalks, may I wish you and your loved ones a Thanksgiving celebration filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We thank God for all of you. Thanks be to God.

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.' Galatians 5:22-23 (a)

To His Glory,
Jill

UCO Treasurer's Update:

Our year-to-date situation is improving, thanks to your kindness! As of the end of September, our year-to-date expenses have exceeded our offerings by \$1200. May we humbly ask for your prayers and financial gifts as we seek to end our year with a balanced budget? Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

