



Urban Christian Outreach (Ottawa)

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Update #81 April 2019

Dear Friends,

By the Grace of God and your generous and sacrificial gifts, UCO was provided for in abundance last year. We saw our Lord move in very powerful ways. He promised to provide and he was true to his promise. Thank you, dear friends, for your faithfulness in listening to The Holy Spirit, and for your obedience in answering. How great is our God!

*Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The Lord's right hand has done mighty things!"
Psalm 118:15*

The joy of Christ Jesus filled us to overflowing, and it spread as we ministered in the downtown core. Despite the difficult circumstances of many of those whom we are privileged to come alongside, I was humbled to see so much joy, authenticity, and even humour this past Christmas season. We can learn so much from the poor. On one occasion, when I met with John (not his real name), he asked me to help him fill out a Christmas card for a friend.

With a straight face, he dictated and I quietly prayed for strength to restrain myself from laughing with delight. John's words were so beautifully honest. Having received his permission, I would like to share what he wrote:

"Season's Greetings!

**Dear Anne, (not her real name)
I had your \$20, and I spent it. I bought a pack of Belmonts for your oldest daughter and I smoked them. I got a Tim card for your youngest daughter but I used it. I couldn't find anything for your son, yet. I will make it up to you this summer. Thanks again. May the timeless beauty of nature fill your heart with joy!' Love, John."**

In the midst of despair, it is good to have a sense of humour, an inner joy which prevents us from having what an old friend coined, 'terminal seriousness.'

Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people. Philemon 1:7

John made no excuses. His honesty was authentic and refreshing.

Despite the many challenges that poverty, addiction, mental illness and despair present to us, our Lord breaks through – Love breaks through – and offers us hope, and even joy. Jesus has a sense of humour! Praise God for the opportunities whereby, when faced with negativity and a grim outlook, we can laugh and rejoice, knowing that joy will come in the morning.

On another day, while meeting with a homeless friend in a coffee shop, he told me that he was annoyed by a young woman who kept coming up to him while he was trying to sleep, asking him for money. I asked him what he did, and he said that he told her to get a job! We both laughed; I've been trying to encourage him to get a job for over 8 years!

One ministry that has brought us great joy (and lots of 'Holy Giggles') is The Alpha Course. Please pray that God will go before us, and provide, in order that we may once again offer an Alpha course this fall. It is such a blessing to the poor on so many levels: fellowship, teaching, and the sharing of a meal. The course facilitates an opportunity for people to say 'yes' to Jesus, and to receive the teaching and power of his Holy Spirit.

Our weekend away is a highlight, especially for those who haven't been outside of Ottawa. We are looking for helpers for this course. Please prayerfully consider how God might be calling you to this ministry.

While our work is not always 'joyful', we consider it a joy and a privilege to serve Jesus. As I wrote this update in a downtown coffee shop, I noticed a man harassing and pursuing a young woman, despite her repeated requests for him to leave her alone. I alerted management, who asked him to leave. We are now working with her to help her to put some protective legal measures in place, and to see just what God might have in store for her. Please lift her in prayer. The Holy Spirit led us to that particular coffee shop at that particular moment. Praise be to God! Friends, we thank God for you and we rejoice in his mighty Grace and power to change lives. May the Love of God fill your hearts with Easter Joy as we celebrate our Lord's Resurrection!

Jill

UCO's Needs:

- 1. Jesus**
- 2. The Poor**
- 3. Your partnership and prayers**