

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

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***Update # 43***

***December 2006***

The advent season marks the beginning of the Christian year. The word "advent" comes from a Latin word meaning "to draw near." As Christians, we begin measuring the year's time with the celebration of God drawing near to us in Jesus Christ. Because of this event, our time has meaning; its worth counting our days, because God has drawn near.

Alongside the fact that God has drawn near, it is also important to keep in mind *how* God drew near. God came to us as a helpless baby, born in a stable, cradled in a manger. In a word, God came to us in poverty. In the poverty of Christ's birth, the richness of God's love for the world shone all the brighter, like a precious diamond mounted in the simplest of rings.

Jesus told us that the poor would always be among us. He Himself was one of the poor. We are often tempted to view our poor neighbours as objects of our charity. But one of the lessons of the Advent season is that God likes to draw near to us in and through the poor. I encourage you to look upon the poor this Christmas with eyes of faith, full of expectation that God will draw near to you through them.

On behalf of the Board and Staff of UCO, I wish you our warmest Christmas greetings.

In Christ Jesus,

***Clint Curle***

***President, UCO.***

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Dear Friends:

Romans 1:17 (*..If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed...*) was recently thrust in front of me.

Urban Christian Outreach took out a small loan to assure cash flow to cover our November payroll. With your prayers and support we made it through without using the loaned funds.

As we head into 2007 please keep the work of UCO in your prayers.

**David Wice,  
Treasurer**

*Blessed are those who are generous because they feed the poor. (Proverbs 22:9 NLT)*

### ***On the City Scene.....***

Just a few glimpses of things that lie at the heart of this outreach.

Our friends on the sidewalks rejoice when the sun chases away the rain; imagine wearing wet clothes all day. Those involved in Bible Study downtown are growing in faith and wisdom for living out their practical (and tough) life situations. A family reconciliation is in the works.

A student from the UCO/ROH classroom continues to succeed at Algonquin College. Our classroom has moved into the brand new facility of the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre.

For many years I have been involved with various professionals in informal dialogue with regard to the neglected learning needs of adults with mental illness. Two years ago there was a happy moment when these criss-crossing strands of dialogue took definite shape in the formation of an ongoing working group under the auspices of the OCCL (Ottawa Community Coalition for Literacy). Nadia Behmann has represented UCO in this forum which brings together literacy instructors and mental health professionals.

Now the group has received funding to examine existing models of literacy education for people with mental illness (amongst other things). We are very excited about this opportunity to profile a 'forgotten' educational need which lies close to the heart of UCO. In the coming days we shall be making UCO's input into the feasibility study, from our perspectives at sidewalk level and in the UCO/ROH classroom.

Last week I was doing a Bible Study with a UCO downtown client when we came face to face with the Scripture ***We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*** (1Timothy 6:7). This simple observation is a great encouragement to our friends amongst the poor. It is a great leveller.

For others it can be a frightening truth..

It demands that we wrestle with the question, "Who am I, without my bank account, without my property ownership, without social status and other trappings of power?"— because that's who we may be at any point along the way, and it is certainly who we shall be finally, in God's eternity.

The radical simplicity of Christ's birth urgently invites us to root ourselves deeply in a different kind of wealth.  
We celebrate a Saviour who calls us to incisive personal change and growth.  
This Christmas time, let's walk closely with the God who came among us.

***Katrine Barton- Coward***

*Executive Director*

***Urban***

*December 2006*

***Christian***

***Outreach***

