

Urban Christian Outreach (Ottawa)

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Update #53

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It's not everyday that we are invited to go back in time, and to look through a window and into the innermost part of a hurting person's heart. Today is that day. I have been blessed with such an invitation and I have received permission to share this with you.

She was a much-loved daughter, sister, granddaughter and friend. She was a classmate, a neighbour, a co-worker, created by God. In order to tell her story in a personal way, I will call her 'Alice.' Alice was the first child born into a middle-class, hard-working family. She was a joyful child, very sociable. She loved school and achieved honours grades without even studying. She was blessed with a loving family and friends.

During her high school years, her life began to change. Alice continued to achieve high marks, despite not having to work at it, but was told that she wasn't working to potential. She started hanging out with the 'wrong' crowd and began to take drugs. Her marks started to decline as a result. Soon after, a close friend of hers died in a tragic accident. Alice, high on drugs and in despair, reacted in a way that was unacceptable to her friends; instead of crying, she masked her pain by laughing. Her friends turned against her and began

to gossip about her. They would follow her home and bully her. Alice's self-esteem plummeted. Her drug use escalated and she began to drink. Her family worried about her and tried to help. Three times, Alice was the victim of rape. Once, she became pregnant, and her parents arranged for an abortion.

After high school, Alice continued to drink and to use drugs, escalating to cocaine and heroin. Despite this, she was able to maintain a seemingly good lifestyle, working for the government, and traveling the world. Her family continued to love her and offer their help. Desperate to be free of her addictions, Alice entered a rehabilitation program, only to relapse time and time again. When Alice was just 39, her brother received the dreaded phone call that Alice had died in her sleep. Her parents never lived to read the letters that she had left behind, found among her belongings; letters written but never sent.

When we come to know and to understand the reasons why people suffer, and why they do the things that they do, it always makes sense. We are changed when we cease to judge, but instead turn, with the heart of Christ, to reach out to our brothers and sisters - to help them to carry their pain to the foot of the cross, where they will find healing and rest in the arms of Jesus.

I am so grateful to Alice's family, who has given me permission to share some excerpts from her letters with you. Her words echo the cries of her heart:

"To Mom and Dad"

"I wish I had listened to you earlier, and to some of your advice."

"I realize you are my best friends."

"I seem to gravitate to the wrong people."

"I want to stop drinking and using drugs but I can't."

"I love you both so much and realize you were not only the best parents a daughter could have, but you are my best friends also."

"You were always there for me when I needed help, and I will always remember that."

"I will always cherish the memories of you both, and all of the special times we shared together as a family."

"If I ever met a real good man like Dad, I would have gotten married years ago."

"I haven't got a lot of reasons to live now that I have no hope and have reached where I am now, but I will always remember you, Mom and Dad. I really, really, love you."

"I'm really, really sorry for what I put you both through, but I want to tell you how much I love you. You're the best."

***Love,
Alice***

Thank you, dear supporters, for your support of the ministry work of Urban Christian Outreach and for your heart for those who suffer alone. Thank you for helping us to help our fellow Christians on the sidewalks of downtown Ottawa, who in the midst of their suffering have called out to our Lord for help. Thank you also for helping us to shine the light of Christ on the suffering who haven't met Jesus yet, so that we might share the hope that we have in Him. It is my prayer that God will provide for us in abundance, so that we may continue with our Alpha Outreach program this Fall. This program has been an enormous blessing, and six of our Alpha graduates are now studying Philipians.

Finally, on Sunday, September 12, 2010, you and a guest are cordially invited to join me and the UCO Board of Directors from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for dessert and fellowship. A formal invitation containing more details will be mailed to you in August.

I pray that our Lord will bless you with a safe and joyful summer.

With Gratitude, In Christ,

Jill Wilson,
Executive Director