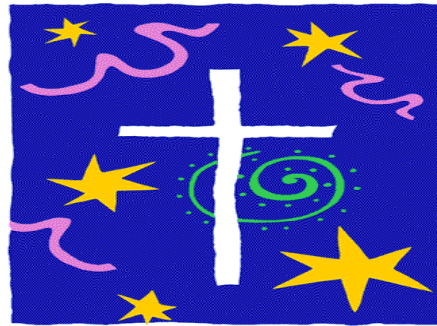


Immanuel Bible Church Urban Immersion Outreach

Reflections

May 17-20, 2007
Washington, D.C.



We are what He has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.
Ephesians 2:10 (NRSV)

Service is the true Christian testimony. We are saved through our faith in Christ, and that faith shapes our actions. For the Christian, life is not merely following a calendar but a course of action, a direction toward maturity in love of God and love of neighbor. The secret of all who devote themselves to serve the Lord daily is renewal of their inner selves through communion with Christ. The glory of serving Christ is to experience a life of service.

Emilio J. M. deCarvalho
Luanda, Angola
Upper Room, January 2006

A compilation of thoughts and commentary from our team that served in Washington, D.C. for four days in May...

“I can’t (don’t ever want to) stop telling people how God blessed us through service to others.”

Ron Peoples

THE PRAYER TOUR

We saw both the most powerful city in the world AND all the needs within in it. The disparity and the potential are so clear and overwhelming at the same time. You go from wealthy Capitol Hill to boarded up buildings within seconds.

As we drove through Anacostia, stopping to pray from that high point where we could see all of the City, so beautiful and touching at the same time.

In the heart of Anacostia, a Smithsonian Museum honoring African Americans – it is in the middle of nowhere and no one comes to it.

As we drove back onto 295 we see kids playing outside after 9:30 at night on a school night. A completely different life – no wonder we lose so many of them before adulthood.

“What a blessing to be around such Godly people. It certainly gave me direction as to what the Lord would have me do when we move to California. I know that the Lord has touched my heart to be in some kind of ministry. I trust He will lead us to the right church and to what He would have us do for Him. Blessings.”

Joyce Hopkinson

URBAN PRAYER BREAKFAST

Mac has such a heart for what he is doing for others. Genuine love for the people he cooks breakfast for daily. He has such a joy and is so gracious to the volunteers.

The preacher lifted them up and gave them hope. He touched one of the men and you could see that with all the sadness that man felt, the touch mattered to him. We all want to be valued and touched.

It doesn’t matter how much you know, it matters how much you care. Serving others in need shows you care.

“I thoroughly enjoyed the intergeneration mix of our group. God puts the best groups together for this journey!”

Don Woodall

CHARLIE’S PLACE

Compassion for compassion sake – Jesus was the example of that to us. While there was no overt gospel message, God is in all of it.

It is not our ability that matters, it is our availability. Charlie’s Place opens its doors faithfully to those in need of food and encouragement.

It was delightful to have room to sit and talk with the guests for an extended period of time. Charles, Willy, and Cliff were delightful men to spend time with. It’s a nice setting, relaxing and warm and inviting.

CENTRAL UNION MISSION

Loving them for who they are and not the label of homelessness. The mission provides dignity, respect and caring to those who stay there.

How many lives we touched day without even meeting them --- making up 85 beds with fresh linens...powerful visual image!

FOOD AND FRIENDS

They really value their volunteers. It is an amazingly organized machine of service to those suffering life threatening illness.

I admire what they do, the volume at which they do it. It’s not a Christian-based organization, but they are meeting the needs of so many. Again, everything that is done to serve others glorifies our God. It may not be spoken but it is apparent.

Why do we do good – is it to check it off a list? It is out of our love for Christ? When we serve others, it is our love response back to God, when we do it for Him and His glory.

“I was struck by how much more of a spiritual problem it is, rather than a physical needs problem. The things that bring people down low and keep them there are of the heart. Not only theirs, but those who have the ability to help and won’t!

In Christ.”

Kyle White

REGENCY HOUSE

You can tell the tenants look out for each other. As we arrived with food they would ask if we had a delivery for a neighbor, etc. Very caring community.

It was wonderful pray with the different tenants we met. Some were receptive, others were not. We just went with what felt right, as led by the Holy Spirit, and God gave us a great afternoon experience!

ANACOSTIA IN THE DAYTIME

While we didn't get to serve the children at Children of Mine, as we had hoped, it was great to see Anacostia in the day time vs. the prayer tour last night.

Your life is not about you. It is about God. When you focus on God, in whatever circumstances He places you, you are blessed in the process.

WORSHIP AT CENTRAL UNION MISSION

Such joy but also such pain. You sense the men in the Spiritual Transformation Program have the joy that comes from a relationship with Christ. They were celebrating their Lord powerfully during the worship. The other extreme were the overnight guests, sleeping through the worship, so downtrodden and hurting. I can only hope that by being at the Mission, the seed is planted to want to find a way beyond homelessness and pain and they see that the answer is Christ.

"I was overwhelmed when I sat down and thought about the number of lives we touched in a short period of time. We may not have met each one but our efforts on their behalf touched their lives..."

Urban Prayer Breakfast – 125

Charile's Place Breakfast – 60

Central Union Mission – making up 85 beds, cleaning the facility that serves over 100 every night

Food and Friends Food Serving Individuals with Life Threatening Illness – 500

Regency House Food Distribution to Elderly and Disabled– 85

St. Thomas More Retirement and Rehabilitation Home – 75

Urban Plunge Meeting Folks on The Streets – 20

Total --- Close to 1000 lives were touched by just 18 of us in a two day period.

It's not a "numbers game" but look what God can do when we are available to Him! God put this immersion team in place and used each of us to accomplish much for his Glory."

Don Woodall

URBAN PLUNGE

Franklin Square - a lot of food is given out there on the weekends by various groups...in order to learn where folks would stay we headed to the Creative Center for Non-Violence (CCNV) and took of tour of the facility...we also visited DC Central Kitchen housed in the basement of CCNV...

(www.dccentralkitchen.org) we were able to take two men to dinner, Joseph and James, at McDonald's.

McPherson Square - Don scored us free socks!, we met a homeless man right away and he answered our questions in two minutes... we talked to the staff at Franklin House...and we talked to Brian who has been homeless for 12 years, we provided dinner to Maurice.

Dupont Circle – Morgan prayed for more money so they could do more on their plunge and happened upon a \$20 bill...**the Lord's timing and provision is what matters says Morgan!**...we had dinner with a man named Harry in a wheelchair...Ron met a blind man who walked into him...they got a copy of a newspaper called *Street Sense* that talked about where to find services in the city.

Adams Morgan – we ended up in a beautiful park, Karamula Park, in the heart of the city and met two brothers...Mike and Ray....from California, from affluence, and with very different perspectives on homelessness....Mike, a carpenter by trade, has found it difficult to find work due to the illegal immigrants who have taken jobs for low paying wages... He was visibly intoxicated while we visited with him...Ray, who had been a successful executive but fell into drugs and lost his company...ended up homeless for a year...he grew from the experience, not as embittered as his brother...they were raised Mormon but Ray found Christ when he saw a co-workers life turned around in California....they both commented on the shelters not necessarily being safe, they too can be corrupted, and how difficult it is for a white male to find help and feel accepted in this city....Kyle has been able to initiate contact with Ray via email since our trip...we might all do a project in the city to serve others some time....on our way out, at McDonald's, we were able to provide some meals and socks to a few men.

Plunge observations --- 1) There are a lot of opportunities to help folks in need in the city, they all address their immediate needs of food and shelter, and it is important to put programs in place that move beyond that...2) Not everyone is responsive to you when you approach them on the streets...the ones that God wanted us to reach, He made it happen....others shut us out and that was all in God's timing too...3) A long afternoon into evening and experienced so much

more of the city by being on those streets, seeing it all first hand... vibrant, abundance, loneliness, sadness, great need and people/resources that can fill it.

“I learned a lot, and was happy to experience what I did. I’ll be encouraging others to participate.”

Michael Connor

WORSHIP AT STAR OF BETHLELEM CHURCH

There are many ways to worship God – we were thankful for the opportunity to be a part of a worship service different from what we were accustomed to but feeling welcomed and challenged by the teaching provided to us.

“Talk about a joyful, be it loud, noise! And then we were asked to lead the singing with songs of our own choosing. A little hesitation and we were all thinking ‘what will we sing??’, but God provided as He always does! I’ll treasure the memory of our group up there singing joyfully unto the Lord at Star for a long time to come.”

deedee collins

Some closing thoughts...

We are called to serve...
but that can be overwhelming.

The Bible does not say we are to cure hunger,
end all disease or homelessness.

Our call is to be faithful in obedience by
continually serving those
around us as God calls us.
(Matthew 25:31-40)

Let us always remember that God will take care of all of it.
We are called to be obedient as He calls us.
Our call is to be obedient.

Justin Hormel
Former Co-Director
CSM, Washington, D.C.