



## A Divine Knock at the Door ...

*“I was just praying that God would bless us for Thanksgiving!”*



Recently released from jail and desperate for a second chance, Delbert felt all hope quickly slipping away.

He had two children, his fiancée, and his mother to look after ... but the incarceration on his record was a glaring “red flag” everywhere he went looking for work.

One late fall afternoon, Pastor Lee was taking a walk near his church, Mount Olive Primitive Baptist, in the same Jacksonville, Florida, neighborhood where Delbert and his family lived. The two men met, and as they talked, Delbert shared his desire to do

good for his children ... and his discouragement at their current situation.

“Would you be interested in receiving some love for Thanksgiving?” Pastor Lee asked.

Delbert agreed — and not long afterward, the pastor was knocking on the family’s door with a Box of Love®, filled with a turkey and all of the trimmings for a Thanksgiving dinner for six. The box was a gift from Cru® Inner City, which provides the boxes to its partner ministries.

Delbert’s mom came to the door. *When she*

*Continued inside...*

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# A Divine Knock at the Door ...

saw the contents of the box, she began to cry. **“I was just praying that God would bless us for Thanksgiving!” she revealed.**

With the entire family gathered around him, Pastor Lee prayed over them, then extended an invitation to attend worship services at Mount Olive. The entire family attended, including Delbert’s young sons. Soon, Delbert was attending an evening discipleship class and gave his life to Jesus. Just weeks after receiving the box, Delbert was baptized.

The church’s support continued long after the family first received the Box of Love ...

- With help from Pastor Lee, Delbert secured a job after entering a program designed to assist former inmates with earning their GED, résumé writing, and interview techniques.

Just weeks after receiving the box, Delbert gave his life to Jesus and was baptized.

- Delbert’s fiancée also accepted Christ and joined the church. The two went through premarital counseling.
- Delbert’s entire family has been changed by God’s love ... and yours.

**Thank you for extending the love of Christ to Delbert — and to children and families of the inner city who are hungry for food ... and Jesus!**

## For the “least of these”

Transform their future ... and secure yours!

Your generosity as 2024 comes to a close can be multiplied to do even more for the Kingdom. *Prayerfully consider one of these strategic giving options as we near the end of the year:*

- 1. IRA rollover.** If you’re 70½ years or older, you can make a qualified charitable donation (QCD) of up to \$105,000 directly from your IRA without adding a penny to your taxable income. You’ll also get an income deduction for your charitable gift whether or not you itemize your taxes. For most people aged 73 or older, this likely counts toward your required minimum distribution (check with your financial advisor to confirm).
- 2. Appreciated stocks or property.** Receive a charitable income tax deduction if you have owned the asset (stocks; bonds; real estate such as homes, vacation properties, commercial or undeveloped land) more than 12 months. You will likely avoid the capital gains tax on the appreciation if you sold the asset ... AND more resources will go toward serving together in America’s inner cities!
- 3. Donor Advised Fund distribution.** Giving to Cru® Inner City from your DAF can accelerate your commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission and transforming lives in the inner city. These funds are already set aside for ministry, so you can give freely without touching your other capital.
- 4. Cash gift.** Any generous donation you give — mailed or given online by midnight December 31 — may apply toward this year’s taxes.

**Thank you. Your support brings lasting transformation to men, women, and children in urban communities nationwide!**





# No to Drugs. Yes to Jesus.

*A new life for Maria.*



Maria was newly sober ... after 20 years of using methamphetamine. “I was getting high every single day,” the Los Angeles resident said, “and hoping the worst was finally behind me.”

But an eviction notice blindsided her during those fragile, early months of sobriety and threatened her resolve.

“I needed help,” she said. “I was going to end up homeless. I was afraid for my children.”

The eviction stirred one of those desperation moments that usually led Maria to a predictable response: Get a fix, NOW.

But this time, *finally* committed to her sobriety, she was desperate to stay clean. Maria opted for a new outcome — she turned to City Church, just two doors from her soon-to-be-lost home.

The congregation rallied around her, helping the family find much-needed resources. **But it was the incredible gift of two brand-new backpacks**

**... filled with school supplies ... that triggered a transformation in the single mom.**

Maria didn't have money to spare. With a new school year quickly approaching, school supplies for her children were a luxury Maria

“I could have never done this by myself. It was God.” —Maria



just couldn't afford. But God's timing is perfect. City Church, it turned out, was in the process of distributing PowerPacks®, colorful backpacks filled with school supplies, provided to the church through

a partnership with Cru® Inner City.

Having the new backpacks was an important encouragement for the family ... and a huge blessing for the children, who had already been through so much.

Through her interactions with the church, Maria's world broadened as she discovered different options designed to improve her financial situation, strengthen her faith, and give her hope. Before long, Maria was baptized.

“I have more faith,” she said. “I pray more. I open my Bible now. I don't ever want to go back to drugs.” Maria has been transformed.

**Thank you for your ongoing support in blessing our inner-city neighbors.**



## The Absolute Truth About Truth



Milton Massie  
Executive Director/  
Steward

There is an absurd, yet telling, video on YouTube about a woman complaining to her husband about pressure in her head. She calls it relentless. As the camera pans out from a tight shot of her nose and cheek, the viewer sees the source of her trouble: a nail is protruding from her forehead. Her husband points out the source of

her symptoms, but his wife becomes angry that he's trying to fix her problem instead of listening to her.

The storyline is about relationships and perspective — but I think it shows another common problem in today's culture: relative truth. In the video, we see that despite the absolute truth that a nail was stuck in her head, it wasn't a priority for the wife. Her truth centered on the relativity of her feelings.

The Bible has a lot to say about Truth, but before we look at specific Scriptures, there is a vital starting point to consider. The first question we should examine is not "What is the Truth?" The more appropriate question is "Who is the Truth?" One of

the foundational Scriptures in the New Testament is John 14:6 (ESV) in which Jesus declares, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." One thing we can observe in this passage is that Jesus refers to Truth not as a set of beliefs and doctrines, but declares Himself the Truth; so Truth is a person.

John 16:13 (ESV) tells us, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth."

In Ephesians 4:15, Paul urges believers to speak *the* Truth in love. He didn't say speak "your" truth in love. Paul's use of the three-letter article "the" tells us that Truth has supremacy. There is no Truth greater ... and it doesn't die or change.

But what if someone else doesn't agree with me? Ultimately, I need to respect the dignity of another image bearer who disagrees because Jesus would respect him.

That, folks, is a Truth we should embrace.

Grateful for your partnership,

*Milton Lee Massie*

Milton Massie  
Executive Director/Steward



# See that handsome smile? YOU put it there!

Mateo wore his face mask like it was part of a uniform. Two years after his school district dropped its student mask mandate, Mateo still struggled with showing his face. *The mask brought a sense of security into Mateo's life.*

Every day, Mateo showed up at his after-school program at First EV Free Church of Los Angeles with the mask securely in place. "Even when he eats snacks at the after-school program, he would carefully lift his mask to take a bite and cover himself again," said Sarah Yetter, a church leader whose department oversees the biblically based S.A.Y. Yes!® Center, a joint venture with Cru® Inner City.

Cru Inner City provides curriculum and support to more than 50 after-school ministries nationwide. In addition to homework and tutoring, S.A.Y. Yes! Centers for Youth Development® provide games, crafts, snacks, and other activities. The EV Free program has operated for decades in the Pico-Union neighborhood, a seven-minute drive from downtown Los Angeles.

The program has proved invaluable for Mateo's single mom and grandmother, his primary caretakers. Mateo's mentor, John, is an important male role model who has helped the eighth grader learn respect and develop good work habits.



At the end of this school year, the center hosted its annual summer send-off. **Mateo arrived with a wide grin, visible for the first time because he came without his mask!**

"As he received his certificate and applause for completing the year, it was wonderful to see his handsome, smiling face, and to know that through his mentor, John, and by God's work in his life, we had gained his trust to let us see him and celebrate him!" Sarah said.

**Lives are being transformed! Thank you for making it possible!**





# Food. Hope. *JESUS!*



Jameson was lost. He grew up on the streets of inner-city Chicago and couldn't escape its pull on his life. He was an erratic and unstable father to his young children ... but Jameson knew no other way — until Pastor Gregory Bell of Upon This Rock Baptist Church reached out to the struggling father.

Just before Thanksgiving last fall, the pastor and members of his congregation showed up at Jameson's home with a Box of Love® for the holidays.

Each of these special boxes, a ministry resource from Cru® Inner City, contains a complete Thanksgiving meal for a family of six — plus gospel literature to introduce its recipients to Jesus.

***The gift touched Jameson, who gave his life to Christ.***

“He got saved that very day,” Pastor Bell said, “and our church family has been following up every week since!”

Today, Jameson and his family attend services together. Jameson is a member of the church, and his young kids are engaged in the Children's Ministry. “His little ones are receiving the spiritual foundation their father never received,” Pastor Bell said.

*And it all began — by God's grace — with a Box of Love!*

Every \$48.50 you give today will provide a Box of Love with an abundance of holiday food to feed a hungry family in inner-city America.

Thank you for giving food, hope, and JESUS to Jameson and his family!



## Boxes of Love®



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Occasionally the names of people featured in this report are changed to protect their privacy.

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