



# Washington Street MISSION

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**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

## Isaiah 9:6

Christmas 2000

Dear Friends:

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This Christmas season as I reflect on these familiar words from Isaiah, I am reminded that names are important.

Each of the names Isaiah confers on the coming Savior is significant. As he announces each name, Isaiah declares that Jesus will be the one who understands us fully, who reveals the power and the heart of God, who brings us together. The name of Jesus is a name of hope.

I must admit that I have a lot of trouble with names. Perhaps it's simply the number of people we work with at the Mission, but the names have a way of slipping out of my memory and I have to work hard at recalling them.

There are times when it would be easier for us at the Mission to simply refer to people as cases or clients. Customers is the trendy new word in social service circles to refer to the people we serve. We sometimes need to use those kinds of terms.

But we are keenly aware that each man and each woman, each youth and each child we serve has a name, sometimes several names. When we greet Duane and James and Mary and Martha as we serve them coffee and doughnuts in the morning, we try to remember that their names are important.

Their names are important to them just as they are important to God. He sent his Son to redeem them. That's how important they are to him.

Sorting out the names of the children and the youth here at the Mission can sometimes be a challenge.

We were confused one evening when one of the youth who had come with a friend told us that his name was Charles, even though everyone continued to refer to him by a different name. When we asked him about it, he said, "That's just my street name. I'm really Charles."

Charles has been in some trouble with the police since he was at the youth meeting at the Mission that night. Perhaps he remembers that we know his name. We hope he knows that we are praying for him.

We are called to build relationships with people as we try to lead them into a personal relationship with God. We cannot fulfill that mission without knowing them. And knowing a person often begins simply with knowing that person's name.

Eyes light up when people hear their names. They begin to feel the genuine care and love of Jesus Christ that is behind the words of personal connection.

We call one man Carl because he has chosen that name, even though his identification card has a different name. "No one needs to know who I am," he tells us. He knows that we know his name,

What does the name of Jesus mean to you? Especially at this time of the year, does the name of Jesus mean hope? Does it mean reaching out to those who are lonely and needy? Does it mean taking people seriously and knowing their names?

We invite you to join us this Christmas season in helping to meet the needs of individual people, each with a personal name.

In the name of Jesus,

Kenneth E. Mitchell  
Executive Director