



Washington Street MISSION

Easter 2004

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Our Mission

To share the love of Jesus Christ with the people of Springfield by providing opportunities that meet their spiritual and physical needs.

Dear Friends:

The Easter season reminds me that the Gospel is central to everything we do at Washington Street Mission. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ offer the only hope for changed lives in our torn and broken world.

As we teach the children in our afterschool program at the Mission, we are highlighting the basic truths of the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. One evening we acted out the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Another evening we read the Bible story of Jesus' last supper with his disciples. We'll talk about Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave.

It is exciting to see the children respond to the message of the Gospel. As they understand that Jesus died for each one of us, they are learning to place their faith in him and trust him as their Lord and Savior.

As we work with the men in our transition house, we are also reminded of the power of the Gospel. These men face difficult addictions and other obstacles in their lives. We try to help them see that change is possible as they open their lives to the love of Jesus Christ that was demonstrated on the cross.



The living room in the Mission's transition house is a comfortable place. Men can relax here. As they begin a new life, they can discover for themselves the truth that Jesus loves us enough to die for each one of us.

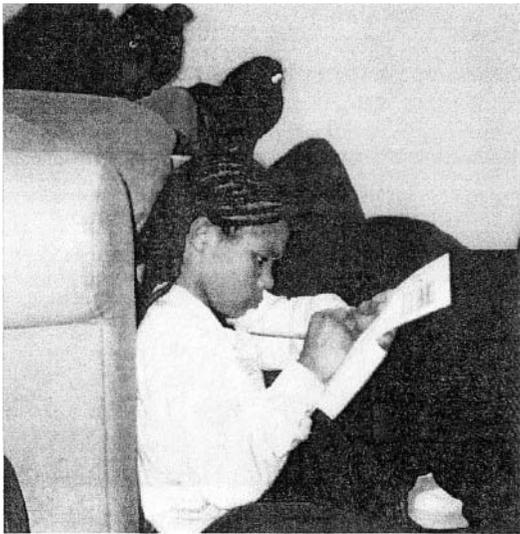
When the men went together to see Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ," they were profoundly moved by the message. It was an excellent opportunity to discuss the power of the Gospel with them.

Thinking about the power of the Gospel also reminds me of the rich heritage

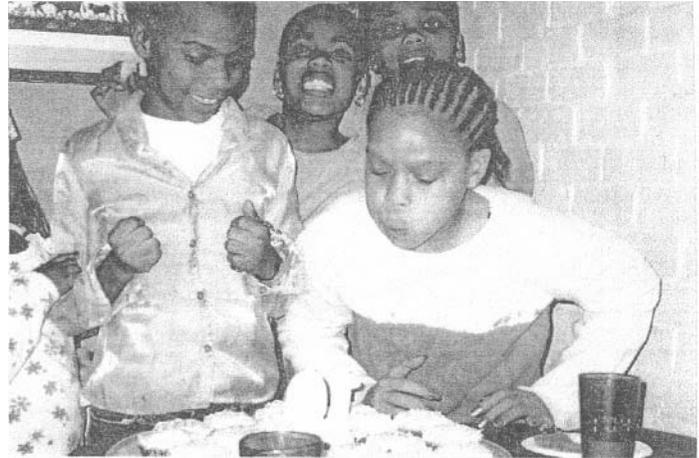
we try to continue at Washington Street Mission. The Gospel has always been central in the ministry of the Mission. For example, I recently came across this statement by John Astra, the first superintendent of Washington Street Mission from 1910 to 1915, announcing an open house at the Mission in about 1914:

"As the cold weather approaches, the public will be stopped on the streets and 'hit up' by poor unfortunate fellows for money with which to buy a meal or a bed. In nine cases out of ten a little money, taken together with the blazing sign of a saloon, is a temptation too strong for resistance by these.. unfortunates.... Instead of doing good, you have only added to the misery of them and perhaps their families as well.

"The Washington Street Mission is an institution founded upon what has proved to be the only practical method of dealing with this problem.



During the Thursday evening youth meeting at the Mission, one of the young men in the group concentrates on completing the Bible study questions.



Celebrating birthdays is a regular part of our afterschool program at the Mission. One of our children blows out the candles on her birthday cake, while several other girls enjoy watching her.

"We ... invite your inspection of our methods of cleaning up a man and putting him upon his feet where he can take care of himself . . . After you have satisfied yourself that we understand the correct method of dealing with this, one of the city's gravest problems, instead of giving the fellow who stops you on the street a piece of money, send him to us. . . . We will see that he is taken care of ... and at the same time put him in a condition where he can choose a better life if he so desires."

As John Astra expressed it, we know that the only practical method of dealing with the problems we see every day at the Mission is sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that meet practical needs.

We invite you to join us in this vital ministry. Your support will help us share the Gospel especially in this special season of the year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth E. Mitchell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Kenneth E. Mitchell
Executive Director