



Washington Street MISSION

Easter 2005

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Dear Friends:

During this season of Lent (the forty days before Easter), many Christians will observe some form of fasting. They will choose to give up some food or some habit, taking time to reflect on Jesus' sacrifice for us. Some will donate the money they save to a worthy cause.

Reflecting on this lenten practice makes me think about the meaning of sacrifice. What are we giving up in order to make a difference for Christ in our world? More significantly, what did Jesus give up for us? Thinking about Jesus' ultimate sacrifice should make us view ourselves and our possessions differently.

I am also reminded of the powerful message of Isaiah 58. The people of Isaiah's day were observing religious rituals, including fasting, but they had missed the heart of God's concern. Isaiah proclaims that the kind of fasting God desires would result in action "to loose the chains of injustice . . . to set the oppressed free . . . to share your food with the hungry . . . to provide the poor wanderer with shelter [and] . . . to clothe" those without adequate clothing (Isaiah 58:6-7).

How well have we taken that message of real sacrifice to heart? Too often our own comfort and convenience get in the way. Too often we are content to simply go through religious rituals.

We strive to make our ministry at Washington Street Mission responsive to the genuine spiritual and physical needs of the people around us. As we share the Gospel, we understand that the message of salvation brings true freedom from injustice and oppression.

Please join us in reaching out to the hungry, the poor wanderer, those who are inadequately clothed, and others considered the least in our society. Let's discover the real meaning of fasting and sacrifice this Easter season.

Before anything else, giving is an act of worship. Giving jump-starts our relationship with God. It opens our fists so we can receive what God has for us. When we see what it does for others and for us, we open our fists sooner and wider when the next chance comes.

** Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Secret of Joyful Giving* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 2001), page 32

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Mitchell
Executive Director

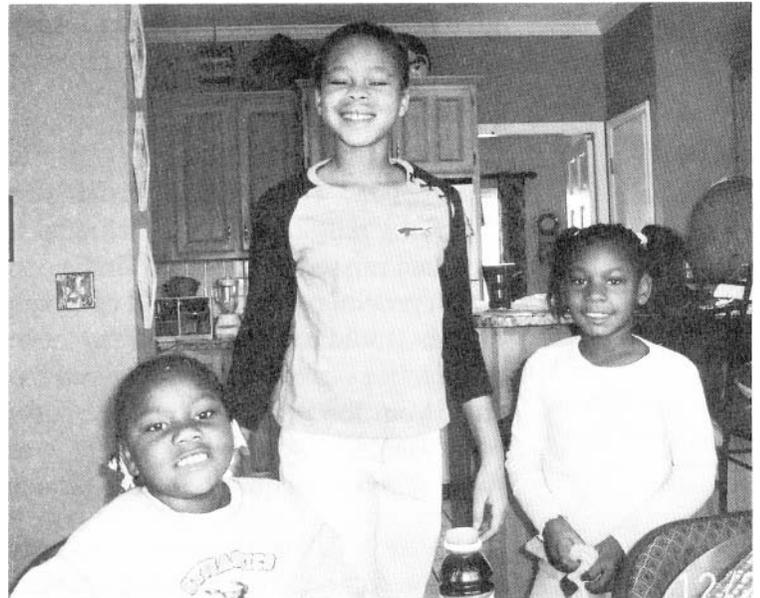
408 North Fourth Street
Springfield, Illinois 62702
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Washington Street Mission Ministry In Action

Staff member Danny Yocum poses with the new mini-van recently purchased by the Mission for use at the Transition House. Providing transportation for men at the house who are in the process of recovery is an important part of our ministry. Danny spends many hours on the road with these men each week.

Major purchases at the Mission, including the new mini-van for the Transition House, are made possible by generous estate gifts. These types of gifts make it possible to enhance and extend the various ministries of the Mission. As you make long-term financial plans, please consider including the Mission in your will or estate plan. Your financial planner or advisor will be able to suggest ways your giving can benefit the Mission most effectively.



Several of the girls in the Mission's afterschool tutoring program enjoy a special overnight at the home of one of the tutors. Seven girls participated in this event that they will all remember for a very long time.



A group of men from Springfield Bible Church recently sponsored and served a Saturday morning breakfast at the Mission. These occasional breakfasts provide a good opportunity for people to serve others in the name of Jesus. We are always looking for groups who are willing to serve in this ministry.