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Thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

-- 2 Corinthians 2:14

Easter 2014

Dear Friends:

Easter is a victory celebration. We celebrate the victory of Jesus over death and the powers of evil. Through his death and resurrection he gives us new life as we trust in him. The apostle Paul compares Jesus' Easter victory to a Roman general returning from the battlefield in triumph. We might compare it to the outburst of joy of a winning high school football team on a Friday night.

As Eugene Peterson translates this verse in *The Message*, "God leads us from place to place in one perpetual victory parade. Through us, he brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite fragrance. Because of Christ, we give off a sweet scent rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation -- an aroma redolent with life."

We feel that we have a special place in this victory parade at Washington Street Mission. It's like riding on the senior class homecoming float. So many unlikely people who have come to faith through the ministry here are riding on the float with us, celebrating new life in Jesus.

In this Easter season Mary Lynn and I are also celebrating fifteen years of leading the ministry at Washington Street Mission. When we came to the Mission in the Spring of 1999, we had very little idea of all that God had in mind for the ministry here. We have learned a lot.

First, we learned that the ministry belongs to Jesus, not to us. As an average of 170 to 180 guests come to the Mission each weekday morning for coffee and conversation, they are attracted by the love of Jesus they see shared here. We have no power in ourselves to really help anyone, but we can point them to the hope of new life that Jesus brings.

Second, we have learned that we must be adaptable and respond to the directions in which Jesus is moving us. Opening the transition house for men in recovery was a major step over ten years ago. Now resharping our focus on the morning day center activities is a direct response to the changes we see around us. Jesus is leading us to a deeper ministry in the lives of the people we see each morning.

Third, we have learned that the ministry must be long-term. As many others have said, ministry is certainly more like a marathon than a sprint. The addictions and dysfunctional families and mental health issues in the lives of the people we serve will not be resolved easily. But sensitive, caring ministry motivated by the love of Jesus will bring victory.

Fourth, we have learned that we cannot do it alone. We need your prayers, your volunteer hours, and your continued financial support. Thank you for the many ways you have supported this ministry in the past. Please continue to give generously.

The verse we quoted at the top of this letter had a profound impact in the life of V. Raymond Edman (1900-1967). At a time of deep discouragement when he was forced to return from the mission field in Ecuador because of poor health, he discovered new hope for continued ministry in this verse. As a result "he had a deep sense of the presence of the Lord in his life" and he went on to serve for many years as president of Wheaton College. [Quotation from Earle E. Cairns, *V. Raymond Edman: In the Presence of the King* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), page 58.]

May we all be encouraged and strengthened with new hope this Easter season as we celebrate the victory that Christ has given us through his death and resurrection. Join us in our part of the victory parade as we share the message of this season at Washington Street Misison.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Mitchell
Executive Director