

## BEYOND THE COLD ----- BEYOND THE STORM

Whether it's in the aftermath of the Tsunami, in the midst of a bitter cold winter or "everyday life", there are thousands upon thousands of people who do not have a place to call home. Recently we have all become more alert and aware of these "ones".

Did you know? Jesus says that the person who would leave the 99 to go after the "one" is doing the will of the Father in heaven. Matthew 18:14 says "Just so it is not the will of My Father Who is in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost and perish." When the events of life or circumstances occur which are beyond the control of mankind, there are many more "ones" today than there were in the recent yesterdays. These events effect people at all levels .... on the global, international, national, provincial and community level.

This local community of Abbotsford has been impacted by the recent "cold snap". Abbotsford is one of many communities to not only be affected but to rise up and take action to meet the immediate needs of the "ones" to BE EFFECTIVE". Jesus said in Matthew 25:40 that "..... in so far as you did it for one of the least (in the estimation of men) of these My brethren, you did it for Me." He also said in John 14:12 that "if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things I do; and he will do even greater things than these..." It's the multiplication factor at work and Kingdom principles put into action.

For the past 10 - 14 days there has been an "OUT OF THE COLD" program spring into action. This is a program that was just in the neophyte planning stages and was put to an emergency response test. Street Hope Ministries, Faith Bible Church and Resurrection Life Church were the first respondents to the call. Faith Bible and Resurrection Life have been hosting the effort while other believers and local churches have come alongside in the relief effort to give of themselves to these "ones". Pastor Ray and a core group of four who have been "ones" have given of themselves above and beyond. Michael, big Mike, William and Blair have been faithful and committed, often doing double duty. Without their "hands on" there would be a serious lack in making this relief effort viable. The volunteer responses have been amazing and Capt. Dave Denault of Street Hope has been organizing the scheduling for volunteer service. There has been a powerful demonstration of the unity of believers in the body of Christ coming together, working together and reaching out and loving the people of the street or the homeless. The unconditional love of the Father is being passed on to those who may be considered "un-loveable" or "one of those!" via the followers of Jesus. This is what the Church is called to do ... BE THE CHURCH ...who reaches out to the poor, the broken hearted, those in prison, those on the streets. To bring a message of hope, give a word of comfort and encouragement, to lend a listening ear and a helping hand. The people of God do have a heart to help as is evidenced by this opportunity that has been provided for them to exercise the gifts and talents they have been equipped with through the power of the Holy Spirit. We'd like to share this story with you.

One young couple, Joel and Tammy, had been evicted from their home on Dec. 29th. Tammy

was 8 months pregnant; they were hungry and cold. They needed someone to talk to. There were a couple of volunteers from King Rd. MB who were ready, willing and able to spend time with this destitute couple. Not only did they listen to Tammy and Joel, they were able to pray with them and share story after story from the Bible regarding the women of the Bible and other young couples in the Bible who also faced great challenges in life. Tammy had been wondering what to name her baby when she was born and after receiving insight and understanding of the power of God to change lives, she decided to call her baby Elizabeth after John the Baptist's mother Elizabeth. Tammy was also in need of winter boots and received a brand new pair from a couple from Grace Evangelical!. Tammy phoned this past week. She had her baby girl in BC Women's Hospital on Wed. Jan. 12th. She did use the name Elizabeth on the naming of her daughter. Can you imagine what the impact could be on this child's life when her mother relays the story to her about the circumstances leading up to her birth, about how she got her name?! She arrived on this earth as a person of importance and of purpose as a direct result of the power of God at work through prayer, love and the servanthood of willing and obedient people of God.

Love in action! Relationship restores acceptance. Just as unconditional love was birthed in the natural, so has it been birthed in the Spirit in the city of Abbotsford. This couple who was "down on their luck" found peace, shelter, new relationships and unconditional love when all they wanted to do was get "out of the cold".

It is of interest to note that a portion of the volunteers from our local church bodies are ones who had been "ones". At one time in the not so distant past, they themselves were homeless or "down and out in their luck" so to speak. These "ones" are now giving back to others what they themselves have received. The Kingdom principle of sowing and reaping/reaping and sowing is in effect. (John 4:35-38) They are modeling what they have been shown and received. Like children model what they see their parents do, these "ones" are beginning to model what they see us in the church do. Just as children need direction through each phase of growth and development, so do these "ones" need direction from those of us who have been a little farther down the road in our walk with the Lord. We as the Church of Christ need to be mindful of how we model the life of Christ ... the "children" are watching!

In conclusion then, whether it is beyond "Out of the Cold" or beyond the "Tsunami", love finds and reaches each one --- "one" at a time. It mobilizes the body of Christ and others in the community. God given compassion and love brings hope, help and healing in a time of great need. **LOVE CONQUERS ALL ..... ONE AT A TIME.**

One last thing.... If we could be so bold as to make a request and let the need be known that there is a cost of heating and other related expenses that follows this relief effort. We simply place the need before you and if any one(s) as individuals or churches would like to donate to help cover the costs, please make your cheques payable to Faith Bible Church at 2455 West Railway St. Abbotsford, B.C.

Submitted by Ray and Leslie Johnson, pastors Resurrection Life