

OPERATION KNAPSACK

The Christmas season has just passed for another year. This is now a time to both reflect and to look forward. For some this may mean regrets for loading up on debts that now will need to be paid for, as we look forward to the year ahead. For others it has meant loading up knapsacks before Christmas that are now paying forward as we go into the year.

Call it "Operation Knapsack"; Call it "Keeping Christ in Christmas". At any rate, a debt was incurred by us humans, was paid for in full by the Christ and a gift was given and keeps on giving!

Prior to December 25th, 2006 Richard Quinlan and his team of volunteers assembled and packed at least 100 knapsacks with gifts such as sleeping bags, blankets and various sundry survival supplies for the purpose of giving to the homeless/needy on Christmas Day.

On Christmas Day Pastor Ray Johnson of Resurrection Life opened the church doors at the Faith Bible location on West Railway for the deployment of "operation knapsack". Marvin Declare of Psalm 23 Transition Society, his wife and team of volunteers cooked and served a full breakfast to all who came while Richard, his wife and team along with Pastor Ray and his volunteers distributed the knapsacks to those in need. They spoke to, prayed with and offered encouragement to many who were feeling discouraged, lonely, hopeless or helpless.

As the blessing was asked over the food it included the request to touch even just one life on that Christmas morning whether it be a volunteer, a resident of Psalm 23 or one who came in for a meal. While many lives were touched that day, there was one life destined for impact. His name is Sean.

On Friday December 22nd, Sean's mother asked him to leave her house/his home. Friday December 22nd, Richard Quinlan was driving in his van when he felt the prompting of the Spirit of God to stop and speak to a young man he noticed walking on the street. This young man was Sean. Richard invited Sean to come for breakfast on Christmas morning. Sean responded to the invitation and was the first person to arrive. He was a young man with many needs that included emotional and spiritual as well as the immediate physical. His life was destined for impact on that day. While "Miracle on 34th St." is a good Hollywood story, the "Miracle on West Railway St" is an awesome reality.

Jesus came to us in the form of a Baby, a tangible gift wrapped and given by the Father in heaven. His purpose was to bring life, hope, love and acceptance to all who, like Sean are experiencing or have experienced helplessness, homelessness, not having a sense of belonging, hopelessness, anger, despair &/or emptiness, to name

a few. Jesus' purpose was one that could not only be reflected on as in the past but looked forward to that which would be accomplished even ahead to this day December 25th, 2006 when a young man like Sean or a person like yourself could and would respond to the invitation to receive a free gift.

On this Christmas Day Sean made a decision. He told Marvin he was tired of being confused and cold. Marvin asked him if he had a willingness to change his life and Sean's response was, "yes, but I'm not sure how". Marvin told him that change takes time but that with the support of others he would not have to walk this journey alone. The first step of change began when Sean accepted the miracle of the free gift of Jesus. Jesus the Christ came to Sean packaged in the human flesh of the volunteer workers that were divinely sent across his path for this day of impact and destiny.

Sean now has a home with the Psalm 23 group so that he can receive direction and support and learn "how to" make the changes in his life. He first accepted the free gift and invited Jesus to take control of his life, to change him from the inside out and to give him a chance to fulfill the destiny and purpose for his life as originally designed by the Creator, our heavenly Designer.

"Operation Knapsack" is one of a group of many volunteers who, during the busy-ness of the Christmas season paused to extend... Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Mankind... and truly keep the Christ in Christmas... His gift keeps on giving in a tangible way even to this day and for the days ahead.

Your day of destiny and impact awaits you. If you have not yet made that decision to accept the free Gift, the Giver of all good gifts has yours just waiting for you to receive, unwrap and fulfill the purpose for your life beginning now in 2007. Jesus is calling. It's up to you to answer the call. Just go to a good Bible teaching and believing church to find those who can walk with you on your journey so that you don't have to walk it alone.

Submitted by Ray and Leslie Johnson, pastors for Resurrection Life