

Hungry for Jesus

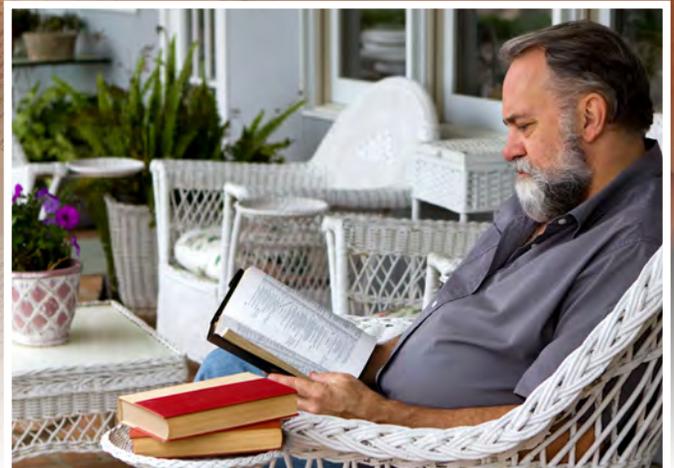


He was ready to go.

Eugene showed up for the meeting armed with his brand-new — and first ever — Bible, a gift from one of the pastors at Great is Thy Faithfulness Church. As soon as he plopped down at the table, he opened the Scriptures and whipped out a highlighter. Eugene was there to learn ... and he meant business!

That fledgling faith started just a couple of months earlier after Great is Thy Faithfulness teamed up with Cru® serving in the inner city to distribute Boxes of Love® — containing all the ingredients to make a Thanksgiving meal for six, plus the gospel booklet *Knowing God Personally*.

While handing out the boxes, the team met Eugene — who had just moved to north Minneapolis from California to care for his brother with dementia.



The neighborhood was tough. Eugene's brother's health was failing. Eugene was hungry for food ... and the gospel.

“I think it was just us reaching out to him and reflecting the care and love of Christ.”

—Derrick Grow, Team Director,
Inner City Minneapolis

From there, our Minneapolis team director Derrick Grow and Minister Miller from Great is Thy Faithfulness Church decided to water the seed by initiating a home visit. They brought encouragement, brotherly love, and breakfast muffins. It grabbed Eugene's heart.

Eugene agreed to meet them again at a coffee

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Hungry for Jesus

shop. “I think it was just us reaching out to him and reflecting the care and love of Christ,” Derrick said.

There, in the middle of the bustling java joint, Eugene prayed aloud, turning his life over to Jesus Christ!

Since then, the pair have been meeting regularly with Eugene as they guide him in studying the Scriptures. Several weeks into the study, Eugene, at

age 65, was baptized. He now serves on the church’s security team and has volunteered several times for evangelistic outreaches. “It is so awesome to see someone really getting to know who Jesus Christ is,” Pastor Miller shared.

Thank you for extending the love of Christ to Eugene — and to children and families of the inner city who are hungry for food ... and Jesus!

She’s a new creation ... Thanks to Jesus and YOU!

When it comes to handcrafting furniture, woodworkers often reach for mahogany, noted for its straight grain and durable nature. Those same characteristics also describe 20-year-old Mahogany, who first arrived at the Agape Center S.A.Y. Yes!® program as “selfish, bratty, different, shy and unsure of myself.” Her bad attitude, she shared, often landed her in trouble.

Then she met Jesus through the after-school ministry. She said 2 Corinthians 5:17 resonates with her because “it encourages me that the old, bad things I did became less as I started becoming new.”

Now a nursing student at Chicago State University — and working as a nursing assistant at a local hospital — Mahogany still comes to the Center two days a week to volunteer.

“I want to say thank you to the Agape Center (staff) for how you’ve shaped me and for giving me the opportunity to give back by being a leader in our neighborhood to all these unique children.”

Mahogany credits much of her personal growth and character to the center’s staff, who faithfully mentored and disciplined the young student, walking her through several rough spots, including her parent’s divorce.



More than a decade after first walking through our Center’s doors, Mahogany now volunteers twice a week, pouring back into inner-city children the way she was once blessed.

Mahogany spent most of her childhood with her grandmother, who enrolled her in S.A.Y. Yes! The after-school program offered more than tutoring, Bible instruction, crafts, games, and snacks. It provided healthy roots for Mahogany to experience growth.

“Now, I want to give back what I received as a child,” Mahogany shared. “No matter where I am, I know I can count on the people at the Agape Center to be there for me spiritually and physically.”

Thank you for making it possible!

Safety and Freedom at S.A.Y. Yes!®



Antonio lives in a difficult neighborhood, ruled by drugs and gangs.

“Sometimes when I walk home from school I see drug dealers around the corner,” Antonio shares. “They try to sell to me.”

He’s constantly looking over his shoulder. “I wish it would stop so I could feel safe walking home,” he said.

While Antonio can’t control the streets, he found safety and freedom at the local safe place provided by S.A.Y. Yes!® Centers for Youth Development, where he receives a nutritious meal and mentoring after school.

The program is a joint venture between local church partners and Cru® working in the inner city, which provides much-needed resources, like PowerPacks® ... brand-new backpacks filled with school supplies and gospel literature for children.

Nearly 50 centers nationwide are transforming

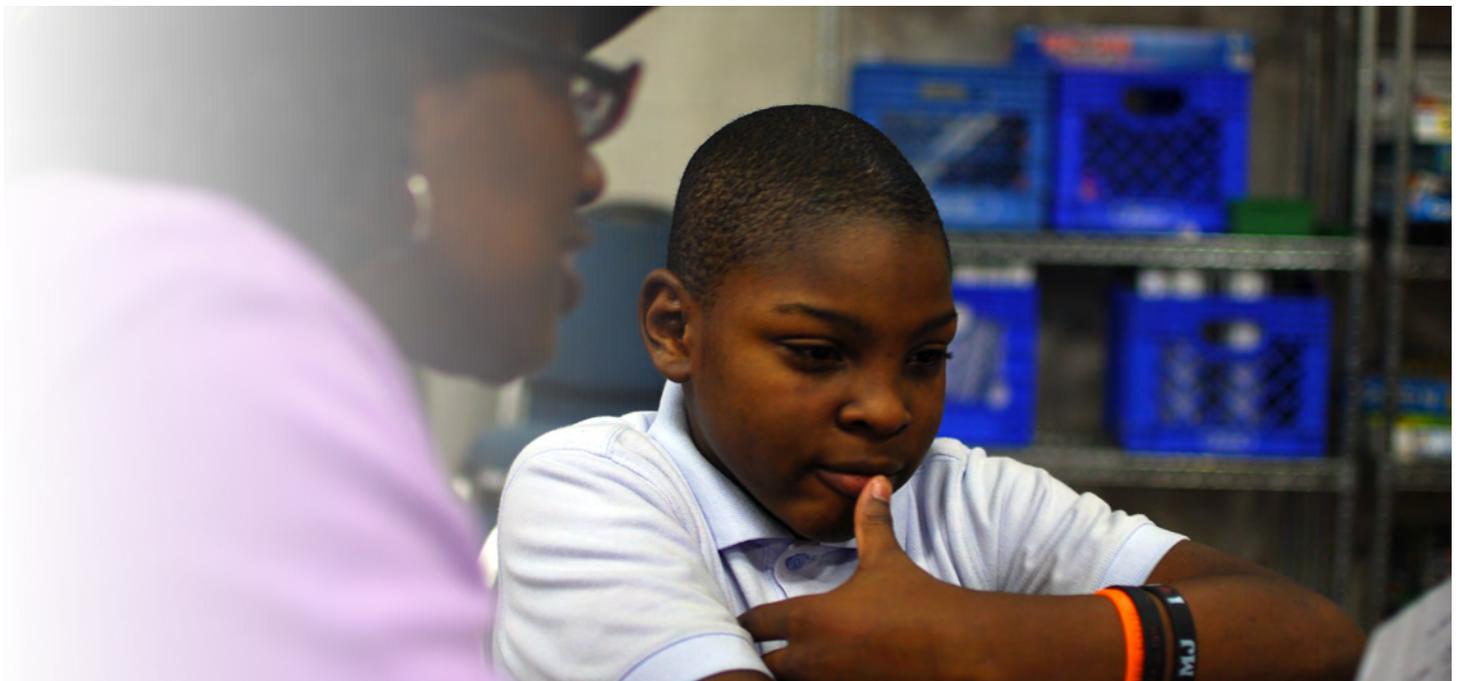


young lives and, in turn, their neighborhoods, too. While there is a strong emphasis on academics and character building, there is also downtime for fun.

“We have supper,” Antonio said. “We play really fun games, and they help me with my homework. I was failing school, but they got me back on track. Now I’m doing really good!”

While he’s doing better in school, Antonio received something far greater than academic success. “When I came to S.A.Y. Yes! I also learned more about Jesus. I gave Him my heart. Now I just let Jesus guide my way through.”

Thank you for providing a refuge for inner-city children like Antonio. You are making a difference in their lives.



In divided days, provoke love ...



Milton Massie
Executive Director/
Steward

America couldn't be more divided, and the rift goes well beyond political lines. We have generational splits, gulfs between genders, and chasms between races. The lists go on: vaccinated or not, masked vs. unmasked, clean energy or fossil fuel. Families have even split over these camps. The

conflicts aren't just limited to the secular world but, shamefully, also in the church. This breaks the Father's heart.

It should also break ours.

God calls His people to advocate for more, to provoke unity. I say provoke because it is an intentional action. It means to stimulate or incite. Bridging divides requires such work. We tout and we push reconciliation, but oftentimes it feels like cheap grace. We may offer a quick "I'm so sorry," an apology that borders on appeasement, not behavior-motivating regret.

If, for instance, a husband and a wife are in an argument or if an offense has taken place, neither spouse is going to accept the other just breezing over it or trying to quickly apologize without entering into the divine work required for genuine reconciliation. Unity must also be part of the equation.

As the world's largest evangelistic ministry, Cru® — including our own inner-city division — prioritizes keeping true to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-19. Regrettably, we often overlook verse 20: *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you* (ESV).

Romans 12:9-10 gives us a blueprint for some of His teaching.

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor (ESV).

Verse 10 commands a posture of humility. We are to bless others by going the extra mile.

Further relationship tips are provided in Colossians 3:8-9, which offers up a list of don'ts. Notice that lying gets its own sentence.

But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ...

The root of all this — the gospel Jesus preached — is love. In both Word and deed, the entire gospel shows Jesus moving toward people. He didn't run from them, and he didn't run from conflict. Since He is our example, are we following suit? Are we living out the practical implications we see in Isaiah 61 and Luke, chapters 4 and 7? If my righteousness vertically has been established through a personal relationship with Christ, is it now demonstrated horizontally with fellow image bearers, whether or not they are believers? Whether or not our worldviews are aligned?

Grateful for your partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Milton Lee Massie". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Milton Massie

Executive Director/Steward



Two great ways to maximize your work for Christ's Kingdom

Make an even **GREATER**
impact at year's end

**We want to be sure you're aware
of a couple of great ways to
leverage your giving at year's end
and lift up Christ in the inner city:**

1 IRA Rollover

- ✓ If you are age 70½ or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 from your traditional IRA to a qualified charity, like Cru® serving the inner city, without adding a penny to your taxable income — while receiving tax benefits that don't require you to itemize on your tax return. Plus, if you're age 72 or older, a rollover gift from your IRA will also count toward your required minimum distributions!
- ✓ This is possible when you make the donation as a qualified charitable distribution — with a direct transfer of the amount you choose from your IRA.
- ✓ This kind of gift also counts toward your required minimum distribution if you have one.

2 It can also be advantageous for you to **donate appreciated assets, such as stocks or property.**

- ✓ You receive a charitable giving deduction for the fair market value of the asset (up to 30% of your adjusted gross income) if you have owned the asset over 12 months.
- ✓ You will likely avoid capital gains tax that you would pay on the appreciation if you sold the asset.

**If you have questions or would
like more information, please
contact Scott Mesker at
501-350-0121 or
scott.mesker@cru.org today.**

**Thank you for your partnership in
reaching the inner city for Christ!**

No Hungry Children This Thanksgiving



Moneca is one of many volunteers assembling Boxes of Love® at our Agape Center in Chicago ... amazing because just a few short years earlier, Moneca and her children didn't have enough food for a Thanksgiving meal.

They received a Box of Love® delivered by volunteers from a neighborhood church — and their lives changed forever.

Moneca and her children began attending church. The children got involved in the youth ministry. Eventually, Moneca and her four children all trusted Christ!

She is overwhelmed today by how different her family is. Her young son, Roy, for example, has become a prayer warrior! When another boy was mean to him recently, Roy's response was to pray for him!

And it all began — by God's grace — with a Box of Love!

As you read these words, another child is hungry. Another family like Moneca's needs Jesus. Every \$43.40 you give will provide a Box of Love with an abundance of holiday food, more than enough to feed a family of six.

Please be the hands and feet of Jesus by giving freely to help hungry children and families ... and share the transforming love of God through the gift of food. Thank you.



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