

“I Know What God Thinks of Me!”

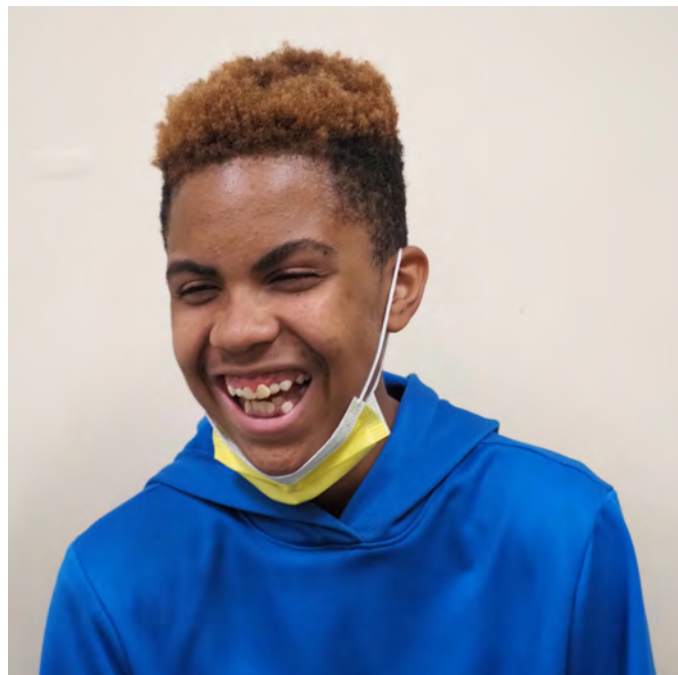
“I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” This verse, from Psalm 139:14, is Deion’s favorite — one of many he’s learned over the past five years at his local Agape Center, a safe haven from neighboring ... but not always neighborly ... inner-city streets.

What matters is what God says.

The Chicago program is one of 46 S.A.Y. Yes! Centers for Youth Development[®] nationwide supported by Cru[®] Inner City. Here, Deion and his friends receive:

- ✓ homework help and tutoring,
- ✓ healthy snacks,
- ✓ discipleship and character development,
- ✓ necessities like school shoes, backpacks,
- ✓ and more.

Deion first heard Psalm 139 at the Center a few years ago — and he’s clung to it ever since. “It’s a verse that’s really helped me deal with a lot of issues at school. It’s like remembering who God created me to be. I’m fearfully and wonderfully made, so it doesn’t really matter what people say about me. What matters is what God says.”



Thanks to friends like you and the unique witness of our S.A.Y. Yes![®] Centers, Deion and so many other children know what God says about them ... and it’s good. This wonderful news is touching and transforming children and their families in urban neighborhoods across the nation.

Thank you for making such a difference!

**I AM FEARFULLY
— AND —
WONDERFULLY
MADE** **PSALM 139:14**

The incredible, life-changing blessing of ... **Urban Immersion™**

Each spring, rowdy college students make headlines for invading beach towns to party, a volatile cocktail of drug use, overdoses, and even assaults.

What doesn't end up on the news are college students who choose to spend their spring break on more eternal-focused efforts. In Orlando, 12 of them enrolled in Urban Immersion™, a weeklong cross-cultural outreach and evangelism training program offered through Cru® Inner City.

Participating students are matched with Inner City's partner ministries, who already have established relationships within under-served urban communities.

This year's projects included helping with the national Point-in-Time homeless count, food distribution at an extended-living motel, concluding with tutoring and sports camp at Orange County Academy, which serves at-risk, low-income children from the community of Bithlo, a depressed area just outside Orlando. The neighborhood has no clean water, and most kids drop out of school by the ninth grade due, in part, to addicted parents.



Throughout the week, the students met a variety of people, each with unique needs.

- Celeste, a former drug addict who gave her life to Christ.
- Michael, who is beaten by his dad, but says he doesn't have it that bad.
- Dominic, a kid whose house was recently "shot up."
- Erin, who hopes — and wants prayer — for her next meal.
- Chelsea, a 5-year-old girl whose mom is an addict, also prays for food. Her family of 14 lives in one small trailer.
- Charlie, who just got out of prison, is struggling to get off drugs and wants help.
- Derek, a vet who has been homeless for three years.
- Dallas, a pregnant woman seeking help.
- Bree, a med-school dropout and former athlete, who uses heroin after breaking her shoulder in nine spots.
- Morgan, a middle-schooler, who was thrilled an adult was willing to spend 30 minutes playing volleyball with her.

While the focus is serving those in need, recipients are not the only ones receiving ministry. Many of the young adults experienced life-transforming moments, including Caitlyn, who reassessed her own standing with Christ after working with Bree.

"During prayer, Bree was brought to tears and expressed how badly she needed Jesus," Caitlyn said. "She was extremely thankful we talked to her about life and faith.... I gave my life to Christ minutes after."

For Mike, the short-term missions trip propelled him to take uncharacteristic risks.

Singing their praises!

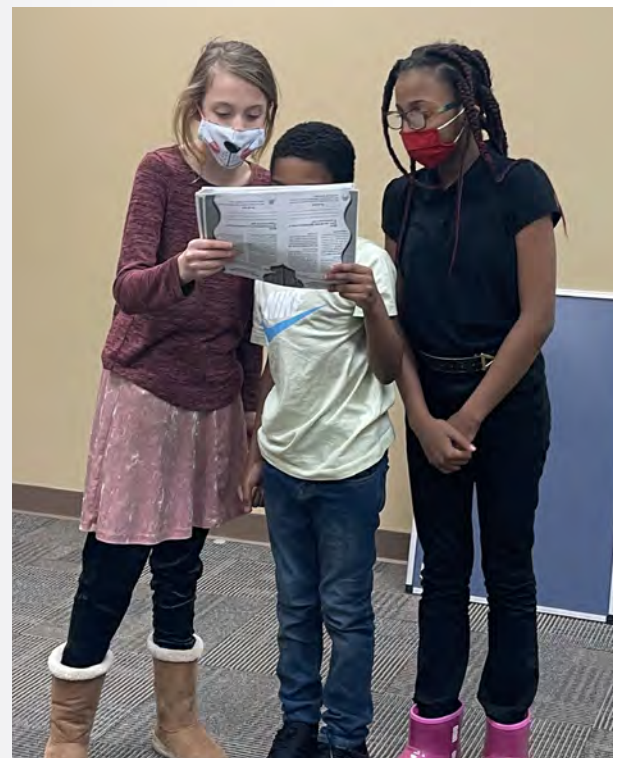
Every Monday, 15 eager students enrolled in the Agape Center Children's Choir arrive at Chicago's S.A.Y. Yes!® program for a truly noteworthy experience.

The choir is one of numerous after-school offerings — part of the program's long-term commitment to holistic ministry.

During their weekly meetings, the classes are split into three project areas: music theory, choir practice, and a Bible lesson. Each child rotates through the three classes, keeping the class sizes small and personal.

The children are exposed to music as another avenue to express themselves. And the Bible lessons challenge the students to develop godly character and grow in their faith. Recently, their choir director “turned the tables” and had the kids teach him the Bible lesson ... which they thoroughly enjoyed!

God is using your support of our S.A.Y. Yes! Centers to empower the future for inner-city children and help them grow in Him!



“Being comfortable (my) whole life probably means that I am not doing it right,” he said. “God calls us to be set apart, to be different. There is nothing comfortable about being different.”

... most kids drop out of school
by the ninth grade ...

The heartbreaking stories of the kids he served has exposed Mike to a new reality.

“I can't sit back and live my life expecting other people to go out and help them,” he said, adding, “No one may ever do it. Some of these kids don't even know where their next meal is coming from, or if they're going to get shot at or watch their parents OD at night.”

College students are being challenged and disciplined in ways they never thought possible. The trajectory of these students' lives and ministry are changing.

God bless you for making outreach like Urban Immersion™ possible through your prayers and support. Together, we are sharing the Good News and serving the poor.



A personal word from Milton Massie

The Justice of Jesus



Milton Massie
Executive Director/
Steward

“When the justice of God confronts moral inequity, which is inequity, then judgment falls. When justice sees inequity, judgment falls.”

—A.W. Tozer, “The Mercy of God,” Oct. 19, 1958

It’s hard to imagine how language and the Christian perspective have shifted over the six decades that have passed since the noted pastor shared those words at his Southside Alliance Church in Chicago, just six miles from my office.

Tozer felt so strongly about them, he repeated similar versions of the same quote in other works.

Justice, inequity, and sin.

In today’s circles, such language often brings hostility, some strongly coming from the church. Indeed, the words justice and equity evoke strong emotions. That can happen when we slap labels on ideas and people, especially when we can’t even come to an agreement on definitions.

What is justice to me can be vastly different than that of my pew mate, co-laborer, or neighbor. Will we ever be able to have conversations with each other without continuously buttonholing each other into corners, going to camps? What does Jesus say about this?

These days I’ve been digging deep into the Scriptures to see how Jesus responded to the concept of justice and how it is linked to righteousness.



It is clear that justice is not inconsistent with the character of God — at all. As loving as Jesus is, He was also just. But for some reason, we often don’t hear those teachings about Christ. We focus on the loving side.

In Micah 6:8 (ESV), the prophet writes: “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Is Micah’s message part of Old Testament law that no longer applies, since Jesus came to fulfill the law? Not according to Matthew 23:23, in which Jesus takes on the Jewish leadership, calling them hypocrites.

“For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.” (ESV)

All things considered, I choose to settle with Jesus — and his message includes justice. Let us pursue and embrace.

Grateful for your partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Milton Lee Massie".

Milton Massie
Executive Director/Steward

Kevin Meets the King



Seven-year-old Kevin and his brothers, Brian and Mitchell, were getting used to doing everything

“remotely.” The young boys were being

raised by their single mom and ailing grandma. For over a year, they had been logging into school online because of the ongoing pandemic — and caution for grandma’s poor health.

Even their Sunday routine was virtual, as they regularly “attended” church services at Pleasant Green Missionary Baptist Church online.

On Easter Eve, 2021, Kevin initiated a familiar routine, logging on to another Zoom gathering, this one a virtual Easter Bag outreach hosted by the church.

The Easter Bags, a collaborative effort between Cru® Inner City and partner ministries across the country, are a tangible expression of love — filled with candy, crayons, a toy, and a clear presentation of the gospel. In greater Chicago, where Pleasant Green is located, 1,200 kids received bags from 33 partner churches!

I am good on the inside, but I do bad things on the outside.



Kevin sat enthralled in front of the computer on this sunny spring Saturday listening intently as church volunteers used the “Meet the King” booklet from the Easter Bags to explain the gospel.

Throughout the presentation, Kevin occasionally offered his own observations. When the topic turned to sin, Kevin lamented, “I am good on the inside, but I do bad things on the outside.”

The Zoom participants played a game, and then Kevin announced he was ready to receive Christ! Everyone was overjoyed!

The following day, the church handed out 50 Easter Bags in a drive-by setting to the virtual attendees, including Kevin ... a brand-new follower of Jesus!

In the year since, Kevin and his brothers remain actively engaged at church. When baptisms resume, he has asked to be first on the list, to share his joy with the church that Jesus is King of his life.

Thank you for supporting our annual Easter Bag outreach. You are helping to transform the inner city for Jesus.

This summer ...

You'll be making an eternal difference!

Like most college students, Brenna had big plans for her summer — plans to make an eternal difference alongside friends like you!

Every summer, we send volunteer college students into inner-city neighborhoods to minister alongside our partner churches and ministries. It's our annual Summer Missions outreach ... where students like Brenna are transforming urban America for Christ.

For eight weeks, she brought Jesus to children in inner-city Milwaukee. As she hit the parks and playgrounds — ministering through puppet shows and colorful “salvation bracelets” — Brenna's eyes were opened.

... the children and families I met
were all so thirsty for God.

“I saw poverty in the city like never before. But I saw something else too: the children and families I met were all so thirsty for God.” The highlight of her experience? Brenna was able to pray with a child who accepted Christ!



We warmly invite you to be a part of it this summer. Your generous gift of support for Summer Missions today will empower a college student to share Jesus with inner-city children and families ... making an impact that will last for years to come. *Thank you!*



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Cru is a charter member of the Evangelical
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