

A Broken Heart Resurrected



Valerie's heart was broken.

She recently lost her 17-year-old daughter, Britany, on the operating table as the teen was undergoing her second liver transplant in 13 years.

Adding to the deep sorrow, Valerie's marriage crumbled under the grief. Skyscraper-sized medical bills began piling up. **Valerie's once-strong faith faltered. It was difficult to see God in life's carnage.**

When Easter arrived months later, the single mom, still in a haze of grief, had no idea how to salvage the holiday for her six foster children — all under the age of eight — each child also drifting through grief and loss.

Even in the midst of her pain,
Valerie found purpose again
through her relationship with God.

Then, Valerie received an invitation to an Easter event at Body of Christ Church, where she attended before life wore her down. During the Resurrection Sunday event, children received Easter Bags provided through the inner-city ministry of Cru®,



filling a void for Valerie. The festive bags contained candy, snacks, and gospel literature, including a booklet called, *Welcome to Heaven*. The booklet

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prompted all sorts of questions from Valerie's grieving youngsters.

Where is Britany? Did she go to heaven? Is she in pain?

"The (book's) pictures and content helped the children understand what their sister went through and where they could go when it was their time to be with the Lord," said Tonya Harris of Body of Christ Church. "They confessed that they wanted to go to heaven, to see God and their sister."

The event also proved to be a salve for Valerie.

"It was like the light kind of came back on," Tonya shared. "Even in the midst of her pain, Valerie found purpose again through her relationship with God. Now she's participating in church more and more, and her children just love being in the ministry."

Thank you for extending the healing love of Christ to Valerie — and resurrecting children and families of the inner city with the hope of Christ this Easter!



Boxes of Love® Bring Light and Hope!



As inflation continued to tick up, the tears on Maria's cheeks were trickling down.

There, before strangers, she confessed what many Americans have experienced: strained finances and medical issues were robbing her family of stability — and peace.

After listening to her plight, members of Anointed by Christ Church helped with the most immediate issue for Maria and her two children — food — by providing a Box of Love® ... complete with a turkey and all the Thanksgiving fixings. The inner-city ministry of Cru® provided the box to Anointed by Christ, one of its partner ministries.

Then, using the gospel tracts within the Box of Love, the church volunteers prayed with Maria and her children — and **led all three to a personal relationship with Jesus!**

Thanks to your prayers and support, similar scenes played out in cities across the nation this holiday season. While some numbers are still outstanding, November's Boxes of Love® campaign resulted in the distribution of over 19,000 boxes by 333 partner ministries in at least 19 cities — so far. To God be the glory!

These life-changing exchanges don't just happen during Box of Love distributions or in follow-up during subsequent months. A foundational element of the campaign is pre-event evangelism training where ministry leaders learn how to effectively share the love of Jesus with the families who receive Boxes of Love. In one training, 40 participants spent two hours in a workshop before hitting the streets to offer prayer and talk to people about Jesus. As a

These life-changing exchanges don't just happen during Box of Love distributions ...



result, at least five people made decisions for Jesus. The team strives to continue building relationships and discipling new believers.

Thanks to your financial partnership with Cru serving in the inner city, hurting people in some of America's most vulnerable communities are finding the light of Christ amid darkness.

Thank you for making it possible. *Your faithfulness is changing lives.*



In one conversation, trainees shared the gospel message with a man who had just been released from the hospital. They cut off his hospital band and replaced it with a special gospel bracelet, which has color symbols representing various aspects of the gospel. It was a beautiful sign of hope reborn.

A personal word from Milton Massie

Remembering Steve Douglass



Milton Massie
Executive Director/
Steward

In October, Cru® worldwide said goodbye to Steve Douglass, who served as ministry president for 19 years.

His obituary includes significant tributes to his extended service with Cru, logging 51 years. He was also an author and radio host. He was a husband, father, and grandfather, until

complications from cancer returned him to the arms of his Father.

Steve was much more than the obituary checklist. He was a statesman, a shepherd, and a soul-care surgeon.

Although Steve navigated an international ministry with several distinct aims, Cru's ministry in the inner city held a special place in his heart. He and his wife, Judy, were allies and advocates for the marginalized, promoting our work through videos, fundraisers, and radio.

Always eager to hear what we were trusting the Lord for, Steve gave Cru Inner City the freedom to do what it did best. Knowing that he believed in us, and our vision, was liberating, encouraging, and invigorating.

In 2020, just before his retirement, Steve reviewed our Strategic Plan, a ministry blueprint leading into 2023. He called me personally to express how excited he was about the vision, committing to join us in our prayers that the Lord would deliver.

As a shepherd, Steve celebrated each of our unique qualities, never lumping us together in a sea of sameness. He lived out Romans 12:10 by always deferring to others and elevating them above himself. He was eager to hear stories on how God was moving through Inner City and our established partnerships.



Partnership was one of his favorite words, and he believed our partnerships with local churches were the most effective way to bring the gospel to places where most people didn't want to go.

While our common goal was the work of the gospel, Steve never forgot about the gospel at work in each one of us, the matters of soul care. He frequently called asking, "How may I pray for you?" The power of those six words on my behalf, and for the wider needs of Cru Inner City, was life-affirming.

Hebrews 13:7 (ESV) tells us, *Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.*

Steve Douglass is somebody I want to imitate. I desire our entire ministry to be as faithful to the call of God. I pray our team embraces the biblical mandates to Win, Build, and Send, as found in the context of both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Will we leave a legacy where people can pick up the baton and walk in the same path of faithfulness?

That is my prayer. And that is the legacy we are committed to leaving.

Grateful for your partnership,

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

Milton Massie

Executive Director/Steward



Hope Partnership

Share Jesus with people in our inner cities

Hope Partners are a core group of committed friends who help to make all our evangelistic campaigns happen, month by month.

This simple auto-giving program enables you to serve alongside our inner-city teams without ever leaving home ... making a beautiful, personal impact on the lives of men, women, and children in need.

With a monthly gift of support, you'll be helping children and adults, families and individuals ... meeting immediate physical needs, and leading them to faith in Christ.

Please consider joining with us as a Hope Partner today!

Become a Hope Partner.
Visit cru.org/hope to learn more.

Homeless ...

18%

For most of 2022, 18% of adults living in households with children had little or no confidence in their ability to pay their next rent or mortgage payment on time.

582,462

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 582,462 people were experiencing homelessness on a single night in January 2022 ... an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness from 2020 to 2022.

50,767

50,767 of those people were families with children.

233,832

233,832 people experienced unsheltered homelessness in 2022, a sharp increase from previous years.

But not hopeless ...

This is our mission field. Together, we will continue to reach out and share Jesus: the hope of mankind!



Wrapped in the love of Jesus!



Steve was 42, homeless and alone, when a deacon from All Nations Church of God first met him on the streets of Chicago.

Steve listened intently as the ministry leader encouraged him to visit the church, where Steve would have access to a variety of resources.

After taking the deacon's words to heart, Steve set out for All Nations on the following Sunday. He was not prepared for what came next.

As Steve entered through the front doors, members of the congregation embraced the man who was invisible to so many. The deacon gave Steve a warm smile and a Homeless Care Kit, both designed to counter the cold Chicago winter.

Each care kit contains a warm blanket, socks, gloves, a scarf, toiletries and gospel literature. The inner-city ministry of Cru® donated the Homeless Care Kits to All Nations, their partner ministry.

In the weeks that followed, Steve kept coming to church ... and the kindness toward him continued as well: bus cards so he could get to church, donations of warm clothes, and always the good news of Jesus, which warmed Steve's heart.



A Homeless Care Kit paved the way

One Sunday, Steve responded to the pastor's altar call, publicly giving his life to Jesus. A few weeks later, Steve formally joined the church. **A Homeless Care Kit paved the way.**

Thank you for making this wonderful ministry possible to people in desperate need — Please do it again this winter by giving generously to provide Homeless Care Kits. Thank you!



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