



"When the right time came, God sent his son . . . so that he could adopt us as his very own children."

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-- Galatians 4:4-5
(New Living Translation)

Christmas 2009

Dear Friends:

Many of our best memories of Christmas focus on our families. We remember opening presents around the family Christmas tree, traveling to the homes of distant family members, eating Christmas dinners around the family table, singing Christmas carols together. What would our Christmas celebrations be like without our families?

As you reflect on the Christmas story during this season, remember that a family is at the center of the story. Jesus was born to the virgin Mary, was obedient to his earthly father Joseph, and lived in a village that must have included lots of kinfolk. He came to fulfill his mission as the Son of God, not in isolation, but in the middle of close and important family relationships.

Many of the families we encounter at Washington Street Mission are chaotic and broken. Circumstances and choices have pulled these families apart. Often they are places of hurt and pain, instead of the places of support, comfort and healing that they should be.

Many of our ministries during the Christmas season are focused on strengthening and restoring families, trying to help men and women and children reconnect with the solid, positive relationships that families are built on. We are amazed at how often the men who stay at our transition house discover the importance of families in a new way.

As we work with the families of the children who participate in the Mission's afterschool tutoring program, we make it possible for them to provide Christmas gifts for their children. Our Christmas gift selection day does not replace their families, but supports and lifts them up.

Our morning coffee hours provide a kind of model family for many of our guests. As they share their needs and hurts, they find listening ears and open hearts among the staff and volunteers here at the Mission. They begin to discover what it can mean to be part of a family and to feel God's love through our ministry. We often claim the promise of Psalm 68:6 -- "God sets the lonely in families."

At a very basic level, reconnecting with family is what the Gospel, the Good News of the Christmas season, is all about. Jesus came to earth to reconcile us to God, to defeat the sin and death that hold us captive in this world and to bring us into his family. As the Bible proclaims, "You are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family." (Ephesians 2:19, New Living Translation)

We hope that our upcoming celebration of the Mission's 100th anniversary in 2010 will also be a family time. As the whole family of Mission supporters gathers together to celebrate, we can thank God for all that he has done through this ministry over the years and look forward to all that he has in mind for the future. We appreciate the part you play in this larger family of faith.

You can continue to help us make whole families a reality for the people we serve at Washington Street Mission. Your generous support is essential to this ministry during this special season of the year.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Mitchell
Executive Director