

Christian Mercy and Justice Network

Volume 3, Issue 1

Winter 2010



But let justice flow like a river, righteousness like a never failing stream.

Amos 5:24

Come to the Justice Institute!

CMJN meetings:

Join us the 3rd Thursday of every month at 7:00!

Meetings are held at New Covenant Fellowship (the corner of White and Randolph).

Inside this issue:

Daily Bread	2
Morningstar Youth Ministry	3
The Difference Prayer Makes	4

Do you wonder what our community's specific needs are? What can we do? Who can we help? Who needs to see the tangible evidence of Jesus' love for them? We want to influence Champaign-Urbana with the Gospel but how should we best do that?

TCBC is sponsoring a 5 week Justice Institute to address these questions. There will be a series of Sunday evening seminars hosted by godly men and women with expertise in local justice issues and the role of the body of Christ in alleviating these systemic wrongs. Along with the seminars, there will be multiple opportunities for those who attend to participate in practical "labs" -- getting out into the community and serving in ways directly related to these areas of injustice. These seminars and labs will help us identify needs in our community and future opportunities to reach out with the love of Christ in meaningful ways that make lasting change.

Course Description

We are influenced by the gospel of Jesus Christ and want to influence others in our community regarding God's heart for justice and mercy through a survey of local social justice concerns. Attention is given to Biblical foundation, healthcare, domestic violence, homelessness, racial tension, and various types of inequalities. The series of lectures by various speakers will

equip the church to make a difference in the Champaign County area by disseminating intellectual and practical information along with passion for social justice.

Course Schedule

Seminars will take place in the Twin City Bible Church sanctuary on the designated Sunday evenings from 7-8:30pm. Labs will take place on-site within our community.

SCHEDULE

Sunday, Jan. 24
Biblical Foundation for Justice
Sunday, Jan. 31
Domestic Violence
Week of Feb. 7
Lab opportunities
Sunday, Feb. 14
Healthcare
Sunday, Feb. 21
Homelessness
Sunday, Feb. 28
Inequality in Education
Week of Mar. 7
Lab opportunities

Registration is online and due by Jan. 20, 2010. Register early so we can plan for your attendance at the practical labs to reach out to our community.

Registration is open to anyone - we look forward to learning together! Go to www.tcbc.cc and click on the "What We Do" tab, then the Justice Institute link, and then the Register here link.

Ministry Spotlight — Daily Bread



By Kimberly Fairley

Like a majority of communities in the United States, Champaign and Urbana are not unique when it comes to poverty and hunger. In their mission to feed the hungry in their community regardless of race, religion or ethnicity, the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen is here to stay. On September 3, 2009 the Daily Bread began serving the hungry with sack lunches out of the facilities of New Covenant Fellowship at 124 W. White Street in Champaign. The Daily Bread is run solely on the support of a compassionate group of volunteers. There are no paid staff and the average age of a Daily Bread volunteer is 60 plus years. The group of volunteers serve sack lunches to approximately 100 people per day, five days per week. The Daily Bread is open Monday through Friday from 11:00-12:30.

The Daily Bread is a very diverse group of volunteers. The group is providing a safe, respectful and inviting environment for those that come for food. The Daily Bread Soup Kitchen sees many of its recipients every day. There

are a many reasons why individuals seek out the Daily Bread. Some come for meals that they may not otherwise have and others to supplement meals while they struggle to provide the very basics for themselves. The Daily Bread has some seating where those coming for food can sit and eat their meal while enjoying the company of the Daily Bread volunteers and their friends.

The group is also able to provide a small amount of assistance on Wednesdays of each week. The majority of the assistance requested is for State ID's. The assistance also includes donated items from the community such as toiletries, clothing, hats, gloves and bus tokens. As some guests are isolated from their families, on many occasions the Daily Bread reconnects them, pays for the stranded to go home and works to find supervised housing for individuals alienated from families by mental illness.

Many of the Daily Bread volunteers are not new to serving this population. A number of the Daily Bread volunteers worked together over the past 18 years through the St. Jude Catholic Worker House. When the steering committee for Catholic Worker House decided to close

the long established soup kitchen in August 2009, many volunteers who remained strongly committed to serving the hungry banded together to create the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen. The group would like to obtain their own lot or permanent building that could be converted to a soup kitchen. This would also allow the Daily Bread to expand and to serve hot meals particularly during the frigid days of winter.

The Daily Bread Soup Kitchen values their relationships with their guests and forms lasting friendships. The group is currently fundraising to reach the goal of having their own space. The Daily Bread Soup Kitchen welcomes all volunteers who share an unconditional positive regard for every human being. For more information about the Daily Bread or how you can get involved, please contact Ellen McDowell at 217.356-7101 or via email at dailybreadsoup-kitchen@gmail.com.



Connecting Church and Community: Morningstar Freewill Baptist Church

By Danny Brown

As things change, they stay the same. As I look at our community, there are many great changes going on. There are also problems that have been the same ever since I can remember. One problem is an unequal chance to succeed.

While some may say that everyone has the same chances, that is not true. This problem has gone on so long that it has become a way of life and has been embedded into the fabric of this community. There are kids who have no mother or father or stable home life. That often means these youth have little chance to dream. For many, success is selling drugs, and a badge of honor is going to jail. For others, their main goal in life is to have a baby so they can feel the love they've never known.

I believe that breaking down this systematic wrong is the responsibility of the community at large. We must all agree that lack of opportunities for some causes our community to be less than it could be.

There are also many bright spots in our area, where people are trying to attack this problem at the grassroots level. Morningstar Freewill Baptist church (Pastored by Reverend Jimmy O Holmes) is one such bright spot. They

conduct a youth ministry on Monday nights 6-7:30pm where about 55 youth from the church and surrounding area attend. Here, youth have a place to go for spiritual guidance, fellowship with other youth in a positive setting, and workshops about growing up in this area and just growing up period. Many of the youth come from low income and single parent families, where they have to deal with all the troubles that low income, public housing and single parenting brings.



For many youth, this ministry is the start of the great equalizer. The ministry assists youth in becoming productive members of society. Parents are encouraged to get involved as well.

The current Youth Ministry Director, Elder Romie Hunter, has great expectations and is excited about the possibilities for the youth and the ministry at

large. According to Elder Hunter, "One of the visions for the ministry is that all become productive citizens. That starts with helping others, taking care of business at school, and giving to those that will come behind them." He continues, "We know that a lot of this unfairness is generational, and in order to break the cycle there has to be a break in the same old routine. The youth ministry offers a break from that same old routine."

On Monday, February 1, there is an open house for the youth ministry at 6:00pm at Freewill Baptist Church. All are welcome to attend, including parents and community members. "Oh taste and see that the Lord is Good," says Elder Hunter.

I believe that the Lord has strategically placed churches in communities to help their neighborhood, and this is an example of the Church helping the community in which it is located.

But we are many members of one body, and it is time for all of us to start taking action. **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6)**

Christian Mercy and Justice Network

124 W. White St.

Champaign, IL 61820

Phone: (217) 355-2038

E-mail: cmjnetwork@gmail.com

www.cmjnetwork.org

The Difference Prayer Makes

By Paula Barickman

Often as agents of mercy and justice we feel called by God to fix problems we see in our communities and fill needs for people we see hurting all around us. But, the ministry of Jesus was driven not just by needs, but by doing what the Father was doing.

We can get so caught up by the urgency of people's needs that we forget to focus on being filled and led by the Holy Spirit to do the

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

agenda of the Father. While we may be doing very good things are we focusing on His agenda?

As we minister to people's physical needs, we must keep prayer at the forefront. Some practical ways we can do this are:

- Prayer walking — simply walking through the city and praying God's blessings and protection over it, asking Jesus to come and walk the streets bringing His peace, love, and joy
- Healing nights — evenings where churches join together to pray for the city
- Community Choir — utilizing prayer and worship in a community event
- Ongoing prayer times — In working with the Vineyard food ministry, we have found that praying before each

session has helped us grow as a team and been a unifying factor



We may never fully realize how much difference the prayer makes before any event. It is easy to get nervous and caught up in the

mechanics and details, but the lasting difference of an outreach is not in our efforts but in the work done by the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who give and receive!

I believe Jesus is urging each of us to focus on the WHO of outreach and ministry, rather than the what and where. I encourage everyone who does outreach, mercy, or justice work to incorporate some type of intercessory prayer before the activity as well as offering prayer for those receiving the services. While it is good to offer practical help, it is truly the connection with Jesus that changes forever both the lives of those who give and those who receive.