

A Life Course on Evangelism

“Jesus is real, and He longs for a personal relationship with me!” That truth was far more significant than anything Colton was learning in his textbooks when he was studying education at Central Michigan University.

Soon after that life-changing realization, Colton accepted Christ and quickly plugged into the Cru® campus ministry at CMU. Shortly thereafter, he was evangelizing and leading Bible studies. A year later, Colton enrolled in a nine-week Summer Missions program with Cru Inner City in Chicago.

The summer missionaries worked alongside local churches and ministries in the name of Jesus. Colton remembers, “Whether I was working at different shelters, food pantries, or working with children at day camps, it just was everything I had hoped for.”

Colton’s pinnacle moment came when the team held a Peace Campaign prayer outreach on a notorious corner in Chicago. Every Friday night through the summer, the group met at one of two intersections, sharing the gospel and praying with neighbors. One evening, a teen approached Colton, saying he was compelled to stop and listen to what the young evangelist had to say.

By the end of their conversation, the teenager committed his life to Christ. It



was a transformative moment! Colton recalls, “I witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit literally draw people to us, not because we’re cool people, not because we’re the wisest people ever, but because He was with us. I loved seeing how God is moving and allowing us to be part of His work on this street corner.”

Because of your generosity, God is raising up a whole new generation of summer missionaries who are actively embracing both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Please pray for them now and as they return to their campuses in the fall, where they will live out the gospel and make important decisions about their future!



“I witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit literally draw people to us ...”

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Taking It to the Streets

How Easter Bags open doors to relationships ... and Jesus!



The congregation of Grace Alive Church in west Orlando left the walls of their church and took to the streets in preparation for their annual Easter outreach celebration.

Church members personally handed out invitations at several locations, including at local schools. The invitations included Cru® Inner City Easter Bags, which are available to partner ministries. These colorful bags are filled with candy, crayons, toys, Bible literature, and a Good News bracelet that shares the Resurrection story.

On Easter Sunday, 38 children came and enjoyed fun activities, games, prizes, and a clear presentation of the gospel. Several in attendance were from the local schools.

Volunteers were able to deeply connect with the parents of two middle school students, with words of encouragement and care. Now, both teens plan to attend the congregation's summer youth camp!

"We have surrounded their families and are praying for God's hand of salvation as we invest in their lives," a member of Grace Alive shared.

But that's not all! Three other people began attending the church, thanks to the Easter Bag event.

To date, we know of more than 13,000 children who received Easter Bags at evangelism events hosted by our partner ministries. Praise God!

Thanks to ministry friends like you and the creativity of local partner ministries, Easter Bags are opening doors, minds, and hearts in communities across the United States through Compassionate Products™ you provide. Thank you for your partnership!



What are Compassionate Products™?

These products are tangible and useful items, given with care by members of local churches, to families in the inner city as a way to share the love of Jesus to those in need. They are a proven way of showing God's love, but they also often open the door to a continued relationship and meaningful conversations about the gospel.

Here is a complete list of Cru's Compassionate Products:



Boxes of Love® provide a Thanksgiving meal for six, as well as gospel materials.



Homeless Care Kits tangibly demonstrate the love of Christ and share the gospel through items that help people in need survive harsh winter weather.



Easter Bags are filled with treasures children enjoy: candy, fruit, a toy, gospel bead bracelets, and a full-color activity book about Jesus.



PowerPacks® help urban churches reach those in need by providing backpacks filled with school supplies, given in Christ's name!



Basketball ... and Baptism?

At JAM Camp™, they do go together!

It was Sunday night, the first evening of a weeklong JAM Camp™, and a handful of boys gathered in the staff quarters at camp to talk about expectations. Moses, who was attending for the first time, plopped down on the bed and began peppering the director Jaye with questions, not about layups, but baptism!

Baptism and athletics might seem an odd pairing, but not at JAM Camp, a partnership between Cru® Inner City and our sister ministry, Athletes in Action®.

At the Ohio-based camp, young men develop athletic skills through clinics, while learning about Jesus through one-on-one mentoring and discipleship. Jaye said, “By the end of the week, these kids become family to each other.”

Moses longed to be baptized, but circumstances at his home church had delayed the celebration. As Jaye listened, he saw an

opportunity and decided to culminate the week with a “family” barbecue and baptism service. A fellow camper, Mike — who is in foster care — was also baptized.

Although the spontaneous gathering was something the leadership team never envisioned when they planned the camp, it confirmed what they already knew: God regularly moves in their midst.

“It was amazing, it was just amazing,” Jaye said. “We had all types of food. We sat down, talked, laughed, cried, worshipped. You know, it was a great fellowship — the same way Jesus did.”

Please pray for the leadership of the camp and that God will move in the hearts of these young men as they seek to follow Him. And thank you for your part in making these camps a reality!

Baptism and athletics might seem an odd pairing, but not at JAM Camp!



Milton Massie
Executive Director/
Steward

A personal word from Milton Massie

Exploring the Emotions of Faith

Anyone who knows me knows I'm a student of the Word. Thanks to

faithful mentors, I have been steeped in God's love letter to us: the Holy Scriptures.

What we feel in our hearts and what we know in our minds at times do conflict; however, this just says that we are complex creatures created to use both sides of our brains. We are emotional and spiritual beings. We can't walk with Jesus without feeling something.

We know this because Isaiah 53:3 says Jesus was despised and rejected, *"a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."* Verse 4 recognizes our natural character models His: *"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."* Grief and sorrow are not just emotions; they are deep emotions.

We can also look at the psalms. Sixty percent of the psalms are lament songs, exposing things that aren't right. The psalmists honestly cried out before God.

Recently, I've been doing an introspective dive on the intersection of emotion and faith, and its

honest expression before God. A balanced faith recognizes that both the right and left sides of the brain are important to God — that what we feel *and* what we know are important. 1 Corinthians 8:1-3 puts it this way:

Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

This passage challenges the knowledge-only concept. It's not only what I know about God, but it also asks, do I know God, and am I known by God? Does God know me?

These questions can keep us from falling into the trap of the enemy, who wants us to believe God can't meet our needs and that we can do it better on our own.

Have you assessed your spiritual emotions recently? Do you know God? Are you known by him? Maybe it's time for a 50,000-mile checkup.

Grateful for your partnership,

Milton Lee Massie

Milton Massie
Executive Director/Steward





Breaking Language Barriers ... and Reaching Children for Christ!

University Presbyterian Church, east of Orlando, has hosted the Transformers Club, a S.A.Y. Yes! Center for Youth Development® — in collaboration with Cru® Inner City — for more than a decade. This center is one of more than 70 operating worldwide and serving more than 2,000 children in total. Each center provides homework and tutoring assistance, Bible instruction, snacks, and a safe place to gather while parents are working. It fills an incredible need for urban families.

The Transformers Club works hard to meet the needs of the children in that community. Many families speak only Spanish in their homes. As part of the academic emphasis in the club, the children are learning to bridge the gap between Spanish and English. They are also learning about Jesus through the gospel instruction offered at Transformers.

Karen Akers, the city director for Cru® Inner City Orlando, volunteers at the center. Earlier this year, she led a gospel discussion with three young girls, explaining how to ask Jesus into their hearts. After letting them absorb the conversation for a couple of weeks, two of the girls said they had invited Jesus into their heart!

The third girl, Lucia, said, “I wanted to ask Jesus into my heart, but I didn’t know how to do it in Spanish.” Karen was concerned. But she gently led Lucia in a prayer in English, and Lucia accepted Jesus right then and there. Since January, eight children have received Christ’s forgiveness!

The dual focus on evangelism and discipleship is what makes S.A.Y. Yes!® centers a powerful ministry tool. The ongoing relationship building between the volunteers and children ensures the young learners grasp the gospel message, even as they are shown how to share the gospel with others.


Thanks to your committed support, Lucia and many other children are learning about Jesus every day! Thanks for “saying YES” to children everywhere!



“I wanted to ask Jesus into my heart ...”

A Family Discovers Jesus through Back-to-School PowerPacks®



 **Brock and Emily, parents of five school-aged children, struggled to keep the family afloat financially.** And back-to-school time was always an extra burden since all five children needed supplies to start the school year off on the right foot.

Fortunately, they were led to one of our partner churches in Southern California who had a supply of PowerPacks® on hand. Thanks to friends like you, these are available to partner ministries of Cru® to reach out in their inner-city neighborhoods! All five children loved the colorful backpacks loaded with school supplies such as pencils, pens, colored pencils, markers, notebook paper, glue sticks, rulers, highlighters, pocket folders, erasers, and scissors. Also included in the backpacks is age-appropriate gospel literature. The kids were happy, but Brock and Emily were thrilled!

As the pastor gave them the backpacks, he invited the whole family to an all-church potluck so he could learn more about their needs and concerns. After a clear gospel presentation, Brock and the children accepted our Lord as Savior! Now the family is growing in faith, attending Sunday services, and being supported in their challenges. PowerPacks empower more than children's readiness for school; they point families to Jesus!

As we prepare to welcome kids back to school in the fall, you can offer PowerPacks — and life-transformation — to more children and families of the inner city. How many can you help us reach today? Please be as generous as possible!



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Creating Options Together™

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Cru is a charter member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability

Occasionally the names of people featured in this report are changed to protect their privacy.

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