



## UNBOXING HELP & HOPE ...

### The Big Reveal: Boxes of Love® 2024!



**Melanie and her two little boys were facing a bleak holiday season.** She had

just been laid off from work ... the bills already piling up ... when her 4-year-old suffered a traumatic injury and lost one of his eyes. Melanie was devastated. The emotional toll was heavy.

That's when Macedonia Church in Bakersfield stepped in with a Box of Love® — provided by Cru® Inner City, thanks to your loving kindness

“The gift of food filled Melanie with hope.”

and support. Melanie and her boys were amazed to discover a turkey and all the fixings for an

incredible Thanksgiving meal (plus leftovers for several meals to follow!) ... and the message of the gospel. The gift of food filled Melanie with hope. And the Word of God changed her life.

Melanie and her sons began attending Macedonia Church — and Mom has since rededicated her life to Jesus! Melanie's testimony

*Continued inside ...*



Continued from front

# Unboxing Help & Hope ...

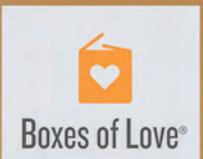
is just one of many in Bakersfield, California, thanks to our incredible Boxes of Love campaign. Seventeen partner churches in the area distributed nearly 650 boxes to working poor families, resulting in 120 first-time commitments to Christ and 140 rededications, including Melanie!

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



Thanks to your prayers and support, similar scenes played out in cities across the nation this past holiday season. While some numbers are still outstanding, November's Boxes of Love campaign resulted in the distribution of nearly 18,000 boxes by at least 350 partner ministries in cities all across the country. To God be the glory!

Together, you and Cru Inner City are unboxing help and hope in some of America's most vulnerable communities, revealing the life-changing love of Jesus through the message of the gospel.





Milton Massie  
Executive Director/  
Steward

*A personal word from Milton Massie*

## Cru® Inner City offers something new for the new year

**There is something about a new year that inspires a time of reflection.**

Both Leviticus 23 and Numbers 29 teach us about the annual observance of the Feast of Trumpets, known today as Rosh Hashanah. The festival, held at the end of each summer, is a season of reflection and repentance for the Jews. Centuries later, Americans celebrate a similar time of reflection when we flip the calendar to a new year.

With the start of 2025 still fresh in our minds, I would like to take some time and space to discuss another new element for Cru® Inner City — our new mission statement: **“Living out the Great Commandment and Great Commission with churches in the inner city.”**

Why the update?

We desired something easy to remember, that gives greater context for the heart of our ministry, and creates a conversation piece that encourages questions about how we serve the inner city. Questions spark dialogue.

We started with the Great Commandment because it is *the* basis for the entirety of Scripture. There is nothing greater. As the blueprint for everything else, the first commandment boils down to love — the love for God and the love for others.

The second pillar, based on Matthew 28:18-20, is vital because its two-prong focus guides us in putting that love in action through Spirit-led preaching and teaching to expand God’s Kingdom on earth. As believers, we must never forget we are called to *all* that Jesus commands, including discipleship and serving the vulnerable.

Another emphasis of our new mission statement is the centrality of the church in everything we do. Notice the wording. We work *with* churches. It’s a partnership. It communicates our posture, our communion, and our union with them.

Finally, while we recognize and value the corporate nature of the global Church, our emphasis is distinctly narrow, thus the lowercase “c.” The underserved and under-resourced churches of the inner city are our heartbeat.

And what a beautiful rhythm it is.

Grateful for your partnership,

Milton Massie  
Executive Director/Steward





# NO LIMITS to God's Love!

COMING SOON...Easter Bags 2025!  
Your support now makes this awesome outreach possible.



We can't wait to see how God will work through friends like you ... and our dedicated inner-city partner ministries ... this Easter season!

Every year, we give Easter Bags by the thousands to children in some of America's most difficult neighborhoods. And time and time again, we see children and parents come to faith in Christ through this amazing outreach.

These are kids like Heidi ... just 11 years old and already acutely aware of just how tough life can be. Daily, Heidi faces the limitations of poverty AND the physical obstacles of being a child with special needs. Heidi wears braces on both legs.

*She's used to being left out of most activities. She's never been chosen for anything ... So imagine her surprise when she heard about a friend named Jesus — Who not only loves her but CHOSE to call her His own!*



It's what she learned at a special Easter Service at Chicago's Mount Ararat Transformation Ministry, where Heidi and 25 other children were given their own Easter Bags, provided by Cru® Inner City. Heidi loved the candy, crayons, and Bible storybook inside the special Easter Bag.

But she was especially enthralled by the colorful beaded bracelet and the story it told — of Jesus and His wonderful love. Before the event was over, Heidi gave her life to Jesus, thrilled to be accepted into the family of God!

**Thank you for extending the love of Christ to Heidi — and standing with us now to bring children and families of the inner city to Christ this Easter!**





## Into the darkness ...

- 771,480 people experienced homelessness in the U.S. last year, up 18% over 2023
- 150,000 children were without homes in America last year
- 43 states saw increased rates of homelessness
- 54+% of homeless children and adults reside in the nation's 50 largest cities

## Shines a great light!

Together, we will continue to reach out with help and hope — and the life-changing love of Jesus Christ!



## 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 join with us as a Hope Partner today!



Become a Hope Partner.  
Scan the code or visit [give.cru.org/HopePartner](https://give.cru.org/HopePartner) to learn more.



# “I’m not ready to die” New life for Oscar!



**Oscar, 58, was familiar with the reality of being unhoused.** He wore the frigidness deep in his bones. Like many in the homeless community, he also wore the stigma of not being seen. So, it stunned him when a small group of people approached him one wintry Chicago morning and asked him his name.

The group, from All Nations Church of God in Christ, gifted Oscar with a Homeless Care Kit. The kit, provided by Cru® Inner City, contained gloves, a scarf, socks, hygiene basics and gospel literature — all rolled up inside a warm blanket.

The church team shared the gospel with their new friend ... and Oscar shared about his long-term struggle with addiction. *As he choked back tears, Oscar told the team, “I’m not ready to die.”* He acknowledged his desire for faith in Christ.

Right there, on a cold, snow-covered Chicago sidewalk, Oscar prayed the prayer of salvation, publicly giving his life to Jesus. **A Homeless Care Kit paved the way.**

Oscar shared about his long-term struggle with addiction.

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!



100 Lake Hart Drive  
Orlando, FL 32832  
(888) 278-7233

[CRU.ORG/INNERCITY](http://CRU.ORG/INNERCITY)  
[innercity@cru.org](mailto:innercity@cru.org)



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