**OUTREACH MINISTRY**

*Jesus once again addressed them: “I am the world’s Light. No one who follows me stumbles around in the darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in.” John 8:12 (MSG Translation)*

This scripture made me think about the houseless at night when it’s dark. They must feel all alone and vulnerable. In addition to the elements, they may never know if someone may just come by and beat them, shoot them, or try to set them on fire while they are asleep, and even sometimes when they are awake. I wonder if they look up to the heavens and call on God during these moments when they are alone in the dark by themselves?

I have a cousin who was out on the streets in Kansas. He had nowhere to go, so he was exposed to the elements. It snows heavily in Kansas. The shelters were all full. He was found leaning up against a building with his arms wrapped around his legs, trying to keep in as much heat from his body as he could. But the elements were too powerful for him. He died from hypothermia. He had given his life to God many years earlier, but did backslide, which we all tend to do at times. I want to think that while he was trying to keep warm, he spoke to God, and God answered him that night and forgave him for his sins, then took him home to Glory.

The purpose of our Outreach Ministry is to provide hot meals, hygiene kits, and clothes for the houseless and those who have a limited income. We can’t bring them all to Jesus, but we provide information to them to hopefully make them think about where they are going and where they want to go and who they should be serving so they can improve their life. There are so many opportunities out there, but some folks need to be refocused to turn from their ways and follow Jesus. We can’t get them all to come to church or Christ, but if we can get them thinking about Jesus and what He has done for them, by planting seeds. They may not see it immediately, but every cloud has a silver lining. You need to want to be helped.

Our Outreach Ministry has grown since its inception several years ago. We started pre-pandemic and restarted when we were allowed back in the church, end of 2019. We were initially (pre-pandemic) doing a street ministry, giving out sandwiches and sides on 3rd Street and Oakdale Ave. Then we realized the people needed hot meals in their stomachs, so we moved to home-cooked hot meals in our social hall at the church. Our ministry now has 25+ members, half of whom are from St. John MBC in SF, and they are our Outreach Ministry Co-Host church. We recently joined Traveling MBC to support each other’s ministries.

*Gloria Stanley-Dews retired from AT&T after 40+ years. As the 1st Lady of Bayview MBC, she keeps busy supporting her husband (Pastor Timothy Dews) and the congregation. In addition to being his personal secretary, she ushers at most events, hosts conference calls for the church, helps to distribute produce to the neighborhood twice a month, and develops and leads an outreach program whose purpose is to connect with the neighborhood. She has invited other churches to join the program, which has been very successful.*