

PRODIGAL PRODIGAL

“We haven’t seen our son for months! He’s somewhere in Winnipeg. Can you find him?” A distraught parent gives a heart-wrenching plea, and the search is on for a prodigal in the seedy bars and hotels of the inner city.

Many prodigals end up in our addiction programs for men and women. A surprising number of them come from southern Manitoba, and other rural areas. It seems addictions know no boundaries of age, gender, cultural background or geographical location.

Probably most of us have a prodigal story to tell, hopefully with a happy ending. But we know that not every story has a happy ending.

By Greg Stetski

The life of a prodigal is hard. One former resident told us he was not allowed to join with the rest of the family, but was forced to eat on the stairway. What a stinging rejection to feel. And this was a minor form of abuse.

You will find a touching poem about prodigals on page 11 of this issue of the Voices. The author knows something about the wrenching pain caused by rebellious children.

Let us pray for the prodigals in Manitoba. May each one realize the Father is calling them back, is looking lovingly (longingly) for them, waiting with open arms. May they become sick of the life of sin and rebellion, and turn their hearts toward home.



By Susan Kukonen, Recovery Chaplain



Dee helping at Ladies' Day on Pritchard

A CHANGED LIFE

“Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think...” (Ephesians 3:20a.)

Once in a while, someone arrives at the Charis Centre who is desperate for recovery. Truly desperate. There has been no coercion by family, no court requirements to go for recovery, just a hungry desire for healing and restoration. Deanna was tired. Tired of her former lifestyle. Tired of the games that go along with addiction. She was tired of the drug dealings, incarcerations, near death experiences and family estrangements.

As a little girl, Dee always had a notion of God. Baba (her grandmother) took her to church regularly and later on, when Dee hit the throes of addiction, she continued to read her Daily Bread. So, it's no surprise that God finally got her attention and she found her way to Charis Centre. December 17, 2013 was the beginning of her journey of change.

Today, Dee is a transformed woman. Her smile and willingness to serve the Lord is evident, as she witnesses to all who will listen. A devotion 'junkie' as she calls herself, she has traded her destructive lifestyle for a walk with God. Her street smarts and God given ability have made testifying about her life in Christ very easy to do. While Dee is the first to admit she's still in process, the work has begun. She completed the one year Heart Program and has now embarked on a one year internship of ministry at Charis. She ministers to the ladies in the 30 day program, cooks, and helps out at Family Life Centre and Winnipeg Harvest.

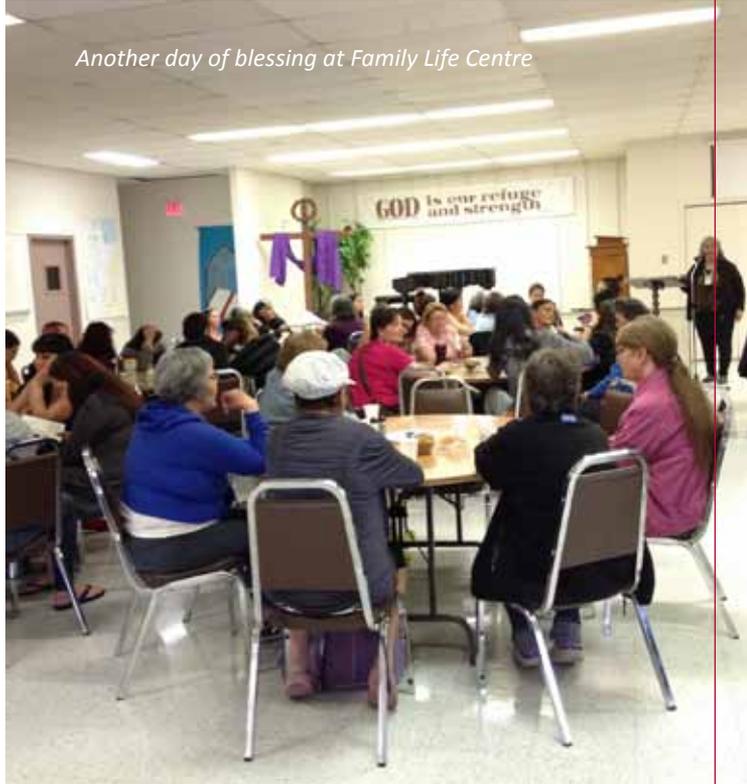
What a great testimony to God who heals and restores. Family relationships have been mended and Dee is “mom” again to her two grown children. Mom and Dad Henderson have their baby girl back. Who knows what God has in store for her? This we know – God has been faithful to Dee. Thank you, Jesus, for a life that is changed.

POOR AND NEEDY

By Connie Pattie, Women's Ministry Leader

Oh, do not let the oppressed return ashamed! Let the poor and needy praise Your name. Psalm 74:21

God has sent us to minister to the people in the North End where there are more murders, crime, violence and poverty than in any other area of the city. The real need is always present, and these are the people who come to the Family Life Centre for help and prayers.



Another day of blessing at Family Life Centre

Denise, who attends our Ladies' Day on Wednesdays, was given the sad news while here that her teenage daughter was badly beaten and in a coma. We prayed for her before she had to go to the hospital to see her daughter. She was in so much anguish and it was an honour to be here to help her.

Myrtle, who is in her 70's, had a heart attack and the doctors told the family she was not going to live as they "lost her" 3 times. With lots of fervent prayer from her family and the people here at the Family Life Centre, she was revived and went through a triple-bypass heart surgery.

She had a very speedy recovery is now coming to Ladies Day.

Another lady who was homeless due to eviction came in to the Centre on a Friday afternoon and we helped her to get a place to stay. She suffers from domestic violence, homelessness, addictions, health issues, depression, anxiety and the struggles of living her life with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder.

Many ladies become born-again Christians, are discipled and their lives greatly improve. Thank you for your prayers for this ministry where the ladies find "refuge and strength in the Lord".



Our men enjoying God's creation at Old Pinawa dam

TRANSFORMING POWER OF JESUS

By Scott Miller, Chaplain

“But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.”
John 4:14

God uses various circumstances to bring us to Himself. Sometimes it's our own brokenness that He uses to help us see our need of Him. This seems to have been the case for Mark. He experienced a lack of input from significant relationships in his growing up years and a series of significant losses in his adulthood. These losses, including the death of his mother and grandmother in a short period of time, removed the support he had depended on. These difficult experiences led him to seek immediate comfort in resources that were destructive. False resources require more and more intake to provide some relief. Mark plunged deeply into an addiction which beforehand he had only been dabbling in. This resulted in the draining of his financial resources. Mark then fell into activities which put him in conflict with the law.

A final experience brought Mark to

Union Gospel Mission. Here he found a supportive environment of human relationships plus the opportunity to build a relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus promised in John 4:14 to give people 'Living Water' which will bring a satisfaction to one's inner being that is greater than all the substances the world has to offer.

Mark has been seeking the 'Living Water' to satisfy his thirst for contentment and peace. He has recommitted himself to the Lord and is rebuilding his relationship with Him. He is growing through Bible Study classes, church attendance, and his personal Bible reading. He has been free from all substances for seven months.

Mark has become a better role model for his eight year old son and his twenty year old daughter. He also has hope in his life and a positive outlook for his future. In light of experiencing the transforming power of a relationship with Christ, his favorite Bible verse is Philippians 4:13, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.'

CHILDREN COME TO THE LIGHT

By Trevor Neufeld, Children's Ministry Leader

"That was the true Light that gives light to every man coming into the world." John 1:9

Hello from all the children in at the Family Life Centre. Thank you for all your prayers and support. Your support is changing the North End.

With the warm weather in full effect the streets have become full of life once again. The playground one block away from the Family Life Centre is now full of children from 3:30 until sunset. With the change of seasons, I notice a change in the children. It is almost like a light switch is turned on. Energy levels are through the roof! Our clubs begin at 5:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the door is always banged on early with kids wanting to come in. They know that the Family Life Centre is a place to come have fun, be safe and be loved.

I have a praise report. About one year ago I wrote about a mass exodus of kids into foster care. These children would come barefoot and dirty, and CFS stepped in and took them. I am happy to say that five girls have recently returned to their home. Their first week back they came to the FLC. I love that we can provide a place that kids are drawn to. Even though they had been gone a year they still knew that the FLC was a place for them. Please pray for the family that they would make lasting changes and that they would find Jesus. Pray that the girls would be a witness to their parents.

God is changing the North End and I truly believe that the children here will be the catalyst for that change. God is going to use the smallest to make the biggest changes. God Bless.



One of our clubs at snack time.



MANY SUPPORTERS ARE VERY EXCITED ABOUT OUR PROPOSED BIBLE SIGN.

Over \$7,000 has already been donated towards the needed funds of \$25,000. We will soon send our application to the City of Winnipeg for the license. Please pray earnestly for a favorable decision, so God' Word can shine forth brightly from UGM.

The Bible Sign will be installed at our 320 Princess location, where hundreds of inner city people walk by each day. There are also thousands of cars driving by who will be impacted by the daily Bible verses as we begin with Genesis 1:1.

WILL YOU HELP? SPECIFY YOUR DONATION TO BIBLE SIGN. THANK YOU.

1

Adopt-a-Student

Send an inner city child to a Christian School for \$50/month.

2

Clean out your Closets

Send your surplus clothing to UGM where we will 'give away the best' and 'recycle the rest'.

3

Potluck with a Purpose

Enjoy a church meal together and take an offering to help the poor.

4

Thanksgiving Every Month

Choose a month for your church to collect food for the poor.

8

**WAYS YOU
HELP THROUGH
THROUGH**



OPTION 1

Due to the response, we are now offering our Saturday afternoon tours as our first option for Mission Aware. Groups of 6 to 24 can book a tour for 1 to 5 pm. We will transport you to 5 of our 6 locations, while providing colorful commentary and interesting background stories. All 7 of our major ministries are covered in one afternoon.

OPTION 2

Come and stay over Friday night, men at 320 Princess St and women

at the Charis Centre. Breakfast and lunch on Saturday are included, along with the tour of 5 UGM locations. We can facilitate groups of up to 12 men or 12 women for this option.

OPTION 3

Dive in for a week (or longer) of inner city ministry. You will live in a private room for the length of your stay, and eat with the men or women in our recovery programs. You will volunteer in one or more areas of ministry, according to your interests.

3
YOU CAN
THE POOR
UGH UGM

Cherish Charis **5**
Donate \$1000 or whatever you are able to help meet the budget at the Charis Centre.

Meal a Day **6**
Donate monthly towards the \$1.97 cost for each meal we serve, over 100,000 per year.

Volunteer **7**
There are needs in all 7 of our major ministries, for individuals and groups.

Air Miles **8**
Request an Air Miles card from UGM or use our number 8401 082 7365 and collect on our behalf. This saves us 100s of \$\$\$ to attend training conferences.



Happy children heading home from school.

By Gilbert Plante, Family Ministries Manager

SURPRISED BY GRACE

“To hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death.” Psalm 102:20

The beauty of frontline ministry is you never know what to expect. This is no exception with our Christian School program.

Upon one of my recent home visits, I entered a home to find a gentleman that I had never met before sitting at the kitchen table. I introduced myself and informed the man why I was there, only to find out that the gentleman is the father and husband to the family I have been visiting for 3 years. Dad told me he has been away for a while - the truth is he was recently released from the Federal Penitentiary.

Dad told me he was happy to finally meet the man who has been coming over to his home and talking about Jesus to his wife and children. I have

to admit at this point I was feeling a little uncomfortable, and not really sure where he was going with this. However, Dad then told me he was very happy with the academic progress that his children had been making, and reached out to shake my hand. He thanked me for being there when needed.

Turns out Dad found Jesus in an 8 x 10 jail cell during his first year of incarceration, and the sponsorship program was an answer to prayer for his family. Breathing a little easier, I told Dad that God is good, and all things are possible with Him. I had never seen Mom with such a glow to her, and I knew Jesus was working in this family. Times will never be easy for them, but life will be manageable as long as Jesus continues to be the head of the home.

For \$50 a month or \$600 a year, you can help a North End family receive a blessing that they normally would not receive. Will you Adopt-A-Student?

GOD CALLS *By Nelson Gonzalez, Principal*

“Because you obey the voice of the Lord your God: blessed shall you be in the city.” Deuteronomy 28:2b,3a.

The word of God has life in it! Our students have the privilege to hear it daily. Sometimes it will be months before this word transforms the life of a student. Two years ago a female adult left our program, as she wanted to reunite with her boyfriend who had been recently released from jail. This decision seemed to have undone the knowledge and the hope in God that she had learned at our school. After a series of failed expectations, she contacted us again and is now continuing the program with us. It is remarkable that she expressed, “I knew God had me in the right path, and for that I am so very grateful. He would call me every day to come back to Him, and I did!”

It was exactly 6 years ago that one of our students asked us to pray for her. Her baby girl had been taken from her at the hospital after birth two years before. She left our program to deal with her pain. Two years later she returned and left again no baby yet. She came back to our school this current year after all this time. Just two days ago, she told us that the government called her and said the baby can come back to her! All this happened after the government agency had placed restrictions to not let her see the baby and had said the baby would never come back to her. That baby is now a precious 8 year old girl. The mother had tears of joy and a radiant countenance of thanksgiving to Jesus. When we answer His call, He will show Himself mighty for us!



Some of our 100 plus graduates on our wall.

REST IN JESUS

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:28, 29

John had been coming to the Overcomers meetings at UGM on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for some time. Here was a young man about 30 years of age, who had already been through a lot of hardships in his life. He had been struggling with alcohol and drug addictions ever since he was a teenager. Leaving home at age 14, the streets had become his life. He would try to get his life together, but the addictions would drag him back down. His girlfriend was now

By Mark Kelm, Chaplain

expecting a baby and he knew he had to get his life in order soon. He needed an answer to his problems.

He found the answer in one of the Overcomers meetings when he heard Jesus speak in Matthew 11:28, 29 (see above). When John heard that passage he suddenly felt hope for tomorrow.

He has been studying his Bible ever since, praying that Jesus will teach him how to be a better person. And God has been answering his prayers. He has found a steady job and an apartment, and is planning to marry his girlfriend soon. Having faith in Jesus and trusting that His Word is true has given John the focus that he needs to get off the street and rely on God for strength instead of drugs

and alcohol. John has found that Jesus is gentle and does understand those who are “low in heart”. He says he has found rest for his soul in Jesus and hopes those who go to UGM will find that same peace in Him. Amen.

One of many who like our green grass on Princess.



PRODIGAL PRODIGAL

Prodigal, prodigal, God's Word is true;
His love restores broken lives, makes them new.
Jesus is waiting, He calls tenderly,
"My precious lost wanderer, come now to Me.
I love you so much I died in your place;
I bore sin's dire judgment that you could not face,
Come to Me, prodigal. You will be blessed.
I'll take your burdens; I'll give you My rest."

Prodigal, prodigal, life hurries by;
days, months, years, decades; then time stops! You die.
The course of your voyage from earth's sinful realm
is downward if Jesus is not at the helm.
It isn't your sins that will drag you below -
it's your stubborn persistence in not letting go.
It's rejecting Jesus Who died for your sin.
It's hard'ning your heart when He whispers, "Come in."

Prodigal, prodigal, think of the day
when all your resources are frittered away
Alone in a famine of waste and regret;
tormented by mem'ries you cannot forget.
Remembering home, and your Father's fond care;
wishing with all of your heart you were there.
That's what your Father is wishing for, too.
Turn homeward, dear prodigal, love waits for you.

Prodigal, prodigal, give God your heart;
He will give you a new life - a new start.
You can have vict'ry by His strength alone;
set Him as Lord and King on your heart's throne.
He has the power to bring you release
from all that entangles and robs you of peace.
He'll never forsake you through all of life's way.
He's calling you, calling you - oh, come today!

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Sign up to be a Prayer Warrior

Please join us in bringing praise and glory to God by becoming a Prayer Warrior. You can receive our Prayer Warrior bulletin five times per year by mail or by email. **Here's how to sign up:**

1 - By Email:

prayer@gospelmission.ca
Subject line: Prayer Warrior
Type your first and last name

2 - By Mail

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
Postal Code: _____

VOLUNTEERS

Applicants needed for rewarding and fulfilling challenges. Bring your weakness, and God will supply your strength. Faithfulness required. Call Jeff at 943-9904 ext 237.

SPECIAL HELP NEEDED IN SEPTEMBER FOR OUR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PROGRAM

Our nursery/Kindergarten class needs a volunteer teachers' aide. Or more than one aide could share this vital role. It is from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, on all school days. Please call Jeff at 943-9904 ext 237.

Listen to a program of hymns
Monday - Friday 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

CFAM
Radio 950
Altona

AM 1250
RADIO
Steinbach

CJRB
Radio 1220
Boissevain

Union Gospel Mission

204-943-9904

EMAIL rescue@gospelmission.ca

MAILING ADDRESS PO Box 1073 Stn Main, Winnipeg MB R3C 2X4

LOCATED AT 320 Princess St.

Family Life Centre

240 Pritchard Ave. R2W 2J1

Christian Education Centre

220 Pritchard Ave. R2W 2J1

Charis Centre (send all mail to UGM address above)

LOCATED AT 271 Archibald St.

Compassion Storehouse

1456 Church Ave.

www.gospelmission.ca

Gregory Stetski Executive Director

Gilbert Plante Speaking/Preaching 204-880-4366

Jeff Gilfillan Development Manager 204-943-9904 ext 237
(Businesses/Volunteers/Groups)

SPENDING OF FUNDS is confined to Board Approved Programs and Purchases. Each gift designated toward an approved program will be used as designated, with the understanding that when any given need has been met, or cannot be completed for any reason determined by the Board, designated gifts will be used where needed most. Gifts are acknowledged and receipted with an official receipt for income tax purposes.

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