

Dodo Birds

Did you know that it is impossible to live without salt?

Salt regulates the water in our cells, aids in muscle contractions, nerve impulses and even our heartbeat!

Salt preserves.

Salt is a purifier.

Salt creates a thirst.

Salt adds pizzazz to something tasteless.

Salt is a deicer. It can melt the hardest of ice.

Salt is sprinkled in the clouds to generate rain for dried barren land.

Jesus says, "You are the salt of the earth"

Approximately 380 followers and lovers of Jesus invaded Leamington last Saturday and embraced those words of Jesus. They went to bed that night completely wowed at what they experienced.

Nathan and his team walked through neighborhoods with rakes in hand asking Jesus which house they should go to. There were questions like "Who are you and why are you doing this?" The answer was always "We live for Jesus and so we're just trying to do what He would do and show you His love"....and God being God, ordered their steps and lead them to homes full of sorrow.

One young woman told them how she hated the fall because last fall her husband died of lung cancer.

Another woman shared with the team, that she was staying at this house because her friend had just been raped and on top of all that she had just found out her Mom had stomach cancer.

A disabled man was stunned to think that the leaves that were ankle deep in his back yard would be raked and bagged, by strangers.

Each of these broken hearts were told that they were not alone, nor forgotten. In fact it was quite the contrary. They were actually sought out by a God whose love comforts like no other. They were so loved that He sent His representatives right to their door.

The Lodge is one of the homes in Leamington that houses alcoholics, drug addicts, the mentally ill and the homeless. On Saturday The Lodge was infiltrated. Every six to eight

feet, on both floors, was a follower of Jesus with a paint brush. In one afternoon the entire lodge was given a fresh coat of paint, a cement wheel chair ramp was installed, the stairs outside were repaired and the stairs inside were covered with a beautiful runner; Christmas decorations were put up and then they threw them all a party! The residents of this haven were in a complete tizzy trying to take it all in. One of the older men couldn't believe that people were actually talking to him. He said "No one ever talks to me..." Two of our volunteers discovered that one of the guys couldn't read so they went to their car and came back in with their Bible and read to him while they painted.

And then there was the 18 year old guy in the trench coat.

I asked him how long he'd lived at the Lodge. He told me he was 18 and had been there for 3 years. As we walked around, he too walked around draped in his trademark, army green trench coat that went almost to the ground. His inner pain was as obvious as his multiple piercings. The Mom in me wanted to take him home and make him all better but I've learned that there are many things even a Mom, just can't do. Only Jesus can reach into our yesterdays and restore and repair what the enemy has robbed so we left with heavy hearts that were desperate for Jesus to do what only He could do.

We found out later that he had been passed around to all his fathers' friends for sexual favors since he was a little boy. We also found out that as the afternoon wore on, this normally very withdrawn young man began to speak to the volunteers asking them why they were there....and then to the shock of everyone who works at this Lodge, he removed his trench coat, and smiled, for the first time ever. On Saturday night he asked to be taken to church the next day...

On the other side of town there were 9 men on a roof. This home belonged to a sweet little family who live from pay cheque to pay cheque. A local principal referred them to Cindy, our incredible Windsor Section Team Leader. He knew that they had two massive holes in their roof and would have no way of fixing that. By the time the sun went down on Saturday, they had a brand new roof and had been introduced to the love of God and His family. Both Dad and Mom were in tears and now at the very beginning of their journey to Jesus.

Bev and her team spent the afternoon at the Pregnancy Center. They painted, cleaned and organized shelves making it easier for those who work there to concentrate on the Moms that come in looking for help.

Families worked together and cleaned specific areas throughout the city that the Town Council directed them to. As they filled multiple garbage bags a lesson on what it really means to serve was instilled in the hearts of the kids that came alongside their parents that day.

In the kitchen of the Salvation Army there were at least 25 pairs of hands making home made apple pies. It was the mother of all assembly lines! There were peelers, there were dough makers and there were pie assemblers. On top of the pies, they also made chili and soup. Every needy family will now receive an apple pie in their Christmas hamper and the homeless will be fed delicious chili and soup all winter long thanks to our volunteers who were the hands of Jesus. As I was leaving a precious elderly woman grabbed my arm. In a thick German accent she looked right into my face and said...

"Susan! Dis is so gude! Dis is vat ve are supposed to be doing! Ve are not to sit in the pew like dodo birds and do nothing! Ve are to be doing dis!"

That should be embroidered and put on a cushion.

The Spa was beautiful. It was full of single Moms. They got their hair cut, their nails manicured, their make-up done and their shoulders rubbed. All of them were encouraged and went home with gift bags and knowing that they were loved. One of the ladies asked Gina if "this church accepted single Moms..." Gina was thrilled to tell her "Yes...and so does Jesus!" This precious Mom allowed Gina to pray with her and went home with Jesus in her heart and the new assurance that she would never be alone again...not ever.

They weren't sure how many would come to the feast. They targeted a huge population of a closed Mennonite sect who live in a legalistic world without Jesus. They put up posters in High German advertising a gargantuan indoor yard sale in the gymnasium of a school. Thanks to Rodney and his rig the place looked like Cosco! There were pickles, cake mixes, and cases of soft drinks, soup, chocolate, shampoo, dish soap, cleaners and clothes and a tremendous variety of other amazing products. As people came they were given a ticket to return at 6 pm for a free chicken dinner with all the trimmings that was set up in a large room next to where they "shopped". Multiple hundreds came through those doors. Over 500 stayed for the feast. Their 150 children were miraculously allowed to leave them to go and participate in a special Kids program. This never happens. Those kids sat there with wide open eyes and wide open hearts as Amber and her team told them about Jesus. Simultaneously, their parents sat and listened to an Old Colony Mennonite lady tell her story. She had been severely abused and by her husband so she ran away which left her feeling helpless and alone. In her hopelessness she cut her wrist severing the main artery but no blood came out. She tried to hang herself but the rope broke. It was at this moment that she cried out to God and He heard her. He revealed His love and she chose to give Jesus her life and now she said, "I'm never alone, no matter what."

A few of us gathered to pray for her as she spoke. We couldn't understand a word she said because she spoke in High German but we could sure feel the presence of Jesus in that place. We could feel The Holy Spirit moving throughout the room and settling on each heart. Something supernatural has begun amidst these people.

All over Leamington, on Saturday, November 14th rock hard hearts were softened. Barren, cracked souls were flooded with the love of Jesus. Tired muscles were jump started and lifeless hearts started to beat. What used to be tasteless now had flavor. The Body of Christ took up the mandate to be the salt of the earth and when they did they found a thirsty people who they were blessed to lead to the River of Life.

It doesn't get much better than that.

Yup, to quote a new friend..."Dis is so gude! Dis is vat ve are supposed to be doing! Ve are not to sit in the pew like dodo birds and do nothing! Ve are to be doing dis!"