

6 words, a bike and Jesus

For me, the Port Colborne "We are Christ Day" will forever be about Shatland and Bill, two eight year old boys who I will never forget. One had come to Port Colborne from Welland just for the weekend to be with his Mom who was in her late twenties rooming with a man old enough to be her grandfather. The other lived in Port Colborne and bounced back and forth between his Dad and Mom. This weekend he was with his Dad, who had left town, so Shatland found himself with a babysitter.

I met Shatland at the gates leading into a park where one of two, Kids Extravaganza's was being presented. The story of Jesus was effectively woven through clowns, balloons, puppets, songs and games. I could read in his eyes that he really wanted to be where the action was but he was afraid. After a bit of coaxing he and the babysitter ventured over to the crowd. As I jumped up and down to a rap song I prayed that Shatland would be drawn into the arms of Jesus before he left the park that day. I desperately wanted him to know that he could always count on Jesus. As I drove out of the parking lot Shatland returned back to the gate and leaned against his bike. I felt so bad leaving but knew there were other events I had to see.

When I returned to the church later that afternoon I was met by one of the volunteers who had helped at the Kids Extravaganza. She wanted me to know that eventually Shatland made his way back to the other kids and after hearing about Jesus he chose to give him his life. Don't you just love how Jesus woos the broken right into His arms?

I sat at Bill's table at the big spaghetti feast that was served at the end of the day. Hundreds were invited throughout the afternoon from around the city and the fellowship hall at the Christian Life Center was packed to capacity. During the meal, Ruth Teakle, our Team Leader for the Niagara Section called one of our ladies up to the stage. She asked her to describe her life as it used to be in six words.

"Depressed, suicidal, helpless, lonely, sad, dark..."

A hush settled over the crowd as Ruth asked her why she was so different now.

"I asked Jesus into my life. He's given me hope, comfort, peace, joy and a purpose."

Ruth told everyone that Jesus came to give us life! She then asked if anyone was interested in living a life to the full. As she asked them to stand chairs began to shuffle as dozens stood in response to her question. The elderly man that lives with Bill's Mom was one of them. 75% of our guests filled out a card requesting prayer and further contact. Paul and Cheryl Moore, the pastors at The Christian Center have invited them all to return for a BQ in a few weeks time.

The hunger for hope and love is huge. It's tangible. It's in our face and it's up to us to let them know that there is a God who loves them and longs to give them life full of unending hope!

Life! ~ that frees them from their sins and assures them of an eternity with Him.

Life! ~ that gives them peace despite the economic chaos or emotional turmoil they find themselves in.

Life! ~ that fills them with joy because they are known, incredibly loved and forgiven by God.

Throughout the feast Cheryl and Ruth drew names for amazing gifts. There were hampers full of food, coffee makers and other small appliances, but the biggest gift of the night were two brand new bicycles! Bill hadn't smiled at all; in fact his face was old and worn for his young age. Again I found myself praying for a little boy in Grade 3 whose life I could only imagine. I asked Jesus to give him the bike. Cheryl asked each of the kids to pick a number between one and fifty.

"Fifty..." said Bill.

"Fifty is the number!! The bike is yours!"

Bill smiled!

I cried.

Bill ran and hugged his bike!

I cried.

Bill's eyes were dancing and he finally looked like he was eight.

As he left the church I knew that Bill would never forget where he got his bike from and I knew he would be back because the love of Jesus is just irresistible.

The Body of Christ hugged Port Colborne on April 25th! There were over two hundred followers and lovers of Jesus who came to be His hands, His feet and His heart to the lost, the lonely, the broken and the forgotten and again....all of heaven applauded and Jesus smiled.

The two spas set up were beautiful and each filled with hurting hearts....the store where everything was free was arranged in a huge warehouse and it was full of thankful, blown away people wondering how all this good stuff could be free. This warehouse has been a beacon of light in a very poor area of Port Colborne for almost three decades and is in dire need of a makeover which began on the "We are Christ Day". One of the bathrooms was transformed, the kitchen area was cleaned, the ceiling over the bowling alley (yes, this place as a bowling alley!) was repaired and everyone who took part had their heart ignited to do more for this potential exploding facility so it can shine even brighter!

A Hair Salon opened their doors to the Niagara team and allowed them to take over two chairs so that the needy could come in and have a hair-cut for free. A home referred to the by Social Services was given a completely new bathroom and kitchen.

Other homes were cleaned and small repairs were done. At one of the 'home visits' a gentleman gave his life to Jesus! At another home visit, two ladies went to one door and discovered there was no one home so they courageously knocked on the door of another home nearby to see if they could be of service there. The lady who opened the door just couldn't believe it. She had recently had surgery and was recovering alone

and was desperate for her home to be cleaned. These precious volunteers fulfilled her wish and then went back to the first home, found someone there and did it all over again! How sovereign is our God?!

A Nursing Home got their grounds beautified while over two hundred residents were blessed with visits. The youth gathered in a place called "The Hub" and left knowing Jesus loved them like no one else ever would. At least two hundred cars were washed and dried by a faithful team of 12 who never lost their zeal. One passenger rolled down her window and asked why they were doing this. One of Christ Ambassadors said, "We wanted you to know you're loved." The driver's eyes filled with tears and said "I really need to know that today." Every car that got their car washed was given an invite to the spaghetti feast and directions to the free store and spas, the "Hub" and kids outreaches in two parks in the city. Everyone who came to the feast went home with a bag full of groceries, a book about how much Jesus loves them and an invitation to come back anytime!

Oh...the Body of Christ represented him so well in Port Colborne!

We have now had 3 "We are Christ Days" and 1,000 volunteers who have come to obey God's command to love Him with all their hearts, souls, strength and mind and to love others lavishly. Hearts have been captured and come to realize that every day is a day to be Jesus to those around us! The fruit is ongoing and bountiful and it really is... just the beginning! We are being overwhelmed by Jesus and continuously awed at His provisions and how He orchestrates every detail from start to finish.

As the Body of Christ was loving Port Colborne, the Cambridge Section was receiving their rig packed with 42 skids of blessings for their upcoming "We are Christ Day" on May 9th, in Fergus. Just as everyone was starting their tasks in Port Colborne, Esther Allison, our Team Leader for the Cambridge Section sent me an email expressing her absolute amazement and excitement at the amount of "stuff" contained in one of Rodney's rigs! She and her team have rented the Fergus arena and will be hosting a 'Mother-Daughter Extravaganza' on the Saturday afternoon of Mother's Day weekend. The phone has been ringing off the wall in Esther's home, at all the churches involved in the city and at the arena. The Principal at the school is on board and has sent notices home with all his students.

Moms and daughters are going to experience an afternoon of a lifetime! The Cambridge Section team is going to be feeding 500! Everyone in the arena is going to hear Joanne Goodwin tell them all about the love and care of a Savior who is unmatched! While this is going on, dozens of homes around the city are going to be cleaned and repaired! Cars are going to be washed, leaves will be raked and Fergus...well, it will never be the same again!

Oh! The divine domino toppling continues and it's just awesome to behold!

Thank you Ruth and Cheryl and Paul and everyone on "the Niagara Section Team"...you made Jesus look really, really, really good!

Thank you Jesus for allowing us to be your hands, your feet, your heart extended to the Shatland's and the Bill's....we will keep representing you until you come....we want to astound you like you astound us!

Looking at the sky and living in Jesus,

Sue and the W.C. Team