

Open Door Ministries

A Familiar Story from Another Angle

In the next few weeks, most of us will be reflecting on Luke's account of the little baby born in Bethlehem. Often, we've romanticized the story to the point where we miss a lot of the significance of the humble account. It seems to me that we need to remember that in God's perfect plan, **Jesus was born into a poor family experiencing troubled times.** The best place his parents could find to stay on the night he was born was a stable. Delivering a baby in a stable is far from pleasant or ideal. Then they put the new little baby in the animal's feeding trough. Sure the hay was probably fairly soft but none of us would want to put our babies there. The first announcement of the newborn was to shepherds. Shepherds were looked at as being in the lowest class of the day. Not exactly the front page of the Jerusalem Times. When Mary & Joseph went to the temple to give an offering for their new son, they offered two doves instead of the usual lamb because they were considered low income. This trend continues on and on throughout the book. **Luke was making a point about God's special concern for the poor and broken.**

Jesus could have been born into any economic situation, but it is clear right from the beginning that God chose to have His Son identify with the poor and oppressed of society. In Luke 9:58 Jesus says, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." **Jesus identified with and served the poor so well because he was poor.** He lived a simple life of humble means and circumstances.

Yes, Jesus is very God Himself, Creator of the universe, and is currently wrapped in unimaginable light, but this Christmas season, let us not forget how He chose to live his life on earth. **Let us follow his example of care,**

concern, and identification with those who were poor and broken. This will take shape differently in each Christ follower, but if we truly know our Lord, the poor will be close to our heart just as they were to his.

We rejoice in everything God has been doing in and through Open Door Ministries in 2008. **One fact stands for sure—lives of the poor and broken have been transformed.** Lives of children from broken homes, at risk youth, single moms, homeless men, prostitutes, street kids, staff, board members, and volunteers. We heard many of the stories at the banquet through video and in person. I was especially touched by James' story of being drawn in by the EAT meal...of coming in from the cold one morning only to overhear the Daily Christian Fellowship group...of opening the Bible for the first time in his life and being touched by God...of moving into the Providence House from the streets. Stories like this help me realize that God is still in the business of transformation.

Transformation is an act of God but he has chosen to involve us in the process. What a privilege and a responsibility. We ask you to continue to partner with us in this vital work. One aspect of this partnership is financial, and we need to make up some ground here at the end of the year. Even after a great banquet in which \$152,000 was raised—our most ever, we still stand \$184,000 short of where we started 2008. Raising these funds now will ensure that 2009 gets off to a great start.

\$50,000 CHALLENGE OPPORTUNITY

On top of the obvious need, we have an unprecedented opportunity. **\$50,000 in challenge funds have been set before us. What this means is that if we can raise \$150,000 in post-banquet funds before December 31st, we will receive another \$50,000.** This will take us past our year end need of \$184,000 and put us on a great path. All gifts to any of the ministries count toward this goal, so please consider a gift before the end of the year.

Your Partner in Transformation,

David Warren
Executive Director

Please see insert for special
State Tax Credits.



"That morning I read the Bible for the 1st time. The words that were read went straight to my heart."

James Fowler

OPEN DOOR
MINISTRIES



Meeting Needs and
Making Disciples in
the Urban Community

P.O. Box 18018 ♦ 1530 Marion Street ♦ Denver, CO 80218

www.odmdenver.org ♦ info@odmdenver.org

Phone: 303.830.2201 ♦ Fax: 303.864.0314

Guiding Principles of Open Door Ministries

Mercy - living out God's special concern for the poor.

Community - building vibrant connections among diverse groups

Discipleship - Practicing holistic discipleship, including raising up indigenous leaders, walking with them through the process

Embracing the Community

What is community? At Open Door, we believe community means building vibrant connections among diverse groups.

Open Door Ministries is a natural community since most of the programs operate on one city block and since many of our clients and staff members live on that block. However, in recent months, we have seen our community expand as clients and staff reach out to neighbors, developing relationships and serving each other.

This fall, two Esther House women on their own initiative went to a neighbor's house and asked if they could pick apples from the tree in his backyard. He was happy to let them use the apples before they went bad. The ladies had already planned to have a pumpkin baking day, in which they made all kinds of goodies out of pumpkin. One of the treats they made was a batch of pumpkin-apple muffins. They took some back to this neighbor, who is an older gentleman living alone. He was absolutely thrilled that they had come to visit him and brought this gift. Crystal says, "We just wanted to reach out to our neighbors, and it really meant a lot to him."



Barbee Stanfield, Still Waters Housing Director, with Crystal & Charrise.

The little grocery store on our corner is frequented by most of us involved with Open Door.

Through the years, we have come

to know the dear family who owns it, and they now send their little boy to our preschool. His mom says he cried a lot at his last childcare center, but now he doesn't want to leave Open Door when it's time to go home because he's having so much fun!



The preschoolers enjoy a fun-filled field trip to the Children's Museum.

Gloria is another key person in our community. She has enjoyed EAT meals and TRYAD events for years. She has always been a valued member of the church, but recently has started connecting with the staff more. She loves to volunteer at the office stuffing envelopes and assembling brochures, and she always has a hug and a kind word for everyone. She has disabilities that prevent her from working. She says, "It means a lot to me that you give me something to do."

You are invited to become a part of this special community. Join us for a meal or a work day. Stuff envelopes or babysit children. Tutor a child or mentor a teen. The opportunities are endless! Contact Jessica Wilson today, if you are interested. Call 303-830-2201, x9 or e-mail jwilson@odmdenver.org.



Matt Smith, ODM youth director, talking with high school senior, Nick McRee.

Youth in Community

The Open Door Youth program is fulfilling the mission of building community by reconciling across racial, cultural, and economic lines. Initially, the focus was on at-risk, urban teens, which typically meant they are from poverty-stricken, single-parent families.

Youth Director Matt Smith says it is changing into a more eclectic group. More kids from Open Door Fellowship church are attending than ever before, and more of the youth group kids coming to church. Therefore, they are seeing kids from a variety of racial backgrounds, socio-economic statuses, and family compositions.

Matt has found, though, that teens have the same issues and challenges no matter what their story. The mission of the youth program is to address those by showing kids how to build and maintain healthy relationships and by sharing Christ in a

relevant way with them. The goal is to teach them to live out their faith every day.

There is an opportunity to join our community. We are looking for a new Youth Director, whose role would be to manage the existing programs and take us to the next level. Currently we have a Wednesday night meal, activity and Bible study, camps, outreaches, one-on-ones, as well as various events throughout the year. This position will free Matt Smith to focus on new outreach opportunities. This candidate must have good organizational and relational skills, experience in youth ministry, and have a heart for at-risk teens. If you are interested, please contact Jessica Wilson at 303-830-2201, x9 or jwilson@odmdenver.org. A full job description is available at www.odmdenver.org. Click on the "Join Us" tab.

Open Door Mini Golf

A FUNd-raising
Event for Open
Door Ministries

Saturday, March 7, 2009
10am-4pm

Mr. Biggs
9670 W. Coal Mine
Littleton, CO

Step #1: Obtain SPONSOR MOBILIZER PACKET from ODM with everything you need to get started.

Step #2: Invite FRIENDS and RELATIVES to SPONSOR you.

Step #3: PLAY MINI GOLF WITH US ON MARCH 7 AT MR. BIGGS. Anyone is welcome. The cost is \$5 per person.

Please visit www.odmdenver.org for more information.



Cassie Dime (on right), a former intern, hanging out with some of the girls from the youth group.

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Carol Delcamp
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Sharing a Community Meal

Sunday evenings at Open Door Fellowship are continually blessed by visiting churches, Sunday School classes, and Bible studies who prepare meals for the evening service congregation. Two churches, Calvary Church in Castle Rock and Mountain View Fellowship in Strasburg serve each month, while the rest of the Sundays are taken by groups who might be trying it out for the first time or who have served a few times a year for many years. Each E.A.T. group is responsible for preparing, cooking, setting up, serving, and cleaning up, and they all perform said duties with joy and true servants hearts.

One of the highlights with many of the newer groups has been the number of families, youth and children that come on Sunday nights to be involved with E.A.T. There is one family that comes to the city and does the meal with just the five of them. We have another church that puts the kids on "drink and dessert duty". Their friendly smiles and greetings add greatly to the hospitable environment that we consider paramount to the ministry. The effort and love that each group puts into planning and serving the meal is a wonderful blessing from which to benefit each week, and see the care and concern they have for the members of Open Door Fellowship.



A typical scene at a Sunday night E.A.T. meal

The E.A.T. meal is one more example of how Open Door Ministries strives to build vibrant connections among diverse groups. The people who attend our meal come from all backgrounds, races and socio-economic statuses. A good home-cooked meal brings rich and poor, old and young, together around a table. We encourage the people in the groups that come down to serve to take some time away from pouring drinks and handing out seconds, and sit down with people from the neighborhood and get to know them and their stories. Community is about learning from each other and serving each other. The E.A.T. meal is a time for all involved to learn from each other and grow closer to God through the building of new relationships.

Open Door Ministries is an outreach of Open Door Fellowship Church

Chayah House: Serving single women by providing housing, life skills, and basic Christian discipleship

Cornerstone Home: Providing housing and companionship for disabled men

Esther House: Providing transitional housing for women leaving the sex-trade industry, addictions, and other dangerous lifestyles

E.A.T. (Eating All Together) Reaching people through eating a meal together after church services on Sunday evening.

Ezra: Building relationships with street kids through art.

Nehemiah House: Providing housing for staff, low-income families, and dorm space for Urban Mission teams.

Preschool: Providing inner-city children a quality education founded upon high academics and Christian character development.

School-Age Program: Providing elementary-age children with before-and-after school care, including tutoring and mentoring

Treasure House: Serving single moms and their kids by providing housing, parenting skills, and basic Christian discipleship.

TRYAD: (To Reconcile You Able-bodied and Disabled) Reaching some of the many disabled in our community through needed companionship and evangelism

Urban Missions: Bringing youth and adults to Open Door Ministries for an inner city, short-term mission trip

Youth: Sharing the message and love of Christ to urban youth through Bible studies, activities, and one-on-one relationships