



An AUM Christmas Carol

"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year."

— from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* by Nicholas Bourg / AUM

In the Dickens story *A Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer Scrooge is confronted by three spirits and made to view his and others' lives in the past, present, and future. He comes to understand the true meaning of Christmas as one of hope and love. Minus the scary visions, Mission partners have found this same hope and love for others through client stories. These stories underscore the essence of Christmas: celebrating the birth of Christ and considering His sacrifice for us. The story of Mission alumni Richard Morrison is one example.

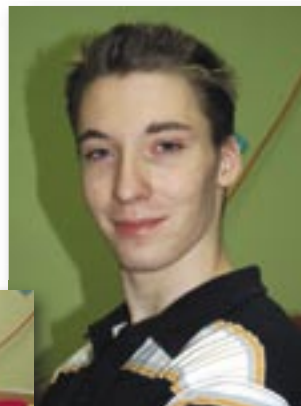
Richard grew up in a family trapped in a life of progressive drug abuse. As an 11 year old, he began taking drugs. "I knew no other way," exclaims Richard, "and by the time I was 14, I was addicted to pain killers." By 19, Richard's life had hit bottom with drug abuse, broken relationships, and jail time. After his release, Richard resumed his reckless use of prescription drugs. However, at this point he began to hunger for a new life; one of sobriety and normalcy. A friend who had completed the Mission's addiction recovery program urged him to give AUM a try. With this encouragement, Richard arrived at the Mission with hope for a better life.

For Richard the Mission was the ticket for realizing his dream of a life free from addiction.



For Richard the Mission was the ticket for realizing his dream of a life free from addiction. He cites one particular moment that changed him forever. "I had just got done reading the Bible, and I was standing in the long line to get dinner, when it hit me that it would be amazing if everyone in this room submitted their lives to God. Then, their life [like mine] would be amazing." Like other Mission alumni, Richard credits the spiritual component of the programs as the key to his success. He turned his life over to Christ and soon graduated from the recovery program with a good job, renewed relationships, and hope for the future.

Richard, now 21, is free from addiction, focused on the Lord, and on track to see dreams come true. He has his own apartment, is working for a fabric company in Atlanta, and is enrolled in college. He plans to become a computer engineer, and, perhaps someday, marry and have his own family. Through God's provision and AUM support, Richard looks forward to a healthy life focused on Christ; a life much different from his own upbringing.



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Richard Morrison
AUM Alumni

Richard's story of struggle and recovery testifies to "the real reason for the season." His story and others provide proof that the Author of our salvation brings healing and miracles each day. In a sense, like Scrooge, every day becomes Christmas Day for many coming through the doors of the Mission; a true Christmas Carol providing hope, renewal and a life-saving relationship with Jesus.

How to give to the Mission:

- Donate online at www.atlantaunionmission.org/donate
- Read about volunteer opportunities
- Find Thrift Store locations near you





Jim Reese
President & CEO

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have no place to stay! Is there room in your inn?

As we enter that time of year when we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, I am so thankful not only for the uniqueness of His birth but also for the fact that a Savior was born to us!

As I read in Luke I am reminded that the Savior of the world was born in a dank, smelly manger because there was no place for the family to find shelter! Imagine traveling a great distance only to find that you have no reservations!

It's hard to grasp the idea of having no place to stay, let alone when the overnight stay may well include the birth of a baby! Every day at the Mission we have, men, women, women with children, and even expectant mothers at our door. Their plea is much like Jesus' family: "Is there any room for us? Is there a place I can rest and be warm?" These beautiful people served by AUM have no home, no warm bed, and often no sign of hope in their faces.

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Daily we are able to say to the needy, "Come in; we have room at our inn for you!" In our shelters we provide a warm meal, a place to stay and a big dose of kindness. We also pray with them and for them asking that they might come to know the Savior who was born so that we all could have eternal life!

I find great joy in seeing these desperate men and women in need of help, move forward, grow in a relationship with Christ, and regain a productive life. I see them battle old habits, and, with Christ, break the chains of addiction and abuse. I observe women learning to be godly moms and reestablish relationships with families. At Atlanta Union Mission we are blessed and honored to

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see the miracles of Christ's healing power every day all of which began with the birth of a baby to a poor mom and dad who found shelter in a manger. A simple story that delivered the simple truth that a Savior is born to us all!

Mission stories are powerful testimonies of mercy, forgiveness and redemption; stories of moms who have graduated from AUM programs and have children in college performing at the honor roll level; stories of men who have left addiction behind and now have meaningful employment; and stories of marriages restored and families reunited. Addiction, abuse and homelessness have been broken resulting in families moving toward healthy relationships! These people came knocking at the Mission's door and God met them at the threshold of a new life. Their lives and their families will never be the same!

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As we celebrate the birth of Christ, I thank you all for your continued support through volunteering, donating and praying for the Mission. As you experience Christmas, please be reminded that because of you we have the opportunity to present Christ to those needy in body, mind and spirit. As you allow us to open the door, we are able to say, "Come in! We have room for you and are thankful for the opportunity to pour into your life."

May you and your family have a truly blessed Christmas.



Atlanta Union Mission is a Christian ministry that brings Christ's healing power to any person in crisis through programs of rescue, recovery and re-entry.



Trivia, Yule Logs, Fruitcakes and a Little Help from Friends

by James Gleghorn / Chief Development Officer

As I sit trying to decide what to write for this newsletter, several thoughts come to mind like the tax advantage of giving at year end (Not a new concept but a very practical benefit of giving). Can you send a last minute gift to help the Mission during our busiest season? Many of you have given over and above in 2009, and for that we are dramatically thankful.



A topic I can't get out of my head is: What is a Yule Log? Or even a Yule Tide? I thought it must have something to do with a misanthropic Northerner messing with our "Y'all" but then, like everyone else, I went to the internet.

Having figured out the context to the celebratory Yule events, I moved on. But what shall I move on to?

My fascination with trivia, coupled with my short attention span, is a good analogy for how quickly the "warm fuzzies" of the holiday season fade. I went to the internet, found out what I needed to know, and moved on. I feel more informed but won't give it another thought until next Christmas. The momentary exhilaration of holiday giving for many feeds our desire to "feel better" about ourselves until next year.

If we could contain homelessness and addiction to November and December, then we would be all set! What would Atlanta look like if everyone helped year round? Before you take me to task, I know

that there are many faithful monthly supporters for whom I am grateful. Your gifts (along with donations from periodic givers) make what we do possible. I really am addressing those who can do more but don't know how.

There are many ways to help the Mission year-round. On our website (www.atlantaunionmission.org) you can set up monthly giving. Could you increase your generous monthly donation just a bit? A few people increasing their monthly giving would be a tremendous help meeting basic needs. On the website you can sign up to volunteer, to donate, or, more importantly, to pray for us on a regular basis. We desperately need your prayers and support all year!

Your help, encouragement, and prayers are what keep us going. Monetary gifts, volunteer hours and gifts-in-kind are the foundation of our work serving broken and desperate men, women and children. As you savor the holidays and give thanks, take a moment to ask, "Have I done all I can do to help those in need?"



One last thought...what's up with the whole fruitcake thing? Someone told me that there are only two or three fruitcakes that exist. They just keep getting passed around and never eaten!

God's blessings to you and a Merry Christmas!



AUM Thrift Stores need your Donations

Appliances, furniture, books & household items for stores and programs support by Cameron Turner / AUM

With Christmas and the New Year on the horizon, many people quote the old adage "out with the old and in with the new." As you do a bit of "getting the old out", please consider an in-kind donation to the Mission's Thrift Stores. Your tax deductible donation of furniture, appliances, household items, books, clothing, autos and other belongings can make a world of difference to the people served by Atlanta Union Mission.

What does your donation mean?

- Men, women and children in AUM programs will have those everyday essentials that make life more comfortable.
- Men at our Potter's House facility can learn solid job skills as they repair furniture, appliances and automobiles.
- Mission programs are equipped with basic living necessities while allowing the monetary giving to go to outreach for the addicted, homeless and hungry.
- In-kind donations mean that we can supply our four North Georgia Thrift Stores with sellable merchandise so as to generate revenue to fund the Mission programs. Of the net store proceeds, 100% goes directly into our programs. Annually, store revenues provide some \$500,000 to our programs. We need this amount to increase to keep up with rising expenses.

Our vision realized is that each store location is a ministry venue; not just a retail outlet with great values. We pray for our customers and have recently installed prayer boxes to extend that ministry. Our heart's desire is that we can pour into you as you bless others with your purchases. Thrift Store & More as an AUM ministry exists to serve and to be a light of hope within North Georgia communities. That light, we trust, is shining in your life.

Christmas Memories - Past, Present & Future *by Josh Harrelson / AUM*

What a wonderful time of the year. The Christmas season brings back childhood memories and excitement about new memories to come. For those who take shelter at Atlanta Union Mission, however, it's likely that the past year has been one of addiction, hunger or homelessness. Childhood holiday memories for some folks are recollections of warmth, comfort and family, but more often the memories are painful reminders of sadness, abuse, and loneliness.

For Mission clients this Christmas offers the opportunity to be different from any past Christmas as well as provide a springboard into a life of recovery and happiness. As these women, children and men come through our doors, our purpose is to bring the healing love of Christ to them as well as shelter, food, and the tools to break away from addiction and poor life choices. The mission of the Mission during the holidays, and year round, is to bring healing and recovery, while replacing dark memories with the light of Christ. Within the walls of AUM there is hope, peace, and love from a family of believers who are dedicated to the clients. Meeting the needs of food, clothing, and shelter is only the starting point for Mission staff and volunteers. Most importantly we offer clients hope through faith in Christ, as well as programs of recovery that equip them with knowledge and support leading to a healthy,

productive future. For many in our shelters and programs this Christmas and many Christmases to come will bring bright memories as they experience love, joy, and peace.

This Christmas season, as we've done for the past 71 years, we offer food, shelter and clothing.



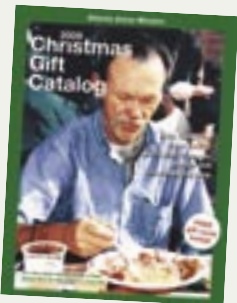
This Christmas season, as we've done for the past 71 years, we offer food, shelter and clothing. The greatest gift we offer, however, is the hope and assurance of a new life in Jesus Christ. As Christmas draws near, we ask that you pray for our clients; that they would look confidently to the future and greater memories to be made. Please consider how you can become a "memory maker" for those in need. Some of our needs include:

- **Monetary donations to support Mission programs and shelters**
- **In-kind donations that are used in our shelters, programs and Thrift Stores**
- **More volunteers! Take a brief "mission trip" to an AUM shelter for a few hours**
- **Prayer for the people in our shelters, the volunteers and the staff**

AUM Christmas Catalog

Last minute shopping with a real purpose

You've waited to the last minute for a few special gifts? No problem! A gift selected from the Mission's 2009 Christmas Gift Catalog is guaranteed to help people in need while giving that person on your list an honor that will go way beyond a tie or a new CD.



When you select your gifts for needy men, women and children in the Mission's shelters and programs, you will have the option to send an attractive gift card announcing that the gifts are given in your friend's or family member's name.

Shopping from the 2009 Christmas Gift Catalog is a great way to help those in crisis while gifting your special someone with knowing that they are a part of providing food, shelter, and other essentials of life to those who can really use the help.

Please visit www.AtlantaUnionMission.org/gift for access to the catalog. Ordering is simple and the feeling you'll get will be extraordinary!!



***Help People. *Get a Tax Deduction. *Feel Great!**
To donate, purchase or find out more—call Dean at 706-354-5569