

Campus Crusade for Christ: Boston Metro

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I joined other new staff from Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions for a conference in middle-of-nowhere PA, to receive further training on raising our initial support, to take a course on personal financial stewardship, and simply to be encouraged by other new staff who were also raising support. The conference itself was great and even refreshing, but what was most notable about those couple of days was our free time one afternoon.

So, we were in middle-of-nowhere PA. There was not much to do, so me and three friends took a walk down the street to a Revolutionary War gravesite. Like I said, not much to do. The gravestones were interesting and the trees all around us were still beautiful autumn colors, but what ended up grabbing our attention on this outing of ours was the sobbing man who happened to be visiting the graveyard as well.

We were taken back when we heard his loud, disturbing cry, "I don't want to die. I want to live... I want to live." We looked at each other and back at the stones at our feet, at first not knowing what to do. Did he want to be alone or should we cross social norms and try to comfort this stranger the best we could? He did not look like the type to be easily comforted or, more likely, he was not the average person us campus staff normally ministered to: he was middle-aged, very built, and covered with tattoos.

A couple weeks before, though, I was challenged in a CCC New Testament Survey course to keep my eyes open for the opportunities God puts before me to love and minister to others. Certain periods of time seem to lack radical situations of God's divine hand in bringing people along my path, but I was challenged to consider that maybe God was not intrusting those situations to me at the moment because my mind was too self-absorbed to even see, let alone act on, the opportunities He has set before me. A few days later, God also had reminded me that as I pray for others, my heart needs to be open to being an answer for that prayer.

God was preparing my heart for this afternoon. I turned to the other girls with me, who were also shocked and concerned about this poor man, and we decided to pray for him and also pray for what we were to do, or not do.

The minute that we were done praying, the man walked up to us unashamedly with tears still rolling down his face. He asked us for the time. As we answered him we asked if he was okay and if we could pray for him, as his approach was a direct answer to one of our prayers.

His name was Ralph, from the East Side of Manhattan. "I don't want to die," he said in a thick New York accent and watery eyes, trying his best to pull himself together for us. "I wasted ten years of my life in prison. I got out this past spring and now I just found out that I have cancer. I WASTED my life and now I have nothing left. I almost committed suicide by overdosing last week—it would be easier for my family—but I just couldn't do it. I met with a pastor and he told me to come to this conference center, to spend time away and pray to God." The cry that first terrified us in the graveyard was Ralph's petition to the Lord for a second chance, for healing.

Ralph was seeking relationship with God for the first time in the 52 years of his life. He understood the reality of his broken condition and the need for a relationship with the Almighty. At that moment, God brought him into our lives so that we could share the gospel and the hope that Jesus gives us through our eternal security in Him, no matter if its God's will for him to be healed of cancer or whether Ralph would come home to the Lord sooner. Because of Jesus' blood, Ralph had hope no matter what God's divine plan was.

Oh how certainly beautiful God's plan is, how ever big or small the moment. Praise God for how He continues to lead and teach His children, so that others may experience hope through Jesus!



← The four of us, minutes before we met Ralph

**For His glory,
Jenn Bennett**

Please pray:

- For guidance for the Boston Metro CCC staff, as we reevaluate our strategy for reaching the city
- For our new Boston Bridges ministry, a ministry focused specifically on reaching international students
- That we all, as the body of Christ, would be open to the opportunities God gives us to be salt and light to the world
- That we would remember the meaning of Christmas and will worship the Lord for the coming of His Son
- That Ralph would continue to grow in his new relationship with the Lord; that he would experience God's peace and even His healing

Praise God:

- For 19 students receiving Christ this fall!
- For God bringing in all of the financial support I need to report, so I will be back doing ministry this coming semester!
- For the opportunity to meet Ralph and share God's hope with him

