

Christmas is creeping up faster than I expected. I hope this letter and card are in your hands before the 25th ;)

A sad reality of Christmas is that many people are lonely and depressed during this time. I work with about a dozen youth who are foster kids. Being a foster kid makes Christmas even more of a mix bag of emotions.

Last night at Station X, I was having a conversation with a girl in her early 20's who has two kids in foster care. She's trying to get her life in order so that she can have them back. Soon she will know whether she is allowed to spend time with her kids on Christmas Day. I hope and pray that she finds the strength and encouragement to "clean up" fast and to be a loving, capable mother for her two infants.

Last week I spent a lot of time with a 13 year old foster boy who recently ran away from his foster home. He showed up at Station X after having spent a couple nights between the police station

and the streets. The next day I spent a lot of time hanging out with him. By becoming his friend I was able to learn his story, help him and show him love. He was running into a lot of rejection on the streets. I sensed he was too scared to even acknowledge that he didn't have a plan for "where to lay his head". He seemed more concerned with the "excitement" of hanging out with drug dealers and getting in trouble with the law. He was actually proud of his new street name, "Fresh Meat."

I managed to find him a place to stay for a couple weeks. Still, his situation is far from fixed. Our investigations into Social Services have lead nowhere and it seems that this is another case of a child getting "lost in the system". He knows though, that the other YFC staff and I are here to help and we'll keep on looking out for him.

At Station X last week my talk was based on the fact that "God will forgive you for any sin. He'll always forgive and won't hold back. Because He loves you." I hope that truth gets through to him.

I don't mean to rain on your Christmas cheer. I just want to reflect on some of the sad realities facing our youth. They need us all to show love during a season when there is supposed to be more love to share. Maybe each of us can do something extra for a lonely person during the holidays.

I think about one friend in particular. He's a

Station X regular who I've mentioned before in previous letters. He was also a foster child (he is now 20) and grew up in terrible living situations. He doesn't know his father and his mother is a severe drug addict. He hates Christmas and gets seriously depressed during this time. Last year, two other Station X volunteers and I brought a full Christmas dinner to him and his roommates so that we could have a little "family" dinner. I then called him on Christmas Day. These things made a difference. As I write, I'm challenged to do something like this again for him. This is what the holidays are all about... showing love to those around us as a part of our celebration of the embodiment of love being born, Jesus.

I'm excited about the new year. I will be involved in a couple of new youth outreaches that I'll update you on in my next letter. I want to sincerely thank all of you who support me in so many ways. Your generosity and prayers enable me to expand my work with "youth with promise". Elisa and I thank God for you and for the opportunity to be involved in this ministry.

God bless you all during the holidays and may He enable you to sincerely love those around you.

Love Calvin and Elisa

Special thanks to www.imagevine.com for use of the imagery.

"I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice." Ezekiel 34:16



**think
of others**