When people think of a “churched” region, they immediately think of the South and the Bible belt. We pass churches all the time, and sometimes it feels like there is a church on every corner. As I grew up going to church every Sunday, my grandmother would give me a gold dollar if I could recite Psalm One. I am sure many people in the south can relate to this narrative, but I have also learned that many children have a lack of basic Bible knowledge in our own city of Jackson, Mississippi.

This year, we registered 81 children in our after-school tutoring program. At the start of each semester, we test each child on their basic knowledge of biblical principles. We ask questions like, “Who was Jesus’ mother?” “How did Jesus die?” The majority of the children in our program do not know the answer to these basic questions. Living right among some of the most “churched” people in America are children in our city who don’t know who paid the price for their sin.

Amid challenges, we have seen tremendous growth in the last year in our tutoring program. Our primary focus is on literacy and reading comprehension. According to research done by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 82% of fourth graders from low-income families are not reading proficiently at grade level. Two-thirds of children not reading proficiently by the 4th grade will either end up on welfare or not graduate high school. If children cannot read, this also leaves them reliant upon someone else to interpret God’s Word for them. We are passionate about equipping children in Jackson with the ability to get to know Christ through His Word for themselves.
CAMP HOPE

This summer, we partnered with many churches and donors to provide an amazing summer experience for fifty children in our eight-week summer day camp, Camp Hope. Studies have shown that high-quality summer programs can disrupt learning loss. We tested each child at the beginning and end of the summer, and we saw a 35.2% increase in reading proficiency. We not only saw disruption of loss, but we saw gains.

Seeing these children in our program each day allows an amazing opportunity to build deep relationships. We have the opportunity to share the gospel each day and talk about deeper aspects of faith. Having a pool at our facility allows us the ability to teach children how to swim and Friday field trips allow them to be exposed to greater learning opportunities. Due to the amazing support we have received we have been able to have more children experience the love of Christ. We plan to have even more children next summer.

ESSENTIAL FOOD

As a child, I used to tell my mom often “I am starving.” She would always respond with the phrase, “You should be grateful because in other parts of the world there are children that are actually starving.” Sadly, you don’t have to go that far to find children facing real hunger. Each day as children get off the bus and enter our facility, we are met with the statement “I am hungry.” Within walking distance from where many of us work or go to church, there are truly hungry people.

Giving a meal to a child or groceries to a mother is a tangible way to communicate Christ’s love to someone. This opens a door to share what is truly important. Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4, “but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.” While we are on track to feed 10,000 people this year, it is our ultimate goal that people obtain something far more valuable than a good meal.

We need your support for more children to have the ability to read God’s Word for themselves and for more children to return home to a cooked meal. You are the answer to the issues our city is facing. By giving, you can empower us to bring on more tutors, support more JPS students with the tools needed to succeed, and expand our facility to give out more food to families here in Jackson. Join us in engaging our community with the love of Christ.

To give go to wewillgo.org/donate or mail checks to 806 N. Farish St. Jackson, MS 39202

"Here am I. Send me!” ISAIAH 6:8