

STA OUTREACH REPORT DECEMBER 8, 2016

From Tina:

Hey, YOU!:

"I've never quit loving you and never will.

Expect love, love, and more love!"

~GOD

(Jeremiah 31:3)

That is the quote I might turn into a banner for outreach on Thursday at STA. I'm not sure I will be at my post because of a snowstorm forecast to be on its way for the same day.

Also, a healthy supply of CS periodicals has been received in Spokane - thank you Betty in Grants Pass, Oregon.

Meanwhile, I've been thinking a lot about the interview (below) I heard two weeks ago and have been wanting to share with you all. There is so much love and hope and practical helpfulness expressed by Andy Grammer. I just love him for his big heart. Below is the transcript. It is even more powerful if you listen to the interview online. We reach out to the same population at the bus station each week.

Here you go, dear readers: The interview of Andy Grammer by Scott Simon, November 26, 2016 - NPR Weekend Edition).

Tina

SCOTT SIMON, HOST: Andy Grammer's new single, "Fresh Eyes," is a love song. But the song got added meaning when he provided haircuts, clean clothes, meals and kindness to people

seeking shelter at the Union Rescue Mission in L.A.

GRAMMER: You dress up just a little. And I'm like, oh, damn. So suddenly, I'm in love with a stranger.

SIMON: And he filmed his new video on Skid Row in Los Angeles in September. And he encourages people who were moved by the video to help the homeless. Andy Grammer joins us from the studios of NPR West. Thanks so much for being with us.

GRAMMER: Oh, man, psyched to be here. This is awesome.

SIMON: Well, it's a very moving video. Tell us what it was like - the time you spent at the Union Mission - who you met there, what you talked about.

GRAMMER: It was such an incredible, incredible experience. You know, I've - I started as a street performer. So I kind of have - homelessness is really close to my heart because I performed out on 3rd Street Promenade in Los Angeles for about four years. That was the way I payed my rent.

So there would be a lot of interactions with homeless people out there - and just kind of getting to know them beyond just that they're homeless. So if you're walking through your day, and you see someone who's homeless on the street, you kind of pass by them. You're busy. You have things to do. And they're just homeless.

But if you're out there like I was on the street for, like, eight hours singing, and it's time for lunch - and there's a homeless man who's not just homeless anymore. His name's Bob - 'cause we spent, like, two hours chatting and getting to know each other. Kind of seeing past that was kind of the inspiration for this music

video.

So to go down to the Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles and spend a good - I mean, it was a long filming day. We probably spent - I don't know - eight to 10 hours down there just to really get to know people and share some love with them and clean them up and see them view themselves differently at the end of the day.

SIMON: Yeah.

GRAMMER: It was really powerful. One of the - by far, the best day of my year.

SIMON: 'Cause what's so extraordinarily moving about the video is not just to see people who you probably thought you knew. Oh, there's a homeless person. There's somebody who's shaggy. There's somebody who's down on their luck. But to see them after they've had their hair cut, their hair fixed - clean clothes on - and to see them, you know, not just cry but smile.

GRAMMER: To smile and be like, oh, you know - and when you're in such an intense situation like that, all the things that are occurring are so rich. So you clean somebody up. And then you ask them just kind of like - just sweetly, not expecting any sort of intense answer back. You just go like, how you feel?

SIMON: Yeah.

GRAMMER: And then the answer back was, I feel human. And you're like, whoa (laughter). Or, you know, I had another interaction with someone where I went in. And I was learning about where they stay. And they were showing me their bunks and talking about how they got there. And we'd already started kind of cleaning people up.

And so I came back from seeing where they were staying. And I started to have a conversation with this gentleman who was clearly a part of the video crew. And we talked for a while just about how cool it was that we were there. And at the end of the conversation, I was like, oh, so what are you doing here? Are you on - are you part of, like, the catering? Are you part of the director's team? And he goes, no, no. I'm, like, one of the guys that you cleaned up.

And I was like, whoa. My brain - my brain is exploding. Why was I - what was the difference there? Why was I talking to you differently? We're all just humans here. You know, what is that gap that we can all overcome when interacting with this population?

GRAMMER: And now all I see is you with fresh eyes, fresh eyes.

SIMON: What did you say to folks when you got them to appear in the video?

GRAMMER: I said, I want you to be the star of my video (laughter). And they got super excited. And one of the - you know, one of the first people you see is a lady named Loretta (ph). And she was really excited. And she's like, oh, well, then I'm going to be the best damn star you've ever had in your video. And she got really - she got pumped up.

What I think was so interesting was the clothes were cool. The haircuts were nice. Putting some makeup on some of the ladies was really sweet. But what was the most important takeaway was they felt a sense of purpose for the day.

SIMON: Yeah.

GRAMMER: And so that's what they kept saying. It was like, oh, man, I don't even feel like I usually do today. There's like things that I'm doing that are important. And I feel a part of something. What I want to do is figure out how to keep going back down there and give them a sense of purpose in whatever way that is at my disposal.

SIMON: So you plan to keep going there.

GRAMMER: Oh, I mean, definitely. It's one of those things where you feel so incredible. I mean, if you go and give service, especially in a situation like this, where the need is so high that even a little thing that you do will create such a ripple, you feel incredible. And it's this circle of win, win, win that I never want to end.

SIMON: Andy Grammer - [you can see his video "Fresh Eyes" on our website, npr.org](#). He joined us from NPR West. Thanks so much for being with us. Good luck.

GRAMMER: Thank you so, so much.

GRAMMER: (Singing) If I could bottle this up - bottle, bottle this up - I would. I would bottle this up - bottle, bottle this up. I would.

STA report continued:

“There is a very thin line, they say, between the sublime and the ridiculous.” An encounter at the bus depot today illustrates what I mean: When I stand behind the cart, with books and periodicals freely displayed and freely given, I like to catch the eye of those curious about our presence by posting an uplifting quote printed on a big sheet of paper. Today’s quote, printed out from my computer used

an eye-catching font and I clipped it to the front of the cart; it said, **“Hey YOU: “I’ve never quit loving you and never will. Expect love, love, and more love!” ~GOD** (Jeremiah 31:3).

A woman rolled up in her wheel chair and asked to have the signed original of that statement. I told her I had just printed it out using my computer and that she was welcome to have my display copy. “No, I want the original.” I said again that I had just copied it from the Bible (The Message) and this sheet of paper was all there was. She accused me:

“You mean you signed God’s name? - You are a forger!” (She was serious.)

She wheeled away in anger.

As I thought it over I “walked” that “fine line”. I thought about the message in all its sublimity and actuality - from her perspective. I giggled.

A fellow asked if we had the Bible Lessons for this December. We don’t. He said, “That’s okay, I’ll just head up to the Reading Room at the church and get it.” Nice!

Today the windchill and low temperature caused shelter-seeking. The depot was loaded with folks keeping warm. I observed people charging their phones, sleeping (snoring), snacking, quietly chatting, staring into space... The smell of consumed alcohol permeated the

air. A tall man, perhaps homeless, walked by wearing sweat pants, a cotton shirt, sockless shoes, and a cotton blanket for a coat.

How our hearts reach out to everyone in need - how their dignity is respected! I was reminded of an article in the CSM in the "People Making a Difference" column, describing a young CEO named Beau Heyen and his team who have brought restaurant-style service and "dining with dignity" to the Community Kitchen in Kansas City (December 5, 2016, p.42-3). Compassion, respect, dignity are our watchwords at STA.

Another fellow, a shining example of generosity – although clothed in dirty garments and with unkempt hair - tried to give me a dollar to support Outreach. Couldn't accept it, but I could accept the kindness expressed and told him so.

After long listening to a man describing in detail a difficult past involving rape and incest, I turned from the monologue by placing my hand on his shoulder to get his attention, to move his thought into the present. He asked me to pray for him. I asked him to not allow the past to define who he truly is as the beloved child of God.

So went my shift. Perhaps we are just as watched over as the people seeking refuge in the bus station. I had moved the cart to a better location during the shift and one of our "Free" signs must have fallen to the floor. A woman who I see every week found me and said she had turned the sign into the customer service booth. Then she said she

would go back upstairs and retrieve the sign for me. Soon she returned and said they wouldn't let her have it. I was touched by her diligence and care.