

A Shoebox Filled with Love

"We love because he first loved us." – 1 John 4:19 (NIV)

Have you ever received a gift that made you feel truly special? A present that wasn't just about the items inside but about the love behind it. That is exactly what happens when a child receives an Operation Christmas Child shoebox. More than just a box filled with toys, hygiene items, and school supplies, it is a tangible expression of Jesus' love, sent from the heart of a believer across the world.



Feeling truly special

Imagine a young girl or boy in a small village, barefoot and uncertain about the world beyond his home. They don't know what it means to be loved by Jesus. Then one day, volunteers arrive with colorful shoeboxes. With wide eyes, they open their box to find a stuffed animal, a toothbrush, a soccer ball, and even a handwritten note saying, "Jesus loves you!" His heart stirs in a way he doesn't understand. This simple gift is an open door, a sign that someone, somewhere, loves him—and even more, that Jesus does.

These shoeboxes do more than bring smiles. They introduce children **to the greatest gift of all: the love of Jesus Christ**. Many of them have never heard His name before. But as they hold that shoebox and listen to the pastors and volunteers explain why it was sent, they begin to understand. The box isn't just from a stranger; it is from Jesus, filled with His love.

In John 3:16, we are reminded that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son for us. That means His love reaches every nation, every child, and every heart willing to receive Him. These shoeboxes are a small but mighty way to demonstrate that love. They open doors for conversations about Jesus, leading many children to receive Him as their Savior.

The impact of these gifts stretches far beyond the moment of opening them. The older children are invited to take part in The Greatest Journey, a discipleship program that teaches them



Waiting to receive the box from Jesus



A loving gift from Jesus

about Jesus and how to share His love with others. Through this, one shoebox can spark a movement of faith in an entire community.

As believers, we are called to share God's love in ways both big and small. While you may never meet the child who receives your shoebox, know that your act of kindness is planting seeds of faith.

I recently had the great privilege to give the shoeboxes to children in the Dominican Republic. This, for me, was a mountain-top experience. Just as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fish, He multiplies the impact of each shoebox to touch countless lives.

Let this devotional be a reminder that love is meant to be shared. Whether through a shoebox, a kind word, or an act of service, we are called to reflect the love of Christ. So, as you prepare a shoebox or pray for those receiving them, remember this truth: we love because He first loved us.

Grover Duling, CBC Executive Board Chair

Weekly Prayer Points

“Why do you look for the living among the dead?” Luke 24:5 (NIV).

We begin the week with Easter! Resurrection! Do you know that early Brethren did not celebrate Easter? Or Lent, or Christmas, or Advent? They believed that every time we gather as believers, we should celebrate the Resurrection! They weren't wrong. But today, our Resurrection Celebrations are a big day in the life of our congregations. Enough beautiful Easter flowers to give you an allergic reaction! Sing! Praise! Hallelujah! And welcome new folks and occasional worshippers with love and friendship, and tell the old, old story again! Pray this week for a renewed and revitalized heart for evangelism in your life, your congregation's life, and in the CBC!

Please pray for these congregations and pastors:

- Sunnyside Congregation in New Creek, WV and Pastor Randy L. Shoemaker
- Tearcoat Congregation in Augusta, WV and pastor Thomas Rowan

CBC Prayer Committee