

Faith4Living - History & Goals

by Tom Kiser

'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' - Matthew 5:14-16

The following article details how God called our family to leave our rural, pastorate in Western Pennsylvania and begin a ministry of spreading the message of Purifying Grace in New York City.

Many cities are built on a hill or series of hills. New York City is not noted for its hills but for its Port. The greatest numbers of visitors and immigrants to the United States have come through this great and scenic harbor. New York City is a missionary's paradise. There are not many places in the world where you can meet and talk with people from Russia, China, Taiwan, Japan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Australia, India, Afghanistan, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Israel, Turkey, Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Greece, Albania, Italy, Sicily, Finland, Norway, France, Spain, Ireland, England, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Trinidad, Grenada, Barbados, Antigua, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba, Panama, Guatemala, Mexico. This is our constant privilege. I recorded meeting people from every country listed above in our first two years here.

Imagine talking with and sharing the gospel with Muslims, Black Militants, Hindus, Moonies, Satanists, Mormons, Buddhists, Jehovah Witness's, Jews, Taoists. Living here in New York City has provided us with this opportunity also.

It was these vast numbers of ethnically diverse people that fueled my great excitement as I considered the possibility of beginning an urban ministry in NYC. I wanted to spread the message of God's Victorious Grace where it is seldom heard. Since being here these 10 years we have realized many times the ones we minister to today may carry this message to others around the world. Urban ministry was not entirely new to me. I was involved with the city ministries at God's Bible School in Cincinnati, Ohio. I had chosen GBS for my ministry training because of their urban ministry opportunities. However I did not go directly to New York City after graduation. God led us to pastor a small

church in rural Pennsylvania. The "us", at that time, included my wife, Faith and our first son, Seth.

We served 7 years in this pastorate and the church was united behind us. We enjoyed the country setting and the kind hearted people we ministered to. However in our 7th year there I began to feel a burden for reaching people who had never heard the message of salvation. In the spring of 1989 I made a trip to New York City. I did not know the layout of the city or any ministry there. I had, though, a growing conviction that it was likely that God was calling us to go there.

I was amazed that on this first trip to New York City I was offered a free place to stay and use as an office in Manhattan. In God's Providence an old lady on the street directed me to speak to an officer at the the Salvation Army located on 14th Street in Manhattan. I shared my burden for starting a ministry in the city with this man. He was very interested and directed me to speak to the Lieutenant at the Salvation Army Corp on 52nd Street. To my surprise the Officer in charge offered me the use of a storage room in their basement. Except for cleaning out the junk and refinishing the room it was rent-free. New York is the earth's center of finance, Media, Publishing and Fashion. Commercial Space there in Midtown Manhattan was known to rent for \$200 a month, per square foot. People who live in this "Neighborhood" have the highest per capita income in the USA. I had barely enough to keep the car running. I wasn't even looking for a place to stay and God had thrown open the door to a free office and sleeping quarters to start our ministry from.

As we sought for God's will we realized there were many great logistical considerations to overcome to make such a radical move possible. How do we start? Where will our family live? How will we pay the bills?

I felt lead to go first to my conference council with my desire to begin a work in New York City. I am an ordained Minister with the Pilgrim Holiness Church of New York Inc. While I had the encouragement and blessing of the conference council it was clear that there were not finances to support a work such as this. This meant that we would be real pioneers and pioneering is a lot of real hard and sometimes strange work.

In the late summer of 1989 we left our home of 7 years in Pennsylvania and moved our family to upstate New York to be near family and friends while I prepared the way for them into the city. I started by working 2 days a week delivering rats and mice to various labs in the Northeast United States. That left 5 days to split between our goals in New York City and being a husband to my wife and a dad to our 2 sons and 2 daughters.

After delivering rats for 5 months, I left the rat job and joined the New York City "rat race" that even today takes me at least 12 hours each day of my 5-day workweek. I became a messenger delivering packages all over the metro area. It

became a crash course on the city. I learned the way to get from here to there. I learned where to park and where not to park. That part of my training enriched the city quite a few times. Parking tickets are serious business in New York. I learned the basic distribution of ethnic groups in the five boroughs and about the racial tensions. I learned where the gays congregated. I learned the safe times to be in certain areas and what times required extra caution. I have learned no place is completely safe. I had my personal laptop stolen from my office at work. I know first hand the fatigue of long commutes on mass transit.

I learned the pressures of working and losing jobs. I left the delivery job to work in a hotel in their sales department. Business is brutal in New York and our company downsized and I was left with good references but no job. I did temporary work until I networked to my present position in another hotel. This is a thumb nail sketch of what it means to be a resident of New York. These hardships have been a great school. I arrived in New York City with Pastoral Experience. In God's wonderful providence I now know the stresses and responsibilities of the business world.

Some will consider this as the the down side of living in the city. But the difficulties are also great blessings! Because life is tough in the city people are hungry for answers. There are a multitude of people here who have a real commitment to Jesus Christ. It is comparatively easy to talk about spiritual things to people in this city. The opportunities to share the Gospel and disciple believers are very many.

In these 10 years of living in New York City the questions of how will we start, where will we live, and how will we pay the bills have been taken care of. God's clocks keep perfect time. We have seen God relieve a situation or send help for a need again and again. God instructed us to pray "Give us this day our daily bread." He has literally provided daily bread as well as a bigger home, a 15-passenger van for transporting people to our services and new chairs for the services. It has been wonderful to see God provide for and maintain the work He called us into.

We started this summary of our New York adventure with a Bible quotation from Matthew 5. "A city that is set on a hill can not be hid." Neither can we hide a family with 7 children and soon to be 8. This verse finishes by saying to "let your light shine so that people will see your light and be drawn to God."

Our work here has often been shaped quite naturally around our family. As other missionaries have found, children are a major drawing attraction to people. Our first challenge was to show an alternative way of raising children. We did this by home schooling our children and by teaching and expecting characterized behavior from each of our children. This caused some in our neighborhood to ask how to raise their children. We began a Parenting Ministry using material called "Growing Kids God's Way." This 18-week program has been a benefit to those who come and has given us greater exposure in our community.

The behavior of our children brought a man in our community to offer his newly remodeled home to us. He had remodeled his home for himself. Circumstances forced him to move his family from the city and he wanted to be careful in renting. The children had impressed him and he offered his home for a rate far less than the market. We have been in this home for the past 8 years and our relationship with our landlord remains very cordial.

The home schooling of our children became another shaping aspect of our ministry. We are founding members of the "Kings Choice" home school support group for Brooklyn and have served on its steering committee since its inception. There have been numerous ways that we have been able to touch lives through our association with this group. It is a our great joy to network with so many people in New York who call on God and believe in Jesus as their Savior. Through this we are continually given opportunities to minister to families.

Our children are an important part of our ministry team. Early in our time here we began hosting groups from different Bible Schools who come to New York for weekend mission work and cross-cultural exposure. These groups of young people pass out tracts and witness to multicultural people in various parts of this city. These young people get a taste of urban ministry. We have also been able to host some students for internships as mission majors.

Time after time our children give up beds and room to allow others to come. They clean and rearrange our limited space from church room to bedroom to play room to storeroom to schoolroom. We have learned to get the most mileage from every inch of space we have. I tell you this because it might seem as if our children would want to be anywhere but here in New York City. But, this is not the case. Our oldest boys are planning and schooling to be servants for Jesus in this ministry. Our girls are also interested in helping in various jobs.

During one session of parenting classes in our Living Room our children conducted a Character Class for the children of these parents in our multipurpose church room. They are dedicated members of our Mission Team. They witness, teach, pass out tracts, call people for prayer requests, set up accommodations for visitors and serve along side my wife and I. We thank God for His work in our children. It is a joy to see them continue to mature in their walk with Christ as they labor for Him here.

We struggle, as do most of you, with the dreams of what we would like to do or have the ability to do. The time we have already been here has been very beneficial. God has been faithfully molding us and this ministry. He has helped us formulate what our ministry is and what it needs to become.

Faith4Living Vision and Goals

It is our goal to impact the People and World Cultures of this city on as large a scale as possible with the message of Purifying Grace. After seven years of

Pastoring a Church from our home God has directed us to focus on assisting the Body of Christ in this City through the following:

- **Accountability Discipleship Groups**

We are now in the beginning stages of developing an Accountability Discipleship Ministry. We hope to establish a network of Accountability Discipleship Groups in various ethnic neighborhoods throughout the city. These small groups will build one another up in Holy Living. The Members of these support groups will come together in combined meetings on a scheduled basis, to worship, hear the Word, edify each other and be mobilized to reach others throughout the city. As these various world peoples and cultures become mighty in God's Spirit they will spread the message of Heart Purity to their cultures here in the city and their homelands across the world.

- **Open Air Campaigns**

Taking the Gospel outside the Church and into the streets is a great blessing. Most of the people within the city will never darken the Church door unless the Church takes its message out to them first. Why keep the Good News inside the Church when we have freedom to take it to the masses? We plan to unite with other Christians throughout the city and enlarge our Open Air witness that we might touch more lives.

- **Tract distribution**

There are hurting people everywhere and tract distribution is a great way to let people know of Christ's love and our availability to assist them. With the help of teams of Christians from both inside and outside New York we are able to expand our outreach.

- **Parenting Classes**

Because Faith is carrying our eighth child we are not holding classes at this time. This area of outreach has been very productive. When we have the strength and time in the future we hope to continue this part of our ministry and offer our family as a resource to churches throughout the New York Metro Area.

- **Seminars**

Recognizing the great assault on the Christian family, we can help facilitate the Institute In Basic Life Principles Seminar in local congregations and serve as a resource to families interested in home educating their children.

Assist Christ's Body outside the City by

- **Bible School & Church Training**

We want to provide better service and accommodations to the number of Bible Schools and Churches that want to train young people for urban ministry. We

would like to increase our ability to host various groups from Churches and Bible Schools for the purpose of "Weekend Warrior Outreaches." We have had to scale this back because the logistics of our current small residence has made it difficult to house our family of 7 children plus the groups.

● **Missionary Hospice**

As we are able with our limited space we provide a safe stop for Missionaries traveling in and out of the USA from New York airports. We are located in a triangle of the three major airports for international travel; Kennedy, Newark and LaGuardia airports. We receive many calls to give overnight accommodations for missionaries and Christians either coming or going out of the City. We recently hosted a couple from Russia affiliated with the Gideons and at the same time a couple from Romania.

● **Internet Outreach**

Through this web site we are able to broadcast the Good News of Christ's Sanctifying Grace, assist His body, and share with others those resources that have blessed us. By making this medium interactive we are able to offer council and receive feedback from the body of Christ Worldwide.

NEEDS TO PRAY ABOUT

Pray for us as we are now focus our ministry on assisting the body of Christ throughout the New York Metro area. Pray that God will give us wisdom and grace that will benefit others. Pray for our Internet outreach. Pray for Faith as she carries our 8th child. The baby is due January 6, 2001. Pray for our children as they continue with their home education and minister to others.

We are moving forward with the vision God has laid on our hearts. However when we look at what we are doing and what can be done it compels us to pray for support so that I can be free of secular work and move forward with the goals we have outlined above. It would be so helpful if I were able to devote full time to this ministry. Spending over 12 hours a day, 5 days a week at work or commuting greatly hinders my ability to touch the needy lives surrounding us. We have daily opportunities open to us to do the work we have outlined, but must turn them away because of my secular work.

We also long as those people in Elisha's day to 'Enlarge the place of our dwelling.' We have outgrown the house we rent. We would love to have a yard for the little children to play in. We need a bigger dwelling, maybe more than one building. We need and want recruits. It is necessary to have a place to house recruits who want to help shine the light of God here.

The Lord Jesus Christ and the Millions of Souls in this city have captured our hearts and we invite you to share our vision. God's work cannot go forward

without His body coming together as a mighty army to press the battle and win the conflict. We covet your prayers that God will send forth laborers who will partner with us in this mighty goal of reaching the lost, discipling the saved and raising high the standard of "Holiness unto the Lord." We need an Army of laborers in prayer. We need an Army of laborers who will come and help us in this vast harvest field. We need an Army of laborers in financial support. God has done great things through His church for past generations. He has called our generation to reach this generation. He has called us for such a time as this. Christ wants His body to reach the lost multitudes He has brought to our shores from every corner of the earth. He wants us to shine the light of his Perfect salvation to our Christian Brothers and Sisters who have not heard. What a vast harvest field! Let us rise up and build! Let us go forth and make disciples! Let us quit ourselves like men and fight! With Christ in the lead the gates of hell cannot prevail against us! Let us follow His lead with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, all we are and all His grace can make us!

We are committed to fulfilling the vision God has given us in New York City. By His grace we have no other passion. Our whole family is united in their desire to reach people here in New York. Who we are is a result of the wonderful love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Our vision is not of our own making, it is the heart of God. Pray that God will help us effectively "set His light on the hill" of this Mega-City of the Earth. Pray that it's peoples will hear and experience that the power of Christ's Perfect Love is stronger than the powers of darkness that hold them down.

Yours for Christ,

Tom, Faith, Seth, Asa, Sarah, Anna, Isaac, Ethan & Uriah Kiser

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