

Word on the Street

Volume I, Issue I, July 2005

Here's Life Inner City in New York City

Matt and Anna Shenk

What is Ministry?

It's been two months now since we returned to NYC from New Staff Training in Orlando where we were commissioned as urban missionaries. As we work to raise financial support, it's tempting to see ministry as something we get to do once we raise all our support and report full-time to our assignment. Ministry is a way of life and there are ways to practically show the love of God wherever you are in life. The following story is just one example of that...

Matt and I were exhausted after a long day of work. We were anxious to get home when a woman suddenly interrupted our conversation by asking for money to get something to eat. For those of you who don't live in New York, this is such a common occurrence that it's hard to help everyone who asks. Something struck us about Michelle and God's Spirit prompted us to stop and talk with her and to get her a warm meal.

Michelle was about 50 years old, her hair covered with a scarf. She hunched over as she spoke and it was difficult to understand her because she had very few teeth left. We walked her to a restaurant where we could get her some food and get her out of the damp spring air. She told us that she was really doing quite well despite living on the streets. We asked if we could help her find a shelter and her reply, which is all too common here in New York, was that the streets were better than the shelters. Michelle had recently been attacked at a shelter for accidentally sitting on someone else's bed, and she felt safer on the streets.

God was looking out for Michelle. She told us about a woman she had met a few weeks ago at the Brooklyn Tabernacle Church who had helped Michelle connect with her family in North Carolina. This woman even bought her a bus ticket. She would be taking the bus to North Carolina in less than a week! Then she shared about how at Brooklyn Tabernacle she came to know Christ as her Savior and Lord. Michelle had a new hope as a Christian that gave her the ability to smile and to enjoy our company, despite the fact that she would be seeking shelter on a park bench that night. She had peace inside, despite having nothing, and that was quite a lesson – and a blessing – to Matt and me.

Tech Bridges

Great things are happening with Tech Bridges and Matt can't wait until he can work full time! You can visit the ministry's recently launched website at www.techbridges.org. Also, Here's Life Inner City has just become a Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (MAR), which is huge news for many reasons. Microsoft generally doesn't work with faith-based organizations but decided to work with Here's Life and Tech Bridges based on the good things we are doing in our communities. Further, as a MAR, we are able to get extremely inexpensive copies of Windows to put on the computers that we refurbish. It's important that all the computers we use have Windows since that is prevalent in the workplace. If we were not part of the Microsoft program, we'd have to pay upwards of \$200 for *each* computer. The churches we work with just don't have the budget for that. Now, Tech Bridges will be able to equip churches all over the city with multiple computers for the education of both kids and adults.

Prayer Requests

In the past few weeks, there have been far too many headlines about violence by and against youth, one instance in particular in the neighborhood around our new church. Pray that Greater Restoration Baptist Church and its people would be instruments of God's peace in Crown Heights.

Please pray for Matt and me. Please pray for energy and endurance during this transitional period. Developing our ministry partner team is a job in itself, and it's a learning process for Matt and me. Pray that Matt and I learn to work together well and that we learn how to love each other and care for each other in deeper ways.

Culture Corner

Here's a great book to add to your summer reading list! *Theirs is the Kingdom: Celebrating the Gospel in Urban America* by Robert Lupton. Robert Lupton – educated and middle class – moved into inner-city Atlanta over a decade ago and in this thought provoking and deeply moving book he shares the stories of what it looks like to love people in the city.

New Contact Information for July-August!

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c/o Jared and Beth Webb
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Also, our home phone number will no longer be working so here is the rest of our info:
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Good Things

We are officially attending Greater Restoration Baptist Church in Crown Heights now and we love it! It's so great for us to be in the community and catch a vision for what God is doing. We are particularly thankful for the opportunity we had over Memorial Day to spend time serving the kids here. I had a great time doing manicures, crafts and "girl things" with the girls and some of their moms and Matt had a great time playing football with the guys.

We're also incredibly thankful that God has provided for us in this time of transition. He has provided us with house sitting opportunities here in New York for the months of July and August (our lease ends June 30) as well as places to stay throughout Virginia for the months of September and October as we raise support in the South. He even provided us with a free place to store our belongings for four months!