

the Lighthouse

A Publication of *The Gospel Mission, Inc.* Established 1912

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A special greeting in the Name of our Savior is extended to you from the missionary staff of the Gospel Mission. Two thousand and four was one busy year with increased activity in practically all areas of our work. Each year we wonder how we can possibly do more, but God always makes it happen. We must thank the Almighty for giving this mission field a dedicated staff and an equally dedicated staff of volunteers to carry on the work. All that goes on here to share the Gospel is absolutely amazing!

It hardly seems that five years have passed since everyone was expecting all the computers to crash and everyone would be eating freeze-dried food. Well, it just didn't happen that way, and we are still getting donations of canned Y2K food items. Nevertheless, the time seems to have zoomed by. Five years here, five years there, and before we know it, life has moved on by. There are so many people with whom to share the Good News. Many from our congregation have passed into eternity in the last five years. It is hard to comprehend how many thousands of people have come through our doors in five years' time. We ask ourselves, how many? How many have come to the Lord? We pray each day for their salvation. It is our desire to see all our friends of the inner city come to a saving relationship with the Christ. Will there be another five years for every person that comes to the mission? Most likely not. We then carry a heavy burden to be busy about the Lord's work.

We are optimistic that the Lord will do great things through the ministry of the Gospel Mission this year. Your prayers are certainly welcome as we endeavor to preach the Truth each and every day. It seems as if there has never been more confusion in the world than there is today. There are major social issues of marriage, gender, sex, abortion, and in addition to that, our country has practically asked God to leave. We have said, "God, please remove your Ten Commandments...please, no prayer in school...and certainly God, the youth can't bring a Bible...God, we can't mention you in public anymore, as we might offend someone or maybe their god...so you know that we will need to change our pledge of allegiance...surely God you will understand that.... uh. Well, we being of an enlightened age, need to be very broad in our opinions as to what life is all about, for the term 'sin' doesn't fit our thinking much any more...sorry, God, things have just changed...and please shut the door behind you."

In our own little corner of the world we will stick to the God of the Bible and take every freedom we still have left to send out the lifeline...many are perishing in the nonsense that is being taught today in society and in our schools. What a wonderful privilege it is to openly proclaim Christ, praise Him, and teach what lies ahead for those who know Him—and sadly tell what lies ahead for those who don't. Pray that the Lord would be greatly moved to open the wells of salvation upon our people.

Thanks again for your support in 2004, the great Christmas gifts, the fine food, and your prayers. We trust that you will be led of God to continue to support us in 2005.

By His grace,



Kenneth P. Clarkston
Chaplain, Director

God's Word Continues Through the Treasures of Snow

It has always been the policy of the Gospel Mission to be available in the hour of need. Whenever severe weather threatens, enough staff is at the mission in order to maintain basic operations. So, if "treasures of snow" (Job 38:22) bring transportation to a halt, chapel service and lunch or dinner still go on as well as the youth ministry and adult God's Gym. On the evening of our pre-Christmas snowstorm, our service was still conducted and we had 135 in attendance, plus 20 youth for God's Gym, all of whom came on foot! We thank the Lord for the few volunteers who were able to make it in to assist as well. We trust that the evening brought great warmth and comfort physically and spiritually to all who were involved.

Christmas at the Gospel Mission

Well, in reflection, all went very well considering the large quantities of snow. It was a tremendous task to prepare for all that was necessary. Christmas gift distribution is probably the most difficult of all operations. We try to customize each gift. Customizing is really necessary because many of the gifts for adults are clothing. It is simply a matter of space, time, and qualified volunteers. We allocate four days to get the job finished but spend many days in preparation. Sue Clarkston is the mastermind of this part of our Christmas activities.

The youth ministry under Ty's guidance went very smoothly and made for memorable times for our neighborhood children. Thanks to all of those who provided the needed items for our youth ministry Christmas. A special thanks to Kmart on Indian Ripple Road for adopting 50 of our children and for bringing the Christmas party to Nehemiah University.

Then there is the food. Brother Mike prepared holiday meals for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. Our King's Table Restaurant serves the finest foods. Some of the main entrees this year were slabs of baby back ribs, boneless lemon-peppered chicken breasts, fish and chips, roast beef, and prime rib! We thank the many food service establishments who provided our holiday meals. It was top quality food all at no cost to the mission. What a blessing to all who participated -- and what a blessing to our budget!



Above all else, we emphasized each and every day that Christ is the reason for our celebration. Despite the current trend to take Christ out of Christmas, we have the joy of presenting Him each day without restraint or the concern for political correctness.

Thanks to everyone who helped to make our Christmas time a wonderful experience.

Vehicle Needs

When we share our needs, we trust God to touch someone's heart to meet those needs. With the one exception of our 12-year-old refrigerated truck, the average age of all our other vehicles is over 20 years old. We have a cargo truck, a 15-passenger van, and a small 28-passenger bus. We keep them in the best possible mechanical condition, but with their ages, it is becoming increasingly more difficult. We really squeeze all we possibly can out of everything we touch. We pray that the Lord would begin to open doors in this area of need.



Material Needs

Our pantry is fairly full now because of generous giving at Christmas. Some of our ongoing needs can be found on our web site: www.GospelMissionDayton.org. These are frequently used items and paper supplies. Thanks again for your thoughtful consideration and for the fine selection of items that filled our pantry.

We are still in need of quality, ready-to-ride adult bikes for our Bike-to-Work ministry.

Also needed are good brief cases for our adult students at Nehemiah University.

Focus of Heart

Many mission conferences take place, especially in the spring and fall. Every missionary has a heart for a particular people group. God has given that missionary call and it weighs upon the missionary to respond as God has so called. Thank God that missionaries have responded to many places that others would not want to go. Perhaps the inner-city mission field is not the place for you, but the Lord has sent staff and volunteers with a desire to serve Christ.

Mission conferences bring knowledge about a mission field. You are more likely to understand the heart of the missionaries and the needs that are before them if you are knowledgeable about their mission field. Not everyone has the privilege to go to the mission field in person, but in spirit, prayer, and letters you can be there. We receive numerous letters and notes of encouragement to 'keep on keeping on'; we appreciate them very much.

We pray for our missionary brothers and sisters around the world...for the progress of the Gospel. All God's workers and places are important. We are thankful for those who have been moved by God to give extra attention in prayer and support to our mission field. Every person in the church needs to have a mission field or two about which they are knowledgeable, then take the burdens of that mission field to heart.

Perhaps your church would like to learn more about the Gospel Mission. Chaplain Clarkston visits many churches to report, encourage, and bring a challenge from our mission field. Just call the office at 937-223-4513 to make arrangements.

Sunday Morning Chapel Service

One of our newer services is the 10:30 Sunday morning Nehemiah Chapel. This is a very traditional service of hymns from the old hymnals, some special music, and 50 minutes of expository preaching. We are also glad to have a team of students from Cedarville University to add to the quality of our services. Since this time is aimed at teaching the Word of God, we encourage people from our other services throughout the week to attend this one as well. There is no meal following this service, although our 2:00 PM Sunday service has a full buffet afterwards.

We look forward to offering this additional service in order that the Gospel can go out one more time. How many one-more-times will there be for some people? Can there be too much preaching? The Bible clearly shows that where there is no Word from God there are definite problems. Preaching is the appointed means to communicate God's instruction and the main instrument for conversion and growth. *My people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge* (Hosea 4:6).

How shall they hear without a preacher? So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:14,17).

There's No Place Like Home

Homelessness is an ordeal that can really break body, mind, and spirit. It takes many people and organizations working every day to prevent and assist with the problem. The staff of the Gospel Mission is happy to be part of the solution. We know that Christ must be part of the equation to solve the problem. Food, clothing, jobs, and housing are only the material part of the solution. Many agencies can only provide this side of the equation. It is indeed the spiritual component that we try to bring into the life of everyone who comes our way.

It is a lofty goal to work toward ending homelessness, but since the programs are funded largely by the government, the spiritual part of the equation will receive minimal attention. The total cure for social ills is as it has always been: one needs to be made a new creation in Christ. Tens of thousands have come off the street with this testimony. There are many great stories of how Christ has brought new life to the worst of derelicts, many of whom have gone on to do great and wonderful things for the One who saved them. (For some of these exciting stories, listen to the radio broadcast Unshackled on WFCJ 93.7 and WCDR 90.3). The Gospel Mission is proud to be part of God's rescue team.

But where is home? Our vision of home changes when we come to know the Lord. Yes, we may have a warm and secure place to call our own, and in which we can raise our family, but then comes the awareness of our totally temporary state upon this earth. There is an old song that says, "This old world is not my home, I'm just a-passing through." There should be a yearning in the heart of every Christian to see the mansions that Christ is preparing for them. So, the final cure for homelessness for all of us is a home in Heaven, bought and fully paid for by the Lord himself. When we have a total view of the body, mind, and soul, we know that only Christ can provide the best life here and now, as well as provide an eternal home. All who know the Lord are on a hobo journey toward home. *For he looked for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God* (Heb 11:10).

There is certainly no place like our heavenly home.

Winter Quarter of Nehemiah University Starts with Great Enthusiasm

The most popular class this quarter is Computer 101. It is an introduction to the operation of the computer. Many people of all age groups take the course. Some take it to learn how to use the computer, while many others take the course so that they may have a better opportunity in the job market. Computer 101 is taught by Dr. Paul on Saturday mornings. During the week, he teaches at the Air Force Institute of Technology. Dr. Paul opens class with a Bible study and prayer. We thank the Lord for these opportunities to share in the compassion, kindness, love, and giving nature of the Christian faith.



Little Sponges

As adults, we can attest to the difficulties in the learning process as we age. Our youth, however, are like little sponges. They absorb many things so easily. With proper teaching, great advancements can be made academically at very young ages; math and reading can be learned pre-first grade. On the other hand, those little sponges can also absorb many wrong things as well. Shown here are students at Nehemiah University undergoing quality teaching for life...the Word of God and the three R's. Thanks for changing the direction of the lives of these children.



Clarification of our United Way Stand

Once again we want to thank all who have continued to support us by **not** going through United Way. Last year our Board of Directors voted not to participate in the United Way fund drives. You can still give to the Gospel Mission through the United Way, but because we are not part of their team, your contributions are significantly reduced before they reach us. For example, if you desired to give \$100 to the Gospel Mission, only \$50 would come to us. Your other \$50 must go to support an organization that is a member of United Way. Of the \$50 coming to us, 24-25% of that will go for their handling fees and non-collectable funds. So when it's all said and done, the mission would receive only \$37.50 of your \$100 contribution.

Before this new rule went into effect last year, the entire \$100 (minus the 24-25%) would come to us even though we were not part of United Way. This pass-through of funds did not help United Way's causes... despite the fact that the funds were helping a lot of grass roots ministries do a very good job. We know companies put pressure on employees to give, but somewhere along the line you need to consider how your money will be spent.

The Spirit of Volunteering

Giving to others is part of the equation of a well-balanced life. It is certainly not God's design for us to be selfish, but to serve others in the Name of Christ. We are very thankful for the team of volunteers who serve at the Gospel Mission.

The work could not be done without them. Volunteers accomplish many things. On the mission's behalf, volunteers enable us to do many, many things in a quality manner without having a high overhead cost. We give the volunteers responsibilities just like staff and they do the job. Volunteers order our food products and disposable supplies, check the fluids in the vehicles, do telephone and computer wiring, work on our lawn and snow equipment, do our welding, install electrical wiring, buff our floors, drive our vehicles, paint our buildings, do our computer programming, work in our office, design our brochures, assist in our publications, keep our web site updated, provide music, work in our restaurant, teach at our university, install our fences and landscaping, conduct services, and as you can imagine, the list goes on.



For the volunteer, this is an opportunity to give of one's gifts, talents, and time. Whether it is cutting a cake in our kitchen or using a backhoe, volunteering provides a balanced equation of giving. Many people have discovered the blessing of giving of themselves. It brings the satisfaction of being able to bless others as God has blessed them. We truly have a blessed group of volunteers who make it all happen. What a team!

How do you get involved? We have an orientation session for volunteers on the second Saturday of each month. It starts at 11:00 AM and lasts until 1:30 PM. You start with the orientation and from there decide where the Lord would have you be involved. Please e-mail the mission at Director@GospelMissionDayton.org, preferably, or call us at 223-4513 a week ahead of the second Saturday to be put on the orientation tour list.

Receiving the Lighthouse

We try to keep all of our paper work in a very tidy condition for an efficient operation. Our mailing list is always changing. We only want to send our newsletter to those who are interested. If you are on our list to receive the Lighthouse, it is because there has been a contribution made in your name or you have requested to receive the quarterly issues. We do not purchase mailing lists. We also want to emphasize that it is our privilege to share the exciting things God is doing here. You need not contribute just because you receive the newsletter. It is not published with the intent of raising funds. God does all that for us. It is sent out to share the reality of God working in everyday life on this mission field, and also to bring you encouragement. Our experiences here are like some of the great missionary stories you have heard from the past. For those of you who know the George Muller stories, God still works in those wonderful ways today to meet the needs for our labors.

If you are receiving more than one copy, this can happen for many reasons, please let us know by returning the label(s) of duplicate issues. If you would like to be removed from the list, please advise us by returning the label or e-mailing us at: Director@GospelMissionDayton.org.

We Know Not What is on Tomorrow, What About the Year Ahead?

No one but the Almighty God knows what the next moments ahead may hold. How can we rightly plan for the future? Planning seems to be necessary for our ministry to continue moving forward for the cause of Christ. We want to maintain biblical precepts when it comes to discerning the will of God for the future. First, we know that it is the will of God for His Word to be proclaimed—and it will be until He comes again. So, in discerning part of our future, we know that we must preach daily. *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ* (Acts 5:42). Second, we know that our mission field will be with us always. Christ identified the never-ending mission field of those who are poor and spiritually needy. As He showed both compassion and love to the lost, we work to follow the example He left behind.

We really don't need to know anymore than that. We then go about daily working toward those two goals. We know that buildings, expansions, etc. are only tools to meet the needs that are already before us. It seems that the Lord has always kept us busy in His work and when the need for a new walk-in cooler came up, it simply arrived. When there were obvious needs for more room to meet different needs, the room was provided. When more food was needed, it just came in. So our future planning is simple. Just keep on keeping on in the Gospel daily and whatever we need will arrive when we need it. We trust God for our future planning.

So what is on for our tomorrow? More preaching and teaching the Word, more sharing the love and compassion of our Lord. That is what we are here to do. We will simply follow in His footsteps as He leads the way.

This approach usually doesn't sit well with people who ask you for your strategic plans for the next five years. We could have never forecasted that the Gospel Mission would have grown as much as it has in the last 20 years. God kept pushing us forward beyond our expectations. Our strategy is to let God do the leading. We want to be so committed to His work that we can just see the next footstep...that is all that we need.

Thanks so very much for your support to keep us on this mission field.

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