



**EXTREME
LIFE
MAKEOVER**
Building Again

Chris and Carol Green

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by
Chris and Carol Green

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version of the Bible.

Extreme LIFE Makeover – Building Again

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to everyone who has ever had to start all over again.

Preface

Since the fall of 2007, we have been archiving the weekly emails that we sent to our church family and compiling them into annual devotional, inspirational books that journal our journey, providing powerful words of encouragement and wisdom.

This book is about our journey in 2010. It is a continuation of our previous books from 2008 - 2009.

More importantly, it is a reminder of the grace and mercy of God.

Our entire devotional book series began when we received the following email from our spiritual sister, DeVata Davis:

I think you should take excerpts from all of these Midweek Connections and publish them in a daily devotional. There is such rich encouragement and a unique demonstration of the word in them that they should be shared in print as well as on this website. This will reach that other generation that either doesn't have a computer, don't trust the internet, or who would rather flip the pages than scroll down. What I'm saying is that these Midweek Connections really bless me and I know they would bless others too. And because I love books, I'd like to see you publish another one. :o)

Be blessed!

DeVata

So we took our sister's suggestion and began compiling the weekly emails. We started sending them because it was our best way of staying connected with everyone since we did not have a midweek church service.

We had no idea our weekly email was evolving into a journal, a log, a devotional and a set of powerful messages and words that would someday help many people beyond our church family.

Introduction

As we look toward a new year, we are even more aware that we are in a spiritual battle. The Kingdom of God is being resisted violently, but we are forcefully advancing. It has been a long time since we've gathered on Sunday mornings, but the Urban Life Church family will begin hosting a special weekly session in the dining hall of the Pennsylvania United Church Center. Here's a description to help you catch the vision:

Imagine enjoying a nice continental breakfast of pastries, fruit and juice. The conversation is light, funny, and informative as you talk about the events of the week, hot topics in the news, or the humorous things your kids just said. Someone begins to sing and you join in with others to praise and worship the Lord. Instead of a sermon, a scripture is read and explained to speak directly into your heart and home.

Finally you unite with your new friends and family to pray for and encourage one another. All of this takes place on a Sunday morning with a special group of people who are seeking God and nothing else.

During the years when we were meeting on Friday and Saturday nights, our Sundays were free, so Carol and I used it as our weekly "date". We went to breakfast, talked and reconnected because our weeks were often busy and hectic. We found our Sunday morning breakfast to be very necessary as well as enjoyable. Many times, the restaurants were packed with patrons, also enjoying Sunday mornings with their families.

Out of this, the Lord began to reveal that just like us, people want to enjoy their Sunday mornings. For many of them, it's their only time for relaxation and sharing with their families. The message became clear that we were to provide the same kind of atmosphere in our Sunday gatherings. So that's what we're going to do. We're starting with a continental breakfast (juice, coffee, hot chocolate, tea, pastries and fruit.)

One day we'd love to advance to the standard breakfast menu, but for now, we just want to provide the same thing that we enjoyed so many weeks and months on Sunday mornings, which was good company, fellowship and encouragement.

So, those of you in the Harrisburg area, we hope to see you for breakfast, fellowship, encouragement and prayer. Those of you who receive this email around the country, we thank you for your continued support in prayer and finances as we reach out to this generation in the urban community that desperately needs to experience the love of God through unique methods like this.

And with that email, we launched into a total rebuild and reconstruction of our ministry in Harrisburg, PA. You are about to journey with us (Chris and Carol Green and the Urban Life Church), as our lives and ministry went through an extreme makeover, like the television show.

As you read through this journey please know that we have never attempted to cosmetically change the emails that we sent out because we want you to feel and know the reality of what we were going through during that season.

May this book encourage you and your family to step out of the old, so that God can demolish it and build something new.

**Let the makeover
begin...**

...with Demolition

Extreme Makeover Life Edition

We have launched into the New Year and the Lord gave us a precious word to share with our church family regarding this new season. Normally we don't announce any clever themes for each year. This year a simple thought came into my heart: ***We're Building Again.***

As many of you already know, one of the captions of this ministry is: **We're not here to build a ministry. God sent us to build people.** As you also know, we've been in a rebuilding process and we are back on track to resume the major thrust for which we were sent out in the first place.

Now it's time for us to build again. We're not talking about building a facility. We're still focused on building people.

Just as we promised, we gathered in our dining hall Sunday morning. It was a simple meal of muffins, coffee and hot chocolate, but it was the conversation and fellowship that was really nice to observe. We sang a couple of songs before Carol and I sat down to share a word about something that's been on my heart for a while.

Many of us are familiar with the television show called *Extreme Makeover – Home Edition*, in which Ty Pennington and a team of designers travel all over the United States to help families who have been devastated by life's hardships. These families are often living in deplorable conditions. Some have been making tremendous sacrifices to help others within their families or in the community, but they are in desperate need of help. Suddenly, one morning, they hear Ty and his team outside their home, calling them out because their lives are about to change forever.

Using this television show as a backdrop, we briefly shared how the Lord is calling us out of our life structure so that HE

can begin the process of an **Extreme Makeover – Life Edition**. We have to come out of the structure that we have built up around ourselves in our human attempts to guard our hearts from further damage and disappointment. God is calling us out of that “house” because He’s going to build something new.

No, I’m not talking about the pursuit of riches, fame or comfort. I’m not preaching that message that involves chasing earthly prosperity and security. I’m talking about something far greater.

Someone reading this email is about to experience an **Extreme Makeover**. God is calling you out of the structure you have been living in. Your structure has faulty wiring and a cracked foundation. Your walls are infested with fear and the memories of horrible things that happened in your childhood. Your windows are broken and there is no insulation to keep the coldness of depression and doubt from sweeping into your heart. Your rooms are small. Your cupboards are bare. You cannot continue to merely exist with a daily goal of mere survival.

The Lord has greater things in His heart for you. Your structure is not safe or secure, but it is all that you know, so you’ve been holding on to it and trying to make it work. Today, God is calling you, like Ty Pennington and his design team, to come out! Come on out of your house! God is about to build something new for you!

When you come out, the Lord is going to send you on a vacation, just like they do for the families. It’s a vacation in His presence. The Lord is calling you to come away with Him. Yes, it’s time to seek the Lord, like never before. It’s time for the fasting and the worshiping. While you’re away with Him, demolition is taking place on your old structure. God is tearing down everything that you ever trusted and depended upon to protect or shelter yourself from the storms of life.

God is doing a total demolition job on your life. That’s what HE did to us after we moved to Harrisburg. He totally demolished everything. All we could do was worship, praise,

and stay before Him while our world was being torn to pieces. Now we realize that HE was doing an Extreme Makeover. We are not the same people that left St. Louis. We are not the same ministry that started in September of 2004.

We're not saying that God is finished with us. He has started a new construction job on us. Even the name of the ministry has been changed because HE tore down Fruitful Life Worship Center and has begun construction on the Urban Life ministry. I believe that's why HE whispered that little thought to me, "We're building again."

So let God bring in the demolition crew. Things may become very uncomfortable for you during this year. Don't rebuke the devil. It's not the devil. In fact, the devil wants you to stay in that old condemned structure that's not fit to be lived in by the King's kids.

I think of the people on the TV show, who returned from those vacations and found a brand new home, that was built out of love and compassion. We have all watched as some fell to their knees weeping uncontrollably because of what had been done for them.

Someone reading this email is going to experience that kind of overwhelming joy. You are going to know what it is like to live in the purpose of God and no longer fear the face of people. You will come to know what it is like to wake up each day and know why you are here. You may not be rich. You may not be famous. You may have many challenges awaiting you every day, but you won't be living in that old house anymore. God is going to give you an **Extreme Makeover!**

So the question today is: Will you come out of the old? Will you let God use His demolition team to tear down every stronghold that has built up around you. Will you let God bring in His construction crew who will establish a new foundation? Will you allow God's crews (His people, His leaders) to build and establish you in the faith?

Some who receive this email rarely go to church. There are many reasons and I'm not condemning you for that. You are

tired of hypocrites or you've experienced a lot of negative things from pastors or even family members who go to church. We can't answer for their mistakes and we can't promise that we'll never make mistakes either.

All I'm saying is that it's time for you to step out of the old routines of only running to God when you're in trouble. Come on out!

Come on out! Let God demolish all the bad experiences and build something new in your life. **It's time for your Extreme Makeover!**

For those of you who have been attending church for many years and you're growing weary as life goes by, it's time for you to come out of your comfort zone. Let God demolish the stuff that has held you back from taking your rightful place in the Body of Christ.

Many of our Spiritual Generals have passed away over the past two years. It's time for everybody to step up to the next level. So it's time for you to come out! Come on out!

It's time for your Extreme Makeover – Life Edition!

What's In Your Hand?

What a marvelous journey we are on in the Lord. My heart is filled as I write this to you because the Lord has brought us to a place where we are walking in a fresh understanding of His purpose for our lives.

Three months after we publicly launched this ministry a special word and prayer was spoken over us at Christ Community Church in Camp Hill, PA on June 22, 2005.

The word was this:

"I know you're not after a big ministry; you're after a grass-roots thing. But because your heart's been right the Lord's going to put a ministry into your hands like you've never seen before. It's going to be a.... I don't want to say one of these mega things... but God's going to put a ministry into your hands and it's going to be some kind of a huge thing here in Harrisburg. I don't understand it all, but I just know your hearts are right. God's going to put a ministry into your hands that's going to be explosive here in the Harrisburg area.

Father, I just pray the blessing of the Lord over this couple and their sons. Father, I ask that you would use them in such a powerful way, you'll use them in such a powerful way that thousands will come to know Jesus.... Thousands, Father... thousands and thousands and thousands will come to know Jesus through this ministry.... in Jesus name."

A second prayer came forth:

"Thank You Lord. Bless them, bless them, bless them with everything they need to fulfill the destiny of God in Harrisburg. Thank you, Lord."

We have kept these two profound prayers in our hearts, pondering over them like Mary, when she heard the word spoken about Jesus. That night, we were so blessed that God would use this congregation to pray over us. We had only recently met them and they were embracing us. It was amazing and we love them. They are a precious family.

However, over the next four years, as I would replay the audio clip of those prayers, I would secretly ask the Lord, "What kind of ministry can you place in our hands at this stage of our lives?" For a season, I was living under the weight of disappointment.

We've done a lot of things in Harrisburg, but we have never made any effort to try to force those words and prayers to come to pass. There was nothing we could do except wait.

Over the past three years, you guys have observed our ministry going through a metamorphosis, like a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. We have been inside of a cocoon, as the Lord has changed us. The results of those changes have been translated into amending the church name from Fruitful Life Worship Center, to Urban Life Church. We renewed the Fruitful Life Network of Ministries, which we had laid aside in 2005.

The Lord has been fine tuning us and opening the eyes of our hearts to see the people of South Central Pennsylvania through His Word from Isaiah 61. Through much prayer and fasting we began to understand what God was actually saying to us.

During the PA Awake prayer gathering in September of 2009, some folks from a church called **Life Center**, politely asked if they could pray for Carol and me, and our sons. As they prayed, they began to speak prophetic confirmations over us. Just like what happened at Christ Community Church, these precious people, who did not know us at all, began to speak about the same things that had been prayed over us at Christ Community Church. There was no way that they could have known the things they proclaimed. They even confirmed that God was giving us a new ministry and doing a whole new thing. What they could not possibly have known was that God has been uncovering the new ministry that is in our hands.

The Lord dropped this little thought into my heart. It was the same simple question He asked Moses in Exodus 4:2, "**What is that in your hand?**" Of course I wanted to know what the

Spirit of God meant by that. For days, this question kept coming to me. **"What is that in your hand?"**

On many occasions, while describing our mission and vision, I would tell our little church family, "We're just going to keep doing what we do: God has given us books and songs, we use internet and websites, and we do video and multimedia. We will webcast lessons for young adults in life's transitions. We will produce more webcast to help couples in their marriages. We will webcast to couples who are already living together and afraid to get married. We will webcast to young men to help them get their lives together. We're just doing what we do and God is, somehow, using it to touch this generation. God is helping us to reach people who don't or can't come to church right now."

Sometimes I read testimonials from people who are receiving the ministry webcast, video clips, emails, website and Facebook inserts. We would rejoice together and vow to continue doing what we do.

One day, as I was driving to work, the two statements came together in my heart: **'We're just doing what we do'** and **'What is that in your hands?'**

Suddenly the prayer from June 22, 2005 at Christ Community Church came rushing up in my heart. God was doing it. He said He would place a ministry in our hands. Our 'doing what we do' **was the ministry** that He had **placed in our hands**.

Looking back at the season when we were going through our growing pains and trials in the wilderness, one of the visions the Lord would often drop into my heart was the launching of an internet television channel in which there would be 24/7 worship and teaching, to reach the unchurched urban communities of South Central Pennsylvania.

Now, I realize that at those times, the Lord was pointing to what was in my hand, and just like He did with Moses, the Lord commanded me to lay down the staff (the Fruitful Life Network) on the ground. But just like it happened with Moses, it turned into a snake and I ran from it. However, Moses was

commanded to grab the snake by the tail and when he did, it turned back into a staff. It became a tool that God would use.

Like Moses, I ran from the snake and was afraid to pick up that snake (ministry through multimedia) because I didn't want to be bitten by it. What I mean is that I didn't want to appear to be self-promoting. I didn't want to look like we were trying to be another Trinity Broadcasting Network. I didn't want to be accused of trying to be another Daystar. I didn't want the last remaining members of Urban Life Church to think their pastor had lost his mind.

What was God saying to me about the use of multimedia and internet?

It's not that this is a novel strategy. Many churches and ministries are streaming videos 24/7 and have been doing so for many years. However, the Lord kept bringing the revelation of providing this ministry for urban and inner city people. Our focus is to be on an often-overlooked part of the community. Many urban dwellers, especially young adults, currently have internet access, but rarely do on-line organizations minister TO them, except to promise financial blessings, if they send in donations. Others focus their messages and ministries on the largest demographics within their churches or to their financial support base. These are not accusations. These are just observations. So God was telling us to take what we have in our hands and go after the lost in the urban world. Since most of them won't come to us, God had given us a way to get to them.

You can't pastor through a web-cam

By no means do we intend to drop the responsibility of being shepherds over the flock of God. That's why Urban Life Church will continue to gather for worship, the Word, prayer and fellowship. We fully expect that, as people receive the Word of God over the internet, they will eventually need discipleship and fellowship. We will lovingly invite those who log on and receive the webcast, to visit our weekly gatherings at Urban Life. We look forward to actually meeting the people who have welcomed us into their lives via cyberspace. You will find the principle of this outreach strategy in the parable Jesus

told about the dragnet. Today the dragnet is called the internet.

How do we do this?

We refuse to ask for donations when we webcast because we don't believe that, as urban missionaries, we should request donations from those we are trying to reach. We are trusting God to help us. We will continue to support the internet ministry through the Urban Life Missions and Outreach fund and trust the Lord to speak to people just like He spoke to you. We have never asked anyone in this church or those who receive these weekly newsletters, to give to this ministry. Yet, many have been supporting us. Why? It was simply because the Lord spoke to them. We will continue to operate in this manner unless the Lord tells us to do it differently.

Where do we go from here?

We don't know how, but we trust the Lord to help us with this ministry (staff) that has been placed in our hands. God has given us the skill and ability to do this and there are pastors who desire and need what has been given us. Yet, we don't know how to make the connections, get the word out, or explain what we're doing, so we're calling on you guys to unite in prayer with us.

In closing I must say that this is not a covert donation request. We are honestly and humbly submitting our prayer requests as we step forward in the destiny of God for our family. We are surrounded by the most humble pastors and ministry leaders you could ever imagine. All are working in their assigned areas on the wall. We just want to be faithful to cover our assigned area on the wall.

Our hearts are longing for souls in this generation, and even our internet analytics show that God has given us favor with them. Of our total internet audience, 45% are in the 18-34 age group and 45% are in the 35-54 age group. The 18-34 group are the young adults that are absent from most churches in America.

Since the Lord has given us their ears and eyes, we want to be faithful with what has been placed in our hands to reach them.

Giving Birth to the Vision

I found myself thinking back on the day when my wife gave birth to our first son. The memories are still strong of the pressure packed minutes of coaching her through the birth.

The Lord reminded me how I had to be stern and gentle at the same time. I still recall the mind-altering moment when I realized that **I had to do this** because her life was on the line. The baby was coming and I had to help her get through this. I could not cuddle her. I could not sugarcoat the moment. I had to help her get through this.

This was especially true when our twin sons were born. At that time, we had no insurance, but it was not time to worry about how we were going to pay for this. We had very little income, but it was not time to worry about how we were going to pay our rent and utilities. We lived in a dangerous neighborhood, but it was not time to think about that. A family lived in the apartment above us, and the mother would leave her little children home alone. We feared that one day they would start a fire, and that our family would be in danger, but it was not time to deal with that.

Once labor begins, and the process of child birth has initiated, the only thing that matters is getting that baby born safely, and for the mother to come through it without losing her life as well.

I don't know how to fully explain it, but that's what I sense about this season for Urban Life Church and Fruitful Life Network. The labor pains have begun and I can't focus on our bills, deadlines and problems. Our prophetic promises are being birthed from the Spirit and into the visible realm, and I have to coach us through it.

Someone may ask: If a vision is from God, why is there pain? If it's from God shouldn't it come without pain?

Our answer is this: Spiritual birth is painful to our flesh. The vision itself is not the pain. The pain comes in the process of our flesh having to give way to the will of God.

Now I see it so clearly, that this is one of the reasons so many visions have been aborted, miscarried or still born. When it's time for a Body of Believers to give birth, the pastor has to stand up and be stern and forthright, while gently leading the people in prayer, worship, repentance and preparation. I have learned that in this community and in cities all over America, that when believers don't understand and discern why leaders do this, they resist it. Some even leave the church.

Have your leaders and pastors been pushing you lately?
A pregnant Body of Believers can receive hurt and offense because the leaders seem to be insensitive to what they're going through. But the reality is that just like when a woman or a young girl is in childbirth, she can't focus on the problems in her life while she's trying to give birth. She has to focus on the child that is coming. She can't focus on her bills, that no good absent boy friend, her selfish siblings, her other children, her interfering mother in law, her nosy co-workers, or her irritating neighbors. All that matters is the birth of this child.

I've been posting pod-cast from Christ Community Church as Pastor Dave Hess has been gently nudging his church family to move past the disappointments in life. These messages are a perfect example of what it means for a leader to coach a Body of Believers through the birthing process. God is bringing something new and this pastor is helping people to move past the flesh and give birth to revival.

I think I understand why so many prayers, ministries and visions have never come forth. Many believers want to be cuddled through childbirth, stroked through childbirth, danced through childbirth, or emotionally carried through childbirth. But every mother can tell you, that there is only one way to get through childbirth. There is a life and death determination that she has to make within herself.

After our children were born, I reached a whole new level of respect for my wife. Did I mention that she gave birth to the twins with no anesthesia at all? By the time we got to the hospital, she was fully dilated and it was time to push. She didn't have time to get ready for it. There was no time for me to prepare her for this like I did with our first child. There was no pep talk, and no gentle hugs and kisses to assure her that everything is going to be okay. Suddenly, we were in the delivery room and she had to find it within herself to just do it. She had to deliver, not once, but twice. Imagine having to give birth to one baby, and instead of being able to finally relax and take a pain killer, you have to do it all over again.

That's why she's such a warrior to this day. That's why Carol doesn't have much tolerance for feeling sorry for ourselves or being sad and down about what we have to go through. I didn't say she has no understanding or compassion. She just doesn't let us settle there. She doesn't let ME settle there. She will push you and push you, until you believe what God says about you.

So we have discovered that we are assigned to be, sort of like, birthing coaches in your life. **We have to do this!** Your life is on the line! The answer to your prayer is on the line! We have to help our own sons, our church, our staff, our web viewers, and our Facebook friends to deal with this aspect of the way God does things.

It's like this: We ask the Lord for answers, but God always supplies a seed. He impregnates us with the answer to our prayers. The way the answer comes into the earth, is by birthing it into our reality.

While we were attending the PA Awake prayer gathering, we received a prophetic word that we are in our ninth month of pregnancy, and that childbirth will begin any day now.

Well, two weeks later, we sense the labor pains. Our flesh is wrestling with the sacrifices we feel coming. God has promised us thousand and thousands of souls, and we can sense the sacrifices our entire team must make to disciple so many people. All other situations in our lives are secondary

now. This is the priority. It's time to begin the process of labor and birth of those things that the Lord has promised.

But take courage family! One thing we know about the Lord is that as we give birth to the vision, He provides for that vision. As His vision is birth into the earth, He supplies everything that we need. He provides for us, so that we can fulfill our part in the vision.

Are you ready? Okay, let's get started. Let's focus on the Lord. Shut out all other concerns and issues in your life. Let's think about Jesus and His awesome love for us. Come on now, breathe with me...

Fight for Your Family

My heart is full of excitement as we anticipate a new move of God in our lives. The Lord has carefully ordered our steps and today we find ourselves strategically positioned to defeat another plan of the enemy. We are standing in the gap, fighting for our families. Let me take a moment to explain.

The Body of Christ has been called to rebuild the walls of our city. I discovered that the root meaning of the Old Testament word for city described it as something that is filled with excitement or anguish. It is something that must be guarded and protected. That description is not only an assembly of people or a collection of buildings with a civil organization, but this word describes our hearts and homes.

We have been assembled and assigned the task of rebuilding the walls around our hearts and homes, just like the Jews who rallied with Nehemiah to rebuild the walls around the city of Jerusalem.

They began the process in spite of insults and threats from three guys who came to oppose them named Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem.

However, after a while, the strength of the laborers began to fail. They also realized that they had more rubble than stones for rebuilding the walls. That's where many of us are today. Our strength is failing and the only material we have to work with is the rubble, destruction and experiences of our lives. You see the rubble was all that was left after the city had been destroyed many years prior to this time. That's where many of us are today. Our hearts and homes were destroyed and all that remains, even if we tried to rebuild our lives, is burned out rubble.

Let's look at the story as Nehemiah records it:

Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall." And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and

cause the work to cease.' So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, "From whatever place you turn, they will be upon us." Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."

As we spoke with the Urban Life family and our internet audience, the Spirit of God showed us three responses to failing strength and fallen lives.

- 1.) Don't be afraid
- 2.) Remember the Lord
- 3.) Fight for your family

I don't have space in this email to repeat all that I said Saturday night, but here is the bottom line.

We have been positioned to stand in the gaps in the walls. We have been assigned, by families, to this task. It's not assignment by special titles, talents or accomplishments. We have been assigned as husband, wives, father, mothers, sisters and brothers, to stand in the gaps of the walls.

From this position, the first command that comes is, "Don't be afraid." Don't be afraid of the threats of the enemy. Get your eyes off the eminent attack. That's what Nehemiah and the Jews were facing. For many of us, the failure and collapse of our family, finances, and future are eminent. It's about to fall apart any minute, but the command is, "Don't be Afraid."

Then the Word tells us to, "Remember God." Simply put, get your focus back on the Lord. He is great and awesome. God is too big to be contained and He leaves us awe-struck when we behold Him. Nothing is too difficult for Him. That's why we praise Him for what He has done, and worship Him for who He is. The minute you really start to remember God, you take the battle way beyond our natural and physical circumstances.

How can I deal with the enemy sneak attacks on my family and me? Remember God.

Where will I find the strength to complete the task? Remember God.

How can we build a wall out of rubbish? Remember God.

The final instruction is to stand in the gaps of the wall and fight for your family.

Some members of Urban Life have been going through major trials. They have been building the wall around their family, but their strength was fading and there was nothing but rubble to work with anyway. The eminent failure that they feared was upon them. After reading this passage, Carol and I began to pray, lay our hands on, and fight for our church family. As of this email, we have seen a breakthrough already.

Many times, pastors and leaders will begin to reprimand and scold church members who are in this position. They scream at them and accuse them of being faithless, or in some kind of sin to explain their dilemma. However, this passage clearly shows that Nehemiah recognized the need for LEADERS, to get in the gaps in the wall and to fight for their families. There are times when people don't have the strength and they don't have the building material, so we have to fight for them. We make war on their behalf.

So Carol and I began to do that. We realized that the Lord had allowed us to go through some very difficult things the past few years so that we would have compassion and wisdom to fight FOR the Urban Life family, today.

We encourage you to do the same. All of you who are strong, stand up and fight. Stop scolding your struggling sisters and brothers. It's not time to fuss at them. It's time to fight for them.

I can hear someone saying, "They'll never learn to fight if I do it for them." to which I will answer, "They'll never learn to fight if you don't show them." We assume that people know

how to fight or that they have the strength simply because we talked about it. We are declaring that in this season, we who are strong must stand up and fight for our brethren, our sons, our daughters, our wives, and our houses.

If your strength is fading, be humble enough to ask for help. Ask for prayer. If you are in a position to help and to pray, be humble enough to offer the help with unconditional love. We can do this! We can change the atmosphere in our cities from what it is today, to one in which families fight FOR one another instead of fighting against one another.

Praise God, a new day has dawned in our community!

Listen to His Voice, Hear His Call

We have called for a month of prayer and consecration as a church family. We talked about it this past Sunday because we are stepping into a deeper commitment in God. So are you listening to the Lord's voice? Can you hear the Lord calling you into a deeper level of intimacy?

We took the time to rehearse an exhortation that the Lord gave us two years ago, almost to the day. I had spent a weekend of fasting and prayer and I sent out an email following that weekend. In that exhortation, The Lord instructed me to tell our church family that He was going to cause us to make up the deficit (in our warfare) and then to surpass the enemy's plot to defeat us. Part of that exhortation went like this:

"For three years, we've been playing from behind and falling further into a deficit. But, I found out something in my weekend in the Lord's presence. God just wants the victory to be that much more spectacular.

Nothing is sweeter in athletics than the come-from-behind victory. And we're not going to win by one point on the last second of the game, either. God's going to cause the comeback to blow the enemy away. It'll be so big that you will call the fruit of your victories Manasseh and Ephraim. Manasseh means -For God has made me forget all my toil. Ephraim means -For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

So here we are, just a couple of weeks into the New Year, and we are living the promise of God. Every victory that we have been reporting recently is the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to us.

Sunday, before we shared this reminder, we sang a little song the Lord gave us many years ago titled **Hear His Call**. Parts of the lyrics are:

In the stillness of the night, Listen to His voice, Hear His call
In the break of morning light, Listen to His voice, Hear His call
For it is beauty from the ashes, that His will brings into my life
Listen to His voice, Hear His call, Hear His call.

I cannot explain why I began to weep while singing this song this past Sunday morning. I cannot explain why I feel the Lord's presence as I type these words today, and find myself fighting back the tears. I just know that God made a promise from Isaiah 61:1-3 that is for you today.

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...

I don't live my life according to feelings and I don't move by intuition or spooky voices. The tears don't make it real, but that special knowing that comes upon me in times like this, is what gives me the boldness to keep declaring this Word to you in spite of what your circumstances are dictating right now.

We have lived by the Word of the Lord. We have lived by what is written and we have lived by what has been revealed as the Word is applied to our lives. Most of you, who receive this weekly email, know about our journey the past five years. God has allowed us to experience what people have been going through here, all of their lives. Yet, He has required that we show them how to get out of the prisons and to climb out of the pit. We have been climbing out and we are showing them how to climb out.

No matter what is happening in your life, don't stop climbing. You climb out by staying in tune with the voice of the Lord. You praise Him even while you're hurting. You worship Him even when you don't have answers. You keep giving your time, talents, treasure and trust, into the Kingdom and keep

serving with the family of believers you are connected to. You just stay faithful to the Lord. Now we are watching God lead us out of the wilderness and into the land of promise.

I said all of this just to emphasize that these are not the words of a preacher trying to get people to respond in their emotions. These are not the words of a pastor trying to recruit people to join his church. These are not the words of a minister seeking to be popular and fashionable.

All we know is that God told us to pack up our family and move to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He told us to come and demonstrate the reality of the Kingdom of God before people who would be accustomed to covenant breaking, religious tyrants and corruption.

We know we're not the only ones that He sent, but we trying to be faithful in fulfilling our part in His master plan for this community. He sent us here to tell you that even though you may never have experienced the level of breakthrough that we are declaring, that it doesn't mean that you will never experience it.

Isaiah 61: 4-5 is declaring that the Lord's anointing is coming into your life: *That they (YOU) may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. And they (YOU) shall rebuild the old ruins; they (YOU) shall raise up the former desolations, and they (YOU) shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.*

This is the beginning of your extreme makeover. God is tearing down the old structure of doubt and skepticism that has held you back. The devastating effects of discouragement, due to the disappointments of the past, are being demolished! The Love of God is tearing fear out of your foundation! We declare this over your life, right now, in the name of Jesus Christ!

Joseph Is Still Alive

Sunday the Lord gave us a simple, but profound message to share with everyone: **Joseph is still alive!** For many years, we have either preached or taught the story of Joseph, but the Lord told us to look at it from Jacob's point of view. So we read through Genesis 37-46, but we skipped all the portions about Joseph and all that happened in Egypt. When you read it that way, you see that Jacob sent his boastful, bragging, yet beloved teenage son to Shechem to check on his brothers. Then his brothers returned with Joseph's blood stained tunic.

We noticed that Jacob's sons never say what happened. They leave it up to Jacob to assume what happened and based upon the evidence that has been presented, he concludes that a wild beast has killed Joseph.

In the context of this exhortation, Joseph represented the hopes, dreams and what was most dear to Jacob. He was the first-born son of Rachel, the one woman he truly desired. She bore two sons, Joseph and Benjamin, but she died giving birth to Benjamin, so you can see why these two sons meant so much to him.

Unfortunately, Jacob was cold and indifferent with his other children. He had been tricked into marrying Leah, Rachel's older sister, so he really didn't love her and was not loving and attentive to the children born by her or through her maidservant. He showed the same kind of indifference toward the children he had through Rachel's maidservant. So Jacob was far from perfect. Sometimes he was downright cruel. He was a hustler and deceiver.

Yet, God made a promise to his grandfather Abraham, so grace and blessings came to Jacob in spite of himself. But he found that you must reap what you sow.

So like many of us, there are a lot of issues to deal with, yet in the midst of it, God gives us a dreamer (prophetic insight), even if we don't understand what it all means. Like Jacob, we

can dress up that dream with all of our plans and ideas, and present it proudly for all to see.

But one day, the plans and ideas were handed to us in a tattered mess, stained in blood. And just like Jacob, we assumed that the dream was dead because of the evidence in our hands. The past few years, many of us have been presented bloody shreds of fabric as we lost loved ones by death, divorce or desertion. Someone was evicted from their apartment, went through foreclosure or filed bankruptcy. Someone else received a bad doctor's report. Someone lost their job. Someone lost everything in a fire, hurricane, flood, or by earthquake. Someone had to close their business. A pastor lost their congregation and closed the doors of the church. I could name situation after situation and each one would mark the moment someone was handed the bloody, torn tunic of Joseph.

But the Lord is speaking to you today, that Joseph is not dead.

I don't have time and space to get into the details of the rest of the story, but Jacob was so rocked by the loss of Joseph that 13 years later, when he was required to surrender Benjamin, he was too fearful to do anything. You see, Benjamin was all Jacob had left to remind him of Rachel and Joseph. Benjamin was all that remained of what was dear and precious to him.

After Jacob released Benjamin to go with Judah and his brothers to Egypt, they all came back with the news that Joseph was still alive. When Jacob gave up Benjamin, the only one that mattered to him, all he wanted in return was just to get Benjamin back. But he got far more than he could ever have imagined.

Today that means we must surrender the last and most precious thing that we possess, under the custody of praise (Judah). This is not some formula to get something out of God. I'm just saying that like Jacob, we can't hold on to the past; nor can we try to preserve what we hold dear.

We have to let it all go and trust God like never before. We have believed a lie for many years. We thought that because the things we clothed the dreamer in were torn and bloody, that the dreamer was dead. The dreamer hasn't died. That's what satan wanted us to believe by presenting circumstantial evidence. But it was not proof. It was all a lie.

Carol and I have decided that we are not going to dress Joseph (the Lord's dream and purpose) in a tunic of our making. We are not going to hold on to Benjamin (our sons and church family). We're letting it all go and we're trusting God with all that is most dear to us. We encourage you, our family, to do the same. **Remember, Joseph is still alive!**

This Could Be Your Moment

In spite of all your challenges, we want you to know that you are making great strides of victory every time you decide to persevere and meet together. Many people neglect this very important aspect of their life and they pass up the opportunity to receive the Word of God in a family setting where the presence of God can meet them in a way that is only revealed when we are in a corporate gathering.

We cannot explain it, but we know that there is something very special and healing that takes place when we gather together, hear the Word of God together, experience healing together, and pray together.

Obviously, your personal relationship and experience is very important, but there is also something to be said about being together and sharing in one another's trials and triumphs.

Even though we are the leaders, you all have been very encouraging to us as we have faced our own struggles just like you. The times you gathered around us and prayed for us, were just as important as the times we walked around the room and prayed for each of you. The Lord has knit our hearts together and how we long for others to come and experience the wonderful healing presence of the Lord as well.

We believe that God puts a person on the planet to fulfill a specific purpose. He puts a word in their mouth or He delivers a message through their life. For us, the What NOW book and teaching sessions are a culmination of the word in our mouth and the message of our life. As we are going through the teaching, we just know that God will reveal the word that is already in your mouth and the message of your life.

Just before I was born, my parents lost their two-year old son in a food choking accident. My mother was seven months pregnant with me, so two months after burying their baby boy, my parents had to find the strength and courage to bring another child into the world.

After I was born, the Lord gave my mother a vision about her new baby. One of my older brothers told me that he recalls that after I was born, life and joy came into the atmosphere of the home again. Of course I didn't know all of this and I lived and fought with depression and a pessimistic attitude for most of my life.

However, during a special prayer encounter, similar to the type of ministry we have here in Harrisburg, the Lord opened my own understanding to see that I was born following death and my life was to be a message that declares life after loss, grace after grief, prosperity after poverty, triumph after tragedy, and purpose after pain.

That's why we are in Harrisburg for this season and we encourage you to come while the Spirit of God is stirring the waters. Come and discover what God wants to do in your life NOW. This could be your moment.

Extreme Makeover...

**...Laying a New
Foundation**

A Praise News Release

All we can say, after all that transpired over the last seven days is "Wow!" We'll take a bit of creative license to describe the past week by writing to you as if though it was a news report:

Praise News Release

Chris and Carol Green were all smiles following the opening session of their **What NOW Series** of lessons that started on Valentine's Day with the topic 'Once in a Lifetime LOVE'. The **What NOW Series** involves 12 weeks of lessons to help people navigate through seasons of transition, trials and change. It is hosted by Urban Life Church as part of their weekly Sunday Café.

Still on an emotional high from his role as master of ceremonies and giving closing remarks at the annual African American History Month Celebration on Thursday, February 11, 2010, at Pennsylvania's Department of Education, Chris was already hyped up before the first session began. A small, but enthusiastic audience, most of whom were young adults, listened, laughed and then huddled in groups ranging from two to four people, to talk about the gift of God's love that was being revealed to them.

Chris and Carol shared their personal journey citing the day Chris missed his high school class reunion because that was the day they had to move out of their home. They carried their audience through a series of events and life revelations that led them to realize that God has provided once in a lifetime love expressions all around them: special moments that seemed like disaster at the time, but there was a hidden treasure in that difficult season of life.

From Proverbs 25, they explained that it is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but it is the glory of kings to search out a matter. They allowed the group to settle into the reality that these precious gifts have not been hidden FROM them, but hidden FOR them. The gifts are wrapped in circumstances or

situations, but if they keep digging past the wrapping, they will discover the gift; the once in a lifetime expression of love from God.

The one-hour session was preceded by a continental breakfast that allowed time for participants to break the ice and get prepared for the word of the day.

One first-time attendee said she really liked the setting because it was not like the rigid church structure and rituals from her past. She felt this kind of ministry would really benefit other young adults who are looking for something practical like this. She added that the Sunday morning breakfast really worked well with their weekly schedule and was something she felt others would enjoy, too. One young man said he knew of friends who were going through some pretty tough times right now and that he would be inviting them to come to the sessions.

“We were beginning to wonder if this was really going to work in Harrisburg,” the lead instructor, Chris Green, confessed. “We had a great desire to reach Harrisburg’s young professionals, but we just didn’t see any way of being able to reach or connect with them. Today was very encouraging to see that the style of ministry that God has given us truly relates to them and their lifestyles.”

Just in time for this new outreach, Chris and Carol released a revised edition of their book titled ***What NOW: Navigating the Maze of Transition, Trials and Change***. Each week they will teach from one chapter in the book and allow the attendees the opportunity to discuss the material in their own groups. Couples are encouraged to discuss the topics with one another.

All books and material are provided free of charge because this church views the weekly sessions as their outreach/investment into the Harrisburg community. Although donations can be made, there is no solicitation of any kind.

As the Urban Life team packed away the equipment and supplies, following a very successful start of the What NOW

Sessions, it was easy to see that a new sense of hope has been revived.

"This has been a week of surprises," Chris explains. "I was honored to be able to MC and give closing remarks at the African American History Month Celebration last Thursday. Then a few days later, we experience this wonderful day with our Sunday Café. Something has happened and I believe a breakthrough is taking place. We are very excited and we are looking forward to seeing what will happen next."

The Extreme Makeover continues...

Changing the Atmosphere

Praise News Release

Urban Life Church continues to take bold steps with its new What NOW teaching series of lessons. As part of the weekly Sunday Café, this ministry is focusing on fundamentals to bring balance and understanding to today's generation of new and young believers; and to those who have been walking with God for many years, but are looking for more.

"There are a lot of teachings that have gone forth throughout church history," states Chris Green, lead instructor and author of the What NOW curriculum. "Most of the topics are highly controversial and while various denominations and organizations are battling over doctrine, there is a whole new generation that has come along and they don't know what we're talking about, much less what the debate is all about."

The What NOW series is offering 12 weeks of wisdom, understanding and discussion for issues that are affecting every single person, regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, social status, or religious beliefs. It deals primarily with the wisdom that is necessary to help people who are walking through the maze; the seasons of transition, trials and change.

After an introductory session that provided a foundation for all of the following weeks, this past Sunday, the church family ventured into the first nugget of wisdom regarding: RESOURCES subtitled, "All you need is God."

The entire series is built upon the wisdom embedded in Proverbs 1. The first nugget of wisdom involved changing our attitude from seeing money as our greatest resource, to looking at GOD as our source.

"You don't always need money," Chris Green declared to the Sunday café gathering "But you always need God. God can bring financial miracles that don't involve giving you money." Then he recalled the time when they had no medical

insurance and his wife gave birth to twin sons. That led to a \$32,000 medical bill. God did not meet the need by supplying cash. Instead, they were shown FAVOR, and the bill was reduced to \$300.

The urban pastor talked about the law of reciprocity and the measure in which we give. He carefully walked the group through the principles of sowing and reaping. He even addressed the doctrinal controversy regarding paying tithes versus free will giving, a battle that has gone on for hundreds of years and continues to divide the church even today.

"Now that we're dealing with a new generation, many of which come from harsh religious backgrounds," explains Pastor Chris "we are presenting the issues and seeking to bring balance so that they can see where both sides stand on the issues, how we got to this point, and thus have some degree of understanding on the steps that we are taking as a church and family."

"Quite a few people may become angry or adversarial with some of the things that we will discuss in these sessions," adds the pastor "Some people within the café and those watching on line are going to be surprised at the things that Carol and I will say as they learn where we stand on some issues. However our point is not to push our position. We just want this generation to have some balance and to hear all sides as they are seeking God in their journey with Him."

The couple stresses the point that in this community, especially for those who are returning to church, that you cannot try to force doctrine and spiritual truths upon them. You must take your time, carefully read through the Bible, give historical perspective, keep definitions within the context of scripture passages, and most of all, let them discover truth. Let GOD speak to them because HE knows what it will take to get past every negative barrier that is hindering them.

"That's why we know that our ministry method and strategy is very uncomfortable for many typical church attendees, " says Pastor Chris "This is not a criticism, but many are accustomed to listening to sermons and engaging only in matters and

topics in which they are already agreed. In the What NOW sessions, we bring up topics and issues that people, who are returning to church, want to talk about. We deal with the taboo subjects and the stuff that has no clear cut yes or no answer. However, that is the perfect environment for today's generation, and that's who we're trying to reach."

Many years ago, Chris had a dream in which he saw the sky over a city filled with a poisonous gas. It was a toxic cloud that was a thick dark green and gray mix. He looked closely, trying to see if it was coming from factories and industrial plants, but instead, he saw the smoke-like substance pouring out of the windows of homes.

He looked into the window of a home and the toxic fumes were pouring out of a television. He looked around the neighborhood and it was coming out of car radios. People were walking down the street holding the old CD player boom boxes and it was pouring out of those music devices. Every where he looked, the media was being used to spew out this poisonous cloud into the air.

That dreamed solidified a calling and command to change the atmosphere with the name of the Lord Jesus. The Urban Life Church and Fruitful Life Network desire to cleanse and fill the atmosphere with praise, worship, prayer and the Word of God.

"That's the reason why we're not trying to build a big ministry," concludes Pastor Chris Green. "We desire to build people and we're trusting God to assemble those who are called along side of us to fulfill this mission."

The Extreme Makeover continues...

Relationships

Praise News Release

It appears the message is beginning to get out that there is a church in Harrisburg for people who desire straight talk about the tough issues of life.

Boldly venturing into life's most complex maze, the Urban Life Church continued its 12-part teaching series called **What NOW**, navigating the maze of transition, trials and change. NOW is the acronym for Nuggets of Wisdom. Pastors Chris and Carol Green present nuggets of wisdom from Proverbs 1 to provide real life answers and practical applications for people who are facing some of the tough challenges of life.

"This week we took on the challenge of exploring what we call, life's most complex maze," says lead instructor Chris Green. "There is probably nothing more difficult than trying to understand another human being."

The Sunday morning session is hosted in the dining hall of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches facility in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The pastors were thrilled to see two more visitors in the audience. One of them was an out-of-state guest of one of the members of Urban Life Church. The young man said he connected with the pastor's heart and the style of ministry immediately because the atmosphere was like that of a counselor. As a graduate student pursuing degrees in marriage and family counseling, he readily identified with the spirit of the session.

Pastor Chris talked about three words from Proverbs 1:3 that are essential for navigating relationships: **Justice, Judgment and Equity**. The discussion offered a fresh understanding about **Justice**: what it means to set things right, **Judgment**: appraising and evaluating others without jumping to conclusions based upon negative experiences, and **Equity**: the ability to see value in others in spite of damage or debt.

"I always get kind of emotional when I talk about this subject," confesses Pastor Chris. "There are so many deeply hurting people in this community, much of which has come from within their own families. I see a community that desperately desires right relationships, but they are so disillusioned that it seems our words are mere fantasy."

"This was an amazing teaching," adds Carol Green, Chris' wife of 29 years. "This was the best explanation of why we must walk in forgiveness that I've ever seen." Her husband presented a diagram based upon how home appraisers calculate the value of a home and how bankers decide how much equity is available to make repairs on the house. Chris explained that even after a debt of offense is granted; it still does not mean the damage has been repaired. However, after an offense is forgiven (debt canceled), there is equity available to BEGIN repairing the home, or the relationship.

"Many people want their apology to solve the damage," contends Pastor Chris "The apology cancels the debt, but it doesn't restore the trust. That is a process that takes time and work."

Once again, a visitor departed with a sense of excitement regarding the Urban Life Church Sunday Café, saying this was really fresh and innovative because many people talk about a new approach, but not many are willing to actually step out and do something different.

"It is tough to do something different, "Pastor Chris admits. "You have your peers who may not understand what you are doing and you have your critics who think you're trying to be appealing to the world."

"These pastors have always been cutting edge and innovative," says long-time friend, ministry partner and What NOW book editor, DeVata Davis. "Back when they were youth, young adult and singles ministry pastors, they were doing things that made church people uncomfortable, but it was what worked to reach people outside of the church. They aren't trying to be different. They're just being who God made them to be."

“Everything that we do is to help people get closer to God,” concludes the What NOW author. “ Sunday, we sat together eating sausage and egg biscuits, sang together a song of worship, prayed together for the people of Chile, shared the pain of betrayal, and laughed together as we worked through a relationship building exercise. It was all done to help everyone draw closer to one another and the Lord.”

The Extreme Makeover continues...

Living By Design

Praise News Release

This week the Urban Life Church family took on another challenging topic by delving into the issues surrounding the preparation that takes place in our hearts during seasons of transition. Since Sunday, February 14, 2010 (Valentine's Day), Pastors Chris and Carol Green have been conducting a 12-week class/ session to help people recognize and receive eight extremely important nuggets of wisdom to navigate through some of life's most difficult mazes. The couple refers to these mazes as seasons of transition, trials and change. They call the entire series **What NOW**.

The eight topics cover nuggets of wisdom for Resources, Relationships, Readiness, Revelation, Riddles, Reverence, Results and Repairs. The first week was an introductory session that revealed some of the things we need to understand about the way God reveals His wisdom to us. The final session will feature question and answers and a review of the topics.

"These lessons are similar to physical therapy after an injury," explains lead instructor Chris Green, "We realize that it's very painful to exercise limbs and muscles that have been injured, but if we don't, that part of us won't heal properly."

This past Sunday's nugget was about **Readiness: Living by Design**.

"This is one of the tougher issues that I'll have to discuss," discloses Pastor Chris, "The night before the session, I was in prayer and I felt the weight of this topic. I found myself weeping."

The atmosphere was a bit more somber and sober this week as the pastor talked about the transition of preparation. One can feel that they are ready for the next season because they have acquired or mastered a set of skills, but Pastor Chris

stressed that seasons of preparation are not only about WHAT we will be, but they are also about WHO WE WILL BE.

"This is one of those nuggets of wisdom that hit me right between the eyes," the pastor admitted to the attendees. "We thought we were ready to pastor a church after all of our years of classes, training and service in our home church. God still had a season of preparation waiting for us."

The pastor went on to talk about his own negative internal issues that God exposed by allowing difficulties during that preparation transition. It was necessary to get them ready for their destination.

"We believe that God takes us through these seasons of preparation so that we can discover HIS designs for our lives," adds Pastor Green, "In his book, *The Pursuit of Purpose*, one of my favorite authors, Dr. Myles Munroe says, 'A manufacturer lets the product's intended use govern the design.' So I understand that to mean that since God is the manufacturer, then HE designed us for a specific purpose. In order for me to come to know that purpose, I must get to know HIS designs for me."

Pastor Chris concluded the session by quoting from the closing paragraphs of chapter four of the **What NOW book**: *In Geometry, we are taught the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. I have discovered in life, the shortest distance between two points is not necessarily a straight line. The shortest distance is actually obedience to God.*

The most direct path may seem like the shortest distance on the surface, but only God knows it will actually lead to a ten-year detour of your destiny. God reserves the right to tell you the shortest route between where you are now and where you are going may involve stopping in places and working with people that are not in your route plans. He knows the way He sends you will take you across the path of people, events and resources you will need when you arrive at your destination. You must trust God with your future. You must trust Him with the path and the process to get you there. You must trust His design for your life.

"A lot of people are frustrated, discouraged, or even angry because they have struggled for most of their lives, and nothing positive seems to ever happen for them," says this urban ministry leader, "But just like God created **something** out of **nothing** in Genesis 1:2, I am convinced that HE will do the same thing for people today."

"It's just that we have to offer Him that **nothing**. For some people the **nothing** is the plan or promise that never came to pass, the dream that has never come true, or it is that desire that goes on unfulfilled. **Nothing** is the perfect material for God to work with. There's a difference between offering God your broken plans and asking Him to fix them; from offering God the shattered nothingness in your heart and just submitting it for Him to create something new."

Today our pastors are encouraging us to just start all over again and ask God to do a whole new thing, with no input from us on how it should look or what it will be when He's done.

"We just want our church family prepared and made ready by God's design," concludes Pastor Chris. "Just knowing that HE is preparing each one of us for something special, during this season, brings great peace to replace frustration and discouragement."

The Extreme Makeover continues...

Closing Another Chapter

It's hard to believe that it's been five years since we first started laying a foundation for the establishment of a strong and solid church and ministry in this community.

We thank God for His supply of grace that has sustained us through some very difficult and trying times, and for the many victories we have experienced along the way. God has caused our paths to cross with wonderful people like the pastors and leaders in our Pennsylvania Connections list. There are so many people who have been a part of bringing us to this moment of reflection and celebration that we can't name them all, but we are forever grateful for their impartations into our life.

Five years ago a small group of people opened the doors of a church and held their first services in uptown Harrisburg. We have met in hotels conference rooms and in the pastor's living room. We have seen a room full of people and empty seats. We have been excited with expectation and discouraged to the brink of quitting. What kept us going? We knew the Lord sent us; our Bishop, church and families were supporting us; and since we've been here, the Lord has been fine tuning us for His purpose.

We don't believe God sent us 800 miles from our home, families and church to just build another ministry. We believe God sent us to Harrisburg to build people. We believe we were commissioned to bring a ministry of hope and healing to hearts and homes.

This Sunday, in our typical nontraditional manner, we have invited the Urban Life family into our home for an intimate gathering in which we will reflect on what God has done in our individual lives and families. We will rehearse the prophetic promises that have been declared over this ministry and pray about our future. Then we'll share in food and fellowship.

Some have already sent words of encouragement and congratulations via Facebook and email, so we welcome any other expressions from families and friends outside of Harrisburg, who wish to send thoughts, prayers and words that we can share with the Urban Life family as well.

We look forward to a very special time together this week. Last Sunday, the Spirit of God moved in such precious ways that we could not even get to our teaching for the week.

Instead we spent the session in worship and prayer, so there's no telling what the Lord has in store for us as we join together for this special celebration in our home. We feel that we are closing another chapter of our story and that the plot is about to really get exciting.

Extreme Makeover...

Construction

Just Being Ourselves

We had a wonderful morning at the Sunday Café. This week we resumed our What NOW sessions. The day was enlightening, refreshing and fun.

After breakfast and fellowship, we sang and danced. Yes, I said danced. It was a return to really being ourselves. We're not quite sure how church visitors will take some of the things that we do, but for those who regularly attend, the expressions that God put in us, seem to be the things to which they relate the most.

Back in our home church, Carol and I would dance and sing together almost every Sunday morning during the praise and worship service. We were never showing off or trying to be in the spotlight. That's just who we were. We love dancing and singing before the Lord.

When playing with our children, there was always dancing and singing in our house.

In spontaneous moments of affection, we would dance in the living room or the kitchen while our three little boys would laugh and squeal with delight, watching their parents dance together. Sometimes they would try to cut in or dance with us.

If you ever watched Bill Cosby's television show and the characters Cliff and Clare Huxtable, that's the kind of family we have; just not quite as financially successful. We had moments like that, all the time. We heard the complaints from the African American community that nobody has a family like that, but for us, that's how it was in our house, especially the dancing part.

So when we danced publicly or in praise services, we were just being who God created us to be. Sometimes we danced while everything was going wrong in our lives. Sometimes we

danced to celebrate great victories. For us, it was a tangible way to give thanks in everything.

Yet, when we moved to Harrisburg, this expression was so foreign to the people we encountered, that we stopped doing it. Some thought it was fleshly and too worldly. Some were offended and totally put off. Some thought we were just showing off. Some thought it was profane and something that should not be in the church. So we stopped being ourselves for a while.

However, over the last week of reflection, we recaptured a very important part of our lives. In our marriage, we dance. In our household, we dance. So in our ministry, we must dance. This past Sunday, we danced with our songs of praise and it was so liberating that it set the tone for the rest of the day. It even affected the way I spoke. Even in the midst of a serious topic, I was actually having fun while sharing the Word.

In the book of Acts (10: 10-16), the story is shared how Peter was taught a lesson to stop calling things common (unclean) that God has cleansed. In some ways, that is what Urban Life Church is like. It is a struggle for those who come from the church community to embrace the seemingly 'common' methods the Lord gives us because they've been taught that these things are not of God and that these things are unclean.

In this year of our extreme makeover, God is a restoring WHO He made us to be. So even though our expressions and methods are common and unclean to many in the church world, we know that God has cleansed us. He has prepared us. He has trained us. He has sent us to a people group who need this freedom of expression.

Recently, one of our attendees told us that's exactly what she appreciates about the ministry. When the pastors are free to just be themselves, it allows everyone else to just be themselves. And that's what seems to be drawing people to the Sunday Café.

Keep Doing What You Do

One of our favorite activities is a social exercise that allows people to get to know one another. We cover a series of topics like: Tell us something that you wish people understood better about you. Well, one of those questions is this: If your company gave you a one-year paid sabbatical, what would you do?

Of course many people say they would travel, see the world, visit relatives or just relax. However, we've observed that people stop to think about it. After the travel and relaxation, most start to get down to what they would really do with their lives.

One very interesting answer was that one person said they would start a business or a ministry so that when the sabbatical was over, they could eventually quit the job and do what they really want to do with their lives.

By far, we found that to be one of the best answers we've ever heard to that question. That's because we are convinced that the passion in your heart, that thing you would do for free, can be an indicator of what you are supposed to do with your life.

We realize that from time to time, we take up a lot of email space discussing the vision and strategy of Urban Life Church. That's because we want to encourage you to continue to follow the Lord and His purpose for your life.

If a little church family in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania can host a weekly breakfast and a multipurpose internet site just to try to build relationships in an era when people find it difficult to venture out into the unknown world of spirituality, then certainly you can begin to do those seemingly crazy things that God has put in your heart.

The past few weeks, we've been receiving personal emails from some of our sons and daughters from across the country. Unknown to one another, they each expressed

gratitude regarding the weekly videos. Each one told us to just **keep doing what we do**.

They had no idea how encouraging that was because what we do is a passion for us. We love meeting people. We love fellowship. We love talking about subjects that are difficult and controversial. We love imparting Godly wisdom. We love writing books and music. We love being a mom and a dad. We love being a husband and wife. We love being pastors in the 21st century, reaching out to a perspective new generation of the church. We love **doing what we do**.

So we urge you to do the same. What you do may go against the tide of your friends and associates, but you must go ahead and just **do what you do**. Don't be a pretender and please don't be one that just goes along with the crowd. God made you to be an original, so don't ever become a copy of someone else.

We must warn you, though. If you decide to go ahead and **do what you do**, it won't always be the popular thing to do. Your songs, stories, ideas and inventions may not convey the catchy phrases and images that fit into today's modes of music and entertainment.

If you go ahead and just **do what you do**, your peers may not understand your path or agree with your strategy. We say this because we live in a season where people feed off popularity and the opinions of others.

When we look at Facebook, for instance, very few people are willing to stand out above the crowd and actually say things in their profile that will challenge the mindset of this world. We see many who declare that they are Christians, yet their postings are filled with racy photos, profanity, sexuality and perversion.

No, we're not saying they have to upload pictures of Jesus, the cross and angels, but profanity laced postings and sexual content doesn't do much to say that they are representing the Kingdom of God. The Word of God clearly addresses this by

encouraging Believers to not allow corrupt communication to come out of them.

Since we are a mission outreach church, we see the need for the consistent Christian lifestyle. For some people who attend our Sunday Cafe, this church stuff is new to them and the inconsistency of Christians has caused a lot of confusion for those who are genuinely seeking God.

This is not just some more pastors spouting church rhetoric. We see, first hand, the need for Believers to really do what they are called to do. As usual, we're putting the challenge out there again. Will you pursue the will of God and dare to be different, creative, powerful and effective; or will you play it safe and just go with the flow?

What if you had a year to do whatever you wanted? What would you do?

As far as the Urban Life Church family is concerned, we're going to continue to **do what we do**. Our mission is to develop and empower non-church attending people to practically experience change in their own lives and then affect these same changes in their families and community.

Doing what we do: We're touching generations and nations with liberating praise, intimate worship, hope filled, faith building teaching of the Word of God, and family fun and fellowship, for the healing of broken hearts and homes.

That's why we are Building Again. That's why this is the year of our Extreme Makeover. It is so that we can continue to **do what we do**, even better!

New Sense of Hope

We are thoroughly enjoying the new wave that is moving in across the city. That's what we see by the Spirit of God. There's a new sense of HOPE as our expectation shifts from merely wishing that change will come, to now beholding our wonderful, awesome and all powerful GOD, and now knowing that HE is empowering us to rebuild, restore and renew our families and community.

Again, to those who are standing on the outside and no longer in fellowship with a church family, YOU don't want to miss the new move of God.

In the spirit realm we see torrents of rain pouring on the city of Harrisburg. The demonic influences are being swept away, sin's dominance is being washed away, and God's family is being refreshed and revived.

We are beginning to see it in Urban Life. More and more individuals and families seem to trickle in, little by little, who are looking for a place of prayer, worship and prophetic insight for their families.

You don't want to miss God's timing for you, so find your church home. Find your spiritual parents. Get planted into a solid church family. Our nation is in crisis, but you don't have to live in panic mode. Come on in to the peace of God.

Fruitful Living Strategy

We are so excited about the way God is bringing things together for us in this season. We are connecting with like-minded people who understand and embrace the vision and strategy that the Lord has given us for reaching this community.

In recent weeks, the Lord has helped us to reorganize and reprioritize the ministry. We are getting back to the original harvest targets. When we first started in September of 2004, the Lord gave us a command to introduce a Fruitful Lifestyle to this community. We called it Fruitful Living.

Part of the strategy involved reaching out to young men and helping them to become better men, husbands and fathers by demonstrating true manhood.

Another strategy involves reaching the young ladies and helping them to see the way God honors womanhood. He honors wives. He honors mothers.

Another strategy involves ministering to couples, some of which are not married, but they have been living together and in some instances, have even started raising a family together.

Many couples are afraid of marriage because of the devastation that they have experienced with their parents. They actually believe that there's no need to get married because it never works out. We want to present marriages and concepts that are working, and trust that the love of God will draw them into covenant commitment with Him and with one another.

For years and years, many in various religious communities, have criticized and complained about this current generation's mindset. We believe that it's time to provide practical ministry to them in the love and compassion of Jesus.

We are moving to a new level as we become much more intentional and deliberate in our efforts to reach a lost generation. The best part is that some of them have already begun asking for help in areas ranging from pre-marital counseling to Bible teaching.

The Extreme Makeover continues...

All You Need Is God

We drive a 2003 SUV. It has over 120,000 miles on it and we were experiencing major engine problems just a couple of weeks before the state emissions testing AND our license plate and window sticker renewals were due. We took it in for repairs and after spending over \$500 it still failed the state inspection. In fact, it still wasn't operating correctly.

We were facing the need to take it to a dealership center for a full diagnostic, with an estimated \$1000-\$1500 to fix the problem. We continued sputtering around Harrisburg for two more weeks barely able to get up to 50 MPH on the highway. The engine light was on all the time. The deadline was upon us and the dealer couldn't get us in until 5 days after everything expired.

Well, the expiration date came and went and we risked driving to and from work on Friday October 1st, but we had to go to work. We planned to stick close to home Saturday, only go to church Sunday, and risk another trip to work on Monday, before taking it to the dealership on Tuesday, October 5th.

The Lord had previously impressed upon me (Chris) to start a 31-day consecration of prayer and fasting. This had nothing to do with our vehicle. This was about the perilous times we're living in and about my role as the leader of Urban Life Church.

I started the prayer and fast on Friday evening and spent the entire day on Saturday in prayer and the Word. On Saturday nights, we go to the facility to set up our equipment for Sunday mornings. Well, my sons and I climbed into the SUV and prepared for the usual slow journey.

The SUV started up quickly and the engine light DID NOT come on. I pulled out of the driveway and had full power. No sputtering, no jerking, not anything. When we got on the highway the SUV was doing 60 MPH with no problem. The return trip was the same. Sunday morning, there was still no problem. Everything was working perfectly.

Of course, we were still risking getting stopped by the police for expired license plates, so after church, I (Chris) called the auto repair shop because we knew it was open on Sundays. It's the same place that did the initial repairs and where the state emission inspection failed.

I told the mechanic that I wanted the SUV re-inspected because it was working just fine, now. The mechanic remembered me and asked, "Is the engine light off?" I told him, "Yes it is" and he says, "Bring it in."

So I drove to the shop almost expecting the engine light to come back on and the SUV to start sputtering again, just before I get there. I had to laugh at myself. (I was not thinking like God's man of faith and power at that moment). After I arrived, the mechanic connected the SUV onto the emissions test machine again and it passed the test. Moments later, he put on the new window stickers, new license plate sticker, and I found myself driving home praising God. Just before I arrived home, I cruised by a police patrol car that was traveling in the opposite direction. He could clearly see my window stickers. All I could do was just smile while thinking, "God, you are so cool."

The next day, I called the dealership to cancel the appointment and I told my co-workers that we just had a legitimate miracle. I'm telling you, we had been sputtering around for a total of 4 weeks and in the space of 24 hours of prayer and fasting, we went from facing a major repair, to driving a totally repaired vehicle. It was more proof that YOU DON'T NEED MONEY... ALL YOU NEED IS GOD!!!!

The bigger picture is that the moment we set our hearts to seek God, HE would not let anything interfere with that. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things He will add.

We weren't looking for this miracle. We didn't even focus our prayer time on this matter. God just stepped in and took the obstacle out of the way so that we could continue to pursue Him without any distractions.

Steady Stream of God's Love and Power

We are coming to the conclusion of our 31 days of personal consecration. It is most fitting that as the month concludes on this Sunday, October 31st, that we will be hosting a very dear and precious couple that will minister to the Urban Life family.

Six years ago, we met John and Kerry Shuey at a regional prayer meeting in downtown Harrisburg. After the special night concluded, they came and introduced themselves to us simply because the Lord directed them to do so.

What they could not have known was that God was causing them to connect us with pastors and various people whom God would later use to preserve us through the difficult trials that were yet to come. Like Barnabus did for Paul, the Shueys brought us into sweet fellowship with the brethren (pastors and leaders in this community). From time to time we have swapped emails and kept up to date with one another. Then, during this prayer and fasting season, Carol and I began talking about inviting someone from this community to minister to our little congregation.

Suddenly, John and I made connections via Face book and we knew they should be the ones to minister to the Urban Life family in this season. You see, **ULC** is made up of people who have been through some of the harshest and most cruel situations that can happen in a person's life. We have been involved in a ministry of therapeutic, spiritual healing over the past five years.

Because of this, we have been very careful about who we invite to minister to this family of believers. People who have been abused and abandoned don't need someone fussing at them. They don't need a message of condemnation. They need encouragers and exhorters. They need prayer warriors.

We have seen a real need for the gentle, patient and powerful love of God, to be literally poured into wounded souls. So our

ministry here has been about a steady stream of God's love and power. We just keep praying and ministering, teaching and encouraging, week after week after week.

It's not very spectacular and sparkling to the outside observer, but to see the countenances of people change over the last five years, and to watch lives change as their hearts are healed, well there is nothing that compares with that. Carol and I are so grateful and thankful to just be a part of what God is doing in this community.

Taking Ministry to the Next Level

A couple of months ago, we expressed our hearts regarding the direction that we believe we should take in reaching out to this generation. The past two months we have posted samples and video clips of our ministry to young men and women, as well as our outreach efforts to couples, rather they be married or living together.

We have also partnered our online efforts with one of our spiritual daughters, who is a professional licensed counselor in the state of Missouri. She is assisting us in providing answers and advice to hurting people. She even provides training for those who want to learn how to help hurting people.

A big part of our future plans involves establishing a rotating monthly seminar/workshop to minister to people beyond our Sunday Cafe, which, by the way, has provided a great opportunity for people to become acquainted with one another and us.

Our goal is to provide healing encounters for women and men, as well as concentrated ministry for couples. God is sending very special people our way and we want to be faithful stewards by shepherding His flock.

In order to step up to this next level of ministry, our desire is expand our office space and for Pastor Chris to be able to shift into full time ministry.

That is why we ask that you support this ministry by praying for its efforts to reach this generation with the practical help that many of them have already asked us to provide. That's the best part about this time. The attendees of Urban Life have already been asking us for this type of help, but due to both time and financial constraints, we have not been able to meet these requests.

So with your help, we can begin to meet this need.

As you may have noticed, our request for support does not come as a request for money. In fact, all we need is just a few minutes of your time.

During the past 30 days, we dedicated the entire month to prayer and fasting. Out of that prayerful season has come renewed understanding of what it will take in order for us to see the will of God come to pass in what HE has assigned to our hands.

So, we are asking all of our family and friends to support us over the next 30 days in PRAYER. The Lord has confirmed a secret desire in our heart that HE would meet our financial needs without us ever having to ask anyone for money; that HE would sovereignly meet our needs. He confirmed this desire by allowing us to come across the true-life story about the ministry of Robert Muller (1805-1898).

Muller and his wife cared for over 10,000 children through orphanages in 19th century Bristol, England. Over the course of 60+ years, God supplied over seven million dollars, yet they never solicited for donations. Muller relinquished his small preacher's salary and placed an offering box in the chapel, and committed himself to never go in debt and never to ask anyone but God for money. We sense that we are to walk in this same kind of faith.

Those who have visited the Sunday Cafe have seen that we already operate this way. We never ask for donations and don't set aside a specific moment to receive an offering. We just allow the Lord to speak to people and they leave their offerings in a small offering plate or they send financial gifts by mail. It has always been in our heart to move forth in this ministry in this manner.

So our request is that you would support us in prayer in a targeted and intentional manner over the next 30 days. We are asking you to lift this simple, yet profound prayer to the Lord on our behalf, every day over the next 30 days: **"Lord, remember your servants, Chris and Carol Green in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania."**

We can't express how awesome it is to know that hundreds of people will whisper this prayer over our lives today, tomorrow, the next day and for several days after that. We just know that the miraculous is being released on our behalf, so that we can minister effectively in the urban community of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Thank you so much for your support in this unique way.

Building a Safe Place

The past two weeks have been very special for us. Two weeks ago, John and Kerry Shuey ministered to us in such a deeply powerful way that it's difficult to put in words how much they touched us through their stories, gifts and teaching.

God used them to bring, a sort of, validation to what we are doing here. For instance, they revealed that Urban Life was the first church to send monthly support to their ministry. They encouraged us by showing a power point presentation of some of the people and pastors in India whose lives have been impacted by our monthly support.

Carol and I were so very pleased that you guys were able to see that as you have given to Urban Life Church, you are also helping us to bless others around the world. It's funny how you can think that you aren't doing very much, but in a matter of minutes, God can give you a glimpse of just how far reaching a simple act of love and obedience can go.

All Praise to God! You can access and review the video with John and Kerry Shuey.

Then, this past Sunday, we explored the prophetic promises in Isaiah 61. This passage promises that those who were poor, brokenhearted, prisoners, captives, mourning and in grief: **THEY WILL restore, renew and rebuild.** This, as you know, is the main thrust of Urban Life Church.

Every week we are opening our hearts to receive the word of God, the power of God, and the purpose of God. We want this restoration, renewal and rebuilding to take place within us, so that the Lord can use us to bring restoration, renewal and rebuilding to others.

One of our favorite songs on Israel Houghton's latest project is a song called ***Others***.

In it he sings, "*Lord help me to love others, the way that you love me.*" Right now, we are in the process of discovering *the way* that God loves us.

So Sunday, in another unorthodox move, we played a brief segment of a DVD by Joyce Meyer in which she gives her testimony of being sexually and emotionally abused by her father. After playing just a few minutes of the video, we held a discussion which led to two people disclosing some of the pain of their past.

It was one of the most profound, significant and powerful breakthrough moments we have ever had in Urban Life Church. The camera was off so everyone could feel free to talk. Carol and I just stepped back and watched in amazement as people began to share and minister to one another spontaneously.

In that moment, we realized why the Lord has placed us in such a unique setting and given us this strategy of the Sunday Cafe. We are beginning to understand why the Lord has led us this way. He has been building and designing a **safe place** where people can feel free to be transparent; so they can receive deep inner healing.

Week after week, the worship is intimate and personal. The word is soul searching and gentle, with no condemnation, as we are led to genuine repentance while the Spirit of God cleanses and heals us. It is an awesome experience.

Now we can hardly wait to gather again to see what God is going to do next week. Something powerful has been released. This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Those Who Grieve in Zion

We have found ourselves (in our southern influenced slang) “smack dab” in the middle of a powerful move of God in our weekly gathering. For the past two Sundays, we have engaged in some of the most frank and honest discussion that a church family could ever have.

Once again there was a gentle healing and cleansing ministry of the Holy Spirit for those who have carried deep dark secrets since childhood. The Spirit of God was present to help us to start the journey of forgiving those who hurt us, harmed us, and basically broke our hearts.

One member pointed out the fact that part of the reason today’s youth are so rebellious is because the same adults who criticize them for having sex before marriage, have themselves, engaged in adulterous affairs right before their eyes. So a teenager’s thought is, “How can you condemn me for what I’m doing (mom or dad) when I’ve seen you with someone else (other than my mother or father)?”

Today, we are ministering to people who have made many mistakes and fallen into all kinds of sin, vices and bondages. They have been living with consequences and paying for their decisions. They have lived in shame and under condemnation for so long that this is all they expect to hear even when they attend church services.

However, in this season of their life, the Lord has led them to a church whose pastors were sent from 800 miles away to specifically connect with them in the way Jesus ministered to the woman who was caught in adultery.

John 8: 3-11 records: Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down

and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

Urban Life Church runs the risk of appearing to be an urban ministry that condones and approves sinful behavior. In John 8, while religious leaders are focused on the deeds and actions of people, and quick to deal out the punishment for sinful behavior, Jesus looks into the heart of a woman who was so DESPERATE for love that she was willing to RISK DEATH to be with a man who was not her husband.

After last month's time of prayer and fasting, we came away with a renewed view of people from God's perspective. Religion sees sins, flaws and failures. GOD sees broken hearts and homes. The longer we have lived in Harrisburg, the more we have come to realize that this urban community needs a genuine baptism in the LOVE of God. While many pastors and churches may perceive the love and inner healing message as merely code-language for excusing sin, we see it as the almighty, all powerful God of the universe, breaking through the darkness and bringing souls into His marvelous light, even for those who are already believers.

Have you ever noticed that in Isaiah 61 the anointing of God is also released to console those who GRIEVE IN ZION?

There are thousands of believers, sitting in church pews, still grieving over the devastating things that have happened in their lives. Professional counselors teach that grief has many stages that include shock, denial, bargaining, depression, and anger. So Urban Life Church has a mandate to console those

who are still in shock in Zion, still in denial in Zion, still bargaining with God in Zion, still in depression in Zion, and still in anger in Zion.

Out of their shock, denial, bargaining, depression and anger, some turned back to alcohol, drugs, sex, food, or even to other religions for comfort, even at the risk of losing everything. They paid dearly for those decisions and they wander from church to church looking for understanding, forgiveness and healing. Yet, the Lord is directing us to see them through the eyes of Jesus, and not focus on what they have done. Included in the list of things that the church is called to do, we are also called to console those who grieve in Zion.

We look forward to the day when, like our partnering pastors, churches and ministries, we will have a dynamic worship team, a powerful small groups ministry, and life changing world-mission initiatives to reach the nations, but for now, God is working on the foundation upon which we will do all of those things. Right now, the Lord is healing the shattered little boys and girls inside of each of us, who are still longing for love and affirmation. He is lifting up bowed down heads that shame has convinced, will never be good enough to be forgiven, blessed or useful in the hands of God.

Extreme Makeover...

Finishing Touch

No Looking Back

As soon as we started writing this week's letter to you, the lyrics to one of Israel Houghton's songs began to resonate from within:

"I'm not going back - I'm moving ahead - Here to declare to you my past is over - In You - All things are made new - Surrendered my life to Christ - I'm moving, moving forward... You make all things new - Yes - You make all things new - And I will follow You - Forward"

How we love this song, and O' how it speaks to our lives today. We were on our way to work yesterday talking about how quickly this year has gone by. It's December already.

The Lord has brought our church family through a year of reconstruction. The first phase of reconstruction was demolition. As we come to the end of this year, some of us have new employment or we are living in a new location. Some are transitioning to becoming official members of this church, even as the ministry is beginning to make progress in reaching people in this community and around the world.

We learned from our October 31st special guests, John and Kerry Shuey, that we have been helping them to encourage pastors and leaders in India.

From our website analytics, we have discovered that from May through November, we have had more website page views and hits from the Russian Federation, than any other country. In fact, our list of countries that have registered views of our website over the past four months reads like a United Nations roll call:

China , Canada, South Africa, Great Britain, India, Philippines, Australia, Brazil, Japan, Trinidad & Tobago, Ukraine, South Korea, France, Kuwait, Venezuela, Iraq, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Romania, Portugal, Thailand, Malaysia,

Israel, Singapore, Denmark, Jordan and Tanzania; just to name a few.

This is incredible! The same word you are receiving in our weekly Sunday Café is being received all over the world. While the number of views may not seem impressive, we are utterly amazed that this is taking place at all.

Somewhere, someone has clicked on our website and explored our various books, music and video clips. You have been a part of sending this message of restoration and renewal to hearts and homes all over the world.

That's why we can say, we're not looking back, we're moving ahead. That's why we're encouraging you to keep moving forward with us.

Next week we're launching a new broadcast on one of Harrisburg's local radio stations and we're preparing to fully engage in the ministry of inner healing and deliverance in our Sunday Cafe.

We're putting our hands to the plow and we're not looking back. We've shared with you our vision for children, the plans for men, and our goals for families. We've been praying and seeking the Lord's face like never before. Don't you dare give up now! It's about to really get exciting around here.

Come on, Urban Life family! No more living under the weight of regrets. We're laying it all aside and abandoning ourselves to pursue the heart of the Father.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; - Philippians 1:3-6 (NKJV)

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- Philippians 3:13-14 (NKJV)

What do YOU see, when YOU look at me?

The only way we can describe how we feel about what's happening in this ministry is by reflecting on our early days as parents. We held those tiny newborn bundles with wonder, nervousness, pride and apprehension.

You wonder how such a special thing could come forth from your body as you're nervously trying to hold this baby, fighting the fear that you will drop them. You are so proud that you are a parent and that God has entrusted you with such a responsibility, but you are apprehensive about your ability to take care of what God has given.

You would think that we would be well beyond those feelings since we've been in the ministry for over thirty years and served as leaders of this church for almost six years. But what is coming forth in the Urban Life Church of Harrisburg, PA is so far beyond what we could have imagined that it feels like we have just really gotten started. We feel like first-time parents of a newborn baby.

Whatever God is doing in this church, bringing special people together to touch this urban community in a very, very unique way, it is simply precious and rare. We feel that all of us are being drawn together to do something great for God in this city. When we declare this, we don't mean that we're going to be the biggest, the best, or the brightest. We just mean, we have a special part to play and we're going to give God our best to accomplish what HE has assigned to our hands in this city.

The people that are attending are so humble, willing and broken before the Lord that they just want to find their place and begin the process of becoming all that the Lord desires for them to be. It is amazing to sit back and watch God bring a church family together.

This past Sunday was our fifth consecutive week of amazement. As we continued our discussion from Isaiah 61, the Lord has directed us to explore this chapter, one verse at a time over the next few weeks. We're just going to take whatever time is necessary to partake of the nourishment that God is giving.

We started with the first verse that reads: *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to **the poor**. He has sent me to bind up **the brokenhearted**, to proclaim freedom for **the captives** and release from darkness for **the prisoners**.*

In taking the time to define what it means to be **poor**, **brokenhearted**, **captives** and **prisoners**, we were able to identify which one or more categories described our individual or family life situations. We were able to hear and receive the good news for our spiritual poverty. We were able to see where we have been wounded and thus allow the Spirit of God to bandage those wounds and start the healing process. We were able to see how we opened doors to demonic influences that took us captive. We denounced the power of the enemy so that we could be set free. We were able to see the lies that have imprisoned us as the light of God's truth was shown into our hearts.

That was a particularly important point last Sunday and it seemed to resonate with our online audience as well. We will no longer live in the prison of the lies of the enemy. We will no longer believe what the enemy has said about us. When the Lord looks at us, HE does not see a mistake. God really does not say "oops", when HE looks at us. HE does not see failure or error. God doesn't want to hit the delete button when HE looks at you and me.

So stop saying, "I don't matter" and "I'll never change". Stop saying "I can't play this instrument, I can't sing good enough, I can't dance, I can't write, I can't finish school, I can't ever get the breaks and the opportunities". It's all lies. Just ask the Lord right now, "**What do You see when You look at me?**"

If you really let HIM answer that question, you will find yourself on your knees, weeping in HIS presence. And you'll never allow the lies to dominate your thoughts ever again.

Consolation

We recall that during the Christmas season of 2005, we entered the most difficult time of our lives. Instead of preparing for Christmas, we were making plans to move out of our first church facility and shift our remaining remnant of church members to meeting in a hotel each week.

That was the beginning of a four-year wilderness journey. We can't say that we always had the best attitude during that season. We felt like failures in every sense of the word. We had lost close relationships, most of our members, the joyful expectations of our dreams, our self-esteem and our confidence.

For four years, we fluctuated back and forth, constantly wondering and wandering through a maze of discouragement and doubt. Today we realize that we were also going through the various stages of grief.

Grief is the process we go through when there has been either a psycho-social loss (divorce, death, separations, loss of purpose) or a physical loss (body part, home, car, money, or job). Depending on the school of thought, there are 5-7 stages of grief. It can be a long and very complicated healing process that can become stagnant or endless, depending on the individual and the amount of stressful and unforeseen circumstances that can continue to affect one's life even after the initial incident.

For instance, even after the losses of that year, we later lost our home in foreclosure and two close friends by death. So while still recovering from initial loss, more losses occurred to start new cycles of grief and offset some of the progress of the previous recovery. It was a very difficult season for our family.

However, we're not writing about it to draw attention to us. What we're trying to say is that this is what people are going through all around us, all the time. That is what's behind the

blank stares while they're sitting next to you on the bus or next to you in a church worship service.

This past Sunday, we talked about the prophetic promise of comfort for those who mourn and the consolation for those who grieve in Zion. Isaiah 61: 2b-3 reads: *...to comfort all who mourn, To console those who grieve in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;*

We explained how **the outward expression of grief is mourning**. Comfort is provided for mourning. Comfort means to ease the pain. However, **grief is the process of recovery** from loss. Through this teaching, we explained why people are still in various stages of grief in Zion.

Looking back at our grieving season, it is now understandable why so many people get so depressed during the holidays. However, with all that we lost during the testing of our faith, we never lost PURPOSE. Deep inside, we knew there had to be a reason for the Lord sending us to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. If we could just hold on, answers would eventually come.

With great joy and perspective we can testify about it now, but back then, we needed some encouragement and a few reminders. God sent very special people from this community and across the country to console us. When you look at our **Pennsylvania Connections** that are listed on our website, these are just some of the people that God used to carry us through our healing process.

Even though we have tried to express our gratitude, they will never know how much they helped us along the way. Timely words, emails, phone calls, or just one-on-one personal time, was part of what was necessary to console (us) those who grieve in Zion.

We mention this because, each of you reading this e-newsletter carry that same ability within you. Someone needs the consolation ministry of the Holy Spirit to come through you.

Consolation is not the alternate prize you give to the person who did not win a contest. You know how the loser always gets a "consolation prize". Consolation is the most wonderful gift you can give to someone.

Consolation means **to remove the sense of loss**. That's a bit more than easing the pain. Someone is wearing the sackcloth and ashes of their grief. They are still trying to heal from their losses. Like ancient times, they have ashes on their head.

Don't assume that everybody around that is smiling is okay. The most valuable gift you can give this year is yourself. We realize that a lot of people feel the pressure to buy gifts and some are embarrassed because they don't have any money. You may be one of them.

But after all we have gone through the last few years; we can tell you that no gift or money is more precious than life. So share your life this year. Share your story. Speak of God's goodness. Let someone know that God will make a way where there seems to be no way. When you do this, you will remind yourself even as you impart LIFE and HOPE to others.

Someone needs beauty (a crown to remind them that they are a prince or princess) bestowed on their head to replace the ashes of grieving. They need the oil of joy to brighten their countenance and bring them out of their mourning. They need a little help exchanging that heavy spirit of despair for the light and bright garment of praise.

That is true consolation. That is the process of removing the sense of loss. The sovereign LORD anointed Christ for this purpose and that anointing is now upon you.

So during this season, rebuild the ancient ruins, restore the former desolations and renew your cities (hearts and homes).

Reflection

At the end of the year we reconciled our record and balanced our accounting books. A few weeks later, when we sent our annual ministry and financial report to our overseers, it was a tangible testimony of God's faithfulness during the year.

For the first time in over five years, we held consistent Sunday morning gatherings from one permanent location. We were no longer wandering from one place to another.

God moved in our personal lives in such a great way that we just knew that He was speaking clearly to assure us about what He was doing in Harrisburg.

From our first Sunday service, in which we declared that it was to be a year of an extreme makeover, until the final week of the year, in which we were blessed with the time and money to spend Christmas with family back in St. Louis, we watched God tear everything apart and put it all back together again.

If you are reading this book, we trust that God has led you to it because you needed to know that there's no need to panic. The demolition that you are experiencing is from God, not from Satan. God is doing a whole new thing in your heart and in your home. Don't resist Him and don't quit because of fear, disappointment or anger.

God's promise to you is this:

"Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness *and* rivers in the desert."

Isaiah 43: 18-19 (NKJV)

It's an extreme makeover! It's very difficult to go through it, but nothing compares to the joy you will experience when God hands you the keys to a brand new LIFE.

Acknowledgements

Chris, Jonathan and David Green (our sons) made it happen every week. We pray that the Lord will grant them a great outpouring of blessings for the dedication they have made with their lives to Him and this ministry.

Hosea and Amethyst Roberson – Thanks for trusting and believing in us.

John and Kerry Shuey – Your love is extravagant.

About the Authors

Chris and Carol Green are a husband and wife team that was sent to south central Pennsylvania to help rebuild, restore and renew hearts and homes. They are certified master life coaches, urban marriage and family advisers, leadership and community outreach consultants, and ordained ministers.

They served in local church pastoral leadership in St. Louis, MO and Harrisburg, PA for a combined 27 years, before they launched a three-part initiative that would synergies their professional expertise with their ministry experience in a network of community services and leadership training.

Their community-supporting initiatives have included hosting monthly workshops in a state-funded unemployment center, on-call life coaching support for a women's transitional housing shelter, consultation and training for local outreach organizations, collaborating with various community outreach efforts, and maintaining an itinerant schedule of local and national speaking engagements and opportunities.

For their community service, they received a United Way 2017 Volunteer of the Year Nomination. They have also received Urban Leadership Awards (2016) and Community Ambassador Awards (2015) from iChange Nations™ and were appointed Goodwill Ambassadors of World Peace, as part of an interfaith peace-building initiative to the United Nations, by Golden Rule International.

Chris Green is a social media veteran and an award-winning producer of a local cable television broadcast (1999). Together, they have been international columnists/writers with a Global Journalism Award-winning social media news team, the authors of several inspirational life-building books, and the creators of numerous blogs and eNewsletters. They are also accomplished songwriters, having penned and produced over 150 songs since 1992.

Their travels have taken them from coast to coast in the United States, to Hawaii, the Bahamas, Trinidad, the United Kingdom, and West Africa.

They have been married since January 3, 1981 and have three adult sons, two daughters-in-law, one granddaughter, and a host of people throughout the world who call them 'mom and dad'.

Access more insight and inspiration from Chris and Carol Green's devotional books at:

Fruitful Life Network, Inc.

www.fruitful-life.net