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the Community

in Maywood

• ISSUE 4 • May • 2008 •

Recent News and Happenings

Greeting to you in the glorious name of Jesus our Savior and Lord. We trust that this letter finds you our friends and advocates blessed and well in the joy of the Lord.

Recent News. Since our last report (about six weeks ago) we've had the opportunity to share our mission and vision with two congregations as well as a number of new individuals. It has become rather clear that outsiders who know of Maywood generally think of it in some of the worst ways. To many it is a place to be avoided or feared. To others it is simply a place they've heard about on the evening news or read about in the newspaper.

We had asked you all to pray for us that God would grant us **favor before village leaders**. In April, John was able to schedule a 15 minute meeting with the mayor. As they talked, the meeting went 30, then 45, then 60 minutes! The meeting ended after 1 hour and 15 minutes, with the mayor cancelling or postponing several appointments along the way! It was a great opportunity to interview and brainstorm with his honor. Later, with a pastor from one of our partner churches, we enjoyed a lengthy meeting with the President of the Maywood's Chamber of Commerce. He was so excited to hear about our plans for ministering to our community this summer. Thanks to each of you who prayed for favor.

A ministry team of eight from the First Baptist Church of Metropolis, IL drove over six hours to Maywood in order to serve us for two days! They painted our walls and cleaned; most of all they loved us and encouraged us with their **sacrificial service**. They treated us as if we were their honored guests when in fact they were ours. We are thankful for our partners of all kinds, but what a treat to have some who are just looking out for us.

We have continued to serve as **volunteers at the local public school**. It seems that the principal is using this first semester as a proving ground for our dependability and diligence

as she has assigned us to some pretty mundane tasks. We're praying that we'll be given more opportunities to engage the faculty, staff, and children during the summer and fall sessions.

It seemed that we had gotten our foot in the door at **two local college campuses**. Hoping to see these in-roads develop into ministry opportunities where the lost are found, and the existing *remnants* are bolstered for gospel impact; instead, since Spring Break, we have seen just about all of our in-roads washed out. Perhaps, the Lord is leading us to engage in an entirely new work at these campuses rather than support existing ones?

We had the pleasure of attending our **NAMB Missionary Commissioning Celebration** (a graduation of sorts) in Portsmouth, VA. With so many pressings things at "home" we regretted having to be away for five days (besides we were burglarized the last time we left town for a weekend). Anyway, the angels of the Lord guarded our home while we enjoyed the hospitality of Virginia and the North American Mission Board. We made many great connections with other planters from around the country. Also, while we've had very cool receptions from Maywood churches, we were blessed by a very warm black Baptist church which was putting on a block party in Suffolk.

Happenings. As part of ongoing attempts to establish our "**good neighbor**" platform (see March 2008 Newsletter) as the launching pad for our Gospel engagement activities, we are organizing a **Block Party** for our street. The village has approved our request to close off the block on Saturday, June 14th, and with the help of short-term mission teams and the enlistment of neighbors, we should have a blast while ministering to our community.

We're also preparing for an outdoor VBS-type program for the kids in our neighborhood; this will be held from Tuesday, June 9th up to the Block Party.

We are in ongoing discussion with our neighbors about starting a **Block Club**, too. Block clubs attempt to mobilize residents of a particular area for the purpose of reclaiming and revitalizing their neighborhood with the cooperation of local law enforcement and the mayor's office of community affairs. Since, moving into our Maywood home only four months ago, we have heard so much gunfire in the area, we stopped counting the incidents. We live only one city block from what is one of the most dangerous intersections (due to criminal activity) in the Western Suburbs. Police alone cannot fix the trouble. It is not a street corner that needs to be won, but the hearts of evil men and women who perpetuate the lawlessness.

Our attempts to get meetings started in our home have not been going so well. While we have had many opportunities to meet and pray with people in their living-rooms, their front doors, or even on the street, we have not had the same kind of success getting people to meet in our home. We will continue to pour into the developing relationships even as we build new ones, too. Please pray for us that we would see regular prayer meetings and Bible studies group burgeon in the near future.

Prayer & Praises @ theCommunity

Be informed about our needs and current activities by visiting www.radiantbride.org. Click on "**community prayer**," and make our requests known to God. What we're attempting is impossible by the power and will of man. The state of the existing community has already proven that! We require the supernatural power of God to be manifest all around us! Also, please drop us a note and tell us that you're praying for us, and we'll keep telling you how God is answering!

Please send all e-mail to John and Gloria Yi at pastorjohn@radiantbride.org
Send all mail to our new address: **The Community in Maywood, 157 South 17th Avenue, Maywood, IL 60153.**
Phone Numbers: (Home-Office) 708-450-5033; (Mobile) 312-608-0349
Also, for those who are sending contributions, please make them payable to "the Community in Maywood."

COMMUNITY ADVOCATES



the **Community** is possible by the advocacy of conscientious Kingdom-minded Christians brought together under Jesus, the Christ, God, Head, and Bridegroom. To Him belongs all blessing, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and might (Rev. 7:12).

Agency Advocacy

Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association
Illinois Baptist State Association
Korean SBC Pastor's Fellowship of Illinois
North American Mission Board
and its Nehemiah Project

Corporate Advocacy

AAC Consulting, Hoffman Estates, IL
Baptist Church of Schaumburg, IL
Binneri Presbyterian Church, Richardson, TX
Calvary Presbyterian Church, Wheeling, IL
Chicagoland Community Church, Chicago, IL
First Baptist Church of Anna, IL
First Baptist Church of Metropolis, IL
Immanuel Baptist Church, Chicago, IL

Individual Advocacy

the **Community** enjoys the support of many individuals who advocate for us here in Chicagoland. While most of our individual supporters are local, we are also blessed by the precious partnership of other individuals throughout North America.

For each and every one of these precious advocates, we thank and praise God. Not wanting to be one who jeopardizes these brothers and sisters of their full reward in the Kingdom, we will withhold their names. We trust that they each know of whom we speak, but more importantly that the Master knows of their generosity and hospitality towards His servants (Mat. 10:11-16).

THEOLOGICAL MUSINGS

When I attended seminary, one of my favorite theology professors had us write weekly "ditties". Its purpose was to teach students to communicate a response to a rather broad theological question in a brief, yet dense is ditty. Since that time, I have continued to periodically write/preach these sermonettes to myself. Well if you will humor me, I'll share them with you.

WHY REVELATION, AND NOT DISCOVERY?

Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith – to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.
Romans 16:25-27 (ESV)

The mid/late 1970's saw a rather prominent blip on the Christian pop culture radar. The peculiar bright-yellow bumper stickers boldly read, "I FOUND IT!" They seemed to be everywhere and no one had a clue what the message meant in the seventy-five-percent-Jewish community of Skokie, Illinois. Like many Americans, people were asking, "Found what? What did you find?" Those in the "know" would boldly answer, "I found Jesus." It was a simple and successful evangelistic campaign. Not surprisingly, Campus Crusade for Christ reintroduced it in 2002. Bumper stickers (updated to bright orange), leaflets, balloons, and sandwich boards with that same peculiar exclamation fell upon the UC-Davis campus like locust. Again, the promotion was a success.

Unfortunately, the well-intentioned campaign of 1970's had the same flaw as the revamped 2002 version. It implied something that was not so. The Son of God was neither lost nor MIA. On the contrary, it was people who were lost and more accurately, *blind*. God had already disclosed himself eons before at the Creation. Since then, he has progressively revealed himself in history. Then at Calvary's summit, in one final hemorrhagic outburst of his love for men, his ultimate self-revelation was displayed in the scorn and shame of the Cross.

Why revelation? Why not, discovery or invention? The Creator God was not lost, misplaced, or gone astray. Man can neither commune with the transcendent God by virtue of fate, luck, or happenstance; nor can God be found, excavated, or stumbled upon. He was the "mystery hidden for long ages past, but now [he is] revealed and made known . . . so that all nations might believe and obey him." (Rom 16:25-26, NASB) *Now, he has initiated* the full disclosure of God's self at the apex of Calvary's Cross just as he did *then* – when he created all things *ex nihilo*. The God of the Universe is not the product of men's designs; instead, they are a product of his. The revelation of God is full in the person of Jesus who is the Christ, God, the Son, and Saviour. Evidently, men have *found* nothing since God will not be found. (Job 23) Instead, as the Father initiates self-exposure, men will declare, "I once was blind, but now I see!"

Can the Bride's splendor be likened to the radiance of the sun? Isn't her honored role that of the moon – to glow with the resplendent glory of her Bridegroom? She cannot generate life-giving light. Instead, her brightness is a shimmering beacon which ought to gather the aimless gaze of men to fixate upon the revealed Son of God.

ADVOCATE for the **Community** and the Church in Chicagoland

1. **Partner in Missional Service in Maywood** by prayerfully and courageously considering how God may be calling you to join Him in the work that He is already doing in Maywood and places like it. Make Maywood the place for your next short-term mission trip!
2. **Partner through Financial Support of the **Community**** which seeks Kingdom-minded Christians who understand that the missional strategy of **the **Community**** coupled with her depressed context makes self-sustainable ministry nearly impossible at the outset. Only through the generous support of advocates like you can the initial financial hurdles be overcome.
3. **Partner in Faithful Prayer** by asking God to enable us and **the **Community**** to leave the indelible mark of Christ's Kingdom in Maywood and raise up more authentic disciples and congregations who will authentically love God and relevantly love people. Please visit us at radiantbride.org and become familiar with our specific prayer requests.
4. **Partner through Advocacy** in your own local church by promoting relevant missionally-minded engagement strategies for domestic Kingdom ministry and new ministry activities which encourage authentic Christians to incarnationally penetrate the immediate and broader community of lost people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Do stuff that invites the world's **appropriate** regard for the Bride. Whether we're loved or hated, may it be for Jesus' sake, and not for our shameful hypocrisy and irrelevance.