

GOOD NEWS

From Beulah (Englewood)—the city God loves (Isaiah 62:4)

Issue 3

Revival Fires Break Out

A phenomenal move of God swept through northern Indiana during the winter—centered in Goshen, Middlebury, and nearby communities. Beginning January 12, for 52 days Christians met for prayer and worship three times a day and sent teams out into the communities mornings and afternoons to pray for people and present the gospel. Hundreds accepted Christ or recommitted their lives to Him. At the evening worship services they baptized those who had given their lives to Jesus that day.

The outreach met an unprecedented response. Some RV factories closed down their production lines briefly for their employees to hear the gospel or receive prayer. Twelve public high schools gave excused absences to students to take part in the street ministry



and the services. Some police who came to monitor the churches' overflow crowds actually joined in the services.

Many people who wanted prayer needed physical healing, and according to one report, "... they are getting it. And it's not happening up on stage—it's happening in homes, parking lots, and sidewalks all over the community. No one claims to have a gift of healing, but when they pray, they're seeing people healed—often to their own amazement. And it's not just physical healing; bondages are being shattered. Hundreds of people are testifying that the Holy Spirit is moving in and through them. Doors are opening. Walls are coming down." <https://hitchhikeamerica.wordpress.com/2015/01/23/revival-in-indiana/>

Those walls had kept various denominations and churches working independently

from one another. But when the impact of the outreach became visible in communities, churches started crossing denominational lines to unite in the effort. At pastors' meetings as many as 89 pastors and churches met as one body to pray for the revival. Christians from surrounding states drove in to take part, even a pastor from Mexico during the closing days. Area newspapers gave the story front-page coverage, and TV stations featured the events. Two radio stations broadcast the evening services live. From 400 people in January, the crowd grew to 10,000 on the closing day.

Some observers gave an overall impression of the revival: "It is creating an even greater hunger for God. . . . we sensed the unity amongst the area pastors and churches, tremendous joy, and the drawing power of God." <http://romans1015.com/tri-state-revival-prayer-network-newsletter-march-2015/> The revival has since moved on to other parts of Indiana and shows no signs of stopping. For more information see www.reviveindiana.org.

Chicagoland Connection

On March 17 a number of Indiana pastors and laypersons bussed to a Chicago suburb and met with several hundred Christian leaders and intercessors. The Hoosiers shared what God had done in their towns, their churches, and their lives. A young Amish man, whose prayers for revival helped prepare the way for God to move, told his story. He had invited a friend, Kyle Martin, to come to Indiana and bring his ministry, Time to Revive. Martin challenged the Chicagoland crowd to believe that God can do the same things here if believers unite and pray and follow God's leading.

Englewood Connection

Follow-up meetings have taken place, some in Englewood with Englewood pastors attending. These meetings are drawing together people with a hunger for revival. Kyle Martin has promised that if pastors and ministries will commit their constituencies to this effort, he will bring Time to Revive to Chicago. A core group has accepted his challenge and is ready to pay the cost and move

forward. Englewood itself may be one of the locations for an evangelistic outreach. Many intercessors who have besieged heaven with prayers for revival and who have wept over this great city now sense that God has heard, and the answer is on the way.

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When God sets up His kingdom in an earthly place, where Christ reigns, we call it revival. King Jesus is conquering rebel territory, whether in a nation, a city (as in those Indiana communities), or a human heart (as in the following testimony of two people brought into Christ's kingdom, who then help bring His kingdom into their community).

Reclaimed by Christ

Ojo dug his toes into the mud, twisted around, and hurtled down the alley, away from the man with the gun. Bullets whizzed past him and crashed into a nearby house. Gasping for air, Ojo reached his home, burst through the door, and ran into the arms of his mom, siblings, and grandmother. The gunman gave up pursuit.

Ojo's mother and grandmother checked him over. Not a single bullet had touched him. But later they saw the bullet holes in the house Ojo had passed in his flight. The holes formed a rainbow, going up one side of his body and over his head, and then down the other side. How could that happen, they wondered.

Ojo Patterson chose his risky lifestyle at age 13. It was a matter of survival. After his father died when Ojo was eight, the family lived with relatives in Chicago's Englewood area for a while, but then they had to move to abandoned houses. Ojo learned how to reconnect the electric and natural gas supply lines that the utilities had closed off. On one frigid wintry night the whole family huddled in one bed under a blanket with a hair dryer to keep warm.

By now Ojo was the sole supporter of his mother and three siblings. Though homeless, the children remained in school and needed clothes and school supplies. However, the boy could not make enough money to cover

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all the family expenses doing the odd jobs available to a 13-year-old. He started dealing drugs. He also followed in his father's footsteps by joining the Gangster Disciples.

Several brushes with the law brought the inevitable—an arrest that put him in jail. But it was his two stints in prison that turned his life around. Christian inmates kept telling him about Jesus, which made Ojo fighting mad. He didn't want to know Jesus. But gradually something changed in his heart. The urge to fight disappeared, and he began to listen.

One day he was standing in line to see a counselor, when an older man next to him spoke up: "God has shown me," he said, "what you will do when you get out of here. You will be serving in the Lord's kingdom by reaching young people and mentoring men because of your testimony." The two had never met before, and the man knew nothing about Ojo. The young man was stunned.

Back in his cell Ojo voiced what was going through his mind: "I don't know who You are. I just know it's a higher power. There are a lot of religions in here, and they all claim to be true. Show me the real thing." A week later a chaplain started coming to do Bible studies with him.

In between the Bible studies Ojo searched the book on his own for answers to his questions. One day he was reading on his bunk when suddenly he had a strange sense of "going to another place." As he describes it, "I could hear in my mind the Lord saying, 'Ojo, what did all the stealing, drug dealing, hurting my people profit you?' I knew the answer was nothing. Jesus continued to speak, 'In all the wrong things you've done, all the people you've hurt, I've kept you because you're My son, and I chose you.' Then He reminded me of my narrow escapes from death—the rainbow of bullet holes on the house, the gun that failed to fire at point-blank range, and many other times. It was He who had rescued me."

From that time on Ojo had no more doubts. He had met the one who is Truth. The young man made a covenant with the Lord: "If this is real, if this is You, please take away my lust, my love for money, and save my family, and I will give You 100 percent." Both parties kept this covenant. Ojo experienced the Holy Spirit's help to remain celibate and sober and to bring family members to know Jesus. "From that day on I lived a different life," the young man says. "The Lord changed me from the inside out."

When he was released from prison, he began working with a south Chicago street ministry

called Christ Or Nothing. Gang bangers and drug dealers could relate to Ojo's story. One outreach of the ministry brought Ojo to a housing project where he used his barbering skills to cut residents' hair and share the gospel.

After a year and a half, the ministry team held a back-to-school give-away for a neighborhood in Englewood. Little did Ojo know he would meet his wife there.

Michelle Winding was a hair stylist who shared the same love for God's people as Ojo. She also loved doing hair as a way to reach the lost and unfortunate. The two struck up a conversation, and by the end of the day, they had exchanged phone numbers.

Michelle was focused on doing God's work and considered Ojo just another brother in the Lord. But a couple of weeks later, she sat down for a talk with Jesus. She had to be honest with herself and the Lord: she definitely would like to be married. Literally while she was praying, Ojo called for a first date—a prayer date.



Michelle Patterson (far right) assists at the CON give-away event.

Through a series of circumstances that only God could have engineered Ojo and Michelle recognized that the Lord had brought them together. God had given Ojo a prophetic word through another couple before the two even met, and He gave confirming words to both of them. As wedding plans progressed, the couple determined to honor the Lord in everything. "Through God's love and mercy," explains Michelle, "we were grounded in God. That enabled us to make and keep a commitment not to live together before marriage. We had both totally surrendered our lives to the Lord. Now we surrendered our relationship to Him. How the blessings flooded in then."

Those blessings included a place to live and a "miracle wedding." They had no resources for a ceremony, but provisions flowed in from every quarter. "Another blessing is the way my son Malik took to Ojo, wrestling with him on the floor, and the way Ojo relates to my two older children. God has given abundantly, above all that I could ask or think"

"In our community there is a lot of fear of marriage," Michelle explained. "It's put on a man, especially when he chooses a woman with children. And even knowing God is leading, you can easily look at yourself, your failures, what you

bring to the table and eliminate yourself from God's blessings. But as we trusted in God, His hand was upon us, and we saw the fruit."

Today the Pattersons' lives bear much fruit for God's kingdom. Every day they share Jesus with co-workers and clients and with fellow passengers on the public transportation they take to work. Many people have entered God's family as a result. Through Christ Or Nothing and California School Project, Ojo and Michelle had the opportunity to minister to youth at several Englewood high schools. In addition, they work with an agency that advocates for housing for the homeless and for legislation to remove some lifetime barriers to employment for people with police records. God is using their transformed lives to transform their community in



The Pattersons: Malik, Michelle, and Ojo

many ways. They dream of one day owning their own hair salon where clients will hear and have a chance to receive God's transforming truth for their own lives.

"Sometimes," Ojo concluded, "I just sit down and ask God, 'Why did You pick me? After all the wrong things I've done, You chose me to do Your work of saving souls for Your kingdom.' It's amazing."

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Speak Up: Stop the Violence

By Shirley Copeland, Englewood resident

As I walk down the streets of my neighborhood,
I see the evil as bullets fly.

It's an everyday norm

As I hear someone cry.

The jail is so full of all our brothers.

The ones who're out are killing one another.

Violence in the streets is an everyday norm.

The members are getting younger

As the gangs begin to form.

So many families have lost a child.

Just listen to their stories in the police files.

You know the thugs you have in your house.

They tell their friends what it's all about.

I know one thing that can change a thug—

It's a change of mind to a heart of love.

Silence is golden—that's no lie.

But open your mouth before someone else dies.

Somebody you know may be next on the list.

Freedom from violence is heavenly bliss.

My heart is heavy; you hear how I talk.

I lost a loved one who was taking a walk.

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