

BEAUTY FROM ASHES

As images of the terrorist attacks flooded every home last September, citizens rose up in unparalleled patriotism and unity. Nationwide, the Christians' response was unequalled in modern day America. Through the wreckage, a new commitment to share the Gospel engulfed the born-again believers. Calvary Chapels and like-minded churches journeyed to New York to lend a hand of love and support to those who were hurting. As we encounter the one-year anniversary, we look for the good that God brought out of such a terrible tragedy.... the Beauty that came from the Ashes.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28

stories by Carol Eskaros CC Old Bridge

Finishing the Race

A story of God's continuing work through Al and Jean Braca

Just one month shy of her 33rd wedding anniversary, Jean suffered first-hand the tragedy of September 11th. Her husband, Al Braca, a trader for Cantor Fitzgerald, was in his office on the 104th Floor of One World Trade Center when a plane struck the building in the floors below him. Cut off from known escape routes and understanding the gravity of the situation, Al led his co-workers in prayer and encouraged them to trust in God alone at the hour of their death, as cellular phone messages would later recount.

Since the tragedy, the testimony of Al's life and death has inspired thousands across the country, from firefighters and officers at Ground Zero, to church members and leaders on the West Coast. "None of it surprises



Jean and Al Braca

me," says Jean. "That is just who Al was. He always encouraged me to share my faith, and he lived what he preached, even to the end."

In the year since September 11th, the Lord has given Jean remarkable opportunities to

share her message, which, she explains, "is about two things—bringing people to Christ, and encouraging those who already know Him to walk by faith, as Al did."

During her first visit to Ground Zero, she had one such opportunity. Jean felt strongly led by the Lord to go to New York and serve those who continued to toil in the recovery and clean up efforts.

She recalls, "Many of the officers I met knew about Al from a Christian magazine, and one officer came right up to me, expressing such grief. The Lord opened the door for me to share the Gospel with him, and he received Christ right there." Jean explains that this is precisely why the Lord allowed her family to endure Al's death—so that others, like this officer, might experience God's grace and love.

"I was driving home and saw a woman sitting near a statue at a local church. As I drove by, the Lord grabbed hold of my heart, and told me to turn around and return to her. As I approached, I saw she was crying, and I asked her to share her story with me. Her daughter was in trouble. There was a history of abuse, and just so much pain. I shared about my loss and God's abundant grace. I then asked her if she wanted to receive Jesus. She did."

Jean feels her family was chosen for this ministry—to encourage the brethren after the WTC tragedy. After learning of Al's death, Jean recalls, she made a conscious choice to cling to God and remain faithful to Him.

At first everyone considered September 11th to be the end of Al's ministry—but in many ways it has just been a continuation. This is just one of the many ways the Lord has used the events of September 11th for His glory, and comforted Jean during this difficult time.

Sharing the Gospel



Lt. Jerry Sillcocks

"People call us heroes, but it isn't really like that. I am not a hero, I am doing what God raised me up to do," says Jerry Sillcocks of his ministry as a fire-

fighter and Christian after September 11th. "We took an oath when we became firefighters to do what we did at the World Trade Center, and as Christians, we are called to reach out to the lost."

God has used the New York City Chapter of Firefighters for Christ and their experiences at Ground Zero to share the hope and grace of God throughout the world. As president of this chapter, Lieutenant Jerry Sillcocks explains that God prepared these firemen for such a time as this.

At the site of unspeakable destruction, Ground Zero is the final resting place for thousands of Americans and a symbol of this nation's war against terror. For firefighters like Jerry, it is also a platform for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jerry has had extraordinary opportunities to share the Gospel all over the country and most recently in Washington D.C. As one of the spokesmen for the September 11th remembrance Jesus Video, he met with senators and other congressmen. "I was especially encouraged by the Christians that are on Capitol Hill. There are believers there with a witness, and we should be praying for them every day," said Jerry.

A highlight of his time in Washington came when he met with President George W. Bush. "What a godly man! He really loves the Lord," Jerry said.

TRAGEDY IMPACTS THE YOUTH

"I was really touched by Pastor Chuck Smith's message the day after September 11th, and I recommitted my life to the Lord," said 18-year-old Justin Calas. He went to church after the attacks, like so many other Americans.

In October of 2001, Justin joined 13 others who went to New York to minister. The team visited firehouses and police stations and shared the Gospel in Union Square, Times Square, and Central Park. Their main job was assisting at St. Joseph's and St. Peter's, serving food to those working at Ground Zero.

"I signed up to be a junior high counselor on our winter retreat," said Justin. "I also got to share my experiences at two different high schools and in front of the church. It was a confirmation to me that the Lord was real, that God could bring good out of bad things."

"I saw an incredible change in Justin on this trip," says CC Costa Mesa's assistant youth pastor, Kenny Wood, who led the group to New York. "I was really blown away by how God is using this young man, and I sincerely feel Justin is called to full-time ministry."

Rather than pursuing a football scholarship, Justin has decided to attend Bible College in the fall. "After September 11th, I want to stay rooted in the Word. I am ready to live my life this way. I am really changed and full of love for the Lord!"

Like Justin, other young people from Costa Mesa experienced tremendous change.

Nicole Santos, 16, felt drawn to Ground Zero soon after learning of the attacks. "My desire was to go to New York and serve my nation."

After ministering with one of the teams at Ground Zero, Nicole's personal walk with the Lord has grown. "I've been a Christian since I was a little girl, but now, I have been praying a lot more. I have realized that prayer is fellowship with God, and prayer has impacted my life the most since September 11th."

Since her time in New York City, Nicole has developed strong relationships with others from her team, and has had several opportunities to share her experiences and love for the Lord. She joined a mission team in France and then served at the Bible College in Austria for three weeks this summer.



Nicole Santos from CC Costa Mesa, and NYC Fireman.

Another youth, Ben Hooker, 18, says, "It changed by life. My trip to New York City was the turning point in my walk because God revealed scripture to me unlike any other time." Ben was very nervous and unsure of how people would react to him, but God faithfully brought encouraging scripture to him at the right time.

In each of the lives of these three young people—Justin, Nicole, Ben, and many others—the Lord is performing a tremendous, life-changing work. As Kenny Woods said, "These kids came back from New York and started Bible studies and prayer groups that have impacted their entire high school. I feel that they are now equipped to go on and do the Lord's work, and they really owe that to the New York City experience."



A WAKE UP CALL

Firefighter Mike Anson

Firefighter Michael Anson simply felt disgusted as he toiled in the early hours at Ground Zero.

"There was no question I was depressed. I was self-centered and felt I had lost God," said Mike. But he was a believer. He knew God had a plan, and that good would somehow emerge from this pain.

He first felt the love of the Lord at Ground Zero when a nurse tenderly put a blanket over him while he rested, exhausted from the overwhelming work. From the nurse's warm blanket to the outpouring of food and

Like other firefighters and aid workers, Michael has had an opportunity to share his experience at Ground Zero and his love for Christ at churches and on television and radio stations. One particular experience stands out when he shared his testimony to 4,000 gathered at a church in Texas.

"When they heard I was coming, military and police officers who were not members of the church came out to hear. It was amazing to me that the Lord was using our experience at Ground Zero to bring so many into churches who would not have been there before."

Michael feels a deep personal change since the tragedy. "I have grown so much bolder

"I am a New York City fireman. Open up and listen. We have great opportunities out there to share the Gospel. Don't miss it."

assistance from all over the world, he realized that God was there. "Everywhere we went, even when we were going on routine jobs away from Ground Zero, people lined up to applaud us, saying 'God bless you,' and 'We love you!'"

Secretary of the local chapter of Firefighters for Christ, Mike felt God leading him to encourage other firefighters facing doubts and depression as they conducted the gruesome work at what they aptly coined 'The Pit.' "I felt God led me to minister to the living, so I began preparing handouts, asking other workers if they needed prayer and counseling," recalls Mike.

A representative approached Mike from the Billy Graham Prayer Line. They had Christian workers and counselors available at Ground Zero to help anyone in need. Mike spread the word. At least 1,500 calls were answered through that effort, and hundreds were encouraged in the months following.

through all of these experiences since September 11th. I give out Bibles and tracts at work. I pray and fast now." Mike realizes that we need to live surrendered lives, asking God to make us humble servants.

To Michael Anson, September 11th was a wake up call. It gave him the opportunity to make his message loud and clear. "I am a New York City fireman. Open up and listen. We have great opportunities out there to share the Gospel. Don't miss it." ↵



Firefighter Mike Anson

A Christian Response to September 11th

Early on a cold Sunday morning at Ground Zero, a fireman watched as the relief agencies assisted the workers.

“One of the young ladies from that church in San Diego told me she wished she could help,” the fireman said. “The woman came all the way from California to make sure I have a lunch. She wants to do something? Tell her she already has.”

“Christians were willing to fly, take vacation time, drive, whatever it took to go and serve food to the workers in New York,” said Erika Klundt, coordinator for the crisis center at Ground Zero. “They just wanted to be there to serve, listen to their stories, give hugs, and pray with them.”

If there was one consensus from the police, firemen, and construction workers, it was that they will be forever grateful for the Christian community’s commitment to their physical, emotional, and most importantly, spiritual well-being.

Masses of people journeyed to New York throughout the year. The vast majority were evangelical Christians, especially when the World Trade Center tragedy began to fade from the media. Mike Finizio, pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Manhattan, said that the response from the Christian community was overwhelming.

“It became a full-time ministry for us to coordinate the Calvary Chapels from across the country that came to minister and help. We thought it would slow down when the weather got cold, but they kept coming, several hundred each week.”

In the days following September 11th, churches throughout the U.S. saw a groundswell in attendance—people who had not been churchgoers sought meaning after the senseless tragedy, and Christians everywhere felt a need to be in fellowship with other believers.

Joe Focht, pastor of CC Philadelphia, said, “Because of New York City’s close proximity to us in Philadelphia, the tragedy gave us an incredible mission field nearby. We trained over 400 people from our fellowship to go to New York. They journeyed there many times over a six-month period to participate in a wide variety of ministries. They helped at the Billy Graham Prayer Center, participated in street witnessing teams, assisted the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, feeding and respite centers, as well as the



morgue. We gave away 5,000 of our new Comfort CD which was created to minister to the broken and hurting.”

“The event also affected us locally. We’ve made contact with the Philadelphia Fire Department, Police Department, and Red Cross to help facilitate programs for chaplains. If a similar tragedy happens here, we want to be in a position to be able to minister to hurting people on the front line.”



Pastor Lloyd Pulley, CC Old Bridge, NJ, said, “There has been some leveling off from that initial burst in attendance; overall we have seen a higher dedication and involvement in the church since the tragedy.”

The Lord has brought lasting beauty to this body of believers in a number of ways since September 11th. “The fellowship understood its place is on the front lines, that we can’t be about business as usual when people are hurting,” said Pastor Lloyd.



“I see a firm readiness in our ministry leaders, our staff, and the body here in the event of another tragedy. The fellowship has seen a difference in its overall approach to sharing the Gospel. Many times as believers we feel beaten down in our witness, we are worried about what people think of us, and we feel weak. Now, we understand far better who we are in Christ. We have authority to share the Gospel, and that has clarified the role of our church.”



Pastor Joe Paskewich, Calvary Chapel of Southeastern Connecticut, said, “We arrived in New York two days after the attacks. We found ourselves ministering at the Family Assistance Center that day where people were coming to look for their loved ones and filing missing person’s reports with the New York City detectives.”

“We had no idea what God would do when I told Al Serino, who was directing our men’s ministries, that he should come down and bring water and Gospel literature. It began a ministry in New York we called ‘Willing Hearts, Helping Hands’ that continues today. By February we had hosted over 1,500 people through the ministry. Ten months later, people are still coming to New York to share God’s love.”

“We learned that God can orchestrate and mobilize a huge army of volunteers in a very short amount of time,” continued Joe. “Seeing the Body of Christ in action was nothing short of miraculous. Everywhere you went in New York City, you met people from Calvary Chapels across the country.”

Comfort CD For those who are Hurting Songs and Scriptures

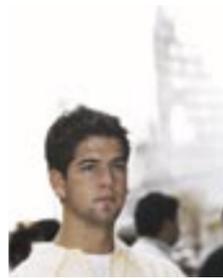


The experiences at the World Trade Center Tragedy and sorrows conveyed from war in Chechnya inspired the CC Philadelphia staff to produce a compilation of music that would bring the comfort of the Lord to those hurting. The music is a blend of worship songs, testimonies, and scripture passages. Their prayer is that this will bring comfort and peace to those experiencing difficult times.

215-969-9742 www.refugerecords.org



Standing Firm as the Towers Crumbled



Andy Deane

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and

though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”

Psalm 46: 1, 2

Andy Deane doesn't describe himself as a hero, but he'll never regret being in lower Manhattan on September 11th. Andy, a 20-year-old college student, rushed to the base of the burning towers and escaped being

remember taking a sip. The Lord gave me the strength to go without.”

“Since then, I've had a deep sense of peace. I can just rely on the Lord, and take things to Him.” Now Andy wants to share that peace with his friends. One friend, who is seeing a therapist for depression, told him, “I wish I had what you have. If I did, then everything would be better. But I can't.”

“It really upset me to hear that,” Andy said. “I've been trying to encourage her that peace is available to anyone who asks.”

Andy wants to share with other survivors. “It wasn't luck. The Lord has reasons they made it out. He has a purpose for their life, and He wants to fulfill that purpose.”

Days after September 11th, Andy read Psalm 91. He was amazed at how much it reminded him of that morning and how the Lord protected him. “It is so encouraging to see that the Bible, as old as it is, still applies

The LORD says, “I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue them and honor them. I will satisfy them with a long life and give them my salvation.”

Psalm 91:14-16 NLT

buried as they collapsed. He led a group of people to safety and then pitched in to help firemen on the scene.

“A lot of people felt helpless that day,” he said. “Out of all the horrible feelings I experienced that day, helplessness wasn't one of them.”

He still marvels at how God used him to minister to people's needs. “I didn't have a drink of water until 4 o'clock in the afternoon,” he recalled. “I was running all over the place, carrying giant jugs of water, handing it out for hours; yet, still, I don't

to today. It's so great to be assured that the Bible is true.”

Andy was a recent recipient of an award for making a difference. Representative Robert Andrews from New Jersey's First Congressional District acknowledged the “generosity of the heroes who walk among us” at a May presentation of awards to outstanding New Jersey citizens. ☞

Story by Loretta Rogers

Limiting Disabilities Turned to Unending Possibilities



Sgt. Jeff Grahn

Five years ago, on a hot July night, New York Police Sergeant Jeff Grahn collapsed on a flight of stairs. Losing his ability to see and walk, he feared that he had suffered a stroke. Eight months of excruciating tests led doctors to the grim diagnosis: advanced stages of multiple sclerosis (MS). He might never see or walk again.

“I will never forget it,” Jeff recalls. “In the morning the doctors told me there was an 80 percent chance I would never walk again and possibly never regain my sight. Later that day, my wife, then pregnant with our daughter, told me this lifestyle wasn't for her and she wanted a divorce. Within 24 hours, my entire life had fallen apart.”

Lying in his hospital bed, Jeff, who had never been a religious man, cried out to God. He promised that if God would heal him, he would be dedicated to the Lord forever. That night he felt the Lord speak to him, “You may have limiting disabilities, but I will give you unending possibilities.” Within weeks, Jeff's sight was completely restored, and he could walk again. While Jeff still has MS, his amazing recovery baffles physicians.

When the planes hit the towers of the World Trade Center on September 11th, Jeff was called into immediate action from his post in the Bronx. He was assigned to a hospital detail responsible for tending to the terrorists' victims—those 300-400 people on the ground who had been burned by jettisoning jet fuel and flying glass.

In the 32 days that followed September 11th, Jeff remained in and around Ground Zero and at the Staten Island Landfill, tending to the gruesome work of searching for body parts and personal effects. Of that time, he says, “I often remembered the story of Joseph and

how his brothers intended his enslavement for evil, but God meant it for good. Good was going to come out of all of this misery.”

God used Jeff's faith for good right there at Ground Zero. “I remember a 72-year-old Jewish man who came by every day with an 11x16 portrait of his daughter, asking each officer if he had seen her or located her remains. He came daily with the same photo, asking the same question, and he broke our hearts. One day, I spoke to him, and he told me how desperately he wanted something of her, some piece of DNA, to bury. The Lord led me to tell him that God created her, and God created DNA to help us differentiate each other, but God does not need DNA to know where she is. God knew where she was, even if we didn't. He thanked me, and somehow, what I shared comforted him and gave him some closure, because he never came back to Ground Zero again.”

He was asked to speak to a gathering of 20,000 in Chattanooga, TN, on the National Day of Prayer. He shared with them his thoughts. “The prayers of the believers kept us going at Ground Zero. All of those people praying for us all over the world—I mean, how else could a man like me, with MS, toil 16-18 hours a day? With all the stress of working long hard hours and performing the daunting tasks associated with the recovery efforts, God was totally answering the prayers of His people.”

Jeff serves as the Vice President of the New York Chapter of Cops for Christ. ☞

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine.

Isaiah 43:1

Portraits of firefighters and police officer by Mike Parfumi.

Spiritual Care

Mike MacIntosh

Mike MacIntosh, the pastor of Horizon Christian Fellowship in San Diego, was one of the first chaplain responders to the World Trade Center tragedy. His responsibility was to set up spiritual care for grieving families. He also organized the Chaplains for Ground Zero in the early days of the disaster as well as dispatched law enforcement chaplains to help at the morgue.

Mike and his assistant pastor, Mickey Stonier, trained over 500 clergy in the first ten days after the tragedy. Many of the Calvary Chapel pastors were able to get the required identification to serve at Ground Zero through these classes. During the first four weeks following the attacks, there were more than 42,000 documented contacts by spiritual care chaplains. The instruction included sensitivity education to assist those grieving, as well as basic crisis counseling and stress management techniques.

Since then, Mike has set the pace for future disasters in America by providing credentialed training to 100 pastors in San Diego County through the American Red Cross. This is the first county in the U.S. to unite the American Red Cross and spiritual care providers to respond to the general public who have experienced a traumatic incident.

Mike and Mickey are members of the Spiritual Care Aviation Incident Response team. It is made up of Law Enforcement Chaplains with Critical Incident Stress Management training. The purpose is to provide spiritual care to survivors and loved ones of an aircraft disaster. The American Red Cross accomplishes this goal in accordance with the Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act.

Should your local church desire to develop a similar ministry in your area through the Red Cross or independently, please contact Horizon Emergency Assistance Response Teams (HEART) at 858-277-4991. ☞

My Heart's Been Breaking for You, New York

Jean-Luc Lajoie

When I visited Ground Zero for the first time, the reality of the devastation struck me. I will never forget standing there in front of the rubble and feeling so small and so helpless. I could only think of those who really knew the depth of this tragedy. On the subway God gave me the song that would become my prayer for New York.

I felt a new desire to reach out to this lost and dying world. We put together a CD that would include this song for New York and the Gospel message. As the one-year memorial approaches, we are praying that more doors of opportunity will open and that the Gospel message will circulate via the CD itself and the airwaves.

September 11th caused many people to ask, 'Why would God allow this to happen?' God answered that question in His Word, the Bible. Through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord declared, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..'. Jeremiah 17:9

We all have been created with the freedom to choose. We are free to choose to do what is right or what is wrong, choose to love or choose to hate, choose to believe or not to believe. Some, on that fateful day, chose to use that freedom in a very destructive and evil way. That is why the heart of man needs to be changed. That is why we are all in need of a new start—a spiritual awakening to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. ☞

www.tothemax.org
krymail@thekry.com 760-726-9292



NEW YORK

MY HEART'S BEEN BREAKING FOR YOU
SINCE THE DAY
YOUR TOWERS ALL CAME TUMBLIN'
DOWN
AND NOW THE WIND
IS BLOWING COLD LIKE IN THE
WINTER
BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW
YOU'RE NOT ALONE

NEW YORK
MY SOUL IS PRAYING FOR YOUR SONS
AND YOUR DAUGHTERS
ACHING FOR THE ONES THEY LOVE
AND NOW THE NIGHTS
THEY'RE GETTING DARKER AND IT
SEEMS
THAT HOPE IS GONE
BUT HOPE IS NOT GONE

SO LIFT UP YOUR EYES TO THE HEAVENS
CAUSE THAT'S WHERE YOUR HELP
COMES FROM
OPEN YOUR HEART TO THE MAKER
HE WANTS TO MAKE YOUR HEART HIS
HOME

AND WHEN HE MAKES HIS HOME IN
YOU
HE'LL CHASE AWAY THE FEARS YOU
KNEW
HE KNOWS YOUR NAME
HE KNOWS YOUR PAIN
WITH HIS HANDS HE'LL CARRY YOU
AND AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE
HE'LL SHINE MUCH BRIGHTER THAN
THE SUN
SO LIFT YOUR EYES UP TO THE SKIES
GOD HAS SHED HIS GRACE ON YOU

NEW YORK
THE WORLD IS GRIEVING WITH YOU
AND ON THAT DAY
IT'S LIKE WE BECAME ONE OF YOU
AND FROM AFAR
IT WAS SO PAINFUL JUST TO SEE
SO WE CONFESS, WE'RE SHORT OF
WORDS...

MY HEART STARTED TO SINK
AND I STARTED PRAYING --
I SAID "LORD -
I GO BEFORE YOU
I PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE HURTING
FOR THOSE WHO ARE CRYING
AND THOSE WHO ARE GRIEVING
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT IS
GOING ON

LORD BRING HEALING TO THIS
NATION
BRING HEALING TO NEW YORK
TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL
WE PRAY & WE CLAIM THIS VICTORY
IN YOUR HOLY NAME, JESUS."

NEW YORK
I KNOW TOMORROW MAY SEEM BLEAK
BUT GOD WILL SHOW
THAT HIS TENDER MERCIES NEVER
CEASE
AND THROUGH THE YEARS
HE WANTS TO LEAD YOU TO BELIEVE
THAT HE STILL CARES
THE WORLD IS GRIEVING WITH YOU

© The Kry

