

Festival of LIFE

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The Anniversary of September 11th ushers in new opportunities for the



An enthralled child expectantly waits for a balloon animal from a member of the clown community.



Pastor Mike MacIntosh, Horizon Christian Fellowship, ministers in Spanish Harlem. Tobey Hancock, left, came from CC Oceanside to participate.



Participants in the Festival of Life praise the Lord.

Jesus Truly is the One

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

1 Peter 3:15

A 14-year-old on the Festival of Life team was on the way to an outreach in Queens with his friends. While waiting for the subway, he began sharing the love of Jesus with an older gentleman who was waiting for a train to go in the opposite direction. The teenager's train arrived. The older man

boarded the teenager's train in order to continue hearing the Gospel presented. Before reaching Queens, the gentleman prayed to receive Christ as his Lord and Savior. He then disclosed that he had previously decided to commit suicide that night, but now felt he had been given a purpose to live.

In the Bronx, a van pulled up to where clowns were ministering in a neighborhood. The Festival of Life team discovered that the people in the van were Jehovah's Witnesses. After the team shared the Gospel with the dozen people onboard, they all prayed to ask Jesus into their hearts and to be born again.



Victor Najor, right, assistant pastor at Horizon Christian Fellowship, coordinated the event.

"The Lord did incredible things throughout the week," said Pastor Mike MacIntosh, Horizon Christian Fellowship. His son, Phillip, and Assistant Pastor Mickey Stonier joined Mike's leadership of the event. The Festival of Life preceded the one-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11. The world watched in horror as 3,000 human beings died. With such an unprecedented death toll, all New Yorkers were affected dramatically.

Believers from all over the nation began arriving in the city on Monday, August 26.

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Just a few blocks from Radio City Music Hall, the Hilton hotel on Sixth Avenue was transformed, becoming a command center for the Festival of Life team. Coordinator Victor Najor of Horizon Christian Fellowship had been preparing for this outreach in New York for months. Since the beginning of the Festival of Life, this was the first time it was brought to an American location.

Groups began venturing into various parts of New York. After a quick course in clown ministry, more than 40 people donned vividly colored costumes and white face paint. While making and giving away balloon animals, they shared the good news of the Gospel with children and parents from Harlem to Central Park.

Some participants played music as they worshipped the Lord, drawing crowds until rain forced them into subway landings. In the Bronx, Festival of Life volunteers joined neighborhood kids in basketball.

For an entire week, Christian men, women, and teens traversed the city streets, inviting residents to a main event, which took place at the end of the week. Concerts, speakers, and every effort put forth during the week all culminated with the life-changing

opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Free concerts were given at Centennial Hall in Manhattan. Groups featured throughout the week were The Kry, Anointed, Michelle Tumes, and Fermin IV. The Christ Tabernacle Choir performed on Saturday.

Pastor Mike told powerful stories of his experiences at Ground Zero and said, "Many have found Christ this week in New York. God won; the terrorists have lost."

Although the response to the music and teaching was powerful, the building of relationships leading up to the event afforded Christians the opportunity to use their gifts and talents. In a weeklong flurry of mini-events, spike-haired, leather clad musicians, clowns, and professional skateboarders joined other believers to reach out to share the news that Jesus is alive and His offer of salvation still stands.

Many participated in offshoots planned throughout the week. Exciting bike exhibitions were held at Riker's Island, home of the largest penal colony in the nation. The first day saw some 300 inmates pray to receive Jesus Christ. In a dramatic move, festival organizers urged the group to return the next day. They were able to continue sharing with those inhabiting this tough prison system.

A luncheon was held for wives of firefighters, organized by Fire Fighters for Christ. Many had lost their husbands on September 11. They opened their hearts to God's message of grace.

Another group that performed heroically during the terrorist attacks was the World Trade Center Emergency Response Division of the NYC Department of Sanitation. They were honored by a recognition luncheon held on September 1.

Pastor Mike MacIntosh, who has been part of New York City's recovery since terrorists attacked the World Trade Center last year, knows these are extraordinary times. "New York is still open; nationally the heart is hard," Mike commented, referring to the spiritual climate in our country.

When asked what he would like to say to the church right now, Pastor Mike replied,

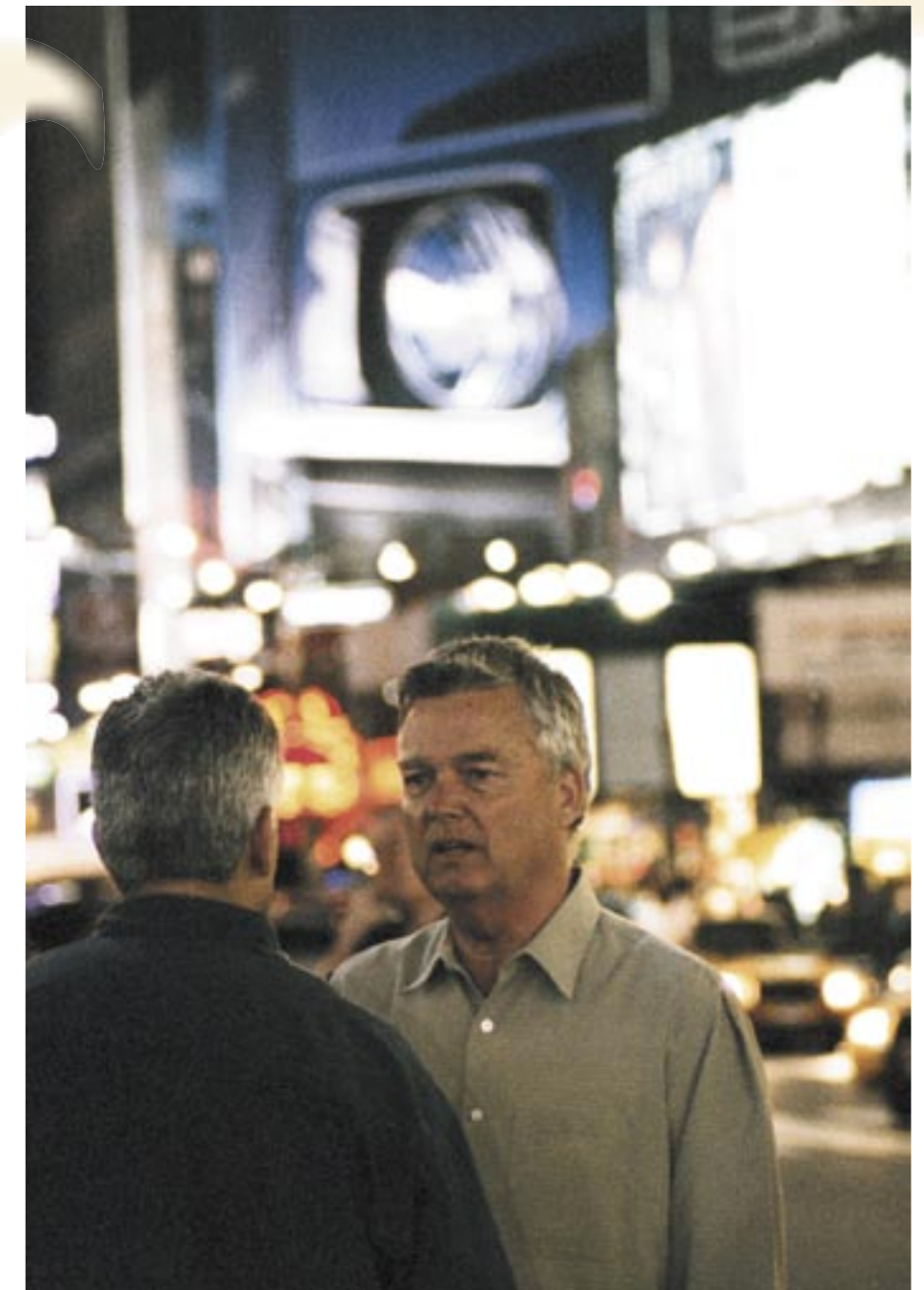
"Time is short. The end is near. After 9/11, it's obvious that we no longer have hours, but seconds. We need to be out of the pews and into the world. We must be about our Father's business."

As Pastor Mike shared at the first morning worship service of the week, he posed the question from Luke 7:20, "Is Jesus the One, or should we keep looking?" He prayed for the Christians who had come to participate in the event. "Whether God calls us to New York City, overseas, or to minister in our own community, may our lives, our

words, and our faith reflect that men and women need look no further...He truly is the One." ✠

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—Pastor Mike MacIntosh



Pastor Mike MacIntosh shares the Gospel at Times Square.