

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4

# STEADFAST IN THE FAITH

story by Sean Mercadante  
photos by Mike Simons

## Calvary Chapel of the Tri-State—Cincinnati



CC Tri-State

CC Tri-State is currently located in space rented from a local mall.

Cincinnati, Ohio—November 30, 2003—Nathaniel Jones, an African American, dies after resisting the efforts of six Cincinnati police officers to subdue him. The incident is videotaped.



Pastor Ed Gaines of CC Tri-State shares from God's Word with his congregation in Cincinnati.

Jones, a large man at 350 pounds, was under the influence of PCP and other illegal drugs. Ed Gaines stated, "Police officers are appointed by the Lord as the Bible declares in Romans

13:1–4. It's tragic that he died, but if Mr. Jones had not been under the influence of drugs and resisted arrest, he would most likely be alive today." Ed is not afraid to speak the truth. He is the senior pastor of Calvary Chapel of the Tri-State. Ed is also an African-American.



Steve Tilden worships with Marguerite, his wife, and daughter Maile.



*Pastor Ed encourages his flock saying, "It's all about what Jesus has done for us."*

The church Ed pastors is in the greater Cincinnati area, his hometown. This region has had more than its share of racial tensions over the past several years. In April 2001, Cincinnati was racked by riots following the death of Timothy Thomas, who was shot while fleeing Cincinnati police.

A year after the riots, Ed was interviewed by *The Weekly Standard* magazine and local radio media. Ed condemned the activities

of a prominent black activist whom he characterized as a race hustler—someone that celebrated the rioters' activities while holding the city hostage to racial blackmail. "I am not saying there isn't any racism in the world," said Ed, "but not every situation involving a person of color is an act of racism, as the race hustlers would have us think.

"Tacit approval of those activities sends a negative message—that violence is the way

**"Someone with authority needs to stand up and speak the truth."**

Pastor Ed Gaines



*Pastor Ed exhorts his congregation that God's commands are not grievous.*



*Vicki Holden plays keyboard while Allan Childress plays bass.*



*Jim Hust, Johnathan Williams, and others in the body of Christ at CC Tri-State seek the Lord during a Sunday service.*

to justice,” Ed continued. “Someone with authority needs to stand up and speak the truth. Cincinnati does not have a race problem. It has a sin problem. Governing bodies try to appease, like Pilate did in Luke 23:4. He said that he found no fault in Jesus but then handed Him over to the mob in Luke 23:23. The Bible tells us in Acts 17:26 (KJV) that He ‘hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth’—one race, the human race.”

CC Tri-State has become active in a ministry to the homeless in the community where Timothy Thomas was killed. While some might shy away from such a challenging area, Ed states that in Acts 1:8 Jesus commanded us to be witnesses at home as well as abroad. CC Tri-State feels there is a remnant in the inner city of Cincinnati that has been totally neglected. “God wants to pull them out of the flames, and He is doing just that,” he said.

### Testimony

Ed Gaines has had his own experiences with the law enforcement of inner-city Cincinnati. He was a good student until the seventh grade. Then he discovered marijuana. By the time he entered college, heroin and cocaine were his drugs of choice. A year later, he was in the county jail on drug trafficking and assault charges.

After Ed had made bond on those charges, a street preacher named Bernard Ferguson came to his house. “He came to share Jesus with anyone who would listen. I thought he would make a great character witness, so I said the sinner’s prayer,” stated Ed. “Then he started coming by every week for a year, which wasn’t part of my plan.”

At a court hearing, a judge asked Bernard if he would take Ed into his home. Bernard’s answer surprised Ed. “The guy I met a year ago—no,” said Bernard. “The guy who stands before me now—yes.”

**“I looked at how God sovereignly used Joseph’s circumstances to minister to him. On a Tuesday night, there in my cell, I sincerely gave my life to Christ.”**

Pastor Ed Gaines

Ed got probation, but he hadn’t truly accepted Christ. He said, “I had memorized lots of Scripture, but Jesus wasn’t in my heart.” He ended up back in jail four years later, arrested on a Sunday. Ed’s attorney, who also used drugs, was in jail himself. Ed was assigned a public defender. The first thing the attorney said was, “What are you doing committing a crime on Sunday? You should’ve been in church!” Ed went to the county jail again, but this time he wasn’t able to make bond. Ed played in the regular poker games where the best cheater won. He read tracts but still rejected the message.

Then, after five months, he asked one of the guards for a Bible. He started reading the book of Genesis and was greatly affected by



*Pastor Ed prays with the worship team before every service.*



*Children at CC Tri-State sing to Jesus during Sunday school.*



*CC Tri-State provides an environment where children can study and grow in God's Word.*



*Pastor Ed prays with Wendy Lawson, asking the Lord to help her to enter into His rest.*

**“I was locked up physically, but for the first time in my life I was free inside.”**

*Pastor Ed Gaines*

the story of Joseph. “I looked at how God sovereignly used Joseph’s circumstances to minister to him.” Ed had known of the Gospel message but now was fully aware of his need for forgiveness and salvation. “I was in jail due to my own sin and realized



*Elder Aggie Daryl Williams prays with Bob Janzen.*

I was headed to a place far worse, unlike Joseph. On a Tuesday night, there in my cell, I sincerely gave my life to Christ,” said Ed. He continued attending the weekly poker games, but for the first time he felt guilty and convicted. “Not wanting to be a hypocrite, I pushed everything I won back into the pot, confessed to cheating, and told the guys that I had accepted Christ. They thought I had fallen out of my tree.”

Ed was facing a 17 to 65-year sentence. He told his lawyer that he didn’t want his trial to go to the jury selection process and that he was guilty. He had to sign documents stating that the prosecution hadn’t promised him any kind of a deal in exchange for his plea. He trusted the Lord to be in control. He said, “I was locked up physically, but for the first time in my life I was free inside.” The judge sentenced Ed to



*Two friends, Glenn Shelly and Rick Couch, greet each other during a service.*

a long time in prison. In that moment, Ed endured a tremendous wave of doubt, made worse by the long pause the judge took to sign papers—“it seemed like an eternity.”

At the end of the pause, he was addressed by the judge: would he later regret releasing Ed to Teen Challenge? The judge had been misled by jailhouse conversions before. Ed said because of the promise of Christ to make him a new creature, the judge would

**“I had read the Bible before, but this time it was an adventure.”**

*Pastor Ed Gaines*



*Daniel Nevins, Jonathan Queen, Lisa Crable, Dave May, Pastor Ed Gaines and his wife Maxine, Denise Nevins, Pastor Brian Nevins, and Stella Bergeen praying before ministry at City Gospel Mission.*



*Lisa Crable and Maxine Gaines preparing to serve.*



*Jonathan Queen and Pastor Ed as worship begins for the Mission.*



*Dave May, Denise Nevins, and Dave Crable leading worship.*



*Pastor Brian Nevins serves food to visitors at the City Gospel Mission.*

not regret it. Ed's sentence was suspended, and he received five years on probation. It was contingent on his successful completion of the Teen Challenge program. At Teen Challenge, Ed was introduced to Pastor Chuck Smith's Bible teaching. "I went through the entire Bible with Chuck with headphones on while reading along. I had read the Bible before, but this time it was an adventure. God was watching over me and speaking to my heart," said Ed. "The difference was the Holy Spirit in me."

After he completed the program, Ed looked for a church that taught chapter by chapter through the Bible. He had taken a job working for a man who introduced him to some aberrant teachings, but the Lord put two verses on his heart that steered him away. "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3) "Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart" (Proverbs 3:3).

**"Sometimes the budget is close, but God has always been faithful to provide for our needs."**

Pastor Ed Gaines



*CC Tri-State is located in Cincinnati, where the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky meet.*

### A Start in the Park

A couple from Costa Mesa moved to Cincinnati on a three-year assignment. They introduced Ed to the taped teachings of Jon Courson, Chuck Missler, and other CC pastors. He was determined to find a church that taught through the Bible. He later met Pastor Bil Gallatin, CC Finger Lakes, at a conference. Over time they became friends. Ed made himself accountable to Bil's pastoral leadership. He was later introduced to Pastor Chuck. Ed poured out his heart to Chuck who made himself available for counsel. Ed served as an associate pastor at the new CC Cincinnati for five years. He felt the Lord lead him to begin CC Tri-State in a Cincinnati park. Attendance grew. As the fall weather turned cold, the young church found a building to rent. The building was sold, but not before spring.

"That happened just as the weather turned nice again, so you see God's timing is always perfect," Ed said. The church has moved a couple of times. "Sometimes the budget is close, but God has always been faithful to provide for our needs."

From their humble beginnings in the park, the church has witnessed the Lord doing mighty works through the body of believers. They have ministered in the Ukraine, Mexico, Austria, Croatia, and Israel as well as in the poorer areas of Cincinnati. The fellowship also became involved with a Ukrainian boy through one of the missionary families they supported while serving with George Markey there. Bogdon had been electrocuted—losing his right arm and sustaining a hole burned through his head as well as eye injuries. CC Tri-States brought Bogdon and his mother to Cincinnati. He received treatment from a nearby burn center. Through the experience, the church body was able to share the love of Christ with the medical personnel and witness many miracles brought about by God.

Members of the church are from a broad spectrum of society. They extend the love of Christ to residents of inner-city Cincinnati through the City Gospel Mission every fourth Wednesday evening, an outgrowth of the church's deep love for the lost. Ed teaches through the Bible there and concludes with an evangelistic message. The church serves a hot dinner for the residents afterwards. "Our 'Jerusalem' is not just the



*Pastor Ed enjoys ministering to the people at the City Gospel Mission, sharing the love of Christ in a practical way.*



*A homeless family shares a meal together at the outreach.*

people who come in on Sunday morning," said Ed. They treat the homeless that attend with dignity and respect.

Ed believes the consistency of the City Gospel Mission outreach has helped

the Tri-State body of believers grow. "As the Bible says in Romans 5:20, where sin abounds, grace abounds much more. We go down there expecting to bless others, but instead God blesses us more than them. What a good God we serve." ☞

**For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.**

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

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