

YUBM Ministries Newsletter

AIM International

Spring-Summer-Fall-Winter 2004-05 Combined Newsletters
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Mature 'Mentor 'Minister 'Maintain 'Investing in Black Futures thru Strategic Leadership Development

**By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established;
through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.
A wise man has great power, and a man of knowledge increases strength;
for waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers.**

Proverbs 24:3-6 NIV

PREAMBLE

S up? Again, greetings again in the wonderful Name of our soon-coming King, **the Lord Jesus Christ**. Back at ya again with the latest on what's been doing here in this little but awesome part of the Lord's vineyard. Again, I trust the Lord Jesus will bless you somehow some way with something from the following material and that you'll pray for some one!

SPRING-SUMMER 2004

DOROTHY K. HEPBURN - Thank you all who had been praying for my **Mom**. She passed into eternity on Sunday, March 14, 2004 around 7:45 p.m. in the arms of my **Dad (Charles)** with her 3 surviving children (**Deb, Ed and myself**), in-laws and grandchildren all surrounding her as she left. We look forward to seeing her again.

Born and raised in Vineland, N.J., Dorothy K. attended Syracuse University where she met and fell in love with former Navy serviceman and fellow student Charles B. Hepburn of Canton, NY. They were married on July 16, 1950. To say Mom's life was very active is an understatement. She served in all kinds of school and community groups throughout her Westwood, NJ years and after moving to Lower Makefield, PA she took a job as a secretary at Rider University in Lawrenceville, N.J. After retiring from there she devoted her life to spending time with her family, especially her eight grandchildren. She loved to cook and entertain, loved traveling with Chuck, playing golf and bridge, gardening and quilting to name just a few things! She was a member of the Morrisville United Methodist Church, where she participated in the Women's Group (the Elizabeth Circle), as well as singing alto in the Senior Choir. She was also a member of the Tri-F Bridge Group and the Lower Makefield Seniors Thursday Morning Bowling Group.

A special note of appreciation to **Pastors Sam (and Cindy) Butler, Jr. & Shelton Mercer III, Larry Anderson, D. Kyle Canty and Anthony and Pat Sangster** who came to her memorial service and to all of you for your thoughtful cards, notes and gifts.

WEB SITE MILESTONE - The YUBM Ministries Web site has registered 500,000 visitors sometime during the last full week of August. It reached 400,000 on Friday, April 1, 2004 (no foolin'). Again, I'm profoundly grateful to the Lord Jesus for the way He's enabled this ministry to "travel" all the way around the globe. The site's had visitors from homes, non-profits, educational institutions, commercial enterprises, governmental offices and military installations. Wow.

PEOPLE to PERSONALLY PARTNER in PRAYER for

Corey Red 'n Precise - two Christian rapper friends of mine - were featured in a September 13, 2004 New York Times article entitled, "Rappers Are Raising Their Churches' Roofs" by John Leland. Praise the Lord for this amazing opportunity.

Denis Johnson, Jr. stopped by on July 31st a tremendous surprise and bona fide blessing to see him after all these years (it's been a minute somethin' like 8 years). He and his wife **Rebecca** live in Rochester, NY, where Denis serves in his church as a worship leader and choir director. He was recently appointed to the position of youth pastor there and is now very excited about building a discipleship-centered youth ministry. His music ministry stretches far beyond the four walls of his church a very talented keyboardist and arranger, son puts in about 34,000 miles a year traveling to different ministry venues. **Cedric Bolton** called July 10th - he and wife **Gwen** are about to move from Minneapolis, MN to Syracuse, NY to begin working at Syracuse University this fall (she'll be teaching there and he'll be working in one of the student affairs offices). Cedric (a.k.a. Blackman Preach) has a spoken word album available online, entitled "The State of the Ghetto Address."

4 YOUNG BULS in NEED of INTERCESSORY PRAYER WARRIORS - **H.** (16 years old), **J.** (18 years old) and **S.** (15 years old). Two are aspiring rappers, the third just likes listening to it; one has a father who wants nothing to do with his son, one is in the midst of some difficult family struggles and all are trying to find their way through life. Their pain 'n pathos is palpable - they are all connected to a church (but ain't feelin' it) and would rather be perceived as sons of the street down here than a son of the Street for eternity. Pray for them. The seductive siren call of the street is comin' on real strong these young buls (as well as to the rest of their tribe). On the flip side is a 15-year-old named **Jonathan A.** who went out onto the street and tried to share Christ and got beaten up by a 16-year-old for doing so. Stand strong, son we praise the Lord for how you stood up for your Savior against someone who stands opposed to Him and took the beat-down for His Name's sake. We thank the Lord for you and for the joy you bring to His heart. Father God saw what went down, saw the pain it brought, and He will see that this incident brings Him glory. And yeah, we're prayin' for that 16-year-old. U got to him for Him.

PHILADELPHIA MASS TRANSIT EVANGELISTS - **Sam H. III** (aka **Ack Davis**) called to ask you 'n me to pray for him and 3 other brothers (**Elio, Eric 'n Josh**) as they roll through Philadelphia's SEPTA transit system, doing the work of evangelists and apologists (and Sam as a discipler). Been talkin' with son over the past week or so concerning the strong call the Lord Jesus has placed on his life Sam's been given some madd dynamic apologetic approaches that he's been deployin' on the Broad Street line and elsewhere. Encouraged him to start writing 'em down, because they're astoundingly good. Yo . . . pray for these men as they share Christ, doing the work of the ministry out there on the front lines. Turns out that after Sam 'n Ryan got out there and were earnestly catchin' the ears of riders on the El, Sam found himself on the verge of gettin' busted for "disorderly conduct" (even though nobody was complaining). A transit cop cuffed son (his hands behind his back holding his Bible), but let him go after they got him out of sight of those witnessing the "takedown."**PATERSON (NJ) NEWS** - **Walter Holmes** called a couple of times in the past couple of months he's a new Dad, lookin' to buy a house and going back to school to finish up his studies and become a teacher. He finally made it out to Los Angeles to catch a Lakers game. Talked with **Kemett Timms** for a while about the music business and shared stories from our faith pilgrimages.**BIRMINGHAM, AL** - surprised and delighted by a phone call from **Pastor Stephen Manyama** on Memorial Day. We weren't able to talk too long as an emergency came up, but long enough to learn that his youngest son, **Bahati** (now in college) has come into his own in developing a very promising ministry as a Christian rapper.

Maher Salhani, a former student of mine at the Center for Urban Theological Studies, was featured in an article in the Philadelphia Inquirer entitled "He Tries to Convert Muslims" which looks at the dynamic open-approach ministry of **Rev. Luis Centeno**. Impressed with Maher's testimony (recounted in the article), I invited him to come in as a guest lecturer for my "Apologetics for the Urban Youth Context" Masters level class at Eastern University's Campolo School for Social Change back in January of 2003. Luis came with him and together they left a powerful impression with their presentation.

NEW YORK, NY - Had the joyous opportunity to meet with **Paul Jackson** (**Kelvin's** younger brother) during a trip to NYC during the last week of May. Paul was in one of my youth groups in Paterson years ago, and has really gotten around since I'd last seen him. He is the publisher of "The Harlem Times" and has an office at 53rd and Madison Avenue in NYC.

JOY & PRAISE MAGAZINE - Philadelphia, PA - **Wil Crew** 'n his crew at Joy & Praise Magazine published an article in the Spring / Summer 2004

issue entitled "Hep's Spiritual Take on Hip-Hop Culture." [Wil and some team members from the magazine interviewed me several months ago and also sat in on a CUTS class, where the four photographs were taken.] The issue's feature article is on NFL player **Troy and Tommi Vincent** and there are also articles featuring **Rev. Dr. Alyn Waller** (Pastor of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church), **Dr. Rev. W. Wilson Goode** (former mayor of Philadelphia) and **Vanessa Elise Baker** (2003's Miss New Jersey USA). Here's a link to the magazine's Web site: <http://www.joyandpraise.org/html/flash/magazine.html> Thanks, Wifor your ministry to us at the Center for Urban Theological Studies and we pray the Lord's best for you and yours as you co-labor with Him.

MARY KOHN'S HOME GOING CELEBRATION - Paterson, NJ - May 20. **Mary Kohn**, beloved wife of **Pastor Alvin Kohn** and mother of good friends **Gerald Dial**, **Edwin and Shawna**, graduated into glory on Thursday, May 13th. She was 84 years old and was such a blessing to so many. The Kohn family was one of the first to welcome me into their home after I moved to Paterson years ago. Take your rest, Mother -- we'll see you again.

PURSUIITS and PERAMBULATIONS during the SPRING and SUMMER of 2004

LABOR DAY WEEKEND RETREAT - Streamside Conference Center - Stroudsburg, PA - September 3-6, 2004. And ya don't stop! This was the 23rd anniversary of a retreat that's been thoughtfully and lovingly put together by **Rev. Ed and Ellen Carwheel**. We especially enjoyed the preaching ministry of **Pastor Samuel L. Butler** (as well as the ministry of his dear wife, **Cyndy**) and the music ministry of **Bro. Zeffro Gaskins** (as well as his wife **Carla**). It was also a great time to catch up with some folks I don't get to see all that often. That would be folks such as **Sis Dorothy Jenkins**, **Rev. Denis and Cheryl Johnson, Sr.**, **Dickson and Margaret Kungu**, **Bea Stocker**, **the Wards**, **the Webbs**, **Dale Schoenwald**, **the Brown families**, **Sis. Joyce Sacher**, **Sis. Mercedes Thompson**, **Sisters Vanessa and Erma Ballard**, **Shabi and Clinton** (both from South Africa), **Hattie Burgess**, **Virginia Reardon** and many others. It was again my honor to lead in praise and worship (along with **Mary** and **Robin**) and do a little speaking at an early Sunday morning lakeside communion service.

2004 MAINE COAST VACATION - Spent about 8 days camping out again in the Maine woods on the "Quietside of Mount Desert Island" at the end of August. This time I had my 12-year-old nephew, **Spencer M.** with me, so it was a different vacation from the ones I've spent in the past (more active / less reflective). This was his first time to the state of Maine and I'm glad to report (although hardly surprised) that he fell in love with the place. We did lots of beachcombing, island exploring, biking through Perkins Cove and Bass Harbor, slept in the car twice on top of Mt. Agamenticus (on our way up to and then on the way back from our key destination, Mount Desert Island). Did some fishing (didn't catch anything) took "Hummer" out onto Long Pond and then into 3 different harbors (Bass Harbor, Northeast Harbor and Bar Harbor). Got quite a distance out into the sea. Spencer used a kayak that **Sue McIsaac** (the owner of Quietside Campground) graciously lent us for the week. Oh, what a thrill (again) to be able to answer the "call of the sea." We must have traversed about 15 miles+ of blue water off M.D.I. It's an exciting (and eerie) thing to see 2-foot-wide reddish-purple jellyfish floating a foot or two beneath the ocean surface and to continue feeling the internal heave experienced while riding the ocean's swells weeks later! Cool.

Spencer was a bit shook by a VERY large fish that passed silently under his kayak shades of Psalm 107:24 They saw the works of the LORD, His wonderful deeds in the deep. Did some souvenir hunting/gathering, had lobster 3 times (that would be me, not Spencer) twice at 2 Bar Harbor restaurants and once as take-out from a lobster shanty in Kennebunkport). Spencer tried it but didn't really care for it, although he did bravely pick a live one up out of a tank and then cautiously placed it back in without incident. Cooking out at the campsite was a treat and a lot of fun: can't beat having scrambled eggs, bacon and grits or hotcakes (sometimes with blueberries) and blueberry-flavored New England coffee for breakfast made in the Maine woods. Dinner was either hamburgers or grilled cheese sandwiches, along with fresh Maine corn-on-the-cob, or eating at some fast-food joint up in Ellsworth. We discovered peanut butter and tortillas for lunch by observing another visitor making one at Bass Harbor Light and found some raspberry-flavored and blueberry-flavored honey sticks. Even had a glass of blueberry soda! Ever try teaberry leaves? Found some at the campground and marveled at the fragrance. Every night ended with a roaring campfire (as well as one during our first morning there), as Spencer loves starting 'em. Don't forget the roasted marshmallows, which allowed us to end almost every evening with a sugar high. Mosquitoes? Numerous and aggressive but deter-able with DEET or smoke from the campfire. Weather? Fantastic! Bright and sunny everyday (except for one overcast day) sever clear as the pibit would say and it only rained the morning we had to leave. Saw 4 lighthouses: Nubble Light, Portland Head Light, Bass Harbor Light (represented in the animation above) and the Bear Island Light (outside of Northeast Harbor). What a treat to wake to either the mournful sound of the Bass Harbor Light foghorn off in the distance, or the sound of the campground's chickens and rooster clucking and crowing in a little ways away (sometimes they'd come over to visit our campsite to see what they could find in the ashes of the previous night's campfire. While exploring Bar Island I determined to completely submerge myself in the somewhat icy ocean waters and after wading out a bit from shore managed to discover afresh why Maine locals say that only tourists try to go swimming. T'was refreshing indeed. Had a good supply of fresh Maine blueberries (brought some home) as well as some pure Maine maple syrup. Found an old wooden lobster trap in excellent condition for \$5.00, and at a really great antiques store in Southwest Harbor I bought a 3rd (annual) hurricane lamp. Enjoyed our somewhat regular runs to the Southwest Food Mart and occasional off-island trips to Wal-Mart. [As Spencer was wildly wheeling a shopping cart alongside me through Wal-Mart's aisles, we suddenly came upon a woman in a wheelchair who looked directly at me and stated rather matter-of-factly: "Like you never did that when you were young." That spun my head a bit!] Said it last year, and I'll say it again: vacations really don't get any better than this. Thank You, **Lord Jesus**, for allowing us this awesome opportunity and privilege to witness the awesome glory of Your work in creation and for the the grace and favor You gave us in going on this expedition.

CENTER FOR URBAN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES - taught Postmodern Urban Culture - Philadelphia, PA - August 2-19, 2004. Great class!

FELLOWSHIP ALLIANCE CHAPEL - taught the Friday night singles ministry Bible study (covering Genesis 3) in Medford, NJ - August 13, 2004. But not after first doing an inadvertent exploration of the Pine Barrens of South Jersey which is to say I got really lost trying to find the church.

GREAT COMMISSION CHURCH - spoke about discipleship at my church's a.m. worship in Rosalyn, PA - July 18, 2004.

PRINCE D.A. BROWN'S NAVY RETIREMENT CEREMONY - July 16, 2004 at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C.. It's been a long minute since I'd last seen **Prince** -- he was one of the first young adults from Philadelphia I had met while working at Camp Streamside back in the early '80s (which was probably the last time I had seen him). Good to catch up with him for this moving ceremony, and to meet his wife, **Bonnie** and his 16-year-old daughter **Candace**. Also surprised to see **Jon Adams, Sr.** there (turns out he and Prince go way back) as well as a host of Prince's family members who I haven't seen for a while. Just to give you some insight into the kind of person Prince is, a captain at the ceremony told the story of hearing a plane flying extremely low over the Navy Annex (which is next to the Pentagon) the place where Prince was working that day, September 11, 2001. Then there was the sound of the explosion. Orders were given to evacuate the Annex and people were told to go home immediately. Not Prince. He went over to the Pentagon crash site and helped with the triage units until late into the night. He then came back the next day to help out and was later sent to Dover Air Force base to help families through the difficult of identifying their loved ones killed in the Pentagon plane crash. Whew. Was also able to spend some time with my sister **Deb** and her husband **Jim**.

TRUE LIGHT FELLOWSHIP CHURCH - 2004 Youth Convention ("STAND") - Philadelphia, PA - July 14, 2004. Had the good opportunity to speak to a group of young people on the topic, "Only the Strong Survive: Understanding the Street's Value System 'n Makin' It Work for You." Thanks, **Sis. Tramaine Hawkins** (did I spell your name right?) and Youth Pastor **Duane Pinnock** for the privilege of meeting with your young people. ỹ

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP EVANGELISTIC CHURCH - Philadelphia, PA - July 6-9, 2004 - I was privileged to present some evangelism training ("The Gospel / The Street" Seminar) for the 2nd year at this great church on the 2300 block of Clearfield Street in North Philadelphia. Thanks, **Bro. Al, Min. Kevin O.** and all the saints who turned out for 4 nights of material relating to how to more effectively minister to those in hip-hop / street culture. Was really glad **Hal** was able to tag along for the last session. Please pray for this young bul.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH of HIGHLAND PARK A.W.A.N.A. CAMP - Skycroft Conference Center - Middletown, MD - June 18-20, 2004. Once again the crew from F.B.C.H.P., led by **Sis. Debbie Crabbe, Bro. James Graves, Dea. Ed Harrison, Sis. Janice Edwards** and a host of other adults (and an impressive group of ministry-minded teenagers), led the A.W.A.N.A. camp ("A Workman Approved, Not Ashamed") for children from kindergarten through to the 7th grade. It was (as usual) an endearing time and I had the honor of helping out with the praise and worship. (**Kenny T.** was able to tag along as well.) [One other noteworthy "perk" at the A.W.A.N.A. camp: being able to get back to playing some serious ping-pong with some serious competition.] Instead of heading back to Philly right away, Ken and I headed down to my sister Deb's and Jim's house in VA to celebrate Father's Day with my Dad.

CROSS MOVEMENT MINISTRIES BOARD MEETING / STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSIONS - Philadelphia, PA - June 11-12, 2004. The Board of C.M.M. (**The Ambassador, the Phanatik, Zack Ritvalsky** and myself (along with administrators **Cathy Beech** and **Kim Gordon**) met for four hours to discuss matters regarding the restructuring of the ministry (as being distinct from Cross Movement (the rap group). After a break from dinner we went back to the C.M.M. office to strategize until midnight, and then for about 10 hours the next day. With Zack capably taking the helm as interim executive director of the ministry, we were able to lay out an ambitious and exciting strategic game plan for the rest of 2004 all the way through to 2008. Thanks for praying for us.

BUILDaBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL (INSTITUTE for the CHURCH and COMMUNITY ARTS) - presented a workshop on "Urban Youth Culture" - Philadelphia, PA - May 19. A big *THANK YOU* to Eastern University's **Prof. K-Jee Johnson** and **Dean Vivian Nix-Early** for the opportunity!

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC CONCERTS - NYC, NY - May 19. Traveled up to New York City again (2nd trip this month) and met up with niece **Melissa** to hear the NY Philharmonic tackle Charles Ives' "General William Booth Enters Heaven" and complex "Symphony No. 4" (at Lincoln Center). I'm a very avid fan of this early 20th century New England composer's transcendental, prophetic, modern/postmodern compositional style, and it was a delight to watch the orchestra and choir go at this material. These 2 pieces are laced with church hymns, folk songs and marching band tunes thrown together in a polytonal, polyrhythmic, poly-sonorous mix that somehow seems to address and answer the big questions of life. On May 27 I went back to Lincoln Center to attend both the orchestra's somewhat pedestrian open rehearsal (in the morning) and excellent performance (in the evening) of Charles Ives' "Three Places in New England" (plus works by Stravinsky and Ravel). In between I was able to meet and have lunch with Paul Jackson and got to visit briefly with my niece Melissa at her job (just down the street from Paul's location).

FAITH CHAPEL REFORMED CHURCH - On May 16th I had the delightful opportunity to speak (and even spill a few verses) at one of the churches I spent many years at when I lived in Paterson. I bless the Lord Jesus for the stuff He's doing at this fellowship led by **Pastor Raymond D. and Mona Timms**. Got to see some folks I haven't seen for a minute **Tanya Crawford, Tyrone Timms., Kim Orr, Kemett Timms, Jermaine Floyd, Delores Hagans, Pastor Eric Farrar, Dexter (the drummer), Lola Patterson, Tom Page, and many others**. Talk of some kind of a reunion is in the air. What a joy that would be!

CENTER FOR URBAN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES - Philadelphia, PA - Spring 2004 semester - finished teaching Introduction to Youth Ministry, Foundations of Christian Thought and Gospel Studies : Luke. Overall, it was a good semester, but it was also filled with a lot of home goings (a faculty member, several faculty member's and student's close relatives) and not a few other major crises in the lives of many connected with CUTS. Thank you for praying!

"THREE SECONDS IN THE KEY" - NYC, NY - May 1. Traveled up to New York City with **Mike Major, Jr.** and met up with **Melissa** (niece) to see this timely and thought-provoking off-Broadway play about a woman suffering from Hodgkin's Disease, her 9-year-old son (both basketball fans) and the New York Knicks. I had a feeling it would hit the mark in where I'm at right now, and it did not disappoint. The upshot of the story is that you need to keep moving when you're in the paint (the most competitive and combative place [under your opponent's basket]), lest you be penalized and forfeit the ball to your opponent. Was also sobered to see (for the first time) the hole at Ground Zero as the PATH train from Hoboken rolled into the reconstructed World Trade Center station, half-circling the excavated canyon awaiting construction of the 9/11 memorial.

YOUTH NIGHT NEWARK BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH - Newark, NJ - March 26, 2004. After going through a couple of really difficult weeks after losing my Mom, I was abundantly blessed to be invited to come and speak to the saints packed out at this vibrant house church led by **Pastor Bert Baker**. Had an incredibly joyous time bringin' the Word to a highly receptive 'n attentive crew of young people and adults and was thrilled to hear what the Lord's been doin' up in this spot. They got some really on-point youth leaders workin' there, lovin', listenin' 'n leadin' a fantastic bunch of sharp young people, many of whom come out of homes where other faiths are practiced. What a joy, what a joy, what a joy even in the midst of a season of great sorrow to interact with the Newark brothers 'n sisters on a quest for the Real. Father God's really got it goin' on, don't He? Can't wait to go back!

FALL-WINTER 2004-05 UPDATES

Edwin Scott - Yet another young brother goes out into eternity while givin' a go at the "game." When I first started meeting the young people of South Camden, I found my heart hit time and again witnessing their courageous, characterized attempts to face the war being waged against them. Out of all those young people, **Edwin (Eddie)** was one who burdened me the most. I was saddened to learn that he was only 25 years old when he was gunned down on September 1, 2004 by an unknown assailant who shot him in the chest at the corner of Ferry Avenue and Filmore Street in South Camden, NJ. Memories of him reach back to the time when he was about 15 or 16 years old and he was involved in the programs at South Camden's Fellowship House (right around the corner from where he died). Eddie was the go-to fun dude who made everybody smile or laugh, but it wasn't all that hard to see a profound sadness just beneath the surface. **Anthony W.** called to tell me about Eddie's murder he had greeted Eddie in passing only 4-5 hours earlier and when he came back through, he found the corner where Eddie was standing taped off as a crime scene. Once again (and again...and again...and again), a family, friends and a community are left hollowed by bullets; saddened and maddened by yet another son / brother / uncle / nephew / grandson gettin' suddenly ushered out (of season) into eternity ahead of the "normal" time. Grieving for another lost son, Eddie: another young Black male goin' for the gamblin' green of the game but losin' it all as red rivulets of his own life's blood ebbed outta him on a hard-scrabble South Camden street corner. How long, O LORD? Gonna miss him, Father, and I know I gotta trust 'n wait on You to reveal the "whys" of this not-surprising but heartache-inducing tragedy.

CAN YOU GUESS the SOURCE of the FOLLOWING QUOTE? "I think we need to pay more attention to boys. I think we've paid a lot of attention to girls for the past 30 years, and we have this idea in the United States that boys can take care of themselves. We've raised them to be totally self-reliant, starting really too early. They need the nurturing that all humans need. And I think that there are a lot of life skills that we teach girls but we don't teach boys. We actually have neglected boys." Not only do boys now attend college at lower rates than girls ... but "they're the ones who are in trouble, who have been adjudicated, who can't read, who are not doing well in school and drop out in frustration and embarrassment. A lot of times they're the ones with the drug and alcohol problems." How do we reach them? You begin in the home with parents ... and you can also reach them through programs such as Boys & Girls Clubs or Big Brothers Big Sisters, and even through athletic coaches. "I'd love to work with coaches on ways we could better mentor boys." **Laura Bush**, in a Parade magazine interview with Lyric Wallwork Wink, January 16, 2005, p. 5. Interesting, huh?

PRESENT PURSUITS and PAST PERAMBULATIONS during the FALL and WINTER of 2004-05

STREAMSIDE YOUTH RETREAT - Stroudsburg, PA - January 21-23, 2005. It's on again. The youth retreats that used to be held on the regular a number of years ago have stared up again after a long hiatus, thanks to the persevering efforts of **Rev. Nate 'n Elsie Adams** and **Bro. Jerrick (Sr.) 'n Jackie Croston**. Even though the weather people forecasted a blizzard over the weekend (which indeed happened), the retreat went on and oh, what a fantastic time we had. **Pastor Shelton Mercer** ("Merc" from Philadelphia Bible Fellowship at Chew Ave. and Fairhill St. in the Olney section of Philadelphia) brought God's Word to about 50 or so teenagers plus counselors and staff gathered from 7 churches in the Philadelphia area, and even

though it was cold, snowy and windy, a really warm time was had by all. Wonderful to see this event start back up again, and I for one am hoping it will continue on for years to come. Had the good opportunity to assist in the worship h praise element of the retreat, and even though we didn't have a drum set, 15-year-old **Jon Adams** still was able to provide some beats: via human beat-boxing.

ASSEMBLING the NATIONS SUMMIT - Wilmington, DE - January 15, 2005. A group of hip-hop artists got together at Praise to the King Ministries to discuss building a ministry coalition. Good to see some cats I had met or had been in contact with once before: **Hak RAW** (youth pastor of P.T.T.K.M.), **Pastor Nailah B. Gilliam** and **Skeez** (a rapper I had met once before when he and **King Cyz** rolled through Philly a couple of years ago) and a couple of members of the rap crew, **Frontlynaz** along with several others involved in youth ministry. **The Phanatik** spoke about the genesis of the Cross Movement, **Ron Tinsley** (one of the co-conveners) also spoke and we all lookin' forward to getting back together to take the next step.

CHRIST LIBERATION FELLOWSHIP YOUTH MEETING - Philadelphia, PA - January 14, 2005. It's gonna take a bit more time before I write about the great time I had with C.L.F.'s youth group (led by good friend **Sis. Pat Little** and the great team of youth leaders she's assembled) at 65th and Lansdowne.

TIMOTHY ACADEMY CHAPELS - Philadelphia, PA - January 7, 2005. Had the wonderful privilege again to speak to 2 chapels ((Kindergarten through 4th grade and then 5 through 8) on Samuel's receptivity to the word of the Lord in a time of spiritual malaise. During one of the chapels the statement was made, 'Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world.' He also said, 'You are the light of the world.' How can both of those be?' A 3rd grader named **Luis** responded, "Because Jesus lives in us." Wow. Out of the mouths of babes. Thank you, **Bev Tuttle**, for inviting me in from time to time to share.

CROSS MOVEMENT MINISTRIES PASTORS' LUNCHEON - November 30, 2004. One of the on-going outcomes of the Westminster conference (see below) was a follow-up pastors' luncheon which was held at the First Presbyterian Church of Germantown. Thirty-four or so pastors and ministry leaders heard from **the Ambassador** and C.M.M. executive director **Zack Ritvalsky** and had the opportunity to meet with a good turnout of members from Philadelphia's Christian hip-hop community.

EASTERN UNIVERSITY - covered **Prof. Calenthia Dowdy's** "Urban Youth Ministry" class - St. Davids, PA - November 9, 2004.

MANNA BIBLE INSTITUTE STUDENT & ALUMNI RETREAT - Quarryville, PA - October 29-31, 2004. Yet another great gathering of the saints at Black Rock under the direction of **Sis. Maria Goode-Burton**, **Sis. Winni Mercer**, **Sis. Cleonia J. Walker** and the rest of the Manna Retreat staff.

Rev. Steven Lawrence back for a second year with his engaging process-oriented presentational style brought us some thought-provoking material in line with the theme, "Behind the Veil: In the Holy of Holies." Again, I had the privilege of assisting in leading the worship h praise portion, along with **Evangelist Cheryl Johnson** with the retreat choir (which again did a fantastic job).

FELLOWSHIP ALLIANCE CHAPEL - taught the Friday night singles ministry (S.A.L.T.) Bible study again - Medford, NJ - October 15, 2004.

"CONTEXTUALIZING without COMPROMISING: A Case Study in Reaching the Hip-Hop Culture" October 8-9, 2004. What a ground-breaking and fantastic time! This was the 2004 two-day Student Missions conference held at Westminster Theological Seminary in conjunction with Cross Movement Ministries and Rock Soul Ministries. The program designed to initiate a dialogue between hip-hop and the theological academic community consisted of three plenary sessions (addresses on contextualization and apologetics by W.T.S. professors **John S. Leonard** [Practical Theology Department] and **Dr. William Edgar** [Apologetics Department]), and the third ("Hip-Hop as a Context for Christian Living") by Cross Movement lyricist **William Branch (The Ambassador)**. There were also a repeated series of four simultaneous breakout sessions led by members of the hip-hop community (**Rasool Berry** [from the Impact Movement] did "The Worldview of Hip-Hop," **Emanuel Lambert, Jr. [a.k.a. Da' T.R.U.T.H.]** did "Message-Centered Outreach v.s. Method-Centered Outreach," **Shai Linne** did "Using Hip-Hop to Teach Doctrine" and **Ron Tinsley** and **Brady Goodwin, Jr. [a.k.a. The Phanatik]** did "Strategies in Reaching the Culture") and the conference wrapped up with panel discussion with all presenters responding to questions from conference participants. I was given the honor and privilege of being host and facilitator for the conference, capably put together by Cross Movement Ministries executive director **Zack Ritvalsky**, **Cathy Beech**, **Kim Gordon**, W.T.S. Student Missions Fellowship's **Sam Boyd** and W.T.S. Dean of Students **Jerry McFarland**. A big "THANK YOU" also to **J. Stafford Carson**, Executive Vice President at W.T.S. for your vision and help in bringing this event to fruition.

MORE PEOPLE to PERSONALLY PARTNER in PRAYER for

Kenny Thompson is having an interesting first year at McKendree College out in Lebanon, Illinois. Not getting a whole lot of playing time as yet, but he is on the team that's coached by **Harry Statham**, who now holds the national record for 4-year college basketball wins. Be patient, K. Stay strong!

Denis 'n Rebecca Johnson, Jr. (from Rochester, NY) were here in Philly for a few days to attend the funeral of their uncle. Amazing and encouraging to hear what the Lord Jesus has been doing in their lives (they've been married for 2 years after meeting in college). Denis is leading both the youth and music ministries at their church (affiliated with **Bishop Joseph L. Garlington's** Reconciliation! Ministries International (based in Pittsburgh, PA) and it sounds like there are some really exciting things going on in the Rochester fellowship. To give you an idea of Denis' formidable keyboard skills, he was once personally asked to accompany **Donnie McClurkin** (much to Denis' initial consternation) and was able to stay with him for the whole set! That may not mean a lot to some folks, but to those who are familiar with McClurkin's music, that's sayin' a whole lot about Denis' musical ability.

PRAYER PRE-VIEW

DeVOS URBAN LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE - I ask you to pray for a brother who's doing some awesome urban ministry in Wilmington, DE. He's a part of the current DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative and has asked me to mentor him for the next year a profound privilege and an honor.

CENTER for URBAN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES - - teaching "Contemporary Adolescent Culture" (MIN 319C) and "Ethics" (PHI 112C [as an independent study]) - Philadelphia, PA - Spring semester 2005.

J.A.M. YOUTH RETREAT (First Baptist Church of Highland Park) - Fredericksburg, PA - February 18-20, 2005

MARCH MADNESS YOUTH REVIVAL - Christian Union Church - Philadelphia, PA - March 13, 2005.

NEW LIFE BIBLE INSTITUTE RETREAT - Schroon Lake, NY - March 18-20, 2005.

The GOSPEL / The STREET Seminar - Wilmington, DE - April/ May, 2005.

Thank you each of you for your faithful love, interest, prayers, patience and support,

His n yours, with much love n respect, **HEP**

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All of this information is available at the **YUBM Ministries Web site**, along with loads of pictures, sound clips, multimedia files, etc., as well as updates on all that's been goin on (or about to go on). Visit www.yubm.org to access what I couldn't fit here on these printed pages.