

**Westminster Theological Seminary** - taking a course this semester with Dr. David Powlison entitled, "Theology and Secular Psychology."

**Center for Urban Theological Studies (CUTS)** - teaching "Foundations of Christian Thought" & "Introduction to Philosophy" - Spring 2008.

**New Life Bible Institute Retreat** - Word of Life - Schroon Lake, NY - March 28-30, 2008. – *Had yet another fantastic time this year!*

**WTS** - D. Min. Mod. 1 (Globalization & Changing Dynamics of Urban Ministry) & 3 (Community Analysis & Demographics) - June 2-12, 2008.

**AWANA Camp** - First Baptist Church of Highland Park (Landover, MD) - Refreshing Mountain Camp - Stevens, PA - June 27-29, 2008

**Cosmopolitan Mission Service Baptist Church Youth Retreat** - Sandy Cove, MD - August 8-10, 2008.

**O YES! Conference (Our Youth Enlightened about Sex)** - Philadelphia, PA - August 16, 2008.

**Manna Bible Institute Student / Alumni Retreat** - Valley Forge, PA - October 17-19, 2008.

The Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have begun thinking less of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at heaven and you get earth thrown in; aim at earth and you get neither. **C. S. Lewis**

PAST PERAMBULATIONS and PEOPLE to PRAY FOR

– events listed in reverse chronological order –

loads of supplemental photos available online at <http://www.yubm.org/umrptss08.htm>

**Two Visitors from Alexandria** - Virginia, that is. Honored to host my 16-year-old nephew **Spencer M.** and his 18-year-old good friend **Joshua H.** here in Philly during part of their spring break from school (March 16-19, 2008). Did the usual Philly sight-seeing thing (Center City, the Avenue of the Arts, cheese steaks from South Philly [and later on South Street], quick drive-bys of the Constitution Center, the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, a brief walk-through of the new Comcast Center lobby, etc.). But the more important part of their trip was going through sections of Philly that most tourists (and the visitors' bureau) take great pains NOT to see: the forgotten communities that lie just beyond the brightly-lit, well-manicured campuses of N. Philadelphia's Temple University, W. Philly's University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University, the devastated community hidden beneath SEPTA's Market Street EI (still under renovation), and some "stuff" here in the Olney section. Lots of interesting, thought-provoking convos, discussions and great questions (which tuckered us all out) — and yes, we did manage to have some impromptu fun as well. Their visit closed with sitting in on part of a church meeting at Epiphany Fellowship just before catching Amtrak back to Washington DC and then home. [Spence was also able to do a little bit of woodworking on **Hummer**, along with a lil leaf-rakin' (with Josh) in the front yard. Thanks! :o) ] Interesting bookends: our 1st Philly cheese steak right after S. & J.'s arrival on Sunday night was from an establishment near 9th and Passyunk where we duly noted the nearby basketball courts. In the church meeting on Wednesday night (right before taking S. & J. back to the 30th Street train station), **Pastor Eric Mason** mentioned the same two cheese steak outlets and the adjacent b-ball courts. Mere coincidence? Hmm...I doubt it. Providential design and purpose? That option seems a lot more likely...if you subscribe to the notion we live in a very Personal universe.

**Hawthorne Gospel Church** - Serving Hands Ministry - Hawthorne, NJ - March 14, 2008. Had the privilege and honor of speaking and presenting the ministry to this assembly of very active, missions-minded saints. What a blessing! Wonderful to re-connect with **Linda Ibach**, **Dave Schuit** (HGC's Missions Pastor), **Marjorie Webster**, **Ruth Hennigh**, **Ermetta Olson**, **Maggie Cooper** and many other saints whom I haven't seen for a long time. Thank you all for your love, hospitality and gracious support through the years. While in the Paterson area, I went looking for **Walter Stewart** but wasn't able to locate him, although I was able to leave my contact info with someone who occasionally bumps into him. Hope 'e doin' aight. Had popped in to visit HGC during their missions conference October 20, 2007. Wonderful to see **Tony & Marianne Loeffler** (Solid Rock Ministries, based in Florida), **Senior Pastor John Minnema and family**, as well as **Pastor Jim & Jean Richmond**. We all go way back. But this is not the time for reverie... there's still more work to be done

**Tim Keller at U. of Pennsylvania** - heard NYC's Redeemer Presbyterian Church's Senior Pastor discuss his recent book, **The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism**, at Westminster Seminary in the morning, then invited **Tim Harris** to join me for the U. of P. evening lecture. It was a full house as some 780 people filled the University's Museum Auditorium to hear Dr. Keller, and although most of the questions during the Q&A were fairly "softball friendly" (Keller even said he was waiting for a difficult, thorny inquiry), the evening was nevertheless thought-provoking and engaging. I kind of got the sense that more of a "Jerusalem" crowd showed up than that of an "Athens." In the wake of a spate of recent books written from an atheist perspective, Keller's tome is worth investigating. At the time of this writing (0315/06) it is # 7 on the **New York Times** hardcover non-fiction bestseller list and **Publisher's Weekly** says it's "[a] compelling overview of the current debate on faith for those who doubt and for those who want to reevaluate what they believe, and why."

**J.A.M. Teen Ministry Winter Retreat 2008** - Skycroft Conference Center - Mitchellville, MD - with First Baptist Church of Highland Park of Landover, MD, Emmanuel Baptist Church of Washington, D.C. and Peoples Community Church - Feb 29 - Mar 1, 2008. The theme was "Come As You Are: No Perfect People Allowed" (Matt 11:28-29) and instead of doing the worship and praise this year, I did presentations to the jr. & sr. high brothers. Topic? "Jesus and Me ... n 'Junior.'" The reception was fantastic, PTL! Kudos to the young adults to whom the retreat leadership baton has been passed, 'n thank you, **Joel Washington**, for lettin' me join y'all in a different capacity.

**Eastern University** - team-taught "Urban Youth Culture" with **Dr. K-lee Johnson** in the Master of Arts in Urban Studies Residency - February 15-16, 2008. This week-ending whirlwind 2-day event (they don't call it an intensive for nothin'!) Was with students from Philadelphia, **Victor G.**, Upper Darby, **Alysia W.**, and Aliquippa, PA, **Joel R.**, Chicago, IL, **Brent P.**, and San Jose, Costa Rica, **Kristen D.**. How do you get everything in? You don't. You can't. The course runs for the entire semester online.

**The Cross Movement & da' T.R.U.T.H.** each got a Grammy nomination (Best Rock or Rap Gospel Album": **HIStory: Our Place In His Story & Open Book**). They didn't win, but repped Christ inside the Grammy's sad whirl-o-worldliness in L.A. in early February 2008.

**Westminster Theological Seminary** - took 2 winter session seminars (leadership and worship - January 7-18, 2008), and now in a counseling course. For financial reasons I had to take it real light for the Fall 2007 semester (1 credit), but that allowed me to catch up on earlier course work that's been difficult to get to. Turned in my research tutorial, a commentary / street-level translation of Philemon (Contextual Theology), several reading response papers (Mission Anthropology) and now one ethnography to write up (from last summer).

**Blessed and Mightily Encouraged to Hear From: Reggie Schofield**, who found my MySpace page and sent me an email. Delighted to hear from him (it's been a minute!) and see all the wedding photos he's posted on-line. Also blessed and mightily encouraged to hear from **Kenny Thompson** (it's been 4 years, G.!) who's finishing up his degree at Benedict College in South Carolina and lookin' at some further schooling. He's also had the opportunity to do some traveling and play some basketball in Holland and Brazil. Nice. **Sam Harris** called (he's enjoying his studies at Philadelphia Biblical University), as did **Sam Cornet** (who's also enjoying his time there at PBU). I was also blessed to hear my brother-in-law **Jim M.** has been voted into a leadership role in a relatively new church that's sprung up in the northern Virginia area. **Richard Greene** is involved in the youth ministry at his church in West Philadelphia.

**Nothing Short of Remarkable!** - Great Commission Church has relocated itself from suburban Hatboro, PA into the West Oak Lane section of Philadelphia, a move which grew in part out of a GCC men's Bible study in Nehemiah, along with other factors. We commend to you the church's leaders: **Pastors Larry Anderson, D. Kyle Canty, Malcolm Walls and Hal Hopkins Sr.**, as well as the saints of GCC, as they seek to follow and serve the Lord Jesus in a field that is ready for harvest but is one that many others try their hardest to get away from or avoid. Would that more of God's people would be done with trying to get to heaven on "flowery beds of ease" and follow the Lord Jesus into similar tough places. More online at [http://www.greatcommissiononline.com/images/Vision\\_Fund\\_External.pdf](http://www.greatcommissiononline.com/images/Vision_Fund_External.pdf)

**The Center for Urban Theological Studies (CUTS)** - finished up the Fall 2007 semester teaching "Foundations of Christian Thought." Great class - great interaction - great work. **Eastern in the City (E.I.C.)** - also finished up teaching the undergrad course, "Foundations of Christian Spirituality." Again, a great class - great interaction (and not a few tears 'n struggles throughout) and great work.

**The Passing of Jermaine Floyd** - Got a phone call from good friend Walt Holmes (a Paterson, NJ school teacher) that Jermaine had passed away on October 31, 2007. Jermaine (aka "Maine"), 34, was a "son in the ministry" to several others and myself, and was the minister/director Faith Chapel's Mass Choir and Male Chorus and played for several other groups. Years ago he was in a singing group I was privileged to be a part of called His Glory, which was made up of a group of young brothers that used to sing at Faith Chapel and occasionally elsewhere. The homegoing service on November 4th was a bittersweet family reunion: a testament of Maine's legacy. Wonderful to see **Linzie Tynes, Darryl Redmond & his family, Kim Orr, Pastor Raymond, his wife Mona & son Kemett, Charles Young, Walt Holmes, Raheem Holmes, Jason, Mark Hickman, Matthew Reaves, Sis. Gloria, Sis. Beulah Ross** and many others.

**Manna Bible Institute 35th Annual Weekend Getaway** - Black Rock Retreat, Quarryville, PA - October 26-28, 2007. A great weekend with the saints from MBI (primarily alumni) — pressed the generational envelope in leading the worship and praise.

**Wedding Bells for Calvin Kelly, Jr. and Dana Polk** - Philadelphia, PA - October 6, 2007. Privileged to take part in the wedding at Grace Baptist Church (Johnson St. and Germantown Ave.), playing the piano for the nuptials and getting to accompany some really great soloists. A wonderful time seeing this fantastic couple come together in holy matrimony.

**Bethesda Baptist Church** - Washington, D.C. - September 30, 2007. Had a wonderful time re-connecting with the saints at Bethesda, notably with **Bro. Michael Thompson, his wife Vera and their family** (now augmented with a high school senior transplant from Canada, originally from Serbia). Did the PowerPoint presentation on Caleb the courageous see'r who, along with Joshua, saw the challenges of the Promised Land from a whole different level than the 10 other spies. Good to see **Donna Battle** (still in the battle!), **Sis. Lilly** and many others. Thank you, Bethesda, for refreshing my heart as I trust the Lord Jesus challenged yours with what we considered.

**Bux-Mont Baptist Church Back2school Bash** - Hatboro, PA - September 29, 2007. Quite a crew **Sis. Janice and her husband Bro. Curt Charlton** have gathered at this fellowship in Hatboro, PA. Had the good opportunity to share a bit with the group some of what it means to be an outsider, taking a look at how **Jesus Christ** Himself (as Author) came into His own story and found Himself an Outsider (John 1:10-12). What a great (and fun!) bunch of teenagers in this marvelously diverse crew meeting there at the church.

**Jesus & Jigga** - Delighted to have lunch with author **Eric J. Dolce and Nana K.** Eric wrote **Jesus & Jigga: Where Hip-Hop Meets Scripture**, which he says is "for anyone who is searching for a way to understand biblical applications outside of the four walls of a church. The Christian faith is rich with teachings and stories that people can relate to in everyday life. This book is for the skeptical rap fan that wonders if the Bible is still relevant today. It's for the Christian who's not sure how to relate to rap lyrics (specifically Jay-Z) because they 'can't find it in the Bible.' [It's] for people who are looking for a way to connect the truth of the Scriptures with modern-day culture and ideas." More information can be found at: <http://www.jesusandjigga.com>

**Three of Hep's Urban Mission Journal Articles Now Online** - Although a bit dated (they were written in 1989 and 1992), they still got 'feet' regarding the street — 'nuff so that **Efrem Smith** and **Phil Jackson** quoted from them in their 2005 book, **The Hip-Hop Church: Connecting with the Movement Shaping Our Culture** (InterVarsity Press).

"Penetrating an Urban People Group: The Street-Oriented Young Urban Black Male (YUBM)" Bob Hepburn, **Urban Mission**, Mar 01, 1989, Volume 6:04, pp. 33-42.

<http://www.strategicnetwork.org/index.php?loc=kb&view=v&id=15652>

"Rap Music: A Window into a Culture." Bob Hepburn, **Urban Mission**, May 01, 1992, Volume 9:05, pp. 6-19.

<http://www.strategicnetwork.org/index.php?loc=kb&view=v&id=15780>

"Rap Music: Give Me My Respect, Man!" Bob Hepburn, **Urban Mission**, Sep 01, 1992, Volume 10:01, pp. 16-28.

<http://www.strategicnetwork.org/index.php?loc=kb&view=v&id=15789>

**Change in Church Involvement** - After being a part of Great Commission Church for a number of years, I've sensed the Lord's leading to return to a fellowship here in the city of Philadelphia. Some think it a step in the wrong direction (Philly's under the gun these days [literally]), and yes, it's gonna cost me, but hey! Who said followin' the Lord was supposed to be comfortable or easy? As of August 2007, I've been at Epiphany Fellowship at 17th and Diamond Streets in North Philly.

If you preach the Gospel in all aspects  
with the exception of the issues which deal specifically with your time —  
you are not preaching the Gospel at all. **Martin Luther**

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