



FREEDOMWORKS

RECONCILING TO GOD, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Fall 2017

Our Vision

By George Lang, Executive Director

The vision God has given us is to support men who are looking to Him during their transition from captivity into a new life in Christ. This support comes through a community of other believers, fellow program participants and supportive volunteers who are modeling God's Word in their lives

Psalms 133 *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!...For there the LORD commanded the blessing—life forever."*

This vision is played out through a central location, which is crucial to the vision that I have been called to support. My heart is not drawn to simply providing supportive housing, typically modeled in the use of duplexes scattered through the Twin Cities. The vision God has laid on my heart is to have one community flowing with God's people and resources, and provided to each believer no matter where he is in his faith. This gives each man an opportunity to gain a deeper relationship with Jesus.

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We Cherish the Memory of Bob Tousignant

Bob was shot to death at 5:52 am on 8/29/17 outside of the FreedomWorks back door as he sat in his car, preparing to go to work. Bob had been at FreedomWorks for two and half years. We have had the privilege of watching God transform Bob from his old life of crime and addictions into a man seeking God's Heart. He became a strong role model and servant to those involved at FreedomWorks and our community.

We ask that you keep Bob's family in your prayers. He leaves behind his daughter and granddaughter. For those who knew him, Bob truly was a blessing. We are thankful that God allowed us the time we had with him. Bob is and will be missed.

Months earlier a young mother was shot and killed in her car just fifty feet from our back door. She was an innocent bystander who had been mistaken for another person as she stopped her car at the convenience store across the street from our ministry. There have now been a total of twelve murders associated with gang activity or the ongoing drug trafficking that goes on a daily near FreedomWorks.



FOLLOW-UP Graduate Keith & Mentor Arnold Nagel



We introduced Keith in our newsletter last Spring. On April 18, Keith graduated from FreedomWorks and moved into an apartment with his new bride. It is always enjoyable when we occasionally get to see him whenever he stops by for a visit.

Keith and Arnold have continued their regular contact that started when Keith chose to have Arnold as his FreedomWorks mentor.

If you are interested in mentoring at FreedomWorks, please call the office (612-522-9007) or click on the "Get Involved" link on our website.



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FamilyMatters

Most of the FreedomWorks participants come from broken homes and unhealthy relationships. FamilyMatters is an initiative that helps them to reconcile with their families. While each family circumstance is unique, this program offers tools to strengthen healthy relationships within their families.

Emmanuel

Emmanuel is a great example to highlight, not only pertaining to the mission of FreedomWorks in general, but also our FamilyMatters initiative. Despite having a home here in North Minneapolis, Emmanuel chose to come here because he wanted to have the support of the FreedomWorks community as he transitions back into society and back into his family. Most importantly, he came to us with a strong desire to build a foundation in Christ and to transition back into his home, not as the man he used to be, but as a man of Christ.

We have watched Emmanuel work through his struggle to reconcile to God. He is learning, along with the rest of us, that life is not always easy. God doesn't promise us an easy way, but rather the power and wisdom to make our way in life that comes through our submitting completely to Him. Emmanuel has been open with us about the challenges that he faces, and it is encouraging to see his example of holding on to God as he works to be the husband, father, employee, citizen, friend, and member of the community that God has called him to be.

Emmanuel's family is fully engaged in his transition and recovery. His wife Denise is also growing in her faith. In fact she and their older son, Julian, have been part of our CBS Bible Study on Monday nights. Together Emmanuel and Denise are very active in bringing their family up in Christ. As they work to support the needs of their family, their children are learning what is involved in living for Christ. It can often take years for a man to be reconciled to his family, but they have consistently stood by him and encouraged him as he learns to lead them to God.

We have also seen Emmanuel reconcile to the community. Together as a family they have been giving back to both the FreedomWorks community and the North Minneapolis community through their service. As Emmanuel works to rebuild trust, he is finding favor with his employers and with the authorities that God has placed over him.

It is a thrilling experience to see God changing lives. We often only see what God is doing in the life of the man that has come to be a part of the FreedomWorks community. With Emmanuel, Denise and their children, we have been able to witness what God can do in transforming an entire family.



Graduate James Timmons

It is exciting to see how God is being glorified through the lives of FreedomWorks alumni who are continuing to trust in Him. James came to us in 2014, seeking Jesus after a life of bondage to the grip that sin had on him. We were able to guide him as he placed his life and future in the hand of God.



In September, God blessed James with his bride Nicole. Together they were able to purchase a house and are looking forward to sharing their lives together in their new home.

James graduated from FreedomWorks in 2015 and has continued to be a friend of the ministry. He recently completed his probation and received a new promotion at a job he has held for two and a half years.

We are thankful for the way that God is faithful in the lives of the men that come through FreedomWorks. We are also incredibly thankful to all of you who provide an opportunity for lives to be changed through your prayers, time, service, finances, encouragement and love.

We Are Thankful for Their Leadership



We lift up our gratitude for Tom Gulliford and Cheryl Myhr for faithfully serving on the FreedomWorks Board of Directors, each for four years. Both are committed to furthering our mission as they continue to serve in other ways. Tom will help lead our mentoring program. Cheryl, along with her husband Greg, are liaisons helping to grow our partnership with Lord of Life Lutheran Church.



Our Vision For the Future

Eleven and a half years ago I was in prison when I heard the vision of FreedomWorks. Its Mission was to transition men from prison to a new life embedded in Christ through community. The path we follow is found in the Book of Acts: A community centered and accountable to God's Word, fellowship, mentoring, breaking of bread and learning to be a servant to others.

Since my release from prison, I have had the privilege to walk out those principles with other men. It is my honor to watch the Power of God change the lives of men like James and Keith mentioned in earlier articles. And to witness God restoring Emmanuel to his family, all while he leads his family closer to God, is nothing short of a blessing.

But to lose a long time resident brother Bob Tousingant was, and still is, heart breaking. Our location has been nothing less than dangerous. The heroin trade off the surrounding corners only adds to the violence. Two years ago former graduate and staff member Steve Stoltz was pulling into the FreedomWorks parking lot when seven bullets hit his car with him in it. In recent, we have had a total of twelve murders in the immediate area; two in front of our building and two near the back door. The bottom left picture included on the front page shows two memorials. One of these was for Bob T. and the other for the lady who was shot over mistaken identity.

We are on hot pursuit of another building. The difference with this particular property is that it does not just move us from one location to another. This property fits our future Vision for the ministry. It will enable us to expand on the Mission by casting a much larger net to share the Gospel to the men we are called to serve. *(More details to come soon)*

Please consider financially supporting the ministry by becoming a monthly supporter or by providing a single offering to meet this current quarter's budget deficit of \$30,000. I also ask you to prayerfully consider giving generously towards meeting our end-of-the-year financial goals.

Thank you all for your willingness to sacrifice for the men we all serve.

Sincerely, George Lang

Save the Dates

<p>Thanksgiving Dinner November 16th 6-8 pm Faith Baptist Church 4350 Russell Ave. N Minneapolis, MN 55412 Bring your family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving with us.</p>	<p>Christmas Banquet December 14th 6-8 pm Faith Baptist Church 4350 Russell Ave. N Minneapolis, MN 55412 Join us as we celebrate Christ's birth with the FreedomWorks men.</p>	<p>Annual Pig Roast & Potluck January 1st 12-5 pm FreedomWorks 3559 Penn Ave. N Minneapolis, MN 55412 Enter the New Year in fellowship! Bring a dessert to share.</p>
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PO Box 11175
Minneapolis, MN 55411



Welcome Steve Swinehart

In May, Steve was hired to serve as our Volunteer Coordinator. This new position was created to focus on recognizing and assisting existing volunteers as well as recruiting new volunteers to help support the FreedomWorks vision and ministry growth.

Steve's background began with jobs as Program Manager, Director of Engineering, and Manufacturing Plant Manager. After retiring from the for-profit world, Steve recently worked with Feed My Starving Children as a Project Manager.

Steve states, "I believe God has orchestrated the events in my life over the past 11 years to prepare me for this ministry. I previously attended a suburban community church in Maple Grove, MN and getting involved in an urban North Minneapolis church was the furthest thing from my mind. Through my involvement with Pastor Joe Sutton and his wife Leila at The Spirit of the Lord Church, however, I met George Lang. In God's timing I have now joined the FreedomWorks staff."

Steve's life scripture is:

Isaiah 1: 17- Learn to do right. Seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless, the widows and others less fortunate.

We are excited to see what God is and will continue to do through Steve's partnership in our ministry.

