

METROGRACE

Developing Urban Churches

November 2017

Giving Thanks

Oh give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples. 1 Chronicles 16:8

For Jesus

I grew up in the city. My dad died when I was six years old leaving my mom with seven children. The little church on the corner ministered to my mother. She came to know Jesus as her Savior! Each of my siblings prayed to trust Christ, too. When a teenage girl shared the gospel at Vacation Bible School, I asked Jesus to save me. Jesus was living in the city back then; He was embodied in the lives of caring, committed followers who loved in word and deed. Much has changed. Many Christians have moved away; but, Jesus never did! Many have chosen to build their lives in urban communities. Jesus is alive in His people as they take their children to school, catch the "E!" to work, relax in a city park and serve in their neighborhood church. MetroGrace develops churches that help growing believers personify Christ in the city.



For Our Team

Lisa and I began serving the Lord together in sixth grade. We married very young. She worked to put me through Bible College. When we moved to Indiana for seminary, she cared for our three preschool children. Lisa gladly moved to the city when the Lord called us to plant a church. She has taught children, disciplined women, led hospitality teams, hosted Home Bible Fellowships, cared for houseguests and so much more! Lisa prays; I aspire to have a prayer life like hers. She worked in urology for many years, helping to support our family when the ministry could not. Lisa is an amazing wife, mother and grandmother. Recently, she's been developing relationships with young parents at the playground. This month she met a young Muslim family from Morocco; we're praying for them. I'm very thankful to have Lisa on our team!



Pete Forshtay grew up in Fremont, Ohio. He came to know Jesus through a Grace Brethren Church when he was just a boy. Many Christians spoke into Pete's life. But, Harald Bjerga made a deep impression. I'm so thankful for faithful servants! MetroGrace has been blessed by the ministry of many others in the body of Christ and the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches! As a teen, Pete

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Dr. Jim Brown,
Executive Director**

attended Brethren National Youth Conference, a ministry of CE National. While there, he met a cute girl from Philadelphia; they became pen pals, exchanging letters for years. After the attacks on September 11, 2001 Pete joined the Marines, serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. Military service made a profound impact; Pete experienced the harsh realities of war in the Middle-East. He cared for civilians as life ebbed away. And he lost friends in battle. During leave between tours, he married that cute girl from Philadelphia – Danielle Sicoli.



Danielle grew up at Crossroads in the very first church we planted. I met her parents Fred and Carla in a Christian book store. Soon, they began attending Crossroads with their little girl. Danielle was very sweet and made friends quickly. That group of friends developed into a great youth group and Danielle was able to attend Brethren National Youth Conference where she met Pete. As Danielle grew older, her family moved to a new neighborhood and began attending First Grace Brethren Church where Shawn Kidder became pastor. Danielle's mother went to be with the Lord at a very young age. That presented a big challenge for a teenage girl in the city. But, the Lord had a plan for Danielle's life. She connected with Pastor Shawn's wife, Stacia. Stacia was able to guide Danielle toward womanhood. She and Shawn continue to be a source of great encouragement to the Forshtays. Pete and Danielle planted Crossroads Community Church in Wissinoming. They continue to develop that congregation. And recently, the Forshtays have taken leadership of our team in Bridesburg. Lisa and I are very grateful to serve with Pete and Danielle.

Margarete Miller was attending a church in the suburbs when she visited our Home Bible Fellowship many years ago. Before long we heard about her boyfriend, Mike Connor. Mike was studying at Philadelphia Biblical University to become a school teacher. Soon Mike and Margarete married and plugged into ministry at Crossroads. God was growing the Connors; when MetroGrace began work to develop a congregation in Northeast Philadelphia, they joined the team. They served at Crossroads Holmesburg in teaching, worship, outreach, administration and more. For more than ten years, Margarete has served as my Administrative Assistant at MetroGrace. That title doesn't do justice to all the ways she serves the Lord. Last year, Mike began a pastoral internship at MetroGrace. He and Margrete are leading our church planting team in Rhawnhurst. Lord willing, Mike plans to continue teaching school while serving as pastor at Crossroads Rhawnhurst beginning in September 2018. Lisa and I praise the Lord for the Connors and appreciate the opportunity to serve with them.



For Our Partners

Our ministry in Philadelphia has been blessed with a team of partners who pray, give and serve to make it possible. Thank you! We are so grateful for those who pray regularly for our work in the city. Sometimes I'll receive a note that reminds me that we are not alone in the spiritual battle we face. People from all over the United States have supported our ministry. Many have served alongside us doing building projects, outreach events and ministries of compassion. We praise God for you! Some churches have included MetroGrace in their mission program. We are greatly encouraged by your partnership in the Great Commission! Missionaries serving in countries like Spain, Venezuela, Paraguay, Mexico, the Philippines, Liberia and Cambodia have helped with our ministry, too. We are humbled by your support!

Thank you all for serving the Lord with us!

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