

Intercession and Good Works, The Formula for City Taking
How One Church is Impacting their City
by Gini Smith

Lying across my bed crying out to the Lord for direction, little did I know or begin to comprehend the journey just ahead. Amidst my tears and sniffles, the Holy Spirit quickened the verse Isaiah 62:10 to my heart as I read desperately through the book of Isaiah looking for answers. The phrase, "Go through, go through the gates" confirmed to my heart that it was time to move out in faith and respond to the will of God. My emotions had not yet caught up to my faith but I knew it was time to obey. That day was a new beginning in my life, a willful decision to step out of the security of the known and into faith and the unknown.

That was the Spring of 1992 and today our lives have been transformed as a result of that first step of faith. Who could imagine five years ago what "go through the gates" would mean. One step of faith has led us to another until today our Seattle church is beginning to understand that good works is the vehicle to "go" and intercession is the key that opens the "gates" of our city. There is great spiritual power in the coupling of intercession and good works. Strategic intercession is the power source that directs good works into their redemptive purpose.

Traditionally the Charismatic, Pentecostal church has had a strong Jesus and Me theology but has had limited involvement in social concerns. We have become proficient in preaching, personal growth, and pastoral care but have done little caring beyond our church walls. With the dramatic changes in the Federal and State Welfare systems comes the opportunity the church has been waiting for, a chance to step up and be the church, offering natural as well as supernatural answers to our community.

The Holy Spirit has guided us into creative good works as we have given ourselves to intercession on behalf of our city. As Ruth just happened into Boaz's field and the will of God, our church just happened into a food distribution ministry through the donations of bread from a local bakery. A person in our church just happened to make the connection and a ministry was born. The bakery had imperfect loaves of bread they could not sell and wanted a source to distribute them to truly needy people. We picked up the bread twice a week from the bakery, bagged it, tagged it with a note from the church and distributed it to low income housing units. The word got out that The City Church and Ministries was a reliable source for donations, and other offers multiplied until we now receive food stuffs and goods from several major companies and minister to thousands of families weekly. We feel like the boy with the five loaves and two fish and Jesus keeps multiplying our efforts and blessing the multitudes.

This year we are opening a resale clothing shop in the marketplace mall in which our church leases space. The response to our request for clothing has been overwhelming. Donations have been staggering from both retailers and individuals. Our racks are full and breaking like the net load of fish the disciples caught after Jesus told them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat. Each clothing item will be tagged with a gospel message and every shopper will be offered prayer. To effect people's lives we must not only preach the gospel and touch their spirits, but we must feed and clothe their bodies.

The apostle James declares that "faith without works is dead" and it is important to give people "the things that are needed for the body". John admonishes us to "love in deed and in truth" when we see our brother in need. The food and clothing become a means to impact people with the power of faith, hope and love.

Never before has the church had a better opportunity to reach out to a needy world. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival has come a growing revelation of God's unconditional love. That love is moving the Body of Christ out of the self-imposed boundaries of religious duty into new dimensions of faith and grace. We have been blessed so that we might be a blessing. We have "freely received", now is the time to "freely give."

We can take our cities for Christ. We have the keys to "the gates" in intercession and the power to "go" in good works. We are going through the gates of our cities in the Name of the Lord. The Holy Spirit will lead us if we will respond in faith and just obey. Cast your net on the other side of the boat, give your little lunch of loaves and fish to Jesus and start happening into Boaz's field. The disciples couldn't contain the catch of fish, the apostles were amazed when all the multitudes were fed and Ruth ended up owning that field!