

Urban Harvest Ministries

Tom and Lidia Grassano, urban missionaries



FEBRUARY 2007

Rebuilding the Ruins

In His home synagogue, Jesus quoted a portion of Isaiah 61: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me to bring good news to the poor...bringing beauty for ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of despair.”* He goes on to say, **“They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities long ago destroyed. They will revive them, though they have been empty for many generations.”** This message is echoed in Isaiah 58:12: *“This generation will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. They will be called the repairers of the breach and the restorers of the streets to dwell in.”*

As the urban poor are empowered and equipped to fulfill their destinies in Christ, they become the agents of change to rebuild their own communities for the glory of God. *That is the mission of UHM!*

Fred Lynch saw this first-hand. Fred is a dynamic youth communicator and leader with more than eighteen years of inner city ministry experience. He is the founder of UrbNet, a National Network of Urban Youth Workers. At the age of 18, Fred helped found P.I.D. (Preachers in Disguise), one of the first gospel rap groups and went on to record six albums. He is the author of *The Epic*, an artistic translation of the Gospel of John in rap.

Fred ministered at *The Harvest Center* on January 12. This is what he had to say:

“I got connected with Urban Harvest Ministries when I met Pastor Tom at a national youth workers’ training convention. When we shared our visions there was an immediate connection, in spirit and direction. We were excited to find out that we see a lot of things concerning urban areas the same way. I learned of all UHM is doing. Most exciting and remarkable to me was to see UHM’s stewardship and the ability to carry out the vision.

“First Thessalonians 2:8 says, *‘We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.’* It’s a powerful thing to share truth; it’s even more powerful to share it in the context of our lives. This is what UHM is doing. They are doing the greater work, sharing the gospel in everyday life — showing how living for Christ is worked out in everything from education, to economic structuring, to social interactions and community development, to worship.

“What’s unique to me about UHM is that the process is taking place through the very people who have been oppressed. To see the people from the devastated inner city area rebuild their own walls is awesome! To hear about it is one thing. To be there and see how it fits together and works is really encouraging and refreshing.”

We thank God for people like Fred Lynch and many others who are partners with us in reaching the ripe fields in the urban harvest. We look forward to all that God has in store as networking partnerships grow with like-minded people whose passion it is to save the lost in our cities and bring glory to our Savior Jesus Christ on the streets!

As Fred said, “To hear about it is one thing. To be there and see how it fits together and works is really encouraging and refreshing.” Come and see for yourself! Join us in reaching the urban harvest!



Fred Lynch ministering at The Harvest Center

Thank you for your prayers and support of last month’s youth outreach. *The Harvest Center* was packed with an overflow crowd that night. Many received Christ as their Savior or rededicated their lives to Him! There were even some parents at the altar. Please continue to pray with us as we seek to teach, train, love and disciple these precious youth.

Vilma Marte, A Repairer of the Breach

“Inside I felt I had no purpose. Inside I felt like garbage.

“Imagine being born into a neighborhood where they say, “You don’t have anything to look forward to.” Being in school where it is understood, “Most people don’t make it out of this neighborhood.” Being around people whose “career” it is to hang out on the street corner, drink and sell drugs.

“As a child I would step out of my apartment door and see crack vials and crackheads who were high. People were constantly killed by guns, knives, or AIDS. Others were rounded up and taken to jail. I wanted to leave. I wanted to move to Manhattan. Certainly things were better there! In high school, you could see the discouragement in the teachers’ faces every time someone dropped out.

“By the grace of God, I graduated high school and went on to college, but I was miserable. Even though I had accepted Christ as my Savior when I was thirteen, I didn’t stick with Him. I kept hearing statements like, “There is no God” and other lies going through my mind. Then a friend invited me to come to *The Harvest Center*. The first night I was there we studied the Bible. I could understand it! The voices in my head were subdued. That wasn’t the end of the struggle, but it was the beginning of the end. I’ve been at *The Harvest Center* ever since!



Vilma tutoring students in Kidz Klub.

“Pastor Tom, Lidia, and others loved me, encouraged me, and trained me. I remember when I was first asked to help tutor children. ‘I’m *not* useless!’ I thought. Truly the overall message at *The Harvest Center* is, ‘God has a plan for your life. You have a future and a purpose.’ They showed faith in me, and showed me how to have faith in God. They took care of me like someone takes care of a plant. I was taught, equipped, encouraged, and prayed for . . . and I sought the LORD.

“Now God is literally using me to do the opposite of what I could be doing. I am heading up Kidz Explosion, tutoring children and teens, and working with the youth through Friday Nite Live. Every week I’m out in the neighborhood visiting kids, teens and their families. I’m also in college, getting my degree in Christian Education.

“Because of God, I am bringing life, truth, and hope that wasn’t there before to this neighborhood. They didn’t know God’s love before, but now they’re going to know. It’s amazing to me to see the difference of how my life is now and how it could have been. God is so good!

“I’m happy that at *The Harvest Center* I have a tightly-knit family, regardless of difficulties. I am excited to be telling others of God’s amazing love, and continually being equipped to do even more. **This city can change. I just want it to be whatever God wants it to be!**”

Hear more testimonies of what the Lord has done in the lives of people of the South Bronx!

Be inspired by a motivating message from Dr. Tom Grassano.

Come to a special fund-raising reception for Urban Harvest Ministries!

February 20, 2007 at the Saw Mill in Greenville, South Carolina

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**Urban
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Empowering and Equipping in Urban America

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