

Breaking the Chains: A Christian Call to Defeating Homelessness and Addiction

In the heart of North Springfield, Missouri, Freedom City Church has been answering a Christian calling to extend help to individuals grappling with homelessness and drug addiction.

Since its establishment in 2015, the church has implemented several programs, guided by a biblical perspective to reach out to those in need.

Pastor John Alarid of Freedom City Church sat down with Charisma to share how his church's outreach programs are making an impact in the community, as well as his own thrilling testimony.

Among the church's initiatives are "Hope Homes," which offers a discipleship home tailored to aid men struggling with drug addiction.

The program "Straight Street" provides critical recovery housing for individuals exiting incarceration, facing substance use disorders and homelessness.

Expanding their outreach further, the church operates the "North Side Recovery Community Center," a haven offering resources, classes and counseling for those seeking a way out of their dire situations.

"It's just a place where people can come for classes, for resources such as food, to go get their ID, to get connected with a counselor," Alarid explains. "So, we're just seeing God move in powerful ways. And there's just no end to the need."

Central to Freedom City Church's mission is the biblical principle of compassion and assistance to the suffering. A key

verse that resonates with their work is Matthew 25:35-36: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

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With a Christian perspective on the intertwined nature of homelessness and drug addiction, the church acknowledges that substance use disorders often underlie many homelessness cases. Mental health challenges further complicate the situations of those struggling with addiction. Moreover, the church recognizes generational poverty addiction, and incarceration as significant factors contributing to the homelessness issue.

"A lot of people that are homeless are there because [of] the environment they grew up in," Alarid says. "We're talking about generational poverty, generational addiction, right here in North Springfield, generational incarceration."

Freedom City Church's approach to addressing these pressing issues emphasizes comprehensive and continuous discipleship. Recognizing that traditional methods may prove inadequate, the church advocates for 24/7 support. By providing recovery homes, workforce development opportunities and spiritual and counseling resources, the church aims to create a nurturing environment to help individuals break free from the destructive cycle of addiction and homelessness.

The personal journey of the church's founding pastor, Pastor John Alarid, stands as a testament to the transformative power of faith and recovery. Having experienced a life ensnared in drugs, crime and incarceration, he found solace in his faith

while attending Victory Outreach, leading to a remarkable turnaround. His story echoes the biblical lesson of redemption, where faith can transform pain into passion and purpose.

Over the years, Freedom City Church's outreach has flourished, impacting numerous lives through their programs. However, the church also faces challenges in bridging the gap between the faith and recovery communities, and in navigating the unique cultural nuances of this population. Nevertheless, their commitment to viewing this community as a mission field and adapting their approach as needed demonstrates their dedication to fulfilling the biblical call to loving and serving the marginalized.

As the church continues to sow seeds of hope and transformation, their efforts epitomize the spirit of Christian compassion and the call to follow the teachings of Jesus, who sought to uplift the downtrodden and provide a guiding light to those in need. With a belief in the power of faith, support and discipleship, Freedom City Church remains steadfast in their mission to help individuals find their way out of the darkness and into a brighter, more fulfilling future. {eo}

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