

How the Gospel Will Take Over Times Square This Weekend

This month, "Saturate New York" has completed for the third year in a row, a five-week initiative involving hundreds of New York City churches working together in all five boroughs, called Jesus Week XL.

They have distributed millions of gospel books, DVDs and other tools. At least 2 million New Yorkers have been personally contacted about Christ during these four weeks.

Now, on Saturday, June 29, Jesus Week XL climaxes with a major united gospel rally in the middle of Times Square.

It takes place with the blessing and support of the mayor's Office, NYPD, NYFD and many other civic and government groups. This is a complete miracle!

Here's the kicker: Though unintended, the rally takes place in the thick of the largest gathering of the LGBTQ community in history: World Gay Pride Week.

This means hundreds of thousands of visitors (let alone tourists) from all over the world will be congregating in Times Square in New York that very night, like Acts 2. Like another Pentecost!

The crowds will witness a four-hour gospel outreach rally, uniting churches across the city with music, drama, videos on jumbotrons and special speakers. It's simply amazing!

Not only that, but Jesus Week USA is ready to go national, to replicate what we've done in New York City in other major cities. We are doing this in collaboration with other major national ministries focused on saturating the nation with Christ in 2020.

But this Saturday may be the most strategic gathering of all. Pray for a mighty work of the Holy Spirit.

Charisma spoke with Pastor David Beidel, president of Saturate NY, to hear about the heart of what they do. This interview has been edited for grammar and clarity.

Charisma: What is Saturate New York?

David Beidel: Sometimes the promises of God seem to mock us. When anyone walks or drives through New York, the overarching promise of Scripture that “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas” (Hab. 2:14) seems ridiculous. What we have learned, however, is that disobedience is what mocks us and dishonors the name of Jesus.

Saturate NYMetro spearheads a large coalition of small, under-resourced churches scattered throughout the most at-risk communities in our region. Our dream is simple: What if we actually honored the promise and appeal of John 17? What if we truly were one with, and saturated with, God in Christ? What if we truly walked as one holy family before Him and strategically aligned to bring the gospel to every home in the tristate region? Would the New York metro area truly “know that Jesus Christ was sent from the Father?”

We utilize Acts 1:8 as our blueprint for building this New Covenant temple in our region. We have contextualized the four quadrants of this strategic Great Commission passage into: neighborhoods (Jerusalem), schools (Judea), public/subsidized Housing (Samaria) and the ethnic groups in our city (ends of the earth). The goal is that 5 to 20 churches would serve together collaboratively in every zip code, making sure that at least, these four quadrants of our Great Commission are receiving prayer and the gospel in word and in deed. We feel the burden of Christ when His heart was broken for Jerusalem because the people were helpless and harassed, like sheep

without a shepherd. Our battle cry is “No Sheep Without a Shepherd in my zip code ... city ... Metro!”

This was a dream three years ago, but now we look back in awe as God has opened a floodgate of blessings upon our city that we would never have thought possible. In this short period of time, our network of churches and nonprofits has distributed over 30 tractor-trailer loads of amazing evangelistic books, full-color children’s books, coloring books, millions of Every Home For Christ “Encounter Life” engagers, custom made for our saturation outreach, and over 3 million *Jesus* film DVDs provided by Christ For All Peoples. Over three million homes have been “adopted” by local churches for door to door Gospel engagement!

God has fully resourced and empowered reaching our neighborhoods/Jerusalem. We are gearing up now to launch a huge “adopt a local school” initiative as we see the potential to stop the bleeding in our inner-city communities.

Charisma: What is Jesus Week 2019?

Biedel: Jesus Week began with another “what if?” What if a critical mass of Jesus loving churches all “stepped it up in prayer and outreach for one week?”

Dimas Salaberrios, (who spearheads Jesus Week with me), Steve Milazzo (who spearheads “Hope Day”) and myself, reached out to several dear friends and network leaders throughout the city to see what they thought. It was all thumbs-up and then God just kissed the John 17 effort. Sponsor after sponsor began pouring in blessings to resource the effort. 2019 is our third year doing this. It gets more exciting every year. We don’t micromanage the various outreaches.

Our only question is: “Will you bring the good news to the lost in your community?” If the answer is yes, we supply them with thousands of books, tracts, our outreach app cards (we developed a very powerful evangelistic/social service web/app:

) and *Jesus* film DVDs.

Charisma: What is the significance of Jesus Week 2019 and World Gay Pride Week culminating in the same weekend?

Biedel: We never would have planned our finale to coincide with World Gay Pride Week. There was a great deal of back and forth before we nailed down a date for our culminating celebration. When we realized what we were stepping into, we were a bit rattled, but then quickly realized that God's sovereign hand deigned this.

It is clear to all of us who are in leadership that Jesus longs to express His love to a community that has experienced so much disdain and even hatred from the church. We began to see this as a unique day of Pentecost. Peoples from dozens of nations will be gathering in Times Square this weekend. They will hear the Good News that Jesus loves them with an everlasting love.

Charisma: Tell me a little bit about the gospel rally planned for June 29.

Biedel: We have five sets planned. Local worship artists and choirs will be performing for each one and then a Gospel presentation will be given by local evangelists: Archbishop Steven Smith of Church of God; Tom Maharis, a worldwide evangelist based in New York; Dimas Salaberrios, producer of the highly acclaimed documentary, *Emanuel* and worldwide evangelist; and myself.

Charisma: What sort of spiritual warfare have you encountered in planning the rally?

Biedel: We applied for the permits from New York months ago but just got official permission this week. This makes every stitch of planning and investing a faith walk.

Saturate NYMetro has had a very challenging year. A strong partner changed course mid-year, so we lost our entire admin team. I am the only part-time paid staff, but we have dozens of wonderful volunteers.

Over the last two years, funding for the Times Square and Herald Square event was strong, but this year, we are still around \$20,000 in the red. Some sponsors have even said the optics of this event scare them. So we are very aware that we are battling unseen forces.

It's really always been an impossible journey. How wonderful it is that God enjoys pushing the limits of impossible.

Charisma: How are you guys preparing for this?

Biedel: Lots of prayer. We have had prayer gatherings in all of the boroughs leading up to this for several months as well as a week of fasting and prayer in May. We are working with an amazing team of leaders throughout the city. We are always on the lookout for the "Weeping Barnabas'" of our city. These are those who weep over their entire city and borough as Jesus wept over Jerusalem and they are also those who, like Barnabas, bring the team together.

Our partners have been amazing. Every Home For Christ has been the driving force behind enabling Jesus Week to flourish. They have contributed generously to the movement and offered to any church in the tri-state region a constant supply of powerful outreach materials to enable us all to hold the ground that we are storming into, that we might truly, "possess the land."

They have even developed an app that enables all of those who reach out to keep records at the door of every visited home for follow up and prayer. Text "HOPE" to 97123 to check it out.

David Bryant of Christ Now spearheads the engine of our movement, which is "Christ Saturation." He has been to me a source of constant encouragement and inspiration. His Christ Institutes have been a powerful encouragement to our entire network of pastors.

Leaders everywhere have been rediscovering Jesus, falling in love all over again and walking fearlessly in Him! His passion

to help us all to embrace the wonder of Christ's ascension and absolute rulership over the universe through us, has impassioned thousands in our region. one of his favorite passages has been deeply imprinted into my heart in this season: That Jesus, and we His joint heirs: "Rule in the midst of our enemies!"

Communications have been vital. Mick Richards of Building a Difference ministries has blessed us with his skill of video production. He volunteers hundreds of hours as executive director and videographer for Jesus Week and Saturate NYMetro. His desire is to produce a full-length movie, telling the story of the grassroots, John 17, gospel movement in NYC.

Lauren Hatch of Live Fearless Media has also donated hundreds of hours of expertise as our communications director. God keeps bringing the most talented people to enable this work to go forward.

Charisma: What are some of your specific prayers about the event?

Biedel: There is an old song that says, "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy one comes down. Brethren pray and holy manna will be showered all around."

We are bringing our fishes and our loaves, only Jesus can feed the multitudes. We are pouring out our alabaster jar, we pray that the fragrance will fill our city and the earth. As I mull over the way to approach evangelism this Saturday, I am completely aware that only God can do this. May rushing winds fill Times Square and holy manna fall like rain.

Charisma: What miracles have you seen come to fruition ahead of the event?

Biedel: Too many miracles to tell!

We are in awe that God keeps opening every door and we are in awe that millions throughout our region are receiving the gospel.

We keep hearing stories of children reading the books we distribute over and over again. one police officer told us that he saw a girl reading one of our books in a park in Bushwick, Brooklyn. She sat on a bench and read the whole book, as she got to the last page, just as the book prompted her, she got down on her knees and gave her life to Jesus. We have distributed nearly a million of these sweet children's books.

We believe that there is an under-the-radar revival going on in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of our city kids. Very few children in under-resourced neighborhoods own one children's book. For many, these stories of Jesus are their one and only.

One of our pastors in the Bronx told me that as he was sharing Jesus Week resources on a street corner, dozens of Bengali Muslims in full customary attire, swarmed around his table, grabbing resources.

As he offered one of the men a *Jesus* film DVD (in eight languages), the man said, "We already have that ... my wife, my children, we love this movie, we watch it all the time!"

We believe there is an under-the-radar revival in the Muslim communities of our city. The tract that Every Home For Christ produced for us is called *Dreams*. It speaks of the fact that everyone dreams of perfect love, hope and peace but only Jesus can fulfill any of those dreams.

It then leads them through a QR code to five movies about five Muslims who found Jesus because they dreamed of Him!

A few days ago, I joined one of our beautiful evangelism partners, Love NY, and a team of around 30 people from NYC and across the nation. They had asked the police in Brooklyn, which was the most dangerous neighborhood in the borough. They told us of a housing project in Brownsville. So we went and ministered in the courtyard through worship, prayer, door-to-

door evangelism and donuts!

There in one of the darkest neighborhoods in our city, light came streaming in. Dozens opened their hearts to Christ, several were healed, people were pointed to a life-giving church and hundreds of hearts were filled with hope. It was my personal joy to pray with the sweetest young lady who was pregnant. Her apartment was barren, but she welcomed Jesus gladly into her heart and her home!

Two of the largest violent gang/drug raids in NYC history occurred the morning after city and boroughwide prayer events that targeted the housing projects we prayed for.

Our Saturate Harlem Borough Shepherd, Donnel Harper, actually prayerwalked through the Manhattanville Housing Projects twice that day before God restored shalom to his community! He told me he saw people walking in his neighborhood that he had never seen in his life because they were all hiding from fear.

One young man was giving out one of our evangelism books titled: *God Will Carry You Through* by Max Lucado. He gave it to a woman sitting in a parked car. A few minutes later when he passed by, she motioned him to come.

She said: "I was just sitting here wondering, how am I going to make it through? I just had an accident. I'm out of work. I have my kids to support ... and you walk over and hand me a book that says *God Will Carry You Through!*"

She and he were both weeping.

We see the lost being found in every neighborhood and on every street corner and the "saved" coming alive again as they break free from the deadly "Dead Sea Syndrome" where living water flows in, but nothing flows out.

Charisma: What prophetic words has the Lord told you about this?

Biedel: My parents left a very comfortable home and life in Sitka, Alaska, nearly 50 years ago because of a prophetic word: "God is calling you to New York City; it will be a long, dark tunnel, but Jesus will be at the end of the tunnel."

Urban Hope is the nonprofit of the Saturate NYC and Jesus Week movements whose base of operations is 77 Alaska Street!

We bought this facility for our church in 1999. At the time this neighborhood, known as "Wild, Wild West Brighton" had the second-highest murder rate in New York. As soon as we purchased the old warehouse, the murders began to spike and our congregants began to scatter for fear.

We desperately sought the Lord and He spoke to us prophetically and clearly from Joel 2:12-27.: "Blow the Trumpet in Zion. Declare a holy fast ... that they may no longer say in your city 'Where is your God?'"

So in January of 2000, our little church gathered, fasted and prayed this declaration: "In the name of Jesus, we bind the spirit of murderous rage in this community. In Jesus' name, we say, 'no more murders in West Brighton!'"

The murder epidemic ended that day. It has been nearly 20 years, and the murder rate is down 97% in West Brighton. There is nothing that Jesus cannot do.

When we purchased this facility, the Lord also spoke to us from Isaiah 54: "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities."

We thought the word pertained mainly to the size of the facility, but we have realized over the past several years that there is nothing Jesus cannot do when we "Love Him, love the lost and love each other." As God seems to be opening

doors in many cities in New Jersey, Long Island and even in the Philly Metro, we are aware that His capacity is limitless.

In my book, *Saturation, A Plan for Gospel Immersion*, I wrote out a kind of bullet-point, dream scene/strategic plan for NYC. I envisioned shepherds for each borough, community district and zip code, all working together to mobilize churches so that every home was visited and prayed for on a monthly basis. A friend of mine called me after he read the book and said, "Dave, this has been done before."

He sent me his book. I was awestruck to find that in 1855, they proposed the same thing. It looks like I plagiarized the historical documents. By 1857, there were 4000 prayer visitors who looked after nearly every home in New York. One of those prayer visitors was Jeremiah Lanphier. He participated in the John 17 strategic visitation and prayer movement. It was his privilege to see it explode into one of the greatest revivals in American history, now known as the "Fulton Street Revival."

It was at this moment when we knew beyond a shadow of doubt that God was building his Church, His New Covenant temple in our city and we were preparing the way for the Lord ... for His glory to cover our city as the waters cover the sea.

Charisma: How can our readers get involved?

Biedel: We need prayer support and financial support. With no full-time staff, we have seen unthinkable things happen. We see the potential for a transformation movement in every Metro area in our nation and beyond. Our website for support is: .

For more on the movement: and .

Charisma: What's next for you?

Biedel: Our hearts break for the Philly Metro and the Baltimore Metro. I also have a special love for the Fort Meyers area. I am an outreach strategist for Every Home For Christ and am very excited about the We Love Colorado Movement there in which we are pushing for the adoption of every home

in this state. I love working in the cities, so I am serving together with some amazing leaders in Denver as we pray for a great move of God in this city.

The collective impact numbers astound us: We only need to mobilize 1500 churches to adopt 2000 homes and there will be “no sheep without a shepherd in NYC!”

2000 churches adopting 2000 homes and there will be “no sheep without a shepherd in New Jersey!”

One million churches adopting 2000 homes and there will be “No Sheep Without a Shepherd in the World.”

We must do this. We must love the Lord, the lost and each other. We must together go into the streets and the lanes, the highways and the byways and compel them to come in that the house of the Lord would be full, that the Lamb of God for sinners slain might receive the reward for His suffering.