

TKJ Schematic

news & views for supporters and friends of



Winter 2005

It has been twenty years since I first went into Philadelphia's House of Correction and our pilgrimage among the poor began. This February marks the sixteenth anniversary of the founding of The King's Jubilee. This is a time to take stock. I know I haven't accomplished a fraction of what I had in mind as an optimistic 29 year old, but I haven't let that stop me from continuing to do what little I can.

Things Wear Out

In June, we sold the ministry van. We sold it for a bargain price to a couple who use it for a YWCA daycare and a homeless ministry in Maryland. We sold it, because I was tired of moving furniture, freezers, tons of food, etc. Now, I know that is what we wanted the van for, but that was when I had younger knees. Things wear out. We would have been happy to hold on to the van, if there were a young buck or two ready to pitch in to do the heavy lifting. In middle age one should learn to recognize one's own limitations. I could not say no to people who had things to move, as long as I had this mammoth vehicle.

I purchased a Scion xB as my personal vehicle to use for the ministry on Thursday nights. Before I test drove it, I measured the luggage area, by cubits and hands to make sure that the soup and hot chocolate containers would fit behind the back seat. It wasn't nearly as much fun as the Cooper Mini to drive, but four full sized adults can ride comfortably with the food in the back and the clothes, etc., on top, in a car top bag.

I dressed it up with a vinyl decal with The King's Jubilee logo on three sides and Psalm 100:3 in reverse (so drivers can read it in the mirror) on the front. To have some fun, while openly confessing my covetousness, I added Mercedes Benz hood ornament and trunk stars.

Last month, the ministry freezer broke down, after only seven years of service. I tried to fix it, but it was apparently the compressor. Things wear out faster than they used to. We had to farm turkeys out to four different locations until we got a new freezer, February 18.

The Feel Good Story

A good fundraising newsletter should have a "feel good story." This is the tale of someone who made a radical turnaround because of what we were able to do through your donations. This is a story of repentance, rescue and redemption! Sorry to disappoint.

I mentioned above that it is a time to take stock, and I have been thinking about this. This week I mentioned a man in casual conversation, then I remembered that he died of AIDS. I started to name the many young, black men and women I have known

and have tried to help over the past 20 years, who have died of AIDS. Then I began to name the ones who have died violent deaths. After that, those who took other people's lives, even after we tried to reach them with the love of Christ. Then the ones who died alone on the street. Then I wonder about so many whom I don't see anymore. I hope that I don't see them because they are doing well and have left the street life behind them. But I fear far worse.

Then I think about the regulars, the guys and gals whom I have been seeing in prison and on the streets for the last 20 years. I am always glad to see them in the land of the living. I am just not glad to see them still needing a free meal served out of a cooler on a park bench.

But you know there are some people I have to confess to you that I don't think of too often, because it is just too painful: their children. Almost all of the people whom we serve are parents. What is happening to their kids?!

Thank God for prayer! Prayer is not a burden or a religious duty. It is a refuge. It is a way for us to be joined to the heart of God. It is a path for us to effect change in hopeless situations and to reach the unreachable.

On the third Saturday of the month at St. Philip Antiochian Orthodox Church, Souderton, we have been singing the Akathist to the Mother of God Nurturer of Children. It is beautiful and it is powerful. It is not just for parents to pray. We pray it for our children, our grandchildren and our god-children to be sure; but we pray it for all the children in all of our communities. Please join us. Learn this akathist and pray it with your family. Bring it back to your church if St. Philip's is not your home.

Please don't make the excuse that you are working too many hours to make it to Vespers. Your kids need you praying this prayer more than they need to go to Disney or to the shore.

All of the people whom we serve on Thursday nights, the "hardcore of the homeless", were once little babies in someone's arms, full of life and hope and possibilities. Come to church and pray for the next generation. Be part of that "ounce of prevention." It's a lot more hopeful and pleasant and, yes, "feel good" than trying to figure out if you can even hope to be part of the "pound of cure."

Has anyone been saved through our ministry over these last 20 years? My wife and I, our four daughters, our two sons-in-law and our grandson are all faithfully at church together. They all serve the poor in Jesus' Name. Beyond that, I cannot say.

We have seen a couple of men turn their lives around and become responsible adults. Can we take credit for that? No. We are glad that we could be there for them during a rough patch, but they made the decision to choose life and follow through.

What We Do

The King's Jubilee serves soup, sandwiches, pasta with meat sauce, hot chocolate, fruit and goodies (if we have them) to between 50 and 150 men and a few women in Center City Philadelphia every Thursday night. This is in a park, year-round. We also share toiletries, blankets and season appropriate clothing with them.

We also try to share resources with other ministries who are serving the poor in Jesus' Name. This month, The Word in Action International Ministries is asking for anyone to come forward to donate the following items:

- ✘ a freezer, new or used, to be used in their community food bank
- ✘ a PC laptop computer, so Chantal can be productive while she is waiting in line in the van at the food warehouse, etc.
- ✘ a passenger van.

If you can help with any of these things, contact them at:

THE WORD IN ACTION INTL. MINISTRIES, INC.

(With a Heart and a Passion for Philadelphia)

1539 W. Cortland Street

Philadelphia, PA 19140

Telephone: (215) 324-7665

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1074, Glenside, PA 19038

Starting Out Right

The Holy Ascension Antiochian Orthodox Mission isn't waiting to get established with a building and a full complement of activities and committees before getting their hands dirty helping the poor. From day one, they have been involved in joining us on the street, bringing sandwiches and pasta dishes to serve on Thursday nights. Various people make sandwiches. The McGraw kids make pasta and sauce and the McGraws help serve in the city.

The support that Father Joseph Butts and the parishioners have given to The King's Jubilee is an important statement of their theology. Serving the poor in Jesus' Name is not a luxury option or something just to do with leftovers, but is a clear way of sharing the love of God with our firstfruits.

May God abundantly bless you and honor your faithfulness with the right building in the right location.

Their web address is: www.holyascension.net

The Ad

"COME AND SEE" Icons, Books & Art was started with the hope that it would provide a steady income with flexible hours to facilitate my involvement in service with The King's Jubilee. After four years, the website has over 1,000 different icons on it. We have signed royalty agreements with more than a dozen iconographers of a variety of styles. The collection is growing all the time. We have shipped to all 50 states, every province in Canada and to over thirty other countries on all six inhabited continents. We average about 7,500 hits per day on the website. Please come and browse our collection at: www.comeandseeicons.com

The Appeal

We can only do what we do, because there are many others who share the resources God has given them with us. Year end giving was down in 2004. We suspect that this is because a lot of year end giving was directed to helping agencies dealing with the tsunami catastrophe. We don't knock that, but groups like ours that deal with the poor, month in, month out, still need resources. A catastrophe in one part of the world should not hurt the poor in another part of the world. We need to step up to the plate and find ways to adjust our lifestyles so that we can manage the crisis and continue to help the poor in Jesus' Name. Donations are gladly and gratefully received. In addition to checks and cash, personal size shampoos, soaps & lotions are always welcome, as well as men's clothing in season.

Checks can be mailed to:



216 W. Fourth St.

East Greenville, PA 18041-1629

Our phone is: 215-679-7563

email: TKJ@shoutforjoy.net

Thank you. May the Lord bless you as you bless the poor in Jesus' Name. Have a Blessed Lent!

Peace,

Cranford Joseph Coulter