

Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death

A Young Man's Account of God's Protection as the Towers Fell

Andy Deane grew up at Calvary Chapel Old Bridge in New Jersey and attends New York University. He lives blocks from the World Trade Center and worked in its shadow. Like many in that area of Manhattan on September 11, Andy ran toward the towers after planes crashed through their upper floors. This is his personal account.

I heard a terrible noise. It was a mixture of screams from the people nearby and a deep rumbling from above. I looked up and saw the World Trade Center collapsing. I froze for a second and then began to sprint toward the police line. It did not appear I was going to make it and would be crushed. I felt a strong wind as the smoke engulfed me. I jumped into a candy store filled with people. I turned to look back outside and saw some women running our way. I stepped out



Onlookers react to tragedy.

into the smoke and grabbed them and threw them into the store. I did that three times. One lady was accidentally thrown onto the floor. I picked her up and pushed her back into the store. The smoke completely surrounded us, and it became totally dark. Twenty people were crammed inside of the small store as it filled with smoke. We had trouble breathing.

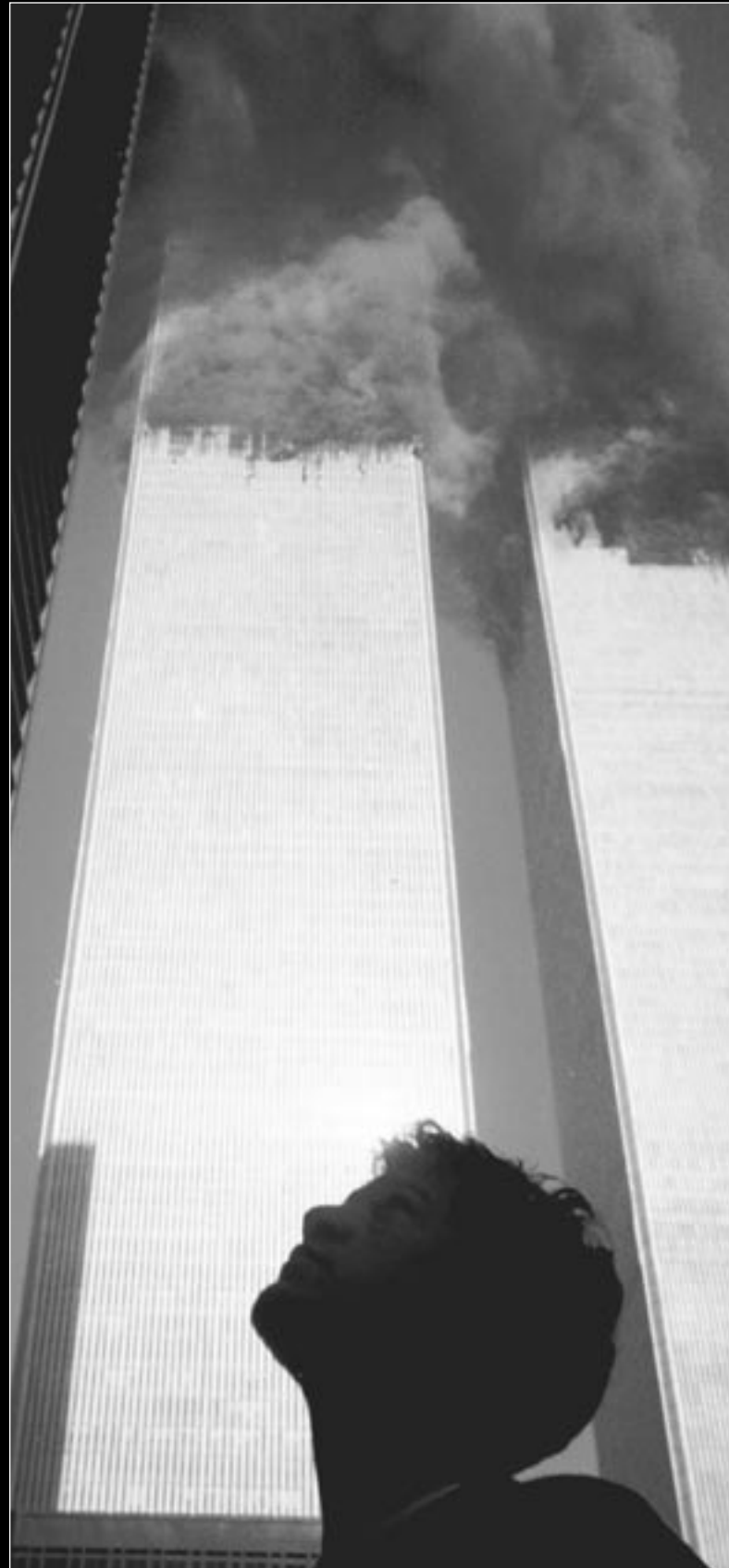
"Is there a basement here?" I yelled to the owner. She said no. So I looked up to God and began to pray. "Jesus, I know I am going to go to heaven if I die, but I'm scared. If you can use me, then give me the strength Lord." Almost instantly I realized that my office building, 11 John Street, was across from my current position. So I ran to it, singing a line from a song from Calvary Chapel, "Let the weak say I am strong." I crossed the street completely blinded by the smoke. I found two women banging on the glass door. I kicked it in and told them to go upstairs.

"Jesus, I know I am going to go to heaven if I die, but I'm scared. If you can use me, then give me the strength Lord."

I then ran back across the street to the candy store. At first I couldn't find it. I yelled to them that I had found a place with oxygen and instructed everyone to grab someone else's hand and follow me.

Ten minutes later the smoke began to lighten. Firemen gathered. I asked where I should go. They told me to run towards the seaport. "No, I mean where can I go to help?" They looked puzzled and said,

Photo by Eric Anderson



Andy Deane, silhouetted by the burning WTC towers, looks on moments before it crashed to the ground, killing thousands and sending those around into complete darkness. The 20-year-old NYU student grew up at CC Old Bridge. He spent September 11th helping firefighters.

"Firemen are missing, and we are going to look for them." So we started to walk onto the rubble.

"Is anyone alive?" I shouted, and I remember thinking how dumb that sounded. I was jogging across pieces of the WTC. We did not hear even one person yell back. I saw a lone pigeon escape from the rubble.

I saw a fireman assisting an Asian man lying on the ground, bleeding. An African-American fireman was also on the ground in a lot of pain. There were two firemen bent over him, holding his hands. I couldn't tell whether he was going to live.

A man yelled down at me that they were trapped. A fireman helped me move a piece of metal that had been blocking the door and the people escaped. I noticed a man trying to put out a small fire on his balcony. I yelled to him, "The whole area is ruined, and you are trying to save your apartment. Get out, because the other tower will fall."

We began to look for trapped firemen. There were five firefighters and three policemen with us. We heard the sound of a plane. Everyone began running. We realized it had to be an American fighter plane.

Seconds later there was another deep and powerful rumbling. The other tower began to collapse.

A fireman yelled, "It's coming down!" We ran across the street and into a building. Once again I thought that I was going to die. It was right above us. The building had all glass windows. Then it hit, shaking us all. It was the loudest sound I have ever heard. It sounded like a powerful wave. The smoke came again and it became black. We couldn't breathe. It was frightening as my eyes were stinging and beginning to shut.

Minutes later we walked outside. The firemen's flashlights only pierced five feet into the darkness. We gathered ourselves, and someone told me to look and see if that restaurant had any water. So I went over and broke the window and climbed up a pole and jumped in. I took all the bottled water I could find. I ran over to the window and tried to get out, but I could not escape at first. The glass was angled toward me. I managed to jump over it without cutting

my legs. I started to walk around and hand out water.

We began to put out car fires. I helped carry the hose line a few hundred feet and held the lines for them. We went from car to car putting out fires. I wondered why we weren't trying to find people. The firemen thought it was important to put out the fires so vehicles would not explode. A fireman came up to me and asked me my name. I told him that I was a NYU student. He looked at me and said, "Well thanks, you're doing a great job today." All the firemen seemed really appreciative. I was in awe of them and their bravery. I felt so honored to be with them, realizing they face dangers all the time. Throughout the morning they called me 'brother.' It felt good to hear that.

Ground Zero was the worst looking thing I had ever seen. It looked like a complete war zone. All of the WTC had crushed down into the basement. The only piece left on one of them was this frayed outline, six stories high. I stared at it and realized that this



Andy Deane returns to the site of the tragedy.

wasn't just a bad dream, and that our lives would never be the same again.

Andy Deane spent the rest of September 11 carrying water for the firemen and helping where he could. Later that afternoon he returned back to his college, his hair white with cement dust, his face blackened from the smoke, and his shirt bloody from a cut. He was tested for asbestos contamination that proved negative.

In the subsequent days and weeks, Andy has struggled with his close encounter with death. He has become even more adamant about sharing his faith in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior as he conveys his story on surviving the collapse of both towers. Andy is grateful for the solid teaching he received growing up that has allowed him to share Christ with his classmates. He spoke at several outreaches with Calvary Chapel Old Bridge about his experiences. Andy now

realizes the Lord has an incredible plan for his life and is now dedicated to fulfilling it.



National newspapers remind New Yorkers that they were not alone.



Photo by Skip Heitzig

For Such a Time as This

Calvary Chapel Pastors Called to Minister at Ground Zero



Senior Pastor Skip Heitzig, CC Albuquerque (left) is overcome by the magnitude of the strike against innocent civilians. Moments later a fireman took Skip to the site of a cross formed by the destruction.

Photo by Mike Finizio

Story by Skip Heitzig and Tom Price

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear... Psalm 46: 1, 2

Pulverized cement still permeated the air around the fallen towers of the World Trade Center where hijackers had crashed fuel-laden passenger jets a week before. Skip Heitzig, from CC Albuquerque, New Mexico, traveled to New York City at the request of Franklin Graham, head of the Christian relief agency, Samaritan's Purse, and son of the Reverend Billy Graham. Workers had been digging through the rubble, frantically trying to locate any survivors. Several Calvary Chapel pastors were involved with grief-counseling ministries for the worst tragedy ever to grip the United States.

Pastor Skip toured the site of Ground Zero, escorted by Mike Finizio, senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship New York. Skip was struck by the totality of the destruction. A somber mood pervaded the site. Sud-

denly, a fireman pointed to a perfectly formed cross, created by metal support beams violently ripped apart in the destruction of the towers. "It's a sign!" the firefighter said adamantly. "I have been pulling corpses out of this debris. No signs of life! No hope! Then I looked up, and there it was!"

Two FBI agents, a local police officer, the fireman, and Skip studied this stark reminder of another death. In this solemn place of mass murder and senseless horror stood a reminder of the One who came to bring eternal life. They locked arms, bowed their heads, and prayed. Four law enforcement professionals and a preacher prayed that this cross and the One who gave His life on it two thousand years ago would not be forgotten, even at Ground Zero.



A cross, created in the destruction of the WTC.

"Such a moment could not have been more poignant," reflected Skip. The fireman who discovered the cross was determined to remove and preserve it as a memorial, standing as a lasting reminder of eternal hope.

Photos by Skip Heitzig



Rescue workers search through the maze of debris for survivors.

Pastor Mike MacIntosh, Horizon Christian Fellowship San Diego, a Calvary Chapel affiliate, had been given the responsibility of coordinating chaplains for the Red Cross. He had rushed to New York on a military transport after learning of the attack. He also ministered at the morgue, where family members came to identify the bodies of their loved ones. Mike worked tirelessly coordinating the outreach to meet the needs and was humbled that the Lord would use him.

"I have seen God move in people's lives during this tragedy in ways I could not have anticipated," said Mike. He personally consoled a tearful former President Bill Clinton at Ground Zero, days after the attack.

"I was able to put my arm around him and then share the Gospel message," said Mike. "Who would have imagined that?"

Among the pastors involved in the counseling ministries from Calvary Chapel were Brian Brodersen, CC Costa Mesa, California; Lloyd Pulley, CC Old Bridge, New Jersey; Joe Focht, CC Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Charlie Restivo, CC Westchester in Yonkers; Mike Finizio, Harvest Christian Fellowship, Manhattan; Chris McCarrick, CC Toms River, New Jersey; Frank Ippolito, CC Vineland, New Jersey; George Bryson, CCCPM; and Gino



American flags adorn damaged buildings. Photo by Skip Heitzig

Geraci, CC South Denver, Colorado. Skip had called Gino in because of his boyhood friend's experience as a police chaplain and his firsthand counseling experience at the Columbine High shooting.

As the pastors toured the WTC site, Mike Finizio, Harvest Christian Fellowship in Manhattan, noticed a giant of a man racing back to the excavation. Covered in perspiration and grime, his demeanor seemed determined and as ragged as his tattered fireman's uniform. The pastors asked him how he had been doing.

"Not so good," the fireman replied. "I lost 17 fellow firefighters from my station." Further questions led the pastors to understand that he had been working feverishly with little rest in hopes of finding anyone still alive. Skip asked him if they could pray for him.

As the pastors nearly ran to keep up with his unfaltering stride, the fireman broke down and cried as prayers were offered. He didn't wipe away the tears, bury his head, or slow down.

"I needed this time of prayer and for someone to hear what I have to say," he said. "But I have a job to do." He thanked them and strode off to the piles of rubble.

"No one refused prayer," added Gino. "Everyone was looking for support and encouragement. As big as the mountain of rubble was at Ground Zero, so, too, were the souls of the workers piled high with all kinds of emotions—anger, resolution, grief, shock, and commitment."



Calvary Chapel pastors Gino Geraci, Skip Heitzig, and Joe Focht listen to pastor Mike MacIntosh, Horizon Christian Fellowship (right), who was placed in charge of pastoral care for the Red Cross.



Photos by Tom Price



facing page: A young woman from Manhattan is overwhelmed by the faces of those missing from the WTC.



Pastor Lloyd Pulley, CC Old Bridge, NJ, ministers to the crowd gathered to hear words of comfort at Union Square Park in mid-town Manhat-

Photos by Tom Price



Mourners write messages of encouragement and faith at Union Square



Christians share the Gospel.



Skip Heitzig and George Bryson, CCCPM, minister.



Pastor Frank Ippolito, CC Vineland, NJ, shares.

THE FAMILY CENTER

The Family Center had been set up at Pier 94. Its entrance was covered with photocopied pictures of thousands of missing loved ones. New information about the recovery effort was made available there. Counselors ministered to family members

trying to fill out forms. Pastors assisted those stricken with grief.

An Indian woman, clothed in traditional attire, stood at a computer terminal. Skip and Gino learned that her daughter, a worker at the WTC, was still missing. Another

woman, similarly dressed, had lost her son. After speaking with them about their loss, Skip asked if they could pray.

“In their time of need, a hand on the shoulder, a caring and concerned voice, and a prayer to God in the name of Jesus were

things these people will never forget,” said Skip. “They will remember at their time of need that Christians reached out to them. God will use that seed.”

Pastors Brian Brodersen and Lloyd Pulley also ministered at the Family Center. Brian spoke with a young bride, devastated by the

loss of her husband of three months. He had worked with Cantor Fitzgerald on the 104th floor of the WTC. Over 700 of the company’s 1,000 workers perished in the tragedy. The woman’s parents and her in-laws pleaded with her, but she had refused food and liquids. Brian listened and spoke gently with her for an hour. Sharing the Gospel, he convinced the young woman that God and her husband would want her to carry on. Finally she accepted a plate of food and a drink. Her parents, beginning to weep, thanked Brian for his care and encouragement.

“Ninety percent listening and ten percent sharing the Gospel,” concluded both Brian and Lloyd. “Let people realize it is normal to have abnormal thoughts in a time like

this,” Lloyd stated. Pastor Chris McCarrick, CC Toms River, New Jersey, also ministered at the Family Center. “How do you become born again?” law enforcement officers and others asked him. Chris was later summoned to Ground Zero and ministered there until dawn.

Later that day, God opened incredible doors for Brian Brodersen and Lloyd Pulley to minister at a park in central Manhattan called Union Square. They spent hours witnessing and sharing the Gospel, in addition to overseeing an outreach to people coming for comfort and strength. They agreed that sharing the Gospel was a delicate balance in these situations.



Faces in the crowd.

THE BILLY GRAHAM PRAYER CENTER

Ken Isaacs, from Samaritan's Purse, had been sent by Franklin Graham to coordinate their relief effort, along with Safe Harbor Ministry. Struggling with a title, all agreed that only Billy Graham's name would give the call-in prayer center the integrity it needed. Taking out full-page ads in the New York Times and the Post, New Yorkers were alerted to the ministry. Christians received training on how to help and pray with those in need.

"The first call was from a Jewish woman whose daughter had perished at the World Trade Center," related Skip. He was uncer-

tain where the conversation was heading. To Skip's amazement, she called to say how grateful she was that Billy Graham's group was there. "There has been an incredible need to just listen to people," said Skip.

A lineman from the Verizon telephone service, an African-American, sat in the Red Cross Center slumped over, eyes glazed. Skip talked to him for a while and then told him he was a counseling pastor. He asked the man if he would mind if he prayed for him. The man's eyes lit up, and he smiled for the first time. "I would be honored if you would pray for me." After praying Skip hugged him and wished him well. Tears streamed down the worker's face as he got up to go back to his job, reminded by this pastor that

the workman's Savior did, indeed, care about him.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28



Strangers comfort Irene (left), who lost family members in the tragedy.



Miniature replicas of the twin towers in the tragedy.



Faces in the crowd.

Sharing God's Amazing Grace

UNION SQUARE PARK

Story by Kerry Marks Hasenbalg

Candles glowed, illuminating a desire to honor those that had so recently lost their lives. Pastors Brian Brodersen, CC Costa Mesa, and Lloyd Pulley, CC Old Bridge, New Jersey, entered Union Square, a park in the middle of Manhattan in New York City. It was the largest unofficial, make-shift memorial to the 5,000 people murdered in the terrorist attack at the World Trade Center.

Thousands of flyers with faces of the missing carried their heart-wrenching stories: Missing, mother of three, 86th floor WTC1; missing, soon-to-be father, 92nd floor; and on and on they read. Each ended with the same plea: "Please call if you know anything about this person."

Earlier that day, a week after the attack on

the World Trade Center, Brian and Lloyd had ministered at the Family Center. Friends accompanying them had discovered the park and felt compelled to show it to the two pastors. Both Lloyd and Brian immediately felt the solemn, mournful spirit of those gathered, their hearts aching and needing comfort, their minds searching to make sense out of the tragedy. Hundreds of red, white, and blue candles had been placed on the ground to form the U.S. flag. Bible verses decorated fences.

"This is where God will use us," said Brian, sensing God's direction. While most clergy were drawn to minister at the high profile location at Ground Zero, Lloyd and Brian felt that the Gospel message should be shared with those gathered in Union Square.

Brian had been in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, September 11, for a congressional event on adoption, which was cancelled after the attacks. With the airlines grounded,

Brian journeyed to Old Bridge by car to assist Lloyd Pulley as his church sought to reach out to those affected by the tragedy.

Brian and Lloyd spoke with several people at Union Square. They agreed that this was where they felt the Lord would use them. Even though it was late at night, Lloyd contacted worship leader Pete Episcopo and gathered a ministry team there for the following day.

The Lord opened the doors of ministry that next afternoon. A local musician with a portable sound system had been playing his guitar and singing folk music in the square throughout the night and into the afternoon. Hundreds gathered to hear any words of encouragement. He began to grow tired and asked the team from Old Bridge to take over so the outreach would not end. Lloyd sent out members of his church to purchase the needed amplification equipment.



Bible verses adorn Union Square Park, known more for its extreme cultist beliefs.

“Jesus is with these men, He is in their corner,” said the weary musician as he left to go home. “These guys are walking with God and they are going to keep this thing going.”

Pastor Lloyd invited those in the crowd to share their thoughts, songs, and stories. As each person shared, the crowd continued to grow. A woman named Irene came to the microphone and read a poem she had written to her sister who had just lost her husband.

“I was supposed to get married this past weekend,” said Irene, fighting back the tears. She pushed her hair out of her face and bit her lip as she spoke into the microphone. “But my sister’s husband worked on the top floors of the WTC and is still missing. We had to cancel the wedding. My sister is my matron of honor.” People in the crowd came up to embrace her as she struggled through her composition of love.

“This poem is for my brother,” a muscular African-American man said. “I’m praying for a miracle,” he stated as he searched for the right words. “But if my brother is gone from this earth, I can rejoice knowing he is with Jesus.”

Pastor Brian gave the man a hug as he finished and thanked him for sharing. “None of us knows how long we are going to be on this earth,” said Brian. “But as our friend here has attested, we can rest knowing that we will step directly into eternity if we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior.” Brian asked those that were interested to pray with him. Hundreds in the crowd bowed their heads.

Brian and Lloyd took turns gently sharing the Gospel message with the crowd between sets of songs and words from those who wanted to share.

A Messianic Jew approached Brian. “What you have done here today is unprecedented in New York City. I have lived here my whole life, and I have never seen anything like this, especially in this park.”

More than 5,000 people came to listen throughout the day as the two pastors ministered for ten hours. People came to be comforted by the words of strangers and to find answers. They left behind their candles, messages, and poems. On Friday Jean-



Pastor Chris McCarrick, CC Toms River

Luc Lajoie of The Kry flew in to help with another outreach.

Sunday became their final day of ministering in this manner as the atmosphere changed. Protestors calling for peace replaced mourners with softened hearts who wanted to hear about God and eternity. The window that God had opened began to close.

The police came. “You are not permitted to do this here.” Brian told them they had been doing this all week. “We know,” the police replied, “but New York is now going back to normal, and you can’t have a concert like this without a permit.”

Jean-Luc played “Amazing Grace” one last time. On the last verse, he backed away from the microphone and let the crowd, some with arms around each other, finish the verse. ✨

“Amazing Grace,
how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost,
but now I’m found,
was blind, but now I see.”



Loretta Rogers, CC Old Bridge, Pastor Charlie Restivo, CC Westchester and others join hands in prayer as the Gospel is presented in Union Square.



Jean Luc Lajoie of The Kry uses his musical ability to share the Gospel as memorial candles light Union Square.



Pastor Brian Brodersen, CC Costa Mesa, consoles those struggling to understand.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Ephesians 1:7